

The Use of Motivation Password Strategy to Encourage Student Classroom Participation at Junior High School in Malang : A Case Study

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Abstract

Classroom participation is an essential aspect of successful English language learning because it enables students to actively engage in classroom interaction and develop their communicative competence. However, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students remain reluctant to participate due to limited vocabulary, low confidence, and fear of making mistakes. This study aimed to explore the implementation of the Motivational Password Strategy and its contribution to students' classroom participation at a junior high school in Malang. The study employed a qualitative case study design involving an English teacher as the participant. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation and were analyzed using thematic analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006). The findings revealed that the Motivational Password Strategy was implemented as a daily routine in which students were required to say a predetermined English expression before entering the school. The strategy provided regular opportunities for language practice outside the classroom and encouraged students to engage with English in a meaningful context. The findings further indicated that the strategy contributed to vocabulary development, increased confidence, reduced speaking anxiety, and encouraged students' participation during English lessons. Through repeated exposure to English expressions, students became more familiar with the language and demonstrated greater willingness to respond, communicate, and participate in classroom activities. The study concludes that the Motivational Password Strategy serves as an effective motivational and linguistic support mechanism that promotes classroom participation among EFL learners. The findings highlight the potential of simple school-based language routines to complement formal classroom instruction and create a more supportive environment for English language learning.

Keywords: Motivational Password Strategy; classroom participation; EFL learners; motivation; vocabulary development.

INTRODUCTION

Classroom participation is widely recognized as an important component of successful learning because it allows students to actively engage in the learning process, develop communication skills, and improve academic achievement. Students who actively participate in classroom activities tend to demonstrate higher levels of critical thinking, confidence, and learning engagement than those who remain passive during instruction (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005; Susak, 2016). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, classroom participation is particularly important because students need opportunities to practice the target language and express their ideas through meaningful interaction. However, many EFL learners remain reluctant to participate due to limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and lack of confidence when using English in front of their peers (Ahmad, 2021).

The challenge of encouraging classroom participation has attracted considerable attention from researchers and educators. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of motivational strategies in supporting students' engagement and learning outcomes. Motivation influences learners' willingness to participate in classroom activities and affects both cognitive and affective aspects of language learning (Emily, 2011). Motivational strategies can therefore help learners become more active, autonomous, and confident in the learning process (Muin & Aswati, 2019). In EFL classrooms,

motivational practices implemented by teachers have been shown to positively influence students' learning behavior, confidence, and academic performance (Howard, 2023; Elashhab, 2020).

Motivational strategies are not limited to classroom activities. Language acquisition can also occur through meaningful exposure in informal settings where learners encounter and use language naturally (Bahrani et al., 2014). Repeated exposure to language in everyday situations helps learners internalize vocabulary and language structures while reducing anxiety associated with language use. Such exposure is particularly beneficial for young learners, who often learn languages more effectively when they are engaged in meaningful and contextualized activities rather than isolated language drills (Cameron, 2001).

One strategy implemented outside the classroom is the Motivational Password Strategy. This strategy requires students to produce a specific English expression before entering the school environment. Through daily repetition, students are encouraged to practice English regularly in a low-pressure situation. The strategy combines motivational messages with language practice, allowing students to encounter English as part of their daily routine. As a result, students are exposed to English consistently before formal classroom learning begins.

Research has demonstrated that repeated language exposure contributes to vocabulary development and language acquisition. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in language learning because it supports learners' ability to comprehend and produce language effectively (Al-Zoubi, 2018). Frequent interaction with simple English expressions may therefore provide students with opportunities to expand their vocabulary knowledge while simultaneously developing familiarity with English usage. Moreover, consistent practice may help reduce speaking anxiety and increase learners' confidence in participating during classroom activities.

Although previous studies have explored various motivational strategies to improve language learning and classroom participation (Howard, 2023; Kosimov, 2023; Elashhab, 2020), relatively little attention has been given to motivational practices implemented outside the classroom as a means of supporting participation inside the classroom. Similarly, studies addressing classroom participation have often focused on instructional techniques such as code-switching and classroom interaction strategies (Taufiq et al., 2022), while the role of school-based routines outside formal learning environments remains underexplored. This indicates a gap in the existing literature regarding how routine language practices conducted outside the classroom can influence students' participation during classroom instruction.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the implementation of the Motivational Password Strategy at a junior high school in Malang. Specifically, the study aims to explore how the strategy is implemented outside the classroom and how it contributes to encouraging and supporting students' classroom participation during English learning activities. By examining this practice, the study contributes to a better understanding of how informal language routines can serve as motivational and linguistic support for EFL learners in school contexts.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the implementation of the Motivational Password Strategy in a junior high school in Malang. The design was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of the strategy within its real-life educational context (Creswell, 2013; Gammelgaard, 2017).

The participant was an English teacher who initiated and implemented the strategy. The participant was selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement and relevant experience.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom and school gate observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to explore the teacher's experiences and perceptions, while observations focused on the implementation process and students' participation. Documentation in the form of photographs and school records was used to support and triangulate the data.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which involved data familiarization, coding, theme development, reviewing themes, defining themes, and reporting the findings.

