

Teacher Approaches to Boosting Student Motivation in English Learning

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the strategies used by teachers to increase the motivation of 10th-grade students in learning English and the factors influencing these teaching strategies. Using a qualitative descriptive methodology, this research targets English teachers and 10th-grade students at SMKN I Boyolangu. Data collection involved interviews with the 3 teacher and 10 students. The data analysis process included data reduction, data display, drawing conclusion. From the interviews to the teachers, it was found that in teaching listening skills, the teacher uses Online Videos, Podcasts, Dictation. For teaching speaking skills, Role Plays, Debates, Group Discussions, Presentations, Storytelling are applied. In reading skills instruction, Reading Circles, Guided Reading strategy are employed. For writing skills, Graphic Organizers, Peer Review, and Collaborative Writing strategy are used because students often struggle to develop their writing. The use of these strategies has shown to increase students' motivation in learning English. This is evidenced by the student difficulty index, which indicates that the exercises are of medium difficulty, making them manageable for the students without being too easy or too difficult.

Keywords: Teacher Approaches, Student Motivation, English Learning

INTRODUCTION

Student motivation is a critical factor in the success of language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Motivation drives students to engage with the material, participate in class activities, and persist in the face of challenges. Liu (2007) in (Thuan, 2021) states that the motivation to learn a second language is based on having positive attitudes toward the language's community and a desire to communicate with and resemble its valued members. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering motivation among their students by adopting various strategies and approaches.

A positive classroom environment is fundamental to boosting student motivation. According to Lundberg & Hyseni (2022), an atmosphere of support and encouragement helps students feel safe to take risks and make mistakes, which are essential for language learning. Teachers can foster such an environment by showing empathy, being approachable, and creating a sense of community in the classroom.

Setting clear and achievable goals can significantly enhance student motivation. Laranjo (2016) argue that goal-setting theory, which emphasizes the importance of specific and challenging goals, can lead to higher performance levels. In the context of English learning, teachers should work with students to set both short-term and long-term goals, ensuring they are realistic and attainable.

Students are more motivated to learn when the content is meaningful and relevant to their lives. According to Krashen (1982) in (Lewis, 2020), comprehensible input that is interesting and relevant to the learners can enhance their language acquisition. Teachers should

strive to incorporate topics and materials that resonate with students' interests, cultures, and experiences.

Engaging students through interactive activities can significantly boost their motivation. Activities such as group discussions, role-plays, and collaborative projects encourage active participation and make learning more dynamic. Research by (Calatayud & Prendes, 2019) and Ningsih (2023) highlights those interactive activities help maintain students' interest and motivation by making the learning process enjoyable and stimulating.

Positive reinforcement and constructive feedback are powerful tools for motivating students. Skinner's (1953) behaviorist theory cited in Mcleod (2024) suggests that positive reinforcement can increase the likelihood of a desired behavior being repeated. Teachers should provide timely and specific feedback that acknowledges students' efforts and achievements, encouraging them to continue improving.

Encouraging students to take ownership of their learning can enhance their intrinsic motivation. According to Deci & Ryan (2015) self-determination theory, autonomy is a key factor in fostering intrinsic motivation. Teachers can promote autonomy by allowing students to make choices about their learning activities and encouraging self-directed learning.

Confidence and anxiety levels significantly affect student motivation. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) cited in Daymiel et al. (2022) emphasize that language anxiety can hinder students' ability to perform and participate in class. Teachers can build students' confidence by providing supportive feedback, creating low-stress speaking opportunities, and gradually increasing the complexity of tasks to match students' proficiency levels.

Integrating technology and multimedia resources can make English learning more engaging and relevant to students' lives. Warschauer (2000) cited in Richards (2018) argues that technology can provide interactive and authentic language experiences, enhancing motivation. Teachers should leverage tools such as language learning apps, online games, and multimedia presentations to create a varied and stimulating learning environment.

