



Teachers' Roles in Overcoming Junior High School Students' Lack of Motivation and Boredom in Learning EFL

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Abstract

Teachers play a big role in influencing students' motivation and their way of learning in the classroom. However, teachers also face some challenges in teaching English as a foreign language. One of them is students' demotivation and boredom. Therefore, this study intends to find out what strategies they use to motivate and reduce students' boredom in junior high school level at MTsN 13 South Jakarta. Six English teachers of the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades were interviewed. The researcher used qualitative method for this study and semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. To analyze the data, the researchers used thematic analysis. Descriptive design was utilized to elaborate on the findings. The findings showed that the teachers have three ways in overcoming MTsN 13 South Jakarta students' lack of motivation; by using actions, learning media, and teaching strategies that are suitable for the students.

Keywords: *Boredom in Learning; EFL; Lack of Motivation; Motivational Strategies; Teacher's Role*

Introduction

Students who are studying English as a foreign language frequently encounter difficulties. According to Lynch (2008), there are three significant issues in classroom teaching and learning English: first, learners may be unmotivated and bored with learning English. They are terrified of failing exams and even engaging in classroom activities; thus, they cannot naturally participate in classroom activities and learn the language. Second, there is not enough time, resources, or supplies. English cannot be acquired and taught as easily as a mother tongue or first language because it is a foreign language. And developing an English classroom climate that supports the teaching-learning process needs time and resources when learning or teaching English as a second language.

Motivation, according to Oxford & Shearin (1996) is a critical factor in ensuring that learners are completely engaged in the learning process. Furthermore, Masgoret & Gardner (2003) claimed that a motivated student puts out more effort, accepts responsibility, has objectives and desires, and values the process and learning. We can infer from these remarks that motivation is one of the most important factors in learning English as a foreign language. Unfortunately, many students become demotivated and bored when learning English.

Teachers play a big role in influencing students' motivation and their way of learning in the classroom. The result of the study conducted by Tang & Hu (2022) showed that students are susceptible to demotivating influences associated to teachers. They will eventually be less eager to learn English if they have a negative experience with their teacher. In addition, Han et al., (2019) stated that teachers might play a crucial role in identifying major sources of learner demotivation and in guiding them to search out and develop effective strategies for overcoming these negative situations. Based on the studies mentioned, it is implied that teachers' role is a crucial thing in motivating students.

However, teachers also face some challenges in teaching English as a foreign language. One of them is students' demotivation and boredom. Dörnyei (1998) defined demotivation as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action.", while boredom is a negative emotional or psychological condition that is frequently associated with low physiological arousal and cognitive stimulation, a distorted perception of time (slow is slow or stagnant), and certain behavioral inclinations (withdrawal from uninteresting situations) (Putwain et al., 2018).

To overcome students' lack of motivation and boredom, teachers must motivate and provide opportunities for students to learn. According to Gao et al., (2022) teaching strategies is one of the factors that contribute to students' motivation in learning English. Therefore, a teacher must use the right strategies other than encouraging to increase students' motivation to learn English (Ariyanti et al., 2019).

Some studies that have been done such as the studies conducted by Ariyanti et al., (2019) and Kurti & Uka (2021) both did a study about what motivational strategies teachers use in a tahfidz school or senior high school. They stated that in boosting students' motivation in general, teachers used encouraging words and game strategy. It was also stated that doing games in the learning process is the most effective strategy.

However, we could not find a study about this research topic that is conducted in junior high school. Therefore, this study intends to find out what strategies they use to motivate students in junior high school level. The research questions for this study are:

1. What is the role of teachers in increasing junior high school students' motivation in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)?
2. What are the most effective strategies for teachers to overcome junior high school students' lack of motivation and boredom in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)?

Method

Study Design

The researchers employed qualitative design to uncover and explore about teachers' role to motivate and overcome junior high school students' boredom in learning English in this research. Qualitative research, according to Berg (2001), pertains to the meaning, concepts, definition, traits, metaphor, symbol, and description of things.

Participants

Six English teachers of the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades at MTsN 13 South Jakarta were interviewed. Since the researchers interviewed the teachers of every grade, variety of motivational strategies they use to overcome junior high school students' lack of motivation and boredom in learning English as a Foreign Language were mentioned, and also the varying roles of the teachers in each grade.