To ensure trustworthiness, data triangulation was applied by comparing interview, observation, and documentation data. In addition, the researcher maintained consistency through repeated data review and verbatim transcription of interviews.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings regarding the implementation of the Motivational Password Strategy and its contribution to students' classroom participation. The findings are organized into two major themes: (1) the implementation of the Motivational Password Strategy outside the classroom and (2) its contribution to students' classroom participation during English lessons.

The Implementation of the Motivational Password Strategy Outside the Classroom

Daily English Password Routine at the School Gate

The findings revealed that the Motivational Password Strategy is implemented as a daily routine conducted at the school gate before students enter the school area. Every morning, students are required to say a predetermined English word or expression as a "password." Only after successfully producing the expression are they allowed to enter the school.

As explained by the participant:

"Every morning, when students arrive at school, they must say a simple English word or sentence that has been chosen as the password. They must say it at the school gate before they can enter the school area. This becomes a routine for all students."

Observation data confirmed that the activity was conducted consistently every school day. Students approached the school gate, produced the assigned English expression, and then entered the school. Teachers or school staff supervised the activity and provided assistance when necessary. The routine created a regular opportunity for students to practice English in a simple and low-pressure context before formal classroom learning began.

Use of Motivational Expressions as Passwords

The findings also showed that the passwords consisted of short motivational expressions designed to encourage students while simultaneously exposing them to English. The expressions were simple, easy to remember, and closely related to positive attitudes toward learning.

The participant stated:

“In this routine, the school uses short motivational expressions as the daily password, such as ‘Don’t be lazy,’ ‘Study is the key of success,’ ‘No time for lazy,’ ‘Study forever,’ ‘Never stop to study,’ ‘Keep spirit,’ ‘I must be diligent,’ ‘I must be success,’ ‘Discipline is the key of success,’ and ‘Book is a window of the world.’ Students say these expressions before entering the classroom so they can practice simple English every day.”

These expressions were changed periodically and repeatedly practiced by students throughout the week. The use of motivational messages enabled students not only to practice English vocabulary and pronunciation but also to receive positive encouragement before beginning their school activities.

Consequences for Forgetting the Password

Another finding concerns the consequence system applied when students forgot the assigned password. Students who could not produce the expression correctly were not allowed to immediately enter the school area. Instead, they were required to memorize and practice the password at the gate until they could say it correctly.

The participant explained:

“If a student forgets the password, they cannot enter the school gate. They must stay at the gate and memorize the word or sentence at that moment. Only after they can say it correctly are they allowed to enter. This rule helps them become more disciplined and responsible.”

Observation findings indicated that students generally attempted to remember the password before arriving at school to avoid delays at the gate. This procedure encouraged students to prepare themselves and participate actively in the routine.

Long-Term Implementation and Weekly Schedule

The findings further revealed that the strategy has been implemented continuously for approximately seven years. According to the participant, the school initially changed the password twice a week. However, the implementation was later modified so that one expression was used throughout the entire week.

The participant stated:

“The strategy has been used for about seven years. It has become a routine that the school consistently applies to support English learning. In the past, the password changed twice a week. From Monday to Wednesday, we used the first password, and from Thursday to Friday, we used the second one. But now the password stays the same for the whole week, from Monday to Friday. This change helps students remember the vocabulary better.”

The current weekly schedule allows students to repeatedly practice the same expression from Monday to Friday, providing more opportunities for memorization and pronunciation practice.

Contribution of the Motivational Password Strategy to Classroom Participation

Vocabulary Development Through Repetition

The findings demonstrated that the daily use of English passwords contributed to students' vocabulary development. Through repeated exposure to English expressions every morning, students became increasingly familiar with the vocabulary contained in the passwords.

Observation data indicated that students were able to recall and reproduce the expressions more easily after repeated practice. The routine gradually expanded students' vocabulary repertoire and increased their familiarity with common English expressions.

Enhancing Students' Confidence

The findings also showed that the strategy contributed to students' confidence in using English. Repeated exposure to simple English expressions reduced students' hesitation and anxiety when speaking English.

The participant explained:

“Students' confidence grows because they feel familiar with the language every morning. By saying simple sentences every day, English does not feel like a scary foreign language anymore; instead, it becomes a part of their own voice. This daily habit gives them ‘small wins’ that break down their fear before the lesson even starts. When they enter the classroom, they do not feel nervous because they already have their own personal word bank and a ready mind. This feeling makes them braver to raise their hands and try speaking without being afraid of making mistakes. This routine turns the hard work of learning into the courage to speak with confidence.”

According to the participant, daily practice provided students with positive experiences in using English. These repeated experiences helped students feel more comfortable and confident when participating in classroom activities.

Encouraging Classroom Participation

The findings further indicated that the Motivational Password Strategy encouraged students to participate more actively during English lessons. Students entered the classroom having already practiced English, which appeared to increase their readiness to respond to questions and engage in classroom interactions.

