



## **How English Language Teachers' Expectation Affect Students' English Learning Motivation**

Aulia Citra Ramadhani, Ari Purnawan  
Yogyakarta State University

### *Abstract*

To master English, students are expected to be eager enough to learn on their own. It is generally assumed that English teachers' expectations of their students affect students' willingness to learn English by themselves. According to their expectation, teachers tend to behave unconsciously differently toward their students. These different behaviors could inflict how the students feel about the learning activity which results in students' eagerness to learn about a certain topic. This study aims to look into how English Teachers' expectation towards their students' ability affects students' motivation to develop their English skills, especially in Indonesia EFL context. This study result in conclusion Indonesian students' varied characteristics may obstruct their teachers' low or high expectation. There is a possibility that teachers' different expectation affects how they behave towards their students. Therefore, teachers' different behaviors toward their students may affect students' motivation during English learning activities in the classroom. To avoid the possibility of this issue, teachers are advised to help students to reach their optimum potentials, be more sensitive toward their students' emotions, and maintain their rapport during the learning process regardless the students' characteristics.

**Keywords:** *teacher expectation, teacher behaviour, learning motivation*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There have been numerous efforts done by educators to continually improve the quality of English teaching and its results. According to Mistar (2005), however, teaching English in Indonesia has not been successful due to some factors, such as the curriculum, teachers' competencies, and time limitations. Most of the factors have been fixed since then, especially the curriculum which continues to develop until today. However, the results may still be far from the expectation. In line with Darwanto (2019), several factors may affect the students' achievement. Students' motivation to learn is the one that has been highlighted (Agustiantri et al., 2016).

The process which begins, leads, and continues someone's behavior for accomplishing a certain goal is interpreted as motivation (Cherry, 2020). It means that learning motivation is all the efforts that learners do to achieve the learning goal. Despite other factors which may affect the learning outcomes, learning motivation is one of the factors which cannot be directly fixed by the teachers. Therefore, the lack of motivation from the students to learn English may be one of the issues that should be concerned. In this case, it is especially related to what teachers should do to motivate their students.

Several aspects may affect students' motivation in learning. Some of them are the classroom climate and the relationship between teachers and their students (Mucherah et al., 2014 and Ebata, 2008). Classroom climate will not be separated from how teachers behave towards their students. Several studies have found that teachers' behavior may be one of the impacts of their expectations towards their students (Brophy & Good, 1983; Urhahne, 2015). Research about teachers' expectations, teachers' behavior, and learning motivation has been conducted separately by several researchers, for example, Szumski and Karwowski (2019), Sedova and Salamounova (2016), and Mucherah et al. (2014). However, these studies do not directly explain the possibility which may happen between teachers' expectation and students' motivation, especially in EFL learning context in a certain circumstance like in Indonesia.

From another perspective, it is generally known that teachers have their expectations towards their students. In fact, it is possible for the teacher to give different expectations for each student. Indonesia has been well known for its diversity, especially its ethnicity and social-economic background. In consequence, it is possible for teachers to meet different types of students at their school depending on which region they teach. It may also imply the possibility of teachers' different expectations towards their students (Agirdag, 2018; Saiful & Triyono, 2018).

Therefore, with these points in mind, this study is directed to the exploration about whether or not teachers' expectation greatly influences students' learning motivation and giving solution about the certain problem. This study is focused on possible answers about how English teachers' expectation may affect their behaviors due to the various conditions in Indonesian EFL learning and how it may stimulate their students' motivation toward the subject. The teachers' professionalism and accurate estimation towards their students will be needed to optimize their students' learning motivation which will affect their students' achievement later on.

## **THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN EFL**

There are several roles of teachers in the language classroom activity. They are the controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, performer, demonstrator, and observer. In addition, Harmer (2007) also states that another teacher's role as teaching aid gives teachers other responsibilities i.e. mime and gesture, students' language model, and comprehensible input provider.

Teacher as controller means that they are the ones who are responsible for what should or should not be taught in the classroom. Any delivered information/knowledge/instruction should be considered wisely by teachers. It is also important for teachers to understand their role as organizers. If the controller is when teachers are totally in charge of certain classroom activities, meanwhile organizer is needed when teacher need to arrange the detail of the classroom activities. This role is related to teachers' role as demonstrators too (Naibaho,

2019). It is when teachers need to demonstrate a certain activity before asking students to do it.

Another teachers' role is as assessors. Teachers' consideration, while they are assessing their students, is also needed during the learning activity. Not only judging, assessing, and giving feedback to their students, but teachers are also expected to inform their students what are being assessed (Harmer, 2003). Teachers as prompters are in charge to give the students some clues when they are losing the thread of the activities. Meanwhile, teachers as participants may occur when teachers also take a role in the learning activity. Acting as prompters and participants can make teachers too dominant in related activities because students also see the teacher as a resource.

