

ວາລະສານວິທະຍາສາດມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສຸພານຸວົງ, ຄົ້ນຄວ້າວິໄຈສະຫະສາຂາວິຊາ, ວາລະສານເປີດກວ້າງ
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ການສຶກສາກ່ຽວກັບຍຸດທະສາດ ແລະ ວິທີການສິດສອນພາສາອັງກິດ ທີ່ຊ່ວຍໃຫ້ປະສິບຜົນສຳເລັດ ແລະ ໄດ້ຮັບຜົນດີ ໃນລະດັບມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ແລະ ວິທະຍາໄລ ໃນປະເທດລາວ¹

ຖາວອນ ປັນມະນີວົງ²

ພາກວິຊາ ຄຸພາສາ ຄະນະສຶກສາສາດ ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລສຸພານຸວົງ

ບົດຄັດຫຍໍ້

ເນື່ອງຈາກວ່າ ພາສາອັງກິດເປັນພາສາທີ່ມີບົດບາດສຳຄັນຫຼາຍ ໃນການສື່ສານ, ການສຶກສາ, ການ
ພັດທະນາເສດຖະກິດ ແລະ ສັງຄົມ ໃນປະເທດລາວ, ມັນຈຶ່ງມີຄວາມຈຳເປັນຢ່າງຍິ່ງເພື່ອໃຫ້ ຄູ-ອາຈານທີ່ສອນ
ພາສາອັງກິດ ສາມາດນຳໃຊ້ວິທີການສິດສອນ ແລະ ຍຸດທະວິທີ ທີ່ເໝາະສົມ ແລະ ໄດ້ຮັບຜົນດີ ເພື່ອຊ່ວຍໃຫ້
ນັກຮຽນປະສິບຜົນສຳເລັດຢ່າງໜ້າເຝິ້ງພໍໃຈ. ຜົນການວິໄຈກ່ອນໜ້ານີ້ໄດ້ສະແດງໃຫ້ເຫັນວ່າ ຜົນຂອງການຮຽນ
ພາສາອັງກິດແມ່ນຍັງຢູ່ໃນລະດັບທີ່ບໍ່ໜ້າເຝິ້ງພໍໃຈ ຍ້ອນວ່າຂາດແຮງຈູງໃຈໃນການຮຽນ, ໂດຍສະເພາະແມ່ນ
ນັກຮຽນທີ່ກຳລັງສຶກສາຢູ່ລະດັບວິທະຍາໄລ ແລະ ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ໃນ ສ ປ ປ ລາວ. ການທີ່ຈະປະສິບຜົນສຳເລັດ
ໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ ແມ່ນຕ້ອງການໃຫ້ມີແຮງຈູງໃຈ ແລະ ຄວາມມຸ່ງໝັ້ນສູງ ພ້ອມທັງມີທັດສະນະຄະຕິໃນ
ທາງບວກ ຕໍ່ການຮຽນນັ້ນ. ເຖິງຢ່າງໃດກໍຕາມ, ການທີ່ຈະຊ່ວຍສ້າງແຮງບັນດານໃຈ ແລະ ຄວາມມຸ່ງໝັ້ນໃຫ້
ນັກຮຽນແມ່ນຍັງເປັນສິ່ງທີ່ທ້າທາຍເນື່ອງຈາກຫລາຍສາເຫດ.