Data Collection Technique and Instrument Development

In this research, the researchers did an interview session to collect the data. Interviews are used as techniques for collecting data to identify problems that need research and also if the researcher wants to get more in-depth information from the respondents (Sugiyono, 2016). This instrument is to gain deeper information about the role of teachers in increasing motivation to learn English as a foreign language and what strategies teachers use to overcome boredom in Junior High School students while learning English. The interviews were semi-structured and the type of interview questions were open-ended questions. Asking an open-ended question helps you to collect more details from the person who is responding to your question. Since the researchers applied open-ended questions, more information or arguments from the participants were expected.

Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained was analysed using thematic analysis, separating the findings theme by theme. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), the act of finding patterns or themes within qualitative data is known as thematic analysis. This method groups a number of discoveries into themes that are centred around a main notion or subject. This is not the same as a code, which is a representation of one or more data insights. Descriptive design was utilized to elaborate the findings.

Results**Teacher's Strategies in Motivating and Overcoming Students' Boredom**

According to teachers at MTsN 13 South Jakarta, there are three ways involved in motivating and overcoming students' boredom: actions, learning media and teaching strategies.

Table 1. Three ways to motivate and overcome students' boredom.

Three ways involved in motivating and overcoming students' boredom		Participants
1. Actions	Word of affirmation	3/6
	Humour	1/6

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	Feedback	1/6
	Story telling	1/6
	Ice breaking	2/6
	Giving a present	2/6
2. Learning Media	Using songs	1/6
	YouTube	3/6
	Wordwall	1/6
	Quizizz	2/6
	Google	1/6
3. Teaching Strategies	Quiz	2/6
	Game (i.e., snake words or scramble words)	2/6
	Cooperative Learning (i.e., peer discussion)	2/6

Table 1.2 Actions to increase students' motivation and overcome students' boredom.

Participants	Interview quotation	Theme
Teacher 1	<i>"Jadi, di awal pembelajaran saya memberikan afirmasi terkait materi yang akan dipelajari, seperti meyakinkan mereka bahwa mereka mampu"</i>	Word of affirmation

melakukannya,”

At the beginning of the lesson the teacher gives affirmations related to the material to be learned, such as convincing the students that they are capable of doing the task material.

Teacher 2

“Tugas seorang guru itu untuk mendorong siswanya agar terus termotivasi, jadi saya sering memberikan pujian atas hasil kerja mereka,”

The teacher stated that teachers’ job is to encourage their students to stay motivated, so she often gives praise for her students’ works.

Teacher 6

“Dalam menyampaikan materi pembelajaran, saya berusaha agar murid merasa nyaman dengan menyisipkan humor dalam bentuk anekdot,”

Humour

In delivering learning materials, the teacher inserts humor in the form of anecdotes.

Teacher 2

"Setelah pembelajaran selesai, biasanya saya mengadakan evaluasi dan memeberikan feedback,"

After the lesson is over, the teacher usually conducts an evaluation and gives feedback.

Feedback

Teacher 4

"Jika anak-anak sudah mulai bosan, biasanya saya menyelingi pelajaran dengan cerita menyenangkan agar semangat mereka bangkit,"

If the children are getting bored, the teacher usually intersperses the lesson with fun stories to raise the students' spirits.

Story Telling

Teacher 1

"Jika dalam pembelajaran ada anak yang tidak fokus, saya biasanya melakukan ice breaking sejenak,"

If there are students who are not focused in the lesson, the teacher usually does an ice breaking for a moment.

Ice Breaking

Teacher 3

“Di awal pembelajaran saya biasa menggunakan ice breaking untuk membangun semangat siswa,”

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher usually does an ice breaking to increase students' motivations in learning.

Teacher 2

“Jika ada kuis saya biasanya memberikan hadiah untuk pemenangnya,”

When there is a quiz, the teacher usually gives a present for the winner.

Teacher 5

“Saat ada pemenang dalam sebuah quiz kelompok, saya memberikan hadiah kecil seperti camilan untuk mengapresiasi kerja mereka,”

When there is a winner on a group quiz, the teacher usually gives small presents such as snacks to appreciate the students' works.

Giving a present

In this action way, the teacher applies six ways, teachers 1 and 2 provide affirmations before and after learning, this is done in order to increase self-confidence in students. Another way that teacher —like teacher 6 —does to motivate and overcome students' boredom in learning English is by inserting a sense of humour in the form of anecdotes.

