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## The Role of Teacher and Peer Relationships on Improving Students' Motivation in English Department at Sam Ratulangi University

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### Abstrak

Peran Hubungan Guru dan Teman Sebaya Terhadap Peningkatan Motivasi Siswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Sam Ratulangi merupakan penelitian yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana guru sebagai panutan siswa dan kelompok teman sebaya sebagai bagian dari lingkungan belajar siswa membantu meningkatkan motivasi siswa dari siswa. perspektif. Penelitian ini terdiri dari tiga pertanyaan yang menjadi pokok permasalahan: Bagaimana hubungan guru-siswa meningkatkan motivasi siswa, bagaimana hubungan teman sebaya meningkatkan motivasi siswa dan bagaimana peran guru berbeda dengan hubungan teman sejawat dalam meningkatkan motivasi siswa. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori motivasi Self-Determination dari Ryan dan Deci (2000) dan teori Learning Behaviorism untuk perilaku siswa di kelas oleh John. B.Watson (1913). Penggunaan metodologi dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif berdasarkan wawancara. Data dikumpulkan dari 14 peserta angkatan 2020 dan 2021 Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Sam Ratulangi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa motivasi siswa dipengaruhi oleh interaksinya dengan teman sebaya dan perilaku guru dimana guru yang aktif dan penuh perhatian kemungkinan besar akan membuat siswa merasa enjoy dan aktif selama proses pembelajaran sedangkan guru yang kurang menunjukkan sikap peduli terhadap siswa akan membuat siswa menjadi pasif. .

Kata Kunci: *Peran Guru, Hubungan Teman Sebaya, Motivasi*

## Abstract

The role of teacher and peer relationships on improving students motivation in English Department at Sam Ratulangi University was a study which aims to find out how teacher as students' role model and peer groups as part of students' learning environment helps to improve students motivation from students' perspective. This research composed by three questions that become the main points: How the teacher-student relationship improve students' motivation, how peer relationships improve students' motivation and how teacher's role differ from peer relationships on improving students motivation. Theories used in this research are Self-Determination theory of motivation from Ryan and Deci (2000) and Learning Behaviorism theory for student behavior in the classroom by John. B. Watson (1913). The use of methodology in this research was qualitative research based on interview. The data collected from 14 participants in batches 2020 and 2021 in English Department at Sam Ratulangi University. The result shows that students' motivation are affected by their interaction with peer and teacher behavior where an active and caring teacher is most likely to make students feel enjoy and active during the learning process while a teacher who shows less caring attitude towards students makes them passive.

*Keyword: Teachers' Role, Peer Relationships, Motivation*

## INTRODUCTION

Language is an important part of human life. Language is a system in which we use sound to refer to things outside the sound. It allows us to share thoughts, knowledge and express feelings. Language can be seen as an identity where someone belongs; as a part of social group or community (Bloch and Tragger, 1942). Every human being is a part of a social group and in all their social activities, human beings depend on the use of language –as an important tool that enables social interaction to happen. Language is not the only important factor that allows social interaction; there is also motivation that helps humans to interact.

Motivation is the core machine that initiates human interaction and directs human activity. Intense social interaction often shapes people within particular circumstances to have the same values, beliefs and interests. Circumstances influence play a crucial role in shaping how students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries use English for communication. The environment in which students are exposed to English language more often can significantly impact students' language proficiency, confidence, and motivation.

English is the world's lingua franca or language that people with different native languages use to communicate. English is widely used and recognized as a foreign language in Indonesia. The importance of English cannot be denied and ignored since English is the most common language spoken globally (Ilyozovna, 2020). English is an official language in 75 countries worldwide, meaning that 39% of countries have English as one of their official

languages (Gration, 2022). Nowadays, information on an international scale also commonly uses English, so understanding English makes it easy to receive up-to-date information from worldwide. The existence of English has been commonly used and should be mastered in the globalization era. Coming with the urgency for everyone to master it, the writer, as an English Department student, realized that in an English major environment, students should realize that they have even more urgency regarding to master the English language.