ໃນການສຶກສານີ້, ໄດ້ໃຊ້ການສຳພາດໃນຮູບແບບ 'semi-structured interviews' ເພື່ອສຳພາດອາຈານ
ສອນພາສາອັງກິດຈາກສອງກຸ່ມເປົ້າໝາຍ: ກຸ່ມທີໜຶ່ງແມ່ນ ອາຈານ 03 ທ່ານ ຈາກມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ໃນ ສປປ
ລາວ, ກຸ່ມທີ່ສອງແມ່ນອາຈານ 03 ທ່ານທີ່ໄດ້ຮັບທຶນຈາກລັດຖະບານ ອິດສະຕາລີ ແລະ ກຳລັງສຶກສາຢູ່ປະເທດ ອົດ
ສະຕາລີ ທີ່ມີປະສົບການ ການສອນພາສາອັງກິດຢູ່ລະດັບວິຊາຊີບໃນປະເທດລາວ. ຜູ້ຖືກສຳພາດເຫຼົ່ານີ້ ໄດ້ໃຫ້
ຄວາມຄິດເຫັນ ແລະ ມຸມມອງກ່ຽວກັບປະສົບການ ການສອນພາສາອັງກິດ ແລະ ວິທີຈັດການກັບບັນຫາ ແລະ
ອຸປະສັກທີ່ເຂົາເຈົ້າປະສົບຝົບຝ້າ. ພ້ອມທັງໃຫ້ຄຳແນະນຳຫຼາຍຢ່າງກ່ຽວກັບວິທີການພັດທະນາເພື່ອໃຫ້ມີການ
ປ່ຽນແປງໄປໃນທາງບວກ, ໂດຍສະເພາະແມ່ນກ່ຽວກັບ ການພັດທະນາການສອນພາສາອັງກິດແບບມີອາຊີບໃນ
ອະນາຄົດ. ຜົນຂອງການສຶກສາຄັ້ງນີ້ ສະແດງໃຫ້ເຫັນຍຸດທະວິທີ ແລະ ວິທີສິດສອນທີ່ຄູອາຈານໄດ້ນຳໃຊ້ ແລະ
ປະສົບຜົນສຳເລັດ ເພື່ອກະຕຸ້ນນັກຮຽນໃນການຮຽນ, ພ້ອມທັງເຮັດໃຫ້ຜົນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດດີຂຶ້ນ. ການເຮັດ
ວຽກຮ່ວມກັບຄູອາຈານທ່ານອື່ນທີ່ມີທ່າແຮງ, ຄວາມມຸ່ງໝັ້ນ ແລະ ຄວາມຕັ້ງໃຈເພື່ອພັດທະນາໃຫ້ມີການປ່ຽນແປງ
ໄປໃນທິດທາງບວກ ດ້ວຍວິທີການພັດທະນາຕົນເອງແບບມີອາຊີບ ສະແຫວງຫາ ແລະ ກຽມພ້ອມ ເພື່ອຈະທົດລອງ
ນຳໃຊ້ຍຸດທະວິທີ ແລະ ວິທີການສິດສອນຕ່າງໆ ແມ່ນຍຸດທະວິທີໜຶ່ງທີ່ປະສິບຜົນສຳເລັດຢູ່ໃນສະພາບຄວາມເປັນຈິງ
ໃນປະເທດລາວ.

ຄຳສຳຄັນ: ຍຸດທະສາດການສິດສອນ, ວິທີສິດສອນ, ໄດ້ຮັບຜົນສຳເລັດ, ການສຶກສາລະດັບມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ.

¹ ການອ້າງອີງພາສາລາວ: ຖາວອນ ປັນມະນີວົງ. (2020). ການສຶກສາກ່ຽວກັບຍຸດທະສາດ ແລະ ວິທີການສິດສອນພາສາອັງກິດ ທີ່ຊ່ວຍ
ໃຫ້ປະສິບຜົນສຳເລັດ ແລະ ໄດ້ຮັບຜົນດີ ໃນລະດັບມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ແລະ ວິທະຍາໄລ ໃນປະເທດລາວ, ວາລະສານວິທະຍາສາດ
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An exploration of teaching strategies and methods that contribute to successful outcomes and bring positive change when English is taught as a Foreign Language at tertiary level in Laos