Another teacher, specifically teacher 2, applies feedback and evaluation at the end of the lesson, this is done in order for students to be able to recognize the mistakes that they need to correct and review. Teacher 4 utilizes story telling as an action in motivating and overcoming boredom by interspersing it in the middle of the lesson to boost students' enthusiasm in participating in English learning.

The teachers, specifically teacher 1 and teacher 3 will do ice breakings when their students are starting to get distracted. These things are usually done to make the students pay attention again to the teachers. Another way to increase students' motivation in learning according to teacher 2 and 5 is to give them small presents for the winners after doing quizzes. This usually works because if the students are promised to get presents as a reward, they will be more excited to be the winners.

Table 1.3 Learning media to increase students' motivation and overcome students' boredom.

Participant s	Answer	Themes
Teacher 5	<p><i>"Karena kelas dilakukan siang dan rata-rata siswa sudah merasa capek dan bosan, jadi saya membuka pelajaran dengan menyanyikan lagu lagu yang relates dengan topik pembelajaran,"</i></p> <p>Since the class is mostly held in the afternoon and some of the students are already tired and bored,</p>	Using Song

the teacher starts the lesson by giving a song that relates to the learning topic and singing it together.

Teacher 1

“Saya mengubah metode ceramah ke menonton video YouTube tapi dikasih pertanyaan agar mereka bisa fokus menonton dan bisa jawab,”

The teacher said that she makes a change in teaching strategy from the lecturing strategy to the use of YouTube videos where before watching the videos the students will be asked questions related to the material thus requiring them to focus on the YouTube videos shown.

Teacher 2

“Anak-anak biasanya lebih semangat jika dipertontonkan fun video yang berkaitan dengan materi, mereka jadi lebih mudah mengerti,”

The teacher stated that students are usually more

YouTube

enthusiastic if they are shown fun videos related to the material, they will be easier to understand the learning material that is being delivered.

Teacher 5

"Selain berpatokan pada textbook, saya juga menampilkan video dari YouTube yang relates dengan materi,"

Apart from relying on the textbook, the teacher also shows videos from YouTube that relates to the material.

Teacher 2

"Biasanya saya menggunakan aplikasi seperti Wordwall dan quizizz untuk membantu proses pembelajaran agar lebih menyenangkan,"

Wordwall

The teacher usually uses apps such as Wordwall and Quizizz to help make the learning process more fun.

Teacher 2

"Biasanya saya menggunakan aplikasi seperti Wordwall dan

Quizizz

Quizziz untuk membantu proses pembelajaran agar lebih menyenangkan,”

The teacher usually uses apps such as Wordwall and Quizizz to help make the learning process more fun.

Teacher 5

“Saat pembelajaran berlangsung, saya sering menggunakan aplikasi Quizizz untuk meningkatkan semangat dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, jadi siswa merasa bersaing dalam kelas,”

During the lesson, the teacher often uses the Quizizz application to increase enthusiasm in learning English, making students feel competitive in class.

Teacher 6

“Saya juga memanfaatkan kecanggihan Google untuk mencari materi sebagai variasi dalam pembelajaran, sehingga meningkatkan pemahaman yang mendalam terhadap

Google

siswa,"

The teacher also utilizes the power of Google to search for materials as a variation in learning, thereby increasing the depth of understanding of each student.

The second way that teachers do to increase motivation and overcome students' boredom is through the use of learning media. There are several learning media that can be used to make learning livelier and fun. Just like Teacher 5 who uses media such as songs to reduce pressure and make students more relaxed to follow the lessons. This certainly helps students to be more motivated to learn.

Teachers 1, 2 and 5 chose YouTube as a suitable medium to increase learning motivation and overcome boredom in students. Teachers feel that the use of YouTube is very helpful in the teaching-learning process. As it attracts students' attention, videos from YouTube make students focus on the material shown, making it easier for them to understand the learning material.

Teacher 2 also utilizes apps that develop students' competitive skills such as Wordwall. Wordwall is an educational game maker application that is easy to use and has various features in it so that it can make the class more exciting and interesting. In addition, teachers 2 and 6 also apply Quizizz, just like Wordwall, the use of Quizizz makes students active and concentrate on learning material, so they will feel motivated to do the practices.

The last one is Google. Teacher 5 believes that students will be more eager to dig up information related to the learning material to be taught through smartphones. Google is one of the media that contains a lot of information so that it increases students' curiosity.