Promoting a growth mindset, the belief that abilities can be developed through effort and perseverance, can motivate students to embrace challenges and persist in their learning. Zintz (2018) explains that a growth mindset helps students view mistakes as opportunities for learning rather than as failures. Teachers can encourage this mindset by praising effort, resilience, and improvement rather than innate ability.

In conclusion, boosting student motivation in English learning requires a multifaceted approach that addresses various aspects of the learning experience. By creating a positive classroom environment, setting clear goals, providing meaningful content, incorporating interactive activities, using positive reinforcement, fostering autonomy, building confidence, utilizing technology, and encouraging a growth mindset, teachers can significantly enhance their students' motivation and, consequently, their language learning outcomes.

METHOD

A research design is a detailed plan that outlines how data will be collected and analyzed to answer research questions (Mulyadi, 2012). For this study, a qualitative research design was chosen to address the research questions mentioned earlier. This approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the research topic. Qualitative research is ideal for answering complex questions that require a deep understanding of the context in which the phenomenon occurs. It also helps gather detailed and comprehensive data, providing valuable insights into the participants' experiences and perspectives. Additionally, qualitative research is flexible, allowing for adjustments to be made as the research question evolves throughout the study.

For selecting participants, the researchers used purposive sampling, which involves choosing individuals based on certain criteria or characteristics. To ensure the sample was representative, random sampling was also applied. The study included interviews with three 10th-grade teachers and ten 10th-grade students from SMKN I Boyolangu, Tulungagung, in Academic Year 2023/2024.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is essential as it involves organizing and interpreting the collected data systematically to uncover concepts, identify patterns, and draw meaningful conclusions related to the research question. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis includes three main steps: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

In the data reduction phase, the researcher sorts and organizes the data into themes or codes, which helps to extract the most relevant information from the raw data, making it easier to handle for further analysis.

Next, during the data display phase, the researcher presents the organized data in a clear and concise way. This can be done using tables, charts, or diagrams, which helps to understand the patterns and relationships within the data more comprehensively.

Finally, in the conclusion drawing and verification phase, the researcher examines the identified themes or codes, looking at their connections and implications in relation to the research question. This step helps in deriving valuable insights and forming well-supported conclusions from the data.

Overall, qualitative data analysis is a structured and thorough process that helps researchers make sense of their findings and contribute meaningfully to their field of study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the information collected from interviews with teachers and students, the data can be summarized as follows: After the Data Reduction phase, the data was categorized and presented according to teaching approaches by skill areas such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Conclusions were then drawn from this organized data. Following the presentation of teaching approaches, the responses from students regarding these approaches were also examined. Further details are provided below:

a. Teacher Approaches in Teaching Listening

Q : What strategies do you usually use to teach Listening, and which ones do you think are effective?

T1 : “I usually use a combination of **online videos and interactive listening activities** to teach listening skills. These strategies have consistently proven to be **effective** in improving my students' listening skills”.

T2 : “My approach to teaching listening includes using **podcasts and audio recordings and conducting listening comprehension exercises both orally and written**. These are good for teaching, but **exercise orally** is more fun and challenging.”

T3 : “I focus on using a mix of dictation, listening to songs, and interactive listening games. **Dictation** helps students practice careful listening and improves their spelling and writing

skills simultaneously. I find these methods to be **quite effective** in developing students' listening skills..."

Based on the data above it can be concluded that a variety of strategies are employed to effectively teach listening skills. Teachers commonly utilize a combination of authentic materials like videos, podcasts, and songs, along with interactive activities such as games and dictation. These approaches are considered effective in enhancing students' listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and overall language proficiency. Additionally, the teachers highlight the importance of engaging students through interactive exercises, which contribute to increased motivation and learning.

b. Teacher Approaches in Teaching Speaking

Q : What strategies do you usually use to teach Speaking, and which ones do you think are effective?

T1 : "I often use **role plays and debates** to teach speaking skills. Role plays allow students to practice speaking in different scenarios, which builds their confidence and fluency."
"...these strategies have proven to be **very effective** in improving my students' speaking abilities."