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ABSTRACT

As English is becoming a significant language for communication, education, social affairs and economics in Laos, it is essential to ensure that all lecturers/teachers of English use culturally appropriate methods and strategies to help their students reach desirable outcomes. Previous studies have revealed that learning outcomes in English have been unsatisfactory because of lack of motivation, especially for those who study at tertiary level in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Achieving better outcomes from learning English requires high motivation, aspirations and a positive attitude towards learning. However, it remains challenging to foster student motivation and aspiration due to various factors.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six EFL lecturers from two groups: three lecturers selected as outstanding by the Dean of Education from a public university in Laos, and three Australia Awards Scholars at Flinders University who have taught English at tertiary institutions in Laos. These interviewees provided insights about their experience teaching English and how they dealt with the issues and barriers they faced. They also provided suggestions about how to implement positive change, especially in relation to collaborative professional development for future improvement in EFL teaching and learning. The results demonstrate strategies and methods that the lecturers have applied successfully to motivate their students, as well as to enhance learning outcomes in their professional contexts. Working with other lecturers who have the potential and willingness to make positive changes through professional development and are prepared to apply a variety of teaching strategies and methods in their teaching is a key strategy for success in the Laos context.

Keywords: Teaching strategies, teaching methods, successful outcomes, tertiary education.

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1. Introduction

English is a global language which is widely used for communication with native-speakers and non-native speakers nationally and internationally. In the education sector, English is often used as the educational tool for instruction and research, as well as to obtain knowledge, especially in higher education (Souriyavongsa, Rany, Abidin, & Mei, 2013). Also, English language is used as the medium of economics, as well as for social and political uses.

Studies have revealed that learning outcomes in English have been unsatisfactory because of lack of motivation, especially among those who study at tertiary level in the Lao PDR (Souriyavongsa et al., 2013; Xaypanya, Ismail, & Low, 2017). There are many factors that cause students to perform poorly in their EFL learning, such as lack of learning motivation, weakness of learning resources, and curriculum design (Souriyavongsa et al., 2013).

Achieving better outcomes from learning English requires high motivation, aspirations and a positive attitude towards learning (Gardner, 2001). However, many lecturers and teachers face difficulties in fostering and maintaining student motivation due to the complex root causes of the issue. Gardner (2009) argued that there are two main factors that affect student motivation towards learning a foreign language: the 'educational factor' and the 'social factor'. The educational factor is identified as educational contextual features, including organizational policy and administration, lecturer ability and curriculum design; while the social factor is identified as student values about the outcomes, such as the benefits, purposes and expectations from learning the language (Gardner, 2009). Motivation has become a major concern for lecturers and teachers of English trying to seek solutions. However, many studies have revealed that teaching methods and strategies, together with the relationship between lecturers/teachers and students, do matter with respect to student motivation towards learning. One example is a study by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei

(2008, p. 72) conducted in Korea, which revealed that "the teacher's motivational teaching practice affected student motivation as manifested in the students' classroom behaviour". Hence, to foster students' motivation and learning outcomes, it is essential and valuable for lecturers and teachers of English to comprehensively understand and recognise a variety of appropriate teaching methods.

According to Xaypanya et al. (2017) and Souriyavongsa et al. (2013), many of the challenges related to EFL teaching and learning remain unsolved in Lao's tertiary context even though the government has provided support. It is noticeable that the majority of EFL lecturers have graduated from national institutions. Only a small number of them have opportunities to attend national or international training each year. In addition, most classrooms appear to be crowded, with up to 50 students per class. Furthermore, the facilities and technology are inadequate because there are not computers and projectors provided; the internet is inaccessible in classrooms; and the textbooks are old, irrelevant to the context, and printed in black and white.

Previous research has shown that teaching and learning outcomes in Lao PDR are less satisfactory in comparison with other countries in Asia like Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand (Xaypanya et al., 2017). This could be the result of many factors. One factor is that lecturers and teachers of English in Laos are not well trained; instead, they follow outdated teaching methods that bore students, thus resulting in poor learning outcomes (Souriyavongsa et al., 2013). Phongsa, Mohamed Ismail, and Low (2018) revealed that many EFL learners feel demotivated in English classes because of lack of engagement from their lecturers. Further, they feel anxiety towards learning English due to peer pressure when they perform poorly.