Table 1.4 Teaching strategies to increase students' motivation and overcome students' boredom.

Participants	Answers	Theme
Teacher 3	<p><i>"Anak-anak sangat antusias saat saya memberikan kuis dalam bentuk cerdas cermat, mereka berlomba lomba menjadi pemenang,"</i></p> <p>The students were very enthusiastic when the teacher gives a quiz in the form of a brainteaser, because they compete to be the winner.</p>	
Teacher 5	<p><i>"Sebelum pelajaran dimulai, saya membiasakan untuk tanya-jawab terkait pelajaran lalu dengan tujuan warming up,"</i></p> <p>Before the lesson starts, the teacher makes it a habit to do Q&A (quizzes) related to the last lesson with the aim of warming up session.</p>	Quiz
Teacher 1	<p><i>"Saat murid merasa jenuh, saya mengadakan game snake word secara</i></p>	

	<i>berkelompok,”</i>	Game
	When students feel bored, the teacher organizes a snake word game in groups.	
Teacher 5	<i>“Kata berantai atau snake word cukup efektif dilakukan karena meningkatkan adrenalin siswa sehingga mereka semangat kembali,”</i>	
	The teacher stated that he chains word or snake word as a game strategy is quite effective because it increases the adrenaline of the students so that they are re-energized.	
Teacher 2	<i>“Dengan dibuat kelompok diskusi, mereka bisa mendiskusikan materi pelajaran, dan mendapatkan pemahaman lebih mudah. Lalu ketua kelompok diminta untuk mempresentasikan hasil kerja mereka,”</i>	
	The teacher said that by creating discussion	Cooperative Learning (Peer discussion)

groups, the students can discuss the lesson material together so that understanding of the material can be achieved more easily. Then, the group leaders are asked to present the results of their work in front of the class.

Teacher 5

“Saya membentuk grup diskusi berdasarkan jadwal piket kelas untuk menjalankan Pelajaran. Dalam kelompok diskusi itu siswa saling betukar informasi dan bekerjasama terkait materi hari itu. Final result tiap kelompok akan ditampilkan di depan kelas dan kemudian akan diambil kesimpulan bersama-sama,”

The teacher forms a discussion group based on the class picket schedule to run the lesson. In the discussion groups, students exchange information and work together on the day's material. The final result of each group will

be displayed in front of the class and then conclusions will be drawn together.

Teachers 3 and 5 always use questioning or quiz, both for warm-up before English learning begins and during learning. The quiz technique can increase students' activeness in participating in class. So that it can increase the competitive atmosphere in students and naturally reduce the sense of boredom.

Teachers 1 and 2 usually use game strategies to increase students' enthusiasm for learning. As we discussed earlier, in classroom learning, there must be some students who feel bored, whether it is because of the atmosphere of the classroom environment or teaching methods that are not suitable. Therefore, according to Teacher 5, the use of game strategy is quite effective to overcome students' boredom, so that their adrenaline is stimulated and make the classroom more alive.

Lastly, teachers 2 and 5 usually use cooperative learning method in the form of peer discussion as a strategy to make students more excited and motivated in following the lessons. According to the teachers, by using peer discussion students can exchange information and work together as they wish. In that case, the class surrounding will be more fun and alive to the point students feel motivated to learn.

Discussion

Action

This research analysis shows that there are three key ways that teachers use to increase students' motivation and overcome their boredom in learning: by using action, media, and teaching strategies. As it was shown in *table 1.2*, the teachers stated that in their actions, they used humour as one of the ways to motivate students and reduce their boredom. The research which was conducted by Wagner & Urios-Aparisi (2011) also showed a similar result. It showed that humour plays a role in motivating students to learn English, because humour produced a positive and favourable learning atmosphere.

Another action that is used by the teachers to increase and reduce boredom in learning English is doing an ice breaking to gain students' focus if they are starting to get distracted. Another research, that was conducted by Pranata et al., (2021) also stated similar result about how effective ice breaking is in increasing students' motivation. It was stated that a few things had an impact on how well ice breaking increased students' motivation. The first one is, it is quite enjoyable and encourages learning competition to determine who can learn the most. Second, ice breaking can boost students' self-assurance in their ability to learn, which encourages participation. Third, ice breaking could create a cozy environment for learning. In the boredom context, ice breaking is one of the ways to change the surroundings from boring and sleepy to lively, exciting, and relaxed. This will improve the learning environment and have a major impact; therefore, it could raise students' motivation to learn by encouraging them to participate more actively in the process.

