

## How Educational Practices Influence Students' Motivation in Learning Foreign Languages

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### Abstrak

*Motivasi adalah keinginan untuk mencapai tujuan. Motivasi merupakan hal yang penting dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa asing. Tanpa kehadirannya, sulit bagi para guru/ dosen untuk membuat siswa mereka mencapai kompetensi yang diharapkan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian yang berkaitan dengan motivasi siswa dalam mempelajari bahasa asing harus dilakukan untuk mendukung kesuksesan pembelajaran bahasa asing. Seperti kita ketahui, banyak faktor yang mempengaruhi motivasi siswa dalam mempelajari bahasa asing. Salah satunya, yang masih jarang dieksplorasi, adalah pada praktik-praktik pendidikan. Artikel ini mendiskusikan bagaimana praktik-praktik pendidikan seperti kurikulum, kualitas pengajar, dan asesmen (penilaian) mempengaruhi motivasi siswa. Dari pembahasan, kita dapat mengetahui bahwa, untuk menjadikan siswa termotivasi, kurikulum harus dibuat menantang tapi jangan terlalu sulit ataupun terlalu mudah, kualitas guru harus memenuhi harapan mereka dan selalu meningkatkan kualitas diri, dan asesmen tidak boleh hanya fokus pada kognitif.*

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**Kata kunci:** *motivasi, praktik pendidikan, bahasa asing, siswa*

### Abstract

*Motivation is the desire to attain goals. It is an important thing to be concerned in teaching and learning a foreign language. With its absence among students, it is hard for faculties to make their students reach the competences. Therefore, researches related to students' motivation in learning foreign languages should be done to support the success of foreign language learning. As we know, many factors influencing students' motivation in learning a foreign language. One of those, which is not explored frequently, is on the educational practices. This article discusses how educational practices such as the curriculum, the quality of teachers, and the assessment give influences to students' motivation. From the discussion, we know that, to make students motivated, the curriculum should be challenging but not either too difficult or too easy; the teachers' quality should meet their expectation and be upgraded; and the assessment should not be focused on cognitive only.*

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**Keywords:** *motivation, educational practice, foreign language, students*

### Introduction

English and Arabic have been taught in Indonesia for many years as a foreign language. English becomes one of the obligatory subjects to be examined in the national examination besides mathematic and Indonesian language since in the elementary school

level, while Arabic is taught at Islamic Junior and Senior High Schools. Then nowadays, there are some other languages which are taught at schools such as mandarin, German, France, etc. Therefore, the teaching and learning process of these subjects gets a serious attention to meet the passing grade. Many studies have also been done to find the solutions to various problems faced in teaching and learning of the subject. However, the complexity of the problem leads to more and more researches. The researchers keep studying the important aspects like developing effective materials, strategies, methods, model, approaches, and finding factors influencing students' motivation in learning foreign languages.

Motivation has an important role in teaching and learning foreign languages because it has a force that creates an eagerness in humans to perform certain tasks<sup>1</sup>. Without motivation, the targets of the curriculum will hardly be achieved. Whatever teachers do will have little effect to students. Besides, Garden et al state that "learners with different types of motivation may display different patterns of interaction in the language classroom and different progress levels"<sup>2</sup>. It surely becomes a serious challenge for teachers to make their students achieve the grade level stated in the curriculum. One thing that must get serious attention is how to improve students' motivation and hold it.

One of the factors which affects students' motivation in learning foreign languages is related to how faculty's preparation and activities in serving the students, called educational practices. Educational practices are activities, policies, and programmatic approaches to achieve positive changes in student attitudes or academic behaviors<sup>3</sup>. This article discusses the influences of educational practices towards students' motivation in learning foreign languages.