Language learning is a process that is often thorough and takes time; learners encounter various difficulties during the process, and many aspects are needed to support language learning. An essential aspect of learning that cannot be denied is motivation. Motivation to learn refers to a competence obtained by general experience instruction or socialization by significant others (Brophy, 1987). Research about positive psychology mentioned foreign language enjoyment (FLE) that leads to better academic achievement, language learning motivation, and social-behavioral learning engagement (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). Those aspects indeed can only be reached with the role of teacher and peer friends support.

The majority of researchers believe that motivation is not exclusively intrinsic or extrinsic in orientation. According to The National Scientific Council on The Developing Child (2018:2-3), there are two types of motivation; which directed toward expected rewards or directed away from threat and both motivation are influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic feedback. A healthy motivation system is best built through the combination of internal (intrinsic) drivers supported by positive feedback. Teachers have a big responsibility to support students' learning motivation. The current study showed that teachers involvement (affectionate, caring, and dependable) becomes a great indicator to students' engagement and teachers were found to directly contribute to their students' FLE (Vollet, 2017; Dewaele, 2018). Teacher issues in the learning environment can lower students' motivation, make them unable to understand the instructions and demotivate their concentration (Tashlanovna, 2020).

Besides the role of teacher, peer relationships as a part of students' academic environment also plays an important role for students' motivation and engagement in school. Positive and supportive peers can provide encouragement during challenging times, such as when facing academic difficulties or personal setbacks which makes students able to preserve and maintain their motivation to achieve their goals. Hence, teachers and peers' involvement contribute uniquely to students' engagement and motivation. Motivationally supportive environment gives satisfaction for students and becomes a safe place for students to be more creative and to expand their ability. Since social interaction in school

requires students to constantly have relations with teachers and peers, it becomes a crucial aspect as extrinsic motivation that influences students' intrinsic motivation to improve academic performance, especially in language learning success.

In this dynamic world where everything happens fast, education sectors need to keep up and update the quality to suit human needs for education. In 2020, when COVID-19 began to spread widely, the education field met the urgency to suddenly shift and fit with the situation by applying online or remote learning. Online learning implementation during the pandemic caused various problems (Efriana, 2021); difficulties for teachers to master the IT and limited access to supervise students, while students also had difficulties such as inactivity in following learning, limited supporting facilities, and network access. Nowadays, when education shifts back to an offline situation, forms of online learning have brought differences that create a new learning style, socialization and motivation. This phenomenon is undoubtedly related to how students' face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers has an important role that affecting students' learning motivation. Thus, this study focuses on how relationships between teacher-student and student-student help to improve students' intrinsic motivation. In this research, the writer hopes to find the answer from students' perspectives and elaborate on how the role of teacher and peer relationships as students' extrinsic motivation influences students in improving their motivation.

#### The Objectives Of Research

1. To identify and describe how teachers' role improve students' motivation.
2. To identify and describe how peer relationships improve students' motivation.
3. To identify and describe how the role of teacher differ from peer relationships in improving students' motivation.

#### METHOD

In this study, the writer uses qualitative methods to get a deeper understanding from students' perspective about the role of teacher and peer relationships on students' motivation". According to Maykut and Morehouse (2005), "Research studies that are qualitative are designed to discover what can be learned about some phenomenon of interest, particularly social phenomena where people are the participants".

Qualitative research is an approach to inquiry that begins with assumptions, world views, possibly theoretical lenses, and the study of research problems exploring the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research helps researchers to access the thoughts and feelings of participants and allow them to gain a better understanding of the implications of participants' experience. The

writer used semi-structured interviews to understand students' perspectives about how teacher and peer relationships impact on improving students' motivation. According to Creswell (2012), an interview is a face-to-face conversation between a researcher and a participant involving a transfer of information to the interviewer. The interview was done face-to-face and took around 8-15 minutes for each participant. The interview consists of 10 questions related to students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. the writer got the opportunity to interview 14 participants from batch 2020 and batch 2021 for this semi-structured interview. The participants were divided into three categories:

1. Students who actively participated in class and have peer group (4 participants from batch 2020 and 2 participants from batch 2021).
2. Students who actively participated but have less social interaction with friends (3 participants from batch 2020 and 1 participant from 2021).
3. Students who do not participate actively but have peer groups (2 participants from batch 2020 and 2 from batch 2021).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Teacher-Student Relationships On Improving Students' Motivation

Teacher-student relationships play a crucial role in improving students' motivation and overall academic performance. A positive supportive relationship between teachers and students helps to boost students' engagement, autonomy, and sense of belonging. Self-determination theory states that humans have three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and belongingness. How teachers meet these basic needs that will influence students' well-being, motivation, engagement, and achievement (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Therefore, how teachers treat, interact with, and build relationships with their students is essential (Thornberg et al, 2022). It creates a safe and nurturing learning environment when teachers show care, empathy, and understanding towards their students. Teachers also need to recognize students' uniqueness and accommodate their different needs.

### Identification of Student's Motivation

This section is associated with students' motivation regarding the reason they choose the English department and what motivates them to learn English.

### Reason Students Choose English Department

The majority of participants answered that they chose the English department because they are interested in the English language and love the English language. The next common answer is that informants were in language studies majors in high school,

indicating intrinsic motivation because they do it with their willingness. Several participants answered that they wanted to enhance their English. A participant also said she joined the English department because she got a scholarship.

The interview results showed that most participants' reason for joining the English department was their interest in the English language. That reason strongly indicates that they have enough motivation to learn, which can help them enjoy the learning process. The second common reason from participants is they took a language studies major in high school; that reason is also strong enough to indicate they could enjoy the learning process because they already went through it during high school years, even though the environment might be different. A participant mentioned scholarships, but despite mentioning scholarships, her primary reason was that she thought she was capable of joining the English department.

#### Student's Motivation in Learning English

The language learning process takes time and effort; there are various factors needed to support the process. Thus, someone's motivation is an important factor that will be a measurement of language learning success as stated by Gardner and Lambert (1972), "apart from the role that intellectual capacity and language aptitude play in learning a second or foreign language, motivation is a major factor in the successful study of language acquisition".

The answers given by all participants are all related to their goals, opportunity and also enjoyment. The answer given by most informants indicated that they learn English because English is an international language that can give them more opportunities to study abroad or find a job. The reason given by participants seems similar to intrinsic motivation, but it is extrinsic motivation (introjected). They are motivated because they want to pursue their goal by mastering the English language. Participant J.M. said that he is interested in learning English because they only use their local language in his hometown, and he wants to learn English; his answers could be included in intrinsic motivation since it comes from his willingness and enjoyment and without mentioning other goals. There is J.L., who said that it is a valuable journey to use her knowledge, indicating intrinsic motivation that she learns because she enjoys the journey of learning and not related to another life goal. Besides talking about opportunity, D.R. explained that she started learning English because she wanted to understand the media that entertained her as a kid. There is P.M. who mentioned that seeing someone fluent in the English language is something amazing, which can also be categorized into extrinsic motivation (introjected) because she has a goal to be fluent so she can be seen as amazing -similar to how she sees people.

## Teachers Role

Teacher or educator is a crucial part of students' learning activities. Teachers are changing their traditional roles and moving to new ones; become an active participants, monitors, consultants and guides (closely working with their students'), become helpers and facilitators (offer suggestions and guidance), (Nunan, 1993; Wenden, 1991, in Yang, 1998). As explained in behaviourism learning theory, all students' behaviour is learned, affected, and shaped by interaction with their environment, and because teachers are students' role models in the educational environment, "teachers' behaviour in a classroom setting is important because it can influence students' motivation and achievement" (Wubbels and Levy, 1991). Teachers have the responsibility to teach and practically prepare students for the purpose that they can cope with all types of learning situations

Relationships with teachers are considered especially potent because of the many roles teachers play, for example, as a potential attachment figure, as a pedagogue, as a disciplinarian, and as the final arbiter of a student's level of performance (Furrer and Skinner, 2003).

