

BUILDING MOTIVATION STRATEGIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT PGRI SILAMPARI UNIVERSITY

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Accepted date: June, 16 2025

Abstract: This study examines the application of motivational strategies in English language learning among sixth-semester students at PGRI Silampari University. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through open-ended questionnaires distributed to 22 students. The responses were analyzed thematically to identify the types of motivation and teaching strategies influencing students' learning engagement. The results revealed that instrumental motivation, such as career goals and future aspirations, was the dominant factor. Additionally, interactive teaching methods, positive reinforcement, and learner autonomy significantly increased students' motivation. Conversely, monotonous teaching approaches were found to reduce student enthusiasm and focus. The findings emphasize the importance of applying relevant and student-centered motivational strategies to enhance English learning outcomes in higher education settings. The findings show that a combination of personal goals, interactive methods, and a supportive classroom environment strongly influences students' motivation. To foster more engaging English learning experiences, educators should develop student-centered strategies that allow for learner autonomy, real-life relevance, and positive reinforcement

Keywords: *Motivational Strategies, English Learning, Learner Autonomy, Instrumental Motivation, Teaching Methods*

INTRODUCTION

English has long been recognized as a global lingua franca, vital in international communication, academic achievement, and career advancement. In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject from elementary to university. Despite this extended exposure and formal instruction, many students demonstrate low proficiency levels and lack confidence in using the language effectively in spoken and written forms. One of the most critical factors influencing students' success in learning English is motivation.

Motivation is the psychological drive that initiates, directs, and sustains learning behaviour. In language learning, motivation determines the effort learners are willing to invest, their persistence, and their resilience in overcoming challenges. As Dornyei (2001) notes, even the most capable students may fail to achieve their learning goals without sufficient motivation. Pujals (1986) defines motivation as a shift in internal energy marked by emotions and reactions that drive individuals to pursue specific goals. It stems from motives—internal impulses that trigger action. Motivation, therefore, serves as a force that influences behaviour and compels individuals to act in pursuit of a desired outcome.

Similarly, Smith (2012) emphasized that motivation is a key determinant of success or failure in second language acquisition. It affects the frequency with which learners use learning strategies and fuels their goal-setting, persistence, and engagement throughout the learning process.

Motivation in language learning is a multifaceted and dynamic construct. Gardner (1985) categorized motivation into integrative motivation, the desire to learn a language to integrate with its community, and instrumental motivation, which relates to learning for practical goals, such as career advancement or passing exams. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985) further differentiates between intrinsic motivation—learning driven by interest or enjoyment—and extrinsic motivation, which stems from external rewards or pressures. These frameworks illustrate that learners respond to various motivational triggers depending on their personal goals and learning environments.

In actual classroom settings, however, motivation is often neglected or taken for granted. Many English classes rely on traditional, lecture-based methods that limit student interaction and fail to address learners' emotional and psychological needs. This often results in a monotonous and uninspiring learning atmosphere, causing students to become passive, disengaged, and anxious, further diminishing their motivation and academic performance.

Previous research has consistently underscored the importance of motivation in language learning. Dornyei (2001) found that motivated learners are more likely to persevere, perform better, and have a more positive outlook on language acquisition. Gardner (2010) similarly emphasized the crucial role of motivation in determining the amount of effort students devote to learning a second language. A study by Hamied and Musthafa (2019) observed that a lack of student-centred activities and uninspiring instructional approaches frequently contribute to low motivation among Indonesian university students. These findings highlight the need for practical, motivation-enhancing strategies in English language education.

To address this issue, educators must understand the nature of motivation and implement purposeful motivational strategies that foster and sustain students' interest. These strategies may include setting clear and achievable goals, providing constructive feedback, designing meaningful and relevant tasks, promoting collaboration, and encouraging learner autonomy.

Dornyei (2001) suggests that effective motivational strategies encompass both teacher-centred practices, such as building a supportive classroom climate, and learner-centred techniques, including self-reflection and goal setting. When appropriately applied, these strategies can transform a disengaged classroom into an active, enthusiastic, and responsible community of learners.

At Pgri Silampari University, where students come from diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds, motivation is vital in shaping their learning engagement and outcomes. Many students face challenges, including limited exposure to English, low self-confidence, and negative past learning experiences. Therefore, implementing well-planned and context-sensitive motivational strategies is essential to help them overcome these barriers and strengthen their English proficiency.

Despite the motivation's critical role in language learning, there is a lack of research focusing on how motivational strategies are applied in the context of English language instruction at PGRI Silampari University. The researcher want to know what motivational strategies are implemented in English language learning at PGRI Silampari University, and how do these strategies influence students' motivation and engagement in learning?

This study aims to explore how motivational strategies are constructed and applied in English language learning at PGRI Silampari University. It seeks to identify the methods used, analyze their impact on students' learning behavior, and offer practical recommendations for educators and institutions to enhance their motivational practices. Through this research, we aim to contribute to the academic discourse on motivation in language education while offering actionable solutions to improve the quality and effectiveness of English instruction in higher education settings.

METODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. This design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore the students' experiences, perceptions, and reflections on the motivational strategies used in English language learning. This research does not focus on statistical measurement but on understanding the meaning behind students' learning experiences.

The subjects in this study were 22 6th-semester students from the English Education Study Program at PGRI Silampari University. They came from the same class and had attended several English courses at the college level. The students were chosen because they were considered to have enough experience to reflect on the motivational strategies they experienced during the learning process.