## **Motivation**

Motivation can be defined as the extent to which you make choices about (a) goals to pursue and (b) the effort you will devote to that pursuit<sup>4</sup>. While, the *Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary* defines motivation as willingness to do something, or something that causes such willingness<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, Wlodkowski suggested that motivation describes processes that (a) arouse a desire to investigate behavior, (b) give direction and purpose to behavior, (c) continue to allow behavior to persist, or (d) lead to choosing or preferring a particular behavior<sup>6</sup>. In short, motivation is the processes of arising desire to do and to attain certain goals. Students with high motivation will have more desire to reach the goals than those who have low motivation.

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Dornyei, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, London: Pearson Education Limited (2001)

<sup>2</sup> R. G. Gardner, P. C. Senythe, R. Clement, and L. Cliksmen, *Second Language Learning: a Social Psychological Perspective* (Candian and New York Longman. 1976) p. 54

<sup>3</sup> D. R. Arendale, What is a best education practice? Unpublished manuscript (Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN. 2010), Available from <https://www.arendale.org/best-education-practices>

<sup>4</sup> H. Douglas Brown, *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to language pedagogy*. Second Edition (Pearson Education, Inc.: White Plains: New York, 2001) p. 72

<sup>5</sup> Available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/motivation>

<sup>6</sup> Ernest W. Brewer and David N Burgess, *Professor's Role in Motivating Students to Attend Class*. University of Tennessee-Knoxville. An article. p.

There are four types of motivations in learning which can be associated with success. Students who have high motivation will be easier to get success in learning language. This is because they have big desire to attain their goals, i.e. they can master the four skills in English (Listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

### **Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation is a thing which comes from students selves. It means that there is no apparent reward, but their actions are for the sake of themselves. As stated by Edward Deci that<sup>7</sup>:

*Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward. ... Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determination.*

This type of motivation is the most important among others (Abraham Maslow)<sup>8</sup>. Without other kinds of motivation, students will learn well if they already have it. Hence, the presents of the others will magnify the fighting spirit of their learning.

### **Extrinsic Motivation**

Extrinsically motivated behaviours are carried out in anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self.<sup>9</sup> Commonly, extrinsic motivation can be in form of money, prizes, grade, and positive feedbacks. Besides, some punishment can also become a thing for extrinsic motivation by a consideration of which they can be challenged to their activity.

Extrinsic motivation itself can have an effect to intrinsic motivation. For instance, positive feedback that a teacher gives can boost their feelings of competence and self-determination. Furthermore, the appropriateness of the use of techniques or method can also increase intrinsic motivation. This is because they feel that they are provided good opportunity in the classroom so that their motivation would arise by itself. One of the good methods to arise students' motivation is group work, where students can have competition among groups in the classroom. As Brown stated that intrinsic values can be directed through: emphasizing the "big" picture-larger perspective; letting students set long-term goals; allowing sufficient time for learning; cooperative learning activities; group work; viewing the class as a team; content-centered teaching; English for specific purposes; English in the workplace; allowing risk-taking behaviour; and rewarding innovation and creativity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> H. Douglas Brown, Op.cit. p.76

<sup>8</sup> Loc.cit.

<sup>9</sup> Loc.cit.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.79

### **Instrumental Motivation**

Instrumental Motivation involves perception of a purely practical value in learning the L2, such as increasing occupational or business opportunities, enhancing prestige and power, accessing scientific and technical information, or just passing a course in school. Culhane claimed that instrumental motivation concerns an individual's primary concern for language development, apart from social goals in second language acquisition<sup>11</sup>. In other words, a second language learner would be identified as instrumentally motivated if he or she is seen to learn the target language to pass an examination or to apply for a better line of work. For example, a junior high school student learns English because he really wants to pass national exam with high score and continue to a well-known senior high school which requires good English.

### **Integrative Motivation**

Integrative motivation is based on interest in learning L2 because of a desire to learn about or associate with people who use it (e.g. romantic reasons), or because an intention to participate or integrate in the L2 using speech community; in any case, emotions or affective factors are dominant<sup>12</sup>. Motivation has been identified as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language<sup>13</sup>. It is thought that students who are most successful when learning a target language are those who like the people that speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in which the language is used<sup>14</sup>. It is also theorized that "integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and a native like pronunciation"<sup>15</sup>. In other words, one would be identified as an integrative language learner if he or she possesses sympathetic attitudes toward the culture of the target language and its speakers; also, he or she probably sees great value in being able to speak foreign languages and experiences an appreciation of different cultures.