### Feel Connected when Recognized by Teacher

Based on 10 out of 14 participants answered that they feel connected by being recognized by the teacher it proves that relatedness needs to be implemented in the classroom because each student's need for belonging should be fulfilled to boost their motivation. Supportive teacher-child related to a child's academic outcomes (Burchinal et al., in Davidson, 2009), feeling supported and cared for by teachers increases students' confidence in learning and interest in studying and engagement in school (Fan, 2011).

### Teachers' Attitude that Motivates Students

This section explains what teachers' attitude motivates students to be more active and take part in classroom activities; according to their answers, the majority of students feel motivated by a friendly, caring, appreciative teacher when students say their opinion but are still able to correct their mistakes without judging them.

Most participants mentioned that a friendly teacher makes them feel comfortable, more enjoyable and motivated in class. Participant J. A said that material does not affect his motivation, but it is necessary for teachers' caring attitude. Those they mentioned are included in relatedness, such as basic psychological needs. A participant also said clear instructions for the assignment and how teachers encourage students to be more active.

### Teachers' Attitude that Makes Students Unmotivated

Students want teachers to tolerate and allow them to express themselves in a way the teacher could manage. It often confuses students when the teacher tells them they are

wrong but does not show which part is incorrect, or often gives assignments without pointing out clear instructions and does not want students to disturb them by asking questions regarding the projects and does not give a follow-up about those assignments.

## Peer Relationships On Improving Students' Motivation

### The Overview of Peer Friends

Peer relationships have various forms and can positively and negatively impact students' motivation and engagement in school. Children with healthy peer relationships report higher levels of emotional well-being, self-perception, and values for prosocial behaviour and social engagement than those kids who do not have healthy peer relationships (Wentzel & Muenks, 2016). Otherwise, students who receive less acceptance from their peers are more likely to be excluded and victimized, associated with lower academic self-competence, lower participation rates, and lower accomplishment values. (Buhs, 2005). Students whom their peers reject tend to be less engaged in class activities than those who enjoy high levels of peer acceptance, and they report strong desires to avoid school (Buhs & Ladd 2001, and Ladd, in Wentzel & Muenks, 2016).

### Activity as Peer Group

Activities with peers in an educational setting can have numerous benefits for students. These activities are crucial in fostering social, emotional, and cognitive development. Most students with a peer group are influenced by their peer group because they tend to spend time together, share experiences and thoughts. Activity as a peer group is also important because it positively impacts students' academic motivation. A study by Wentzel (2016) has shown that perceived peer expectations for prosocial behavior are related to students' efforts to learn and mastery orientation, while perceived emotional support from peers has been found to be positively associated with students' academic effort.

### Peer Relationships in Affecting Motivation

The data gathered shows that peers significantly motivate and support students in their academic journey. Most students with a peer group are influenced by their peer group because they tend to spend time together, share experiences and thoughts. Answers from students who are active and have peer groups similarly bring up how most of their members are active such as mentioned by C.W, which gives him the motivation to be more active. Similar to L.P, who mentioned that all her peers are diligent students, they usually motivate each other. There is also M.L. who also mentioned that they encourage her, convince her that she is good enough to do something, and she is motivated when her peers join a

competition. What M.L, C.W, and L.P mentioned relates to competence as basic psychological need that should be fulfilled.

Moving to the next category, which is active students but has no peer group, they have slightly different answers because D.R. mentioned she is motivated when there is someone who can give her a hand and she can rely on, because she can't do anything alone. It is similar to S.S. who said that she is motivated when friends ask her to make assignments together, while J.A. said friends do not affect his motivation. The answers by D.R. and S.S. showed that even without peer group, their motivation are still affected by people around them. The next category, less active and have peer groups such as M.W, F.S, and P.M also mentioned about helping and reminding each other helps them to be more motivated.