T2 : "My approach to teaching speaking includes using **group discussions and presentations**. Group discussions help students practice speaking...".
"...these methods are **particularly effective** in helping students develop their speaking skills."

T3 : "I like to use **storytelling and peer interviews** as strategies for teaching speaking. Storytelling allows students to practice their narrative skills...".
"These strategies have been **effective** in enhancing my students' speaking..."

From the data above, it can be assumed that a variety of interactive strategies are commonly used to enhance students' speaking skills. These strategies primarily focus on creating opportunities for authentic communication and building confidence. Role-plays, debates, group discussions, presentations, storytelling, and peer interviews are considered particularly effective in developing students' fluency, accuracy, and overall speaking ability.

c. Teacher Approaches in Teaching Reading

Q : What strategies do you usually use to teach Speaking, and which ones do you think are effective?

T1 : "I usually employ **reading circles and guided reading** sessions to teach reading skills. In reading circles, students discuss the text in small groups...".
"These strategies have proven to be **effective** in improving students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills."

T2 : “ My approach to teaching reading includes using **extensive reading and close reading** techniques. Extensive reading encourages students to read a wide variety...”.

“ I find that combining these methods is particularly **effective** in enhancing students' overall reading skills.”

T3 : “I use **skimming and scanning** techniques, as well as literature circles. Skimming and scanning help students quickly identify the main ideas..”.

“These strategies have been **effective** in fostering a love of reading...”

The data above reveals various effective strategies for teaching speaking skills. Teacher 1 uses reading circles and guided reading sessions, where students discuss texts in small groups, which have been effective in improving students' reading comprehension and critical thinking. Teacher 2 incorporates extensive reading and close reading techniques, encouraging a wide variety of reading to build fluency and detailed text analysis for better comprehension, finding the combination particularly effective in enhancing overall reading skills. Teacher 3 focuses on skimming and scanning techniques alongside literature circles, which help students quickly identify main ideas and foster a love of reading through collaborative discussions. Together, these methods demonstrate a comprehensive approach to teaching reading, aiming to develop both enjoyment and analytical skills in students.

d. *Teacher Approaches in Teaching Writing*

Q : What strategies do you usually use to teach Writing, and which ones do you think are effective?

T1 : “I use **graphic organizers and peer review** sessions to teach writing skills. Graphic organizers help students plan and structure...”.

“These methods are effective in enhancing students' writing.”

T2 : “I usually use **journal writing and process writing** techniques.”

“These strategies have proven **to be effective** in improving students' writing.”

T3 : “I employ **drafting and revision workshops**, along with **collaborative writing** exercises.”

“ These strategies are **effective** in my class..”

Based on the teacher responses above, it can be explained that a variety of strategies are employed to effectively teach writing skills. Teachers utilize a combination of structured approaches such as graphic organizers and peer review, as well as process-oriented methods like journal writing and drafting/revision workshops. Collaborative learning through peer interaction is also emphasized. These strategies are considered effective in enhancing students' writing abilities by providing them with tools for planning, organizing, and refining their writing, as well as opportunities for practice and feedback.

Meanwhile, the researcher also interviewed 10 students to understand their perceptions of the strategies used by their teacher. The detailed analysis is provided below:

Q : How do you feel about the teaching strategies your English teacher uses? Which strategy motivate you the most?

Student A:

"I really enjoy the interactive activities, like **group discussions and role plays**, because they make learning fun and engaging. These methods **motivate me** the most because they allow me to practice speaking and listening in a more relaxed and enjoyable setting."

Student B:

"I feel that the teaching methods are quite good, especially when we use multimedia tools like **videos and audio recordings**. These resources help me understand the material better and keep me **interested** in the lessons. The multimedia activities are definitely the **most motivating** for me."

Student C:

"I find the **personalized feedback sessions** to be the most motivating. When the teacher gives me specific feedback on my writing and speaking, it helps me see where I can improve and motivates me to work harder."