We should be aware that English language learners need to have those sorts of motivation in order to be successful in learning English. English teachers should stimulate their students to grow intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental and integrative motivations. It can be done by giving them understanding of how important English for their future education and life and introducing them about the beauty of English and English cultures, and etc. If they successfully grow those motivations, teachers will have easier task in teaching.

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<sup>11</sup> S. F. Culhane, An Intercultural Interaction Model: Acculturation Attitudes in Second Language Acquisition (*Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 2004, Vol. 1, No. 1) p. 50-61. Retrieved from <http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v1n12004/culhane.htm>

<sup>12</sup> M. Saville-Troike, *Introducing second language acquisition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.92

<sup>13</sup> G. Crookes & R. W. Schmidt, *Motivation : Reopening the research agenda* (Language learning, 1991). p.41

<sup>14</sup> J. Falk, *Linguistics and Language: A Survey of Basic Concepts and Implications*, Second edition, (John Wiley and Sons, 1978) p.

<sup>15</sup> E. Finegan, *Language: Its Structure and Use*, Third Edition (Harcourt Brace, 1999) p.568

### Educational-Practice Factors Influencing Students' Motivation

Studies of motivation in foreign language teaching find that many educational factors influence learners' motivation, one of those is teachers quality<sup>16</sup>. Besides, students' motivation is also influenced by how teachers give feedback and assessment<sup>17</sup>. Accordingly, another expert presents eight-top-most-motivating factors i.e. quality of instruction; quality of curriculum; relevance and pragmatism; interactive classrooms and effective management practices; progressive assessment and timely feedback; self-directedness; conducive learning environment; and effective academic advising practices. From the factors mentioned, we can make them into three big factors, namely: curriculum management, assessment, and teachers' quality<sup>18</sup>.

Curriculum management seems to have an important role in motivating learners studying English language. As we know that without a good plan, we cannot reach our goal. More than 80% of the interviewees claimed that the quality of the curriculum was a major source of motivation for them<sup>19</sup>. Nawaz et. al. also found that inappropriate syllabus has a negative effect towards Pakistani students' motivation in learning English language<sup>20</sup>. Those show us the importance of a syllabus in relation with students' motivation. In other side, we may say that if we fail to developed appropriate or good syllabus, then we have failed before starting the teaching and learning process. Faculties must be aware of this crucial fact.

What should be done with curriculum to boost students' motivation? Motivation can appear when the curriculum is well managed e.g. curriculum is developed relevantly to their needs since most adult learners have a practical reason for their learning<sup>21</sup>. In other words, the content of the learning must be in line with their majors or works. When they feel that what they are studying really prepares their future, students will be motivated in learning English. Another characteristic of a good curriculum is challenging to learners<sup>22</sup>. That is why curriculum makers should be able to avoid too easy as well as too difficult materials or lessons. They also have to make sure the curriculum provides students English skills which supports their major. Furthermore, it is suggested that students are involved in developing the syllabus.<sup>23</sup> By letting them involved, they will feel some ownership to the

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<sup>16</sup> Mehrak Rahimi, Fatemeh Hosseini Karkami. *The role of teachers' classroom discipline in their teaching effectiveness and students' language learning motivation and achievement: A path method*. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research Vol. 3, No. 1

<sup>17</sup> Nafizah Hamidun, Shafiq Hizwari Md Hashim, Nur Farhinaa Othman. *Enhancing Students' Motivation by Providing Feedback on Writing: The Case of International Students from Thailand*. International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, 2012, Vol. 2