The data collection technique was conducted through an open-ended questionnaire distributed online. The questionnaire consisted of six main questions designed to reveal: 1. The main factors that motivate students to learn English, 2. Things that make learning interesting or boring, 3. Strategies

used by lecturers to motivate students, 4. Students' responses to teaching methods, 5. The level of perceived learning freedom, 6. Students' suggestions to improve learning motivation. Students were asked to provide narrative answers based on their personal experiences and views.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis based on Braun & Clarke's (2006) six steps, namely:

1. Familiarization with the data: Rereading all student answers.
2. Initial coding: Marking essential parts of the data with labels.
3. Identifying themes (searching for themes): Grouping the codes into main themes and subthemes.
4. Reviewing themes: Evaluating whether the themes represent the overall data.
5. Defining and naming themes: Naming themes specifically and descriptively.
6. Reporting the data (writing the report): Writing the results in narratives and tables that reflect the themes and data evidence.

Analysis results are visualized through themes, citation tables, and hierarchical thematic diagrams.

RESEARCH RESULT

Finding

Thematic Results Based on Respondents' Answers. The following table presents the main themes, subthemes, and representative quotes from respondents based on the results of data coding:

Table: Themes, Subthemes, and Respondent Quotations

Main Theme	Subtheme	Respondent Quotation
Instrumental Motivation	Career Aspiration	"I want to work abroad."
	Future Orientation	"English is important for my future."
Intrinsic Motivation	Personal Interest	"I want to be a football commentator, so I have to speak English fluently."
Teaching Strategies	Interactive Methods	"I feel more excited when we do role plays and group discussions."
	Positive Feedback	"My lecturer always gives appreciation, which keeps me motivated."
Learning Autonomy	Freedom in Learning	"I feel motivated when I'm allowed to choose my way of learning."
Motivational Barriers	Monotonous Methods	"If the class is just a lecture, I get bored quickly and lose focus."

From the thematic analysis above, instrumental motivation is the main driver of students' learning of English. This supports Gardner's (1985) view that in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language), instrumental motivation, such as the desire to work or study abroad, is more dominant than integrative motivation. Another finding shows that the lecturer's teaching strategy greatly influences motivation. Students are more motivated when lecturers use interactive methods, provide positive feedback, and offer flexibility in learning. This aligns with Dörnyei's (2001) theory on the importance of a supportive learning environment and the use of planned motivational strategies. In the context of Deci & Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination theory, the basic needs for autonomy, competence, and social connection are met when lecturers build good relationships, provide space for expression, and facilitate student success through reinforcement and support.

To further elaborate on the table findings, the following section discusses the five dominant themes based on students' responses to the open-ended questionnaire:

First, career-oriented motivation emerged as the most frequent reason for learning English. A total of 18 out of 22 students expressed their desire to use English to achieve professional goals, such as working abroad or pursuing an international career. One student stated, "I want to work abroad." This confirms the importance of instrumental motivation as a practical and goal-oriented force behind language learning.

Secondly, future preparation was also a central theme, with 16 students stating that English is essential to their life plans. Comments such as "English is important for my future" show how students connect language proficiency with long-term academic and personal development.

Thirdly, lecturers' teaching methods play an essential role. Fifteen students stated that interactive approaches such as role plays, discussions, and games made them more eager to learn. One respondent said, "I feel more energized when we do role plays and group discussions." This aligns with Dörnyei's (2001) view that motivation increases when learners are actively involved in learning.

Fourth, learning independence also contributed significantly to motivation. Thirteen students valued the freedom to choose the best way for them to study. One response stated, "I feel motivated when I am allowed to choose my way of learning." This supports Deci & Ryan's (1985) theory that independence is key to maintaining motivation and self-directed learning.

Finally, the critical issue of demotivation caused by a monotonous teaching style emerged. Fourteen students explicitly mentioned that the traditional lecture method bored and disengaged them. One student wrote, "If the class is just a lecture, I get bored quickly and lose focus." This

emphasizes the importance of varied and dynamic teaching in maintaining student interest.

In conclusion, the findings highlight that internal factors (personal goals and interests) and external factors (teaching strategies and classroom dynamics) shape student motivation. Educators should consider these insights to design learning experiences that are purposeful, interactive, and responsive to students' motivational needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's results, students' motivation to learn English is strongly influenced by personal goals, lecturer strategies, and learning climate. Students are more motivated when: Learning is interactive and fun, the material is linked to real life, and their future. Lecturers give positive feedback and appreciation. Students are free to choose a way of learning that suits their style. Thus, lecturers need to develop motivational strategies that are not only academic but also psychological and contextual to inspire students to become active and globally competitive language learners. Therefore, lecturers must develop motivational strategies that are both academically effective and psychologically supportive to foster active and globally competitive English learners.

IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study have several implications for English language educators and curriculum designers.

1. Incorporating motivational strategies tailored to students' goals and interests is essential for increasing learning engagement.
2. Educators should prioritize interactive teaching methods that foster active student participation, such as role plays, group discussions, and project-based learning.
3. Granting students autonomy in learning and encouraging self-directed activities can increase their sense of responsibility and confidence.

Recommendation: Institutions should offer professional development for lecturers to equip them with practical, motivational techniques and build awareness of students' emotional and psychological needs in the language learning process.

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