



From english teachers' perceptions: English learning demotivating factors for Indonesian University students

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ABSTRACT

Students' demotivation is a crucial issue in EFL context that has not yet received sufficient research particularly in higher education level. In Indonesia English as a foreign language context, students' demotivation in language learning is mostly addressed based on students' perceptions. The purpose of the current study is to examine Indonesian university EFL teachers' perceptions of factors demotivate students to study English at university level in Indonesia. To collect the qualitative data, five teachers from English study program were involved in a semi-structured interviews with additional follow-up questions to further explore the raised concerns. These teachers were asked to understand their perceptions and experiences on what factors demotivate their students to study English. Seven demotivating factors were identified in teachers' perception that demotivate students to study English: students' attitudes toward English, students' past experience, peers proficiency, teachers' workload, classroom availability, hot and suffocating classroom, and technological facilities. This study has some implications for higher education policy makers, institutional authorities, EFL students, and EFL teachers in particular.

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the most essential aspects when learning a foreign language. Numerous studies have showed that motivation is one of the factors that can lead individuals to succeed in learning a second or foreign language (Al-Hoorie & Busari, 2018; Dornyeu & Ushioda, 2021; Lila, 2016). For example, Hu (2011) stated that while high motivation learners have a positive influence on their language learning performance, demotivating factors prevent the language learning process. Therefore, learners' with low level of motivation in learning a language suffer from a continuing effect, such as low self-esteem, lack of confidence, failure, feeling guilty, and working hard to regain motivation during the learning process (Falout, 2012). Students who have low language learning motivation or so called demotivated will lose their interest and passion and might not perform well and demotivation decreases their productivity and performance in learning a foreign language (Han & Mahzoun, 2017). In addition, Ellis (2009) highlighted that

demotivating language learners frequently experience various barriers during the process of learning English, resulting in failure to achieve their long-term goals. Even learners with exceptional language skills, cannot achieve success in learning a foreign or second language without high level of motivation (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). Therefore, demotivating factors should be eliminated to create a good language learning environment and to determine the extent of students' involvement in the classroom, academic achievements, and language performance (Foul et al., 2009).

In higher educational context of Indonesia, English is considered as a compulsory subject as mandated in the National Standard of Education No. 19/2005, article 9, paragraph (2). In the process of language learning, teachers become the main figure and learners engage in the classroom under their instructional guidance (Rahman et. al., 2019). Therefore, during the process of learning a language, teachers monitor all the activities and track all the language progress made by the students. Thus, teachers may have different or similar perceptions of causes that contribute to students' demotivation. According to Sakai & Kikuchi (2009), language teachers should be able to identify factors causing students' demotivation in order not to be the main source of demotivation. The reason for conducting the research is because factors influencing demotivation of students based on EFL teachers perceptions have gotten little attention in earlier studies, especially in Indonesian context. The review of previous studies only concentrated on the factors causing demotivation among teachers (e.g., Bravo, et al., 2017; Busari, 2018) and demotivation from students perceptions (e.g., Han & Mahzoun, 2017; Jahedizadeh, Ghanizadeh & Ghonsooly, 2016; Lestari, I.W. 2017). Thus, more critical papers that explore demotivation among EFL students from teachers' perception in Indonesia especially in higher education setting need to be investigated.

Furthermore, elements in demotivation seem to have a significant aspects that have an unfavorable effect on students attitudes in learning as it results in undesirable learning outcomes (Ghadirzadeh et al., 2013). Demotivation is a process that causes students rejection in learning a language and minimize their motivation for a particular goal. The sources of demotivation found in various EFL context seem to have internal and external factors. Dornyei & Ushioda (2011) used the term 'demotivation' to refer to a particular external situation where the learners experience lack of motivation and desire to achieve a particular goal. Other researchers, Sakai & Kikuchi (2009) expanded the interpretation of Dornyei's about demotivation by including internal forces that causes students lack of motivation in learning English. Furthermore, students demotivation in learning a language don't necessarily mean that they entirely lose motivation, yet their motivation in language learning has been reduced due to various demotivating factors such as learning environment, the subject, facilities or the learning context. Within this context, Dornyei & Ushioda (2011) added that students demotivation in learning a language does not mean a complete loss of motivation in learning, but there are factors that unfavorably limiting students level of motivation.