<sup>18</sup> Sogunro, Olusegun Agboola. *Motivating Factors for Adult Learners in Higher Education*. International Journal of Higher Education. Vol. 4, No. 1 (2015)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Humera Nawaz, Muhammad Amin, Ijaz Ahmed Tatla, *Factors Affecting Students' Motivation Level to Learn English as a Second Language in the Pakistani University Context*, Journal of Research and Reflections in Education December 2015, Vol 9, No.2, p. 104

<sup>21</sup> Wlodkowski, R. J. Fostering motivation in professional development programs. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2003, 98, 39-47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ace.98>

<sup>22</sup> T. Finegan & J. Siegfried. (1998). *Do Introductory Economics Students Learn More If Their Instructor Has a Ph.D.?* American Economist, Vol 42, No. 2

<sup>23</sup> Kaylene C. Williams, Caroline C. Williams, *Five key ingredients for improving student motivation*. Research in Higher Education Journal

decision. Yet, it is also crucial that they should understand the fact that not all aspects are negotiable.<sup>24</sup>

Curriculum cannot be separated with assessment, which also takes part in influencing learners' motivation.<sup>25</sup> Classroom assessment and motivation are closely interconnected.<sup>26</sup> It is necessary to provide learning environment that meet their particular needs, such as a well designed and implemented assessment. This assessment must be helpful for their learning development. The sort of the test also influences students' motivation. The test should be relevant to what they have studied, be based on course objectives, not involve surprise or novelty, and be as easy as possible for them to process. PA (performance assessment) is more interesting, more challenging, and more engaging than traditional P&P (Pen and Paper) tests like multiple choice, true-false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank tests.<sup>27</sup> It is because PA has characteristic that it: is open ended, focus on higher order or complex skills, use context sensitive strategy, use complex problems needing several sorts of performance and significant students' time, may need individual as well as group work, and allow for significant degree of students' choice. Besides, it is important not to give tests which are more challenging than any previous practices because it may negatively affect their motivation.<sup>28</sup> In general, test-taking instructions, terminology, layout, and item choices need to not be ambiguous, confusing, illogical, unclear, imprecise, or poorly designed.<sup>29</sup>

Faculties also need to consider using low-stakes tests rather than high-stakes tests. *The Glossary of Education Reform* gives definition on those tests. They are not different in form of tests but in the usage. If the test result is used dominantly in final scoring, it is called high-stakes test. Yet, if the test is used to measure students' achievement and identify learning problems, then it is called low-high tests. So, the faculties should find an appropriate percentage on final scoring accumulation. They must not make mid semester test and final semester test become the determinant of their final score. Madaus & Clarke conclude some disadvantages of using high-stakes tests are.<sup>30</sup>

1. High-stakes (high standard) test do not have positive effect of teaching and learning.
2. High-stakes tests do not raise students' motivation.
3. High stakes tests are not an appropriate way to assess students' progress since they are different in race, culture, and gender.
4. High stakes tests increase students' failure in learning.

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<sup>24</sup> Olson, G. (1997). Motivation, Motivation, Motivation - Secondary School Educators. Retrieved from [sysiwyg://934/http://7-12educators.about...-12educators/library/weekly/aa071897.htm](http://934/http://7-12educators.about...-12educators/library/weekly/aa071897.htm)

<sup>25</sup> Crookes, G., & Schmidt, R. W. (1991). *Motivation : Reopening the research agenda*. Language learning, 41(4), 469-512.

<sup>26</sup> Yongfei Wu, Liying Cheng, Esther bettney, *Assessment and Motivation: Perspectives from Teacher candidates* (Conference Paper, 2014) p.367

<sup>27</sup> Jay Parkes, *Effects of Classroom Assessment on Student Motivation in Fifth-grade Science* (The Journal of Educational Research. Vol. 96, No 3, 2003)

<sup>28</sup> Kaylene C. Williams, Caroline C. Williams. Loc.cit.