The action that the teachers also used to increase students' motivation is word of affirmation in the form of giving compliments and praises to the students, such as convincing the students that they are capable of doing the task material, and giving them praises for doing their works. In the research conducted Firdaus (2015), it showed that if praise was provided appropriately, it would have a good impact on students' involvement in learning. As a result, this study offers some recommendations that could help teachers raise student involvement. To encourage students to actively participate in the teaching and learning process, it is advised that teachers select, develop, or most likely construct praise that is thought to be able to deliver effective learning and fit with the students' interests.

Learning Media

Besides action, learning media is also used as one of the key ways to increase students' motivation and boredom in English class. As it was shown in *table 1.3*, one of the teachers stated that when the class is held in the afternoon, the students often feel bored and tired. Therefore, the teacher always uses songs which relate to the materials they are about to discuss as one of the learning media to make the learning environment livelier. The research conducted by Al-Smadi (2020) stated that singing songs can be more engaging and fun than other activities since they encourage students to sing along and participate in action songs. Meaning that students will be excited to engage more in the learning process.

Another learning media that is considered as an effective media to motivate and reduce boredom that the teachers mentioned is by applying Quizizz app in the

teaching learning process. They stated that students show their competitive side more. Similar findings were found in Dhamayanti (2021) which stated that because of Quizizz's gamification features, students' motivation to engage in the learning process increased.

Teaching Strategies

Moving on to *table 1.4*, the last way to motivate and reduce students' boredom in learning according to the teachers is in the form of using effective teaching strategies. The first one is in the form of applying quizzes in the teaching learning process as an effective strategy to motivate and reduce boredom. Refnita (2019) found that quizzes are a strategy and a measurement, much like tests, and that they greatly motivate students to study and go over their course topics. The majority of the students studied for the quizzes because they were aware that they would be given in class. Students will try to answer the quiz questions first rather than thinking they will perform better than the others. One aspect of quizzes that can encourage students' motivation to learn English is that they are enjoyable and challenging since they involve the students in learning activities, according to a different study by Simbolon et al., (2019).

Another strategy that can be used as the teachers mentioned is by using games. According to the study conducted by Pho & Dinscore (2015) on game-based learning. The Learning Games Committee of the Instructional Technology Committee not only provides students with enjoyable activities but also introduces them to the concept of the learning objective. Another study by Yudha et al., (2021) found that games provide students with an enjoyable and relaxing learning environment. Teachers can use games to create a setting that inspires students to learn the language. Furthermore, when students feel like they are progressing well, they will learn more efficiently. Games provide students the chance to practice and overcome their fears. The needs of today's children can be met through the usage of educational games (Mattheiss et al., 2009).

The last strategy is incorporating peer discussions and cooperative learning into the teaching and learning process. According to research by Alcalá et al., (2019), cooperative learning can improve students' academic achievement by fostering close relationships among students. According to Goodyear et al., (2014), cooperative learning combines individual and group accomplishment with the development of interpersonal qualities like tolerance and respect for others, which can help in socialization and help foster a positive perception of the group.

Conclusion

Lack of motivation and boredom is one of the common problems in learning English. In teaching English, teachers face some challenges. Therefore, connected to this research's result, English teachers have their own strategies in overcoming them. This study revealed that teachers have three ways of playing their roles in motivating students and reducing their boredom; by actions, learning media, and teaching strategies. It was shown that the teachers find doing actions (word of affirmation, humour, feedback, storytelling, ice breaking, giving a present), using learning media (using songs, Youtube, Wordwall, Quizizz, Google), and doing these teaching strategies (quiz, game, cooperative learning) is effective to motivate students and overcome their boredom in learning English.

Out of all the strategies mentioned, word of affirmation is the most effective strategy to motivate students, while Youtube is the most effective learning media to reduce students' boredom. They can be called as effective in MTsN 13 South Jakarta's environment because half of the participants use these strategies in their English classes.

This study still has its limitation, as it was only done in MTsN 13 South Jakarta. Therefore, future studies about this topic could also be held in another setting such as in senior high school or university level. In Addition, further research is needed to explore the details on how each one of these ways or strategies can contribute in students' motivation and reduce their boredom. Lastly, future studies could also find out if these strategies also work in teaching other languages.

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