Observation data showed that students who were accustomed to producing English expressions during the morning routine were generally more willing to answer questions, participate in discussions, and engage in speaking activities during English lessons. The strategy therefore served as a bridge between informal language practice outside the classroom and formal language use inside the classroom.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that the Motivational Password Strategy functions as a routine language practice that provides students with daily opportunities to use English outside the classroom. The strategy requires students to produce English expressions before entering the school environment, creating regular exposure to the target language in a meaningful and authentic context. This finding supports the view that language acquisition can occur not only through formal instruction but also through informal language encounters that encourage learners to use the language naturally in everyday situations (Bahrani et al., 2014). By integrating English into students' daily routines, the

strategy extends language learning beyond classroom boundaries and promotes continuous engagement with the language.

The findings also reveal that the use of short motivational expressions contributes to students' familiarity with English vocabulary and expressions. The repeated use of the same expression throughout the week allows students to encounter, memorize, and reproduce vocabulary items multiple times. This result is consistent with the argument that repetition plays an important role in vocabulary acquisition because repeated exposure helps learners internalize new words and language structures (Slattery & Willis, 2001). Furthermore, the weekly repetition system adopted by the school appears to reduce cognitive overload and provide sufficient time for students to become comfortable with the expressions. This supports Al-Zoubi's (2018) assertion that vocabulary acquisition requires continuous exposure and repeated encounters before learners can successfully retain and use new language items.

Another significant finding concerns the role of motivational expressions in supporting positive attitudes toward learning. The expressions used in the strategy contain encouraging messages related to discipline, perseverance, and academic success. As students repeatedly produce these messages, they are simultaneously exposed to English and reminded of positive learning values. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing the importance of motivation in influencing students' willingness to engage in learning activities (Dervić & Bećirović, 2019). Motivation has been recognized as a key factor that shapes learners' behavior, persistence, and participation in educational settings (Emily, 2011). Therefore, the strategy appears to combine linguistic practice with motivational reinforcement, creating a dual function that supports both language learning and student engagement.

The consequence system implemented within the strategy also contributes to its effectiveness. Students who forget the password are required to remain at the school gate and practice the expression until they can produce it correctly. Importantly, the findings suggest that this consequence functions as reinforcement rather than punishment. The procedure encourages students to prepare themselves and take responsibility for remembering the assigned expression. This finding supports previous research indicating that immediate practice and repetition strengthen memory retention and facilitate language learning (Slattery & Willis, 2001). The consequence system therefore helps maintain students' commitment to the routine while ensuring that all learners participate in the language practice activity.

A particularly important finding of this study is the contribution of the Motivational Password Strategy to students' classroom participation. The findings indicate that students who engage in the morning routine become more willing to participate during English lessons. One possible explanation is that the daily use of English reduces students' anxiety and increases their familiarity with the language before formal instruction begins. This finding is consistent with Garton and Copland (2018), who argue that learners become more confident when they are provided with manageable opportunities to use language in supportive environments. Because students have already practiced English before entering the classroom, they may feel better prepared to respond to questions, participate in discussions, and engage in classroom interaction.

The findings further suggest that the strategy contributes to students' confidence in speaking English. According to the participant, repeated exposure to English expressions provides students with "small wins" that gradually reduce their fear of making mistakes. This observation supports previous research showing that confidence is closely associated with classroom participation and language performance (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005). Students who feel confident are generally more willing to communicate, express their ideas, and engage in learning activities. Through consistent practice, the Motivational Password Strategy appears to create positive language

experiences that encourage students to view English as a familiar and accessible means of communication rather than as a difficult foreign language.

Overall, the findings indicate that the Motivational Password Strategy serves as both a motivational and linguistic support mechanism for EFL learners. The strategy promotes vocabulary development, reinforces positive learning attitudes, increases confidence, and encourages classroom participation. By creating a connection between language practice outside the classroom and language use inside the classroom, the strategy demonstrates how simple school-based routines can contribute to students' active engagement in English learning.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the implementation of the Motivational Password Strategy and its contribution to students' classroom participation at a junior high school in Malang. The findings revealed that the strategy is implemented as a daily routine in which students are required to produce a predetermined English expression before entering the school. The strategy provides regular opportunities for students to practice English outside the classroom through simple and meaningful interactions. The use of motivational expressions, consistent repetition, and a structured consequence system encourages students to engage with English as part of their daily school activities.

The findings further indicate that the Motivational Password Strategy contributes positively to students' vocabulary development, confidence, and classroom participation. Through repeated exposure to English expressions, students become more familiar with the language and more willing to use it during classroom interactions. The strategy also helps reduce students' anxiety and prepares them mentally for English learning activities. As a result, students demonstrate greater readiness to respond, communicate, and participate actively in classroom discussions.

In conclusion, the Motivational Password Strategy serves as an effective motivational and linguistic practice that supports students' participation in EFL learning. The strategy illustrates how a simple school-based routine implemented outside the classroom can contribute to language development and encourage more active classroom engagement among junior high school students.

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