The interview results is related to the study from students' perception that showed peer supports impact student effort and mastery goal orientations by way of internalized values and academic self-efficacy (Wentzel, 2016). However, it is important to acknowledge that not all students are significantly influenced by their peers. Some participants mentioned that peer influence does not affect them as much. That results related to study by Furrer and Skinner (2003) that showed the loss of relatedness to peers did not have serious consequences for children's engagement (specifically, children with low relatedness to peers but high relatedness to teachers).

#### The Differences Of The Role Of Teacher And Peer Relationships In Improving Students' Motivation

Teachers and peer relationships can significantly impact students' motivation, but each role is affected differently. All researchers agree that the teacher is an important factor influencing students' motivation. Teachers play a crucial role in creating a positive and engaging learning environment because a study by Vollet (2017) showed that teachers' involvement (affectionate, caring, and dependable) becomes a great indicator of students' engagement. A positive and supportive teacher-student relationship is crucial for students' motivation. Beside the important role of the teacher, peer relationships are also crucial for students' academic motivation.

#### Differences of Students' Motivation during Online and Offline Learning

This part provides information about the differences in students' motivation during online and offline studies. The participants begin their college years during the pandemic, as the two learning environments offer distinct experiences and challenges. After all, the differences in students' motivation between online and offline learning are influenced by social interaction, autonomy, and the learning environment.

Participant's opinions in this section showed that different forms of social interaction with peers during online and offline learning affected students' learning motivation. Despite the different form of online and offline learning, the impact teachers hold is always the same; teachers are crucial for students' motivation because teacher is the one who initiates strategies for class activity. Constantly absent teachers allow students to be lazy, and the absence of teachers brings no sense of competence among peer group students. Students' peer groups become casual hanging out with friends and emotional support rather than friends to improve academic skills. The impact on students without peer groups is even more significant since they do not constantly have peers to hang out with, and academic life no longer offers something interesting.

#### Ideal Teacher and Peer Friends in Students' Perspective

This section provides participants' perceptions about what an ideal teacher and peer would cause to their motivation. Teachers and peers have different roles influencing students' motivation, and the ideal combination will bring different influences. Students' motivation and involvement in their academic work can be significantly influenced by a supportive combination of teacher and peer group; students are more likely to be inspired, interested, and successful in their studies when they perceive ideal expectations and support from both their teachers and peer group (Wentzel et al., 2017). The statement is aligned with the interview where participants mentioned how positive lecturers and peers helped boost confidence, self-esteem, and mental capability, and also how teachers and peers with positive vibes help to be motivated and affect motivation.

#### The Joint Effect of Teacher Involvement and Peer Group

Based on the interview, the writer found that all students are intrinsically motivated to improve their English but are influenced by factors outside themselves, such as teachers and peers. Students who are active in class-have peer groups such as K.Y, M.L, C.W, J.L, J.M, and L.P are being affected by how their peer group become role models that could directly and indirectly motivates them because their peers being active in class makes them to be challenged and also wanted to be active. They also mentioned in the interview (3.3) how their peers directly encourage them with their words.

Despite the category and intrinsic motivation within participants, their motivation is still influenced by both teacher and peer relationships. Although positive peer friends can help students' motivation, students without peer groups mainly depend on teachers' influence. Thus, teachers' roles become more crucial for students without peer groups, which means teachers play a more critical role towards students' learning activities. Thus,

teachers should create a friendly class environment, tension-free, interactive, synergetic, experiential, and based on students' interests (Ali, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

The overall result shows that most participants are already motivated to learn the English language. However, students' motivation is affected by the external factors in learning environment; such as teachers and peers. Teachers' positive attitude, such as care, could fulfill students' need for relatedness and help students to be enjoyable in class. Tolerate students' mistakes, give them freedom and opportunities to express themselves in class assist students to be motivated. Besides teachers, peers also help to boost students' motivation by becoming direct and indirect motivation.

Students' peer groups become an example, because it makes students be challenged by seeing their peers being active in class. Students also want to be active because it boosts their feeling of competence. Also, peers direct encouragement words helps to boost students' motivation. However, it is also important to acknowledge that peer friend is not significantly influencing students without peer group. Thus, teachers' role in educational setting becomes more important for that type of students.

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