Numerous research studies has been conducted to explore the sources and factors of EFL students demotivation across various contexts and perspectives. Most of the studies explore the student' demotivation based on internal and external factors. Several studies identified students' characteristics, attitudes in learning a language, level of proficiency or language performance, self-confidence, and peers proficiency (Falout & Maruyama, 2008; Tsuchiya, 2006; Ushioda, 2011). In Their study, Falout & Maruyama (2008) explored factors causing demotivation on students from 64 different colleges that divided into two different proficiency level namely low and high proficiency groups. The results of the study revealed that students' self-confidence was identified as the most demotivating factor from the two low and high proficiency groups. Another study by Trang and Baldauf (2007) found that the internal factor that significantly contributed to the EFL students were students' experience of failure, attitude towards English language, and self-confidence. Meanwhile, the external factors that contributing to students' demotivation were English proficiency, behavior, instructional language and methodology, etc.

In addition, some recent studies have identified teaching facilities, classroom environment, learning contents, students' internal condition, and materials as the main factors of demotivation among English students (Çankaya, 2018; Liu, 2020;). In the same context, Quadir (2021) investigated sources of demotivation among EFL students in Bangladesh indicated that institutional facilities, textbooks, students' past experience and attitude of their peers were generally the main factors of students' demotivation in learning English. However, there are also some studies that showed that teachers were one of the main sources that negatively affect students' motivation in language learning (Arai, 2004; Evans & Tragant, 2020; Kim & Seo, 2012). For example, Evans & Tragant (2020), categorized factors of demotivation on learners into nine different categories after interviewing EFL students. The results examined that nearly half of the factors affecting students demotivation were teachers and it represented approximately 40%. Besides, Zhang (2007) explained that teachers' proficiency level and competence became the source of learning demotivator in four different nations such as China, Germany, Japan, and U.S.A. He added that it comprises nearly 40% of factors that affecting students attitude.

All the studies mentioned above collectively indicated that factors causing demotivation among students in the EFL context seem to relatively correspondent (e.g. learning facilities, teaching materials, students' attitudes, English teachers, language instruction, competency, etc.). Moreover, although all the studies were conducted in the context of English as a foreign language, they mostly focus on students' perceptions to explore students' source of demotivation in English learning. Very few studies focus on teachers' perceptions in exploring factors of demotivation among EFL students, especially in the context of EFL in developing country like Indonesia in general and private higher education context in particular. In fact, factors causing demotivation among EFL students can vary due to various contexts. Taking the existing gaps into consideration, this study was conducted to examine EFL teacher' perceptions on factors causing students' demotivation to study English in Indonesia. This research is limited to identify teachers' perceptions on English language learning demotivating factors for EFL students at one of the private universities in Indonesia. This research also investigates educational implications to promote the motivation of Indonesian higher education students in English language learning from teachers' perception.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study follows qualitative research method to identify the sources of students' demotivation to learn English language based on English teachers' perceptions at English Study program at a private University in Indonesia. This qualitative method was suitable to use as it studies "phenomena that happens in natural settings" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p.133). The study employed semi-structured interviews with additional follow-up questions to further explore the raised concerns. The interview was done to investigate English teachers' perceptions of factors causing demotivation among EFL students, and to give some educational implications to promote the motivation of Indonesian higher education students to study English based on teachers' perception. The data were collected between September and October 2023. The interview was done approximately 60 minutes by using audio-recorded. Firstly, all the participants were informed about the purpose and the content of the interview to ensure that the researcher and participants shared the same perceptions of demotivation. The interviews took place in the lecturers' room at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University where the participants were working. Next, the interviews were conducted using Bahasa Indonesia as the participants' first language. The participants were given plenty of space to respond confidently and explain their perceptions on factors causing demotivation among EFL students. They were also asked to give some educational implications and recommendations to promote the motivation of Indonesian higher education students to study English. Lastly, the recordings were transcribed in English in exactly the original words. The

collected data were analyzed using the procedure suggested in Braun and Clarke (2006) that suggested a six-step thematic analysis.