Lecturers face many issues in teaching and coping with their EFL classes, especially when students are under-motivated (Souriyavongsa et al., 2013). From my personal experience, many

lecturers and teachers, including myself, face difficulties in engaging students to participate in classroom activities, answer the lecturer's questions and do their homework. To overcome these issues, lecturers use different strategies depending on what they perceive and know. Under-motivation is difficult to resolve for many reasons. For example, strategies and methods used by some lecturers and teachers are limited and inappropriate, and many lecturers lack opportunities or are unwilling to undertake professional development. Although several lecturers, are effectively motivating their students to be active learners in the classroom, the strategies and methods used by these lecturers are not shared with others.

Hence, this study was conducted to: 1) investigate what strategies and methods are used successfully by lecturers of English in the Lao PDR; 2) suggest widely accepted methods identified in the literature to deal with this issue; and 3) propose suggestions and recommendations for bringing positive change in EFL teaching in the tertiary context in Lao PDR.

2. Materials and Methods

The subsequent sections explain the choice of research method, as well as the processes of selecting the sample, collecting the data and analysing the data.

3.1. Research Methodology

This qualitative study applied two methodologies: literature review and semi-structured interviews. Initially, a literature-based methodology was used to explore well accepted strategies and methods that have been applied successfully in other contexts and that could be relevant and adaptable to the Lao context. Subsequently, the teaching experiences of individuals can be identified and described from telling stories of teaching, so the interview method was used to collect the data. To get rich and in-depth understandings of experience from the participants in the research context, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Based on Punch and Oancea (2014, p. 184), semi-structured interviews "are guided by a set of questions and prompts for discussion, but have flexibility to adapt to

particular respondents and situations". Thus, semi-structured interviews were suitable to use with lecturers who were identified as being able to use appropriate methods to engage students in learning English.

3.2. Selecting participants

This study focused on two areas of tertiary education in Laos. The first focus was the Faculty of Education of the university selected for this study. The second focus was EFL lecturers who are experienced in teaching English at tertiary institutions in Laos and currently pursuing their education in Australia. This research used purposeful sampling to intentionally select sites and participants to collect in-depth information in order to explore the central phenomenon related to this study (Creswell, 2012). Six participants were chosen purposefully from two areas. To ensure that I obtained accurate and appropriate information to answer the research questions, two main criteria were considered in the sample selection process. Firstly, the participants should have a minimum of three years and preferably longer teaching experience in EFL. Secondly, they should have successfully applied teaching methods and strategies to deal with demotivated learners.

3.3. Data Collection

Firstly, for the literature-based method, the main resources were identified from well-documented and most cited books, articles, journals, and annual and official reports. I focused on the studies conducted in EFL and ESL contexts, and relevant to the English language. The data were gathered from two groups of participants. Interviews with the first group of three participants, who were currently teaching English in Laos, were undertaken by phone calls (using Messenger). I acknowledged that there are benefits and limitations of using telephone to conduct interviews. Due to the limitations of time and budget, I have to choose undertaking this way. The second group of interviews was completed face-to-face with the three participants who were lecturers of English in Laos, and were currently studying at the Master's level in the field of education in

Australia.

3.4. Data Analysis

The researcher followed a three-main-component data analysis, as suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), namely data reduction, data displays, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Firstly, I transcribed the recordings in the Lao language, the language that was used for the interviews, and then translated the Lao transcriptions into English. After that, the transcriptions of the recorded interviews were coded in order to reduce irrelevant information, and then categorised into themes.

3. Results

The strategies and methods used to deal with demotivated EFL learners at tertiary level in Laos vary. The lecturers indicated that they implemented different strategies and techniques to address the issues, depending on the particular causes or factors identified by the lecturers. The results of the EFL lecturer interviews are presented according to three major themes, including teaching methods and content, the use of technology and teaching materials, and increasing environmental and social distractions.