Student D:

"I like the variety of teaching methods my English teacher uses. However, I am most motivated by **Storytelling and Reading Circles**. Working on projects allows me to apply what I've learned in a practical way, which makes the learning process **more meaningful and interesting**."

Student E:

"The **collaborative activities**, such as **peer review and group projects**, are particularly **motivating** for me because they provide an opportunity to learn from my classmates and work together towards common goals."

The data presented was gathered from 5 students, as the remaining students provided similar responses. This indicates that the teachers' strategies for teaching English, including *Online Videos, Podcasts, Dictation, Role Plays, Debates, Group Discussions, Presentations, Storytelling, Reading Circles, Guided Reading, Graphic Organizers, Peer Review, and Collaborative Writing* across various skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), effectively motivate them in learning English.

DISCUSSION

The current study's findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of a positive classroom environment in boosting student motivation. Lundberg & Hyseni (2022) assert that a supportive and encouraging atmosphere helps students feel safe to take risks and make mistakes, essential for language learning. This is corroborated by our data, where teachers create such environments by showing empathy, being approachable, and fostering a sense of community. Furthermore, the significance of setting clear and achievable goals is highlighted by Laranjo (2016), who argue that specific and challenging goals can lead to higher performance levels. Our interviews with teachers confirm this, as they work with students to set realistic and attainable short-term and long-term goals.

The study also supports Krashen's (1982) theory cited in Lewis (2020), which posits that students are more motivated when the content is meaningful and relevant to their lives. Teachers in our study incorporate topics and materials that resonate with students' interests, cultures, and experiences, thereby enhancing their language acquisition. Interactive activities,

as noted by Brown (2007) and Ningsih (2023), are crucial for maintaining student interest and motivation. Our findings show that teachers employ group discussions, role-plays, and collaborative projects to engage students actively, making the learning process enjoyable and stimulating.

Additionally, the use of positive reinforcement and constructive feedback, as suggested by Skinner's (1953) behaviorist theory cited in Mcleod (2024), is evident in the current study. Teachers provide timely and specific feedback that acknowledges students' efforts and achievements, encouraging them to continue improving. Overall, the multifaceted approach observed in our study, which includes creating a positive classroom environment, setting clear goals, providing meaningful content, incorporating interactive activities, using positive reinforcement, fostering autonomy, building confidence, utilizing technology, and encouraging a growth mindset, significantly enhances student motivation and learning outcomes. Interviews with students confirm that these diverse strategies effectively motivate them across all language skills, supporting the research by previous scholars.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Student motivation is crucial for successful language learning in EFL contexts. It involves effort, goal achievement, and positive attitudes, driven significantly by teachers' strategies. A multifaceted approach that includes creating a positive classroom environment, setting clear goals, meaningful content, interactive activities, positive reinforcement, fostering autonomy, building confidence, using technology, and encouraging a growth mindset can greatly enhance motivation and learning outcomes.

Interviews with English teachers reveal effective strategies for teaching various skills. For listening, teachers use authentic materials like videos, podcasts, and songs, combined with interactive activities such as games and dictation. For speaking, role-plays, debates, group discussions, presentations, storytelling, and peer interviews are commonly employed. Reading skills are developed through reading circles, guided reading sessions, extensive and close reading techniques, skimming, and scanning. Writing skills are enhanced using graphic organizers, peer review, journal writing, and drafting/revision workshops, with an emphasis on collaborative learning.

According to interview with students, they confirm that these diverse strategies which are employed by their teachers effectively motivate them in learning English across all language skills.

Finally, the study's findings are expected to provide useful insights for teachers, educators, and local authorities on the best strategy for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to students. Moreover, future researchers might find this study helpful, as it could support similar research in other subjects. However, this research is also far from perfect, as it relies solely on interviews for data collection and involves only a small number of participants. Therefore, future researchers might consider these points to conduct similar studies with improved results.

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