A number of 5 full time English teachers employed in a English study program at one of the private University in Baubau city, Indonesia, participated in this study. The teachers' experience in English language teaching were 5 to 12 years at undergraduate level. 3 teachers possessed masters' degree and 2 others had doctoral degree. All the participants were excited for participating in this study and sharing their perception of factors causing students' demotivation to learn English. To maintain participants' privacy, their names were changed into code (e.g., English Teacher B; English Teacher C, teacher E).

Table 1. Participants' personal information

	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D	Teacher E
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female
Age	55	41	32	40	37
Educational Degree	Doctor in English Studies	Doctor in English Education	Mater in TESOL	Master in English Education	Mater in Applied Linguistics
Teaching Experience in EFL	30	15	5	11	12

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

After interviewing all the participants, the results were categorized on seven different factors that demotivate students in learning English based on English teachers' perception. The demotivating factors were related to students' attitudes toward English, students' past experience, peers proficiency, teachers' workload, technological and physical institutional facilities. Table below shows the list of teachers' collective perceptions of the factors that demotivate English students in studying English at English study program of Indonesian private University.

Table 2. Factors demotivate english students

Factors	Teachers' Perceptions
Student-related Demotivating Factor	Attitude Towards English
	Past Experience
	Peers Proficiency
	EFL Teachers' Workload
EFL Teacher-related Factor	Classroom Availability
	Hot and Suffocating Classroom
	Technological Facilities
Institutional Factor	

a. Students' Attitudes towards English

The majority of teachers reported that students negative attitude towards English seem to have a powerful effect on students motivation to learn English. Students' characteristics, misbehaviour, and lack of discipline were also related to this which later affected students motivation to learn English. Students attitude towards English was considered by the participants as one of the potential demotivator for students to learn English in the classroom. Teacher B stated:

"I see that when it comes to teaching in the classroom, most of the students do not fully pay attention to the course. There are only few of them that can clearly understand the topic that I explain to them. So, it seems like the students do not really care what I explain and when I ask for a question related to the topic, most of them cannot give a comprehensive answers. In other words, they easily get bored, unmotivated, and be passive during the learning process in the classroom".

Almost all participants interviewed (Teacher A, C, and E) agreed with teacher B about students attitude towards English was one of the main demotivating factor in learning English. The students lack of interest and motivation in learning English because they think that studying English in University was just to get the degree and to fulfill what the their parents want, not what they really want. This situation affects the students' self-motivation and self-esteem (Teacher C). Along the same line, teacher E added that:

"I was not surprised that many parents nowadays not only English students, but all students from various undergraduate programs were forced to study at University level because they were forced by their parents. This situation then make the students have less motivation, interest and discipline during the learning process in the classroom".

b. Peers Attitude and Proficiency

The next demotivating factor among students according to the participants is the proficiency and the attitude of peers. Four out of five participants agreed that peers proficiency is factor that explicitly contributing to demotivation of EFL students. The peers negative attitude and poor academic achievements unfortunately affect the other students' motivation and attitude towards English. It was shared by teacher B who explain that:

"The relationship among EFL students affects the classroom environment and increase students' progress, mood, motivation, and later on proficiency. However, I see that more than a half of the English students at English study program do not perform well in the classroom and have a poor motivation to improve their English proficiency. As a result, their peers who are emotionally connected with other students, will lose their motivations too to improve their English ability. Peers poor performance, low motivation will negatively hinder the students participation in the classroom and demotivate them to improve their English skills".

Students' positive progress, good academic performance and motivation could most likely to give a positive impact and boost' the peers motivation. Students share and learn not only from the teachers, but also from their peers. Any academic progress, motivation, and achievements that their peers make, will motivate other students, no matter how small the progress, and the achievement is.

c. Students' Past Experience

The participants also highlighted the need of past experience in learning English, since it could help them to succeed during their study at English language study program. Students past experience in English language learning is one of the factor that affect their motivation to learn English at University level. The majority of the participants specifically categorized students' past experience with their inability to express ideas in English, weakness in Grammar, and lack of vocabulary. Teacher A and D stated the students were mostly come from the rural areas, and their English marks in examination are not good enough. This situation demotivate students at university level and make them lack of confidence at University level. Teacher B:

"I think that some of my students have anxiety to express their English especially in oral expression. They are lack of confidence because their anxiety in English speaking perceived since they were at high schools and junior high schools. This low English speaking ability causes demotivation when they are at university level".

d. Teachers' Workload

Some of the participants stated that teachers' workload was one of the main demotivating factors among EFL students. Four out of five participants have another responsibilities besides teaching English such as: being a vice rector, head of department, secretary, and they have to deal with numerous tasks. They have to sacrifice their time with the students and this was considered as a source of demotivation for the students because they have limited time and sometimes have to reschedule the class. Teacher B explained:

"We have so many demands here given by the institutions. We do not have enough time for the students, as we have to deal with numerous tasks. The workload leave me with very limited time to teach my students and to prepare the lesson for them. Sometimes, I have to change my teaching class schedule as I have to finish my administrative tasks. Even, I just texted the captain class and asked them to do the assignments that I give via Whatsapp".

The workload that teachers have will affect the students' learning process and the teachers will be unable to help the students with their academic problems due to limited time with their students. As a result, this situation could cause demotivation for the students.

e. Institutional Facilities

Another crucial factors that demotivate EFL students based on teachers' perception was the lack of both technological and physical facilities. All of the participants criticized mostly similar concerns regarding inadequate institutional facilities (eg. Hot and suffocating classrooms, technological facilities for listening practices, and classroom availability). Teacher B explained

"I see my students do not feel confident when I teach them in the afternoon as the temperature rise and the classroom gets hotter and uncomfortable. The two ceiling fans installed may not be enough and this absolutely affects students concentration on the lesson".

Teachers C, D, and E agreed that not having good classroom facilities seemed to be the source of demotivation for the students. Teacher C explained how not having good technological facilities could demotivate students to study English in the classroom. Teacher C:

"I teaching listening comprehension I and II, and as you know, when it comes to teaching listening comprehension, you need loud speakers for your listening class. The classrooms are not equipped with the loud speakers for teaching listening, so I have to bring my own little loud speaker. For me and my students, my own loud speakers is not appropriate for a big class with up 30 students, the audio is not really clear, especially for the students who sit in the back".

Dealing with listening class can become a challenging practice for the students and teacher D agreed that without having sufficient technological facilities, it will demotivate students' to learn English listening comprehension and hinder students' progress. She complained about the quality of loud speakers she has to work with for teaching listening in the classroom. Teacher E also

commented on the classroom availability allocated based on the fixed schedule. This teacher stated that:

“The classroom availability is limited here, there are only two classroom available for English department students. Even we have to share the classroom with other study programs. Every time I try to do my teaching activity, me and my students have to wait for other classes to finish before we come in to the classroom. We would love to have our own classroom, to teach my students without thinking about the time limit”.

The lack of classroom availability for English language learning could affect the students' performance and motivation to learn English. The delay of teaching English in the classroom can create frustration for the students and lead to a potential factor of demotivation among the students.

Another source of demotivation as stated by the participants was language laboratory. For teachers, language laboratory was one of the most important aspect for English language students. They perceived the unavailability of language lab was another factor of students' demotivation in learning English. Teacher D:

“When I teach my students E-Learning, it's a challenge for me because my students need computers to access language software that allow them for practicing their language skills effectively and improving their digital literacy. There was a moment when the students feel disappointed because there were no computers to visualize what E-learning was all about and what sort of English software and application that they can try to practice their English skills”.

Institutional facilities like language lab is crucial for language students, especially at university level as it can affect the motivational level of the students. Having this facility can support the language learning and the students can further practice their English skills effectively.

Discussions

The principal objective of this study was to examines EFL teachers' perception of factors causing students' demotivation to study English at one of Indonesian private University. To reveal factors causing EFL students' demotivation based on EFL teachers' perception, data were collected using a semi-structured interview. According to the study, students' attitude towards English, past experience, peers proficiency, EFL teachers' workload, classroom availability, hot and suffocating classroom, and technological facilities are sources of demotivation for EFL students. This means that factors causing demotivation among EFL students were divided into three categories, namely student-related demotivating factors, EFL teacher-related demotivating factors, and institutional factors.