3.5. Teaching methods and content

All the participating lecturers agreed that applying different innovative strategies and methods could foster student motivation. Five participants said that when they noticed their students were demotivated or passive, they changed the activity to be more fun and interactive to encourage student involvement. For instance, one said, *"I try to do something different to change their reaction. I usually change the activities to be more fun and interactive"* (C). One mentioned: *"If I notice that students are getting tired, bored and demotivated, I switch to different activities, such as organising them into groups and having conversations or discussions or playing games"* (A). Another participant proclaimed that *"the lecturers of English should have a commitment to teaching or consider teaching as their first passion; they should lead using humour or comedy, in order to make the students enjoy their studies"* (D).

It appears that if lecturers follow only the same teaching sequences and methods, the students get bored easily. In contrast, lecturers noted that different activities and methods help learners remain motivated.

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method and its components were mentioned during the interviews as one way dealing with demotivated learners. One lecturer who is currently pursuing his education in South Australia recommended:

"I think CLT method, which offers opportunities for students to engage and participate in activities, is the most productive and successful method in EFL teaching and learning these days. ... I try to encourage students to speak as much as possible by giving a platform for them to share their experiences and ideas" (B).

In addition, activities that promote and encourage student participation and interaction, which are the components of CLT, were mentioned by the same participant *"Collaborative learning, such as group work should be emphasised and implemented in the English classroom"* (B).

There is a problem with different levels of students' English competence within one classroom. One participant, currently in Australia, mentioned during the interviews that *"learning autonomy is also another option. ... In this approach, the lecturer needs to put more effort to organise and provide appropriate tasks for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels"* (C). Another lecturer provided a second strategy to deal with demotivated learners when they have different levels of English competence:

"Another strategy is peer support. This technique would help students to learn from each other. The lecturer may assign high-competence students to sit with low-competence students, or those with high motivation to sit with those with low motivation. By doing this, the student would have opportunities to discuss and exchange their learning experience" (E).

In the context of Laos, irrelevant and uninteresting content offered in the prescribed textbooks was another demotivating factor. To deal with this issue, lecturer D said *“effective preparation of lesson plans and teaching aids could constitute interesting and relevant content to meet students’ interest”*. Participant F said that *“a well-prepared teaching sequence could make the lesson more interesting, challenging and fun”*. Another participant recommended:

“The lecturer should always seek and apply appropriate methods to match the availability in our context. For instance, taking students on excursions and using games to facilitate learning could be activities to shift from boring tasks” (C).

Additionally, Participant F proclaimed that creation of attractive teaching aids, such as flashcards, pictures or the use of videos to assist teaching, could encourage students to learn effectively.

Students’ low awareness of the significance of learning English is a considerable demotivating factor noticed by the lecturers. When asked about strategies to address these demotivating factors, the strategy of modelling was mentioned by participants C, D and E. One lecturer said:

“I attempt to motivate my students to be enthusiastic and eager learners by showing histories of successful English learners from the local area as models. This would be significant inspiration, and can motivate them to learn” (C).

Similarly, lecturer E highlighted that *“the demonstration of successful people resulting from learning English as models or idols would allow the students to recognise the significance of learning English.”*

A second strategy suggested by participants D and E was raising the need for and significance of learning the English language in relation to the labour market, professions and further education. One lecturer asserted that *“the lecturers should remind their students about the benefits of learning English and advise them that*

learning English requires learners to be patient” (D). These comments imply that the progress and performance of successful people could be used as a role model to inspire and motivate some students with low motivation to learn.

One lecturer highlighted that increasing students’ confidence would make students feel motivated and engaged in the classes. Participant E stated: *“I think the students should be strong on their own. The lecturers should teach them to feel confident and believe in their ability”*. Lecturer E also added that giving encouragement is a strategy to keep students motivated:

“English language teachers need to encourage students when they make progress (even small progress); tell them that English takes a lot of time and diligence to learn and that making mistakes along the way is normal; and correct them, but do so gently”.