A performer is another role in which teachers may need to act during the classroom activity (Naibaho, 2019). Teachers as performers mean that teachers should be aware of which mime and gesture they need to perform in a particular activity. It is generally known that students think their teachers master all knowledge about the major they teach. Comprehensible input is one of the teachers' roles as a resource in a language classroom. Next, the role of a teacher as a tutor is needed when students have a pair or teamwork, unlike their role as controller or organizer which can be done at the classroom level. Last but not least, teachers' role is an observer. Teachers are expected to pay attention to how students carry out related activities, how conducive the class condition is related to the activity chosen, how students develop from one activity to another, and many more.

As quoted from Harmer (2007: 113), "...a class where there is a positive, enjoyable and respectful relationship between teacher and students, and between the students themselves.". This kind of class may be derived when students willing to give their trust to the teachers, especially when it is about the teachers' academic capability. A proper relationship between teachers and students is needed to optimize each of the teachers' roles.

However, teachers who are considered knowledgeable will be useless if they do not know how to properly impart their knowledge. Considering this issue, Harmer (2007) proposed the keys to getting well-engaged with the students during learning activities. These four keys are (1) recognizing students, (2) listening to students, (3) respecting students, and (4) being even-handed.

Realizing and performing their roles properly are very necessary for teachers. However, some previous studies proved one of the causes of teacher's role lacking performance is teachers expect differently towards their students (e.g. Sedova & Salamounova, 2016). It is also reported that these different expectations affect different results on students' achievement and involvement during learning activities (e.g. Szumski & Karwowski, 2016; Urhahne, 2015). This study will be focused on how teachers should carry out their roles to maintain their rapport with students which is, later on, affecting students' engagement during the classroom activities, especially in the Indonesia EFL context.

## **TEACHER EXPECTATION AND BEHAVIOUR**

Teacher expectation is generally described as teachers' estimation or ideas which they believe about their students' potential academic achievement. Teachers' accurate expectation is needed to maximalize students' potential, but it is not a surprise when teachers estimate their students inaccurately. This inaccurate expectation may be selectively obstructed due to teachers' stigma towards their students' backgrounds, especially their

social groups (Jussim et al., 1996). According to Saha and Dworkin (2009), there are several factors which may influence teachers' expectation towards their students. Most of them are students' gender, social class, diagnostic labels, ethnicity, personality, and social skills, teacher/student background, names, and other siblings.

Several recent studies prove that these related factors still affect teachers' expectations towards their students. These findings are apparently based on Borphy and Good (1970) findings of how teachers' different communication is affected by their expectation. Teachers reportedly chose different ways to communicate towards low and high expectation students, such as they praise more high expectation students and less toward the lower ones. Teachers may also rebuke students' same bad behaviors differently according to how well teachers expect them. Students' different outcomes were also reported caused by teachers' different expectations and behaviors. This finding enormously supports the idea of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

A self-fulfilling prophecy is generally described as how someone's false expectation may lead to its confirmation. Elaborating this concept in the teaching context, we may conclude that how teachers expect towards their students may lead teachers to unconsciously make it happens. Teachers' behaviors, which convey from their belief to their instruction, are already known as the mediator of these findings. Therefore, students' different interpretations of teachers' different behavior may lead to different students' responses in a learning activity (Borphy, 1983). These different responses may become the 'bedrock' of other implications such as students' learning motivation and academic achievements.

Teachers' behavior is always linked with their expectations unconsciously. The certain phenomenon may be caused by several factors, and it is generally known that these factors also exist in Indonesian teaching and learning activity. Therefore, this study focuses on teachers' inaccurate expectation which comes up due to their subjective judgments and how it may probably affect their behavior towards these students. By bringing up the topic, teachers are expected to have optimistic behavior even if they realized students' background diversity. This may help the students learn more comfortably to learn a certain subject, especially in an English classroom.

## **EMOTION, MOTIVATION, AND LEARNING**

According to Hall & Goetz (2013), a multidimensional construct that consists of affective, psychological, cognitive, expressive, and motivational components is generally known as emotion. The most essential and basic component is the affective. It is a stage when we feel something within because of a particular circumstance which can be from outside or inside of ourselves. After we feel the emotion, physical responses are transferred. These physical responses do not only occur in our bodies but also our minds. This stage of components is known as the psychological one. The psychological component will link us to another stage which is cognitive. The cognitive component is the part when our brain processes the emotion which has been delivered. At this stage, our brain will stimulate what kind of response we should convey according to the certain emotion we feel. These spontaneous responses may be in the form of sad or happy faces or other body movements. Therefore, it is when the expressive component is constructed. After that, certain behaviors can be stimulated because of these emotions and that is when the motivational component is built up. According to these proposed ideas by Anne and Elizabeth, this is important for

teachers concern about their students' emotions, especially in the classroom, which later on may trigger their motivation in a certain learning activity.