<sup>29</sup> H. Trugman, The Role of Tests in Students (De)Motivation. *Publications by BETA IATEFL*, January 1, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Wynne Harlen & Ruth Deakin Crick, *Testing and Motivation in learning*. Assessment in Education, Vol. 10, No. 2, July 2003

The quality of teachers is another very influencing factor to promote learners' motivation. Having teachers with greater expertise and experience can increase learners' motivation<sup>31</sup>. For instance, Students have better motivation when they are studying with a Ph.D. faculty than M.A. faculty. In accordance, Teachers need to acquire new qualities and continue to grow and evolve as they are the role models for the students,<sup>32</sup> and they must have clear understanding that teaching is not only about subject matter knowledge and classroom management skills.<sup>33</sup> What should be understood here is that teachers must upgrade their knowledge and skills. They have to practice what people say 'lifelong learning'.

Besides, how teachers get along with the students also become quality that need to be owned by teachers as Bettencourt et al. indicate a positive relationship between teacher enthusiasm and student motivation.<sup>34</sup> In addition, relation, supporting and caring each other between the teacher and his/ her students, may motivate students in learning process.<sup>35</sup> Students will be more motivated to learn with teachers they like.<sup>36</sup> There are 5 characteristics of good teachers according to students as below.<sup>37</sup>

1. Teachers are able to build trusting relationships with students in order to create a safe, positive, and productive learning environment.
2. They are patient, caring, and kind.
3. They understand the pace and capacity of the student.
4. They are always willing to help and give time.
5. They are able to engage and motivate students to learn.

To build trusting relationships, teachers need to show their patience, kindness, and care to their students. It can be done by understanding their students' ability and give extra time if they need help to understand the lesson. Teachers also need to make their students optimistic about their future by telling the importance of the lesson for their future.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

There are three main factors in educational practices influencing students' motivation, namely: curriculum management, assessment, and teachers' quality. To make students motivated in learning foreign languages, curriculum should be made challenging and in line with their major to let students feel that they are prepared for their future. Assessment should be more in form of PA (performance assessment) rather than P&P (Paper and Pen). PA assess not only their cognitive skill but also affective and

<sup>31</sup> T. Finegan & J. Siegfried. Op. cit

<sup>32</sup> Kaylene C. Williams, Caroline C. Williams. Op.cit

<sup>33</sup> Celikoz, N., *Basic Factors that Affect General Academic Motivation Levels of Candidate Preschool Teachers. Education*, 131(1), (2010). 113-127

<sup>34</sup> E. M. Gillet, M. H. Bettencourt, M. D. Gall, & R. E. Hull, *Effects of teacher enthusiasm training on student on-task behavior and achievement. American Educational Research Journal*, Vol 20, 435-450, 1983.

<sup>35</sup> Da Luz, Fredson Soares dos Reis, *The Relationship between Teachers and Students in the Classroom: Communicative: Language Teaching Approach and Cooperative Learning Strategy to Improve Learning. In BSU Master's Theses and Projects. Item 22. (2015). Available at <http://vc.bridgew.edu/theses/22>*

<sup>36</sup> Gregory P. Montalvo and Eric A. Mansfield, Raymond B. Mille, *Liking or Disliking the Teacher: Student Motivation, Engagement and Achievement, Evaluation & Research in Education*. 20. 144-158. P.145

<sup>37</sup> Ashley Peterson-DeLuca, *Top Five Qualities of Effective Teachers, According to Students*, An Article, 2016. Available at <https://www.pearsoned.com/top-five-qualities-effective-teachers/>

psychomotor skills. Then, teachers should have good quality in teaching and class management. Unqualified teachers will only weaken their students' motivation.

Considering the importance of motivation in teaching and learning English, some suggestions are given as follows:

**For educators**

1. Teachers/ lecturers should give attention to their students' motivation, and they should try to boost their students' motivation.
2. Educators should improve themselves to meet current standards of knowledge and modernization.

**For future researchers**

1. Future researchers should explore deeper how curriculum management, assessment, and teachers' quality influence students' motivation in Indonesia context.

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