3.6. The use of technology

From the interviews, the lecturers seem to use technology for two purposes. Initially, technology is an effective tool to motivate students in teaching and learning. It can be used to teach new vocabulary, explain new lessons and improve listening skills in effective and modern ways. One lecturer mentioned, *“I use technology as teaching aids or resources, for instance the use of YouTube or App for improving listening skills or explaining new lessons” (D).* Another lecturer contended that *“it is easy to use an LCD to show images of difficult vocabulary and then have discussions or do activities about the images” (A).* The second purpose is that the lecturers usually use technology for their professional development, in order to explore new teaching techniques and methods to adapt in their own teaching. One lecturer said:

“I often explore new teaching techniques on the Internet. Once I find a new interesting technique, I try to use it in class as a new option for students. I try to avoid using the same techniques over time; instead, I

try to use new methods to gain students' interest" (C).

Another lecturer said technology is used to improve their teaching skills as well as to access scholarships for professional development:

"The technology provides us a lot of convenience in accessing famous online sources from language learning organisations. The lecturers can use technology to access scholarships for professional development for example, AAS and ANZ scholarships" (D).

Hence, technology is used by some lecturers to facilitate teaching and learning in innovative ways; and it is also used by lecturers for their professional development to improve their teaching skills and methods.

3.7. Increasing environmental and social distractions

The surrounding environment and social factors are other uncontrollable external demotivating reasons that affect EFL students in learning. The environment, such as unpleasant weather, together with inconvenient classroom facilities, could demotivate students in their learning.

One lecturer mentioned that shifting to a short extra activity or playing a quick game was a successful strategy to deal with these demotivating factors. Lecturer A stated:

"If students are demotivated on a hot day or they're physically tired, I try to do either a short extra activity to get them moving or I incorporate physical movement into the current activity. For example, we might play a quick game of Simon Says or I'll have students form circles when doing a speaking activity instead of sitting at their desks".

Hence, this could be a technique that could also be applied when students are demotivated because of other issues.

4. Discussion

The suggestions and recommendations for bringing positive change in EFL teaching and learning in Lao tertiary education are organised into six themes.

Each of these is discussed individually below.

4.1. Professional Development

The results showed that all participants agreed that ongoing professional development could be a crucial step in constituting positive change in EFL teaching and learning in Laos. Thus, it is essential for EFL lecturers to always seek opportunities for improving their professional skills. Specifically, lecturer A stated that *"the most important thing is taking every opportunity for professional development, and always reading to keep myself-up-to-date"*. Interviewee C also highlighted that *"the lecturers should always seek opportunities for professional development to develop their profession"*. This matches a suggestion provided by Richards and Farrell (2005) that ongoing professional development can assist EFL lecturers to become familiar with current and innovative resources and methodologies for teaching. Also, Karabenick and Noda (2004) claimed that professional development is a crucial factor in improving teaching approaches, and in staying up-to-date with the latest skills and knowledge in the field.

4.2. Teaching Methods

Implementing and applying innovative and effective teaching methods was another important theme recommended by the participants to make positive changes in teaching and learning English in the Lao context. Four participants suggested that EFL lecturers apply techniques and approaches that fall under the concept of communicative language teaching (CLT), which encourages communication, cooperation and lifelong learning. These concepts match the ideas provided by Jacobs and Farrell (2003) which summarised the emergence of a paradigm shift of implementing positive and sustainable changes in language teaching and learning. Specifically, lecturer B mentioned that *"EFL lecturers should emphasise communicative teaching in order to encourage students to speak ..., such as an open platform for students to participate, talk, discuss and practise with peers"*.

Lecturer A also highlighted one element that fits the CLT approach. She said, *"I think EFL lecturers should emphasise group study to promote cooperative learning"*. A study by Alfares (2017) conducted with EFL students in Saudi Arabia demonstrated that working in groups or pairs allowed students to institute productive activities, and to share their knowledge and experience; it also fostered learning motivation, as well as enhancing the learning process.