These results are consistent with the findings from the previous studies on factors causing demotivation among students; student-related factor (Kim & Seo 2012; Al-Hoorie, 2018; Quadir, 2021). Students' attitude towards English, past experience and peers' proficiency emerged as a student-related factor that significantly contribute to the students' demotivation to study English. According to the teachers, students' attitudes toward English is a crucial factor that affect their motivation to study English. Further, students' past experience in high schools and junior high school will affect their motivation to study English at University level. The teachers believe that students with negative academic experience in English when they were at high school will perceive English to be frightened subjects in their current level. Also, peers' English proficiency is viewed as one of the factors that strongly impact students motivation in studying English. The finding coincide with previous study conducted by Ushioda (2011). Peers with unfavorable attitude in terms of poor English proficiency are the sources of demotivation for students in the classroom.

Peers are emotionally connected, when they feel stressed and demotivated, other students will be affected. On the contrary, peers can encourage each other when they have motivational problems.

Furthermore, besides student-related factor, another factor affecting students' motivation to learn English is teachers' workload. This finding is in agreement with Han and Mahzoun (2017). In this factor, all teachers in the current study feel fatigue and under stress due to workload and administrative tasks so that unfavorably affect the students motivation. All the teachers in the study are in charge of dealing with other administrative tasks beside their teaching tasks. As a consequent, they have limited time for effectively teaching and sharing about the material. For example teacher B and C were appointed by the Rector as a vice rector and head of postgraduate program. They reported that less preparation for the teaching class materials and less time for discussing face to face about the material due to too much administrative tasks directly affect the students' motivation to study in the classroom. The participants added that the students became less motivated and disinterested in learning because they sometimes have to skip the class and miss the face to face discussion with the students. English teachers need to spend time more and discuss with the students to maintain a good relationship so that the students keep motivated in learning the material (Curby et al., 2009).

Regarding institutional factors, the current study showed that technological and physical facilities; classroom availability, hot and suffocating classroom affected Indonesian EFL students motivation towards their English study. In technological and physical facilities, the teachers perceived some aspects of institutional facilities that appear to be sources of demotivation for EFL students in learning. Hot and suffocating classroom, lack of classroom availability, and poor classroom technology tools were the most stated factors of demotivation in terms of learning facilities. Furthermore, laboratory language computer, loud speakers for teaching listening fell under the institutional technological facilities. This findings is in line with some previous studies that found that institutional facilities affect the students motivation (Sakai and Kikuchi 2009).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study has investigated Indonesian teachers' perception of factors causing demotivation among EFL students to study English at University levels. The results of the study revealed that student-related factor, teacher-related factor, and institutional factor as sources of EFL students' demotivation in learning English. Student-related demotivating factor were students' attitudes toward English, students' past experience, and peers proficiency. Besides students, teacher-related, i.e. teachers workload were detected based on teachers' perception as the sources of demotivation among EFL students in learning English. Last factors, institutional factors was reported by teachers as source of demotivation among Indonesian EFL students at private university. More specifically, poor technological and physical institutional facilities negatively affected students' motivation to study English.

As to pedagogical contribution to the literature on factors causing demotivation, the results of this study have a number of implications. Firstly, EFL teachers should be conscious and sensible about factors that potentially causing students' demotivation especially in private University context. The EFL teachers should be reflective about those factors by using innovative strategies that provide students with better learning opportunities. This study provides insights for institutional authorities to consider what has become the needs and expectations of the students to support their learning environments for achieving expected academic achievements. Institutional authorities should also reflect on teachers' workload by reducing their administrative tasks so they can fully focus on their main duty as full-time teachers. The results of the study may be enlightening to some educational settings, especially EFL context at higher education where English is taught as a foreign language.

The study has examined teachers' perceptions of factors causing demotivation among EFL students to study English at Indonesian private university. Future studies may investigate the phenomenon at other institution since every institution has specific circumstances that may not be applicable to other institutions. Future studies also might explore the phenomenon at different level of institutions, i.e. secondary and primary levels from other perspectives that represents English language learning in EFL context. The present study is lack of its independence on reporting the data of the interview, limited to a few participants, and only single methodology used in collecting the data. To gain more representatives findings, future studies may include more participants, various data collection methods and more approaches to validate the findings of the study on factors of demotivation.

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