4.3. Classroom Facilities

Asked about making positive change in teaching and learning English in the Lao context, the participants suggested that classroom facilities and technology used for facilitating teaching and learning need to be improved and adequately provided for. Lecturer A mentioned that *"the institution should have sufficient up-to-date technology and the Internet for both lecturers and students to use and facilitate their teaching and learning"*. Technology has been well accepted as an essential component in EFL teaching and learning because of its abundant potential benefits. The international literature demonstrates that EFL lecturers in numerous countries have adopted the use of technology in effective and innovative ways, both in their teaching and in their students' learning (Thorne, Black, & Sykes, 2009). The literature also demonstrates that in facilitating foreign language teaching and learning, the use of technology such as videos and games results in better learning outcomes (Ahmed & Nasser, 2015; Cakir, 2006). Hence, based on the participants' suggestions, it is recommended that technology should be promoted and used to facilitate EFL teaching and learning in the Lao context.

4.4. Providing Support

One compelling suggestion for enhancing student motivation and bringing positive change is that tertiary institutions should have a student support centre or program of pastoral care. Lecturer D stated that it would be very worthwhile *"to enhance student motivation by providing student support or pastoral care (D)"*. Providing support for students in need of assistance and advice to ensure that they

know how to handle challenges could be an essential part of tertiary educational institutions (Stewart, Goodson, Miertschin, Norwood, & Ezell, 2013). Sajiene and Tamuliene (2012) highlighted that student support fulfils students' emotional, academic and social needs as a requirement for successful academic performance. Hence, through a lack of support, emotional encouragement, students could be obstructed by roadblocks in furthering their education.

4.5. Lecturers' Characteristics

One significant theme mentioned by the participants was the characteristics of EFL lecturers. A study by BAYTUR and Razi (2015), from the perspective of Turkish learners, indicated that effective EFL teachers display both pedagogical and personal qualities, including being friendly, enthusiastic about technological development, having accurate pronunciation and effective classroom management skills. Salahshour and Hajizadeh (2013), claimed that a successful and effective EFL teacher should be interested in his/her job, have a sense of responsibility towards his/her job, and be enthusiastic, lively, self-confident and punctual. From the results of the interview, lecturer A claimed, *"I think an EFL lecturer should be creative, and well-prepared to use different activities when students are demotivated"*. In addition, EFL lecturers in the Lao context should have sufficient knowledge of the subject matter, be familiar with a variety of teaching methods, be creative and friendly, being enthusiastic about developing their profession.

4.6. Curriculum and Resources

Another suggestion to bring about positive change made by participants was that the English curriculum should be improved: *"the curriculum should be up-to-date or adaptable" (B)*. Lecturer F suggested that *"the curriculum needs to be improved to suit levels of student competence"*. International literature suggests that effective EFL curriculum could bring numerous benefits to learners. Participants perceived that, in the Lao context, the curriculum should be up-to-date

and adaptable to suit the level of students' proficiency.

5. Conclusion

The result of this study demonstrated that the lecturers applied different strategies and methods to deal with students who were demotivated or who exhibited low motivation. Mostly it appeared that they made the content of lessons and related activities interesting, up-to-date and relevant to the context. Another effective strategy is that lecturers could enhance students' interest and inspire them to learn by convincing students to recognise the significance of learning English, and using modelling to increase students' efforts, desires and aspirations. In addition, one strategy highlighted was building students' habits of being active and confident learners, as well as having a growth mindset. One more strategy is to build a friendly relationship with students to make them feel comfortable and involved.

Opinions from the study participants and the international literature are in agreement that EFL lecturers should always seek opportunities for professional development internationally and nationally to develop their profession and bring positive change. In addition, EFL lecturers should be well-prepared to accept change. Further, they should be competent and have sufficient knowledge about the field of education so they can apply innovative and appropriate activities in their teaching. Also, to implement positive change, the organisations should provide essential classroom facilities, as well as teaching and learning materials and resources, for both lecturers and students to access. The facilities, materials and resources would allow lecturers to easily adapt and implement new methods in teaching.

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