Emotions are the basis of how motivation is built up. To conclude the ideas that have been stated so far, the essential of emotion in learning activities must be considered. The assumption of how emotions affect learning activities is from their impact on students' motivation. The bedrock of motivation is the desire to do something. When the desire is strong enough, an action may be provoked (Harmer, 2007). When someone has reasons to be motivated and is motivated enough, they will do anything to achieve certain goals.

Emotion, motivation, and learning are intertwined. According to the ideas which have been stated so far, we can conclude that emotions are the 'bedrock of someone's motivation. In a learning context, teachers may be one of the external causes of students' motivation and emotion which is distributed from how they behave towards their students and maintain the learning classroom's atmosphere.

## **ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING IN INDONESIA**

Indonesia has been known for its diversity in any of its cultural aspects which one of which is its languages. Different cultures of each tribe or race lead to this unique phenomenon. Indonesia is known as linguistically varied. There are at least 700 local languages that are still currently used. Regarding this diversity, it is understandable that Indonesia needs a language to become their lingua franca which is known as Bahasa Indonesia. It may be one of the causes of why Indonesia still places English as a Foreign Language. Therefore, this position allows many obstacles and weaknesses of learning English in Indonesia. Looking at the society we live in, most of us do not use English in our daily communication. This may lead the students which are expected to learn English to feel less motivated about the urgency to master it.

According to several studies, this study will come to an assumption that there are significant social class differences in Indonesian which is indirectly or/and directly affect its educational system. Moreover, this issue would affect how the teaching and learning run in particular schools, how teachers expect certain students based on their related background, or even how teachers may behave to them. Assumptions about how the English teacher in Indonesia will establish the different expectations of students with related backgrounds are very likely to occur. However, this study will be focused on how English teachers may perceive their students' academic potentials based on their background and how those expectations may affect students' learning motivation in English classes.

## **HOW ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPECTATION MAY AFFECT ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION**

Differences in teacher expectations may occur due to different students' characteristics in Indonesia. In line with Agirdag (2018), collectively, teachers tend to believe that schools with higher socioeconomic status students are more teachable. Regarding this, it implies that English teachers in rural areas may have lower expectations than the others who are teaching in urban areas by analyzing how teachable certain schools are. Even teachers in a particular area may still expect differently toward their different students.

This phenomenon is, somehow, acceptable and inevitable. Based on students' backgrounds, they may have different opportunities to be optimal on a certain subject. However, reasonable different teachers' expectations may be 'harmful' during learning activities when it affects how teachers behave to their students (Sedova & Salamounova, 2016). Teachers tend to know and remember high expectation students, in a good image, rather than the other students. Other 'harmful' behaviors may occur when teachers show their carelessness, or even disrespect, towards low expectation students (Sedova & Salamounova, 2016). High expectation students, frequently, may not object to teachers 'special' treatments that they received, but the low expectation may. It is when teachers often point their bad students to be humiliated because of their lacked English skills.

This difference in teacher attitudes eventually affects students' emotions which in result influencing students' motivation in learning. Students' realization about their teachers' behaviors will affect students' emotions. High expectation students may feel positive emotions because of the recognition, praise, and engagement. Meanwhile, the low expectation student may feel the negative ones because of the unexciting class, embarrassing situation during the lesson, and so on. Furthermore, these, either positive or negative, emotions will be the bedrock of students' learning motivation in a particular lesson, in this case, English.

To sum up, the idea which has been stated so far, a good prejudice against students' academic potential, regardless of their deficiencies character or background, may result in good encouragement for students' motivation. On the contrary, teachers' beliefs about students' low academic potential tend to lead its confirmation linking by teachers' behavior. Furthermore, teachers' actions regarding their realistic expectations to their students need to be wisely considered. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

Teachers' training about their biases and expectations toward students may be needed (Szumski & Karwowski, 2019; Seth & Nicholas, 2017). However, this is not a direct suggestion for the teachers but the education providers. Related to this, some advices for teachers' action about their expectation to the students need to be discussed further. Some of the suggestions for teachers which can be applied are setting optimist expectation regardless their students' characteristics, being more sensitive to students' emotion, and maintaining the rapport between students and themselves during the learning activity.

Teachers tend to put 'realistic' low expectations for some students, but it is never good for teachers to underestimate students' potential. It implies the importance of teachers' role as observers. Teachers need to pay attention to their students' capability well enough. Teachers are expected to be an optimist to their students' potential because inaccurate high expectation may lead to the better outcomes than the lower ones (Gentrup et al, 2020). Students' emotion has been recognized important in a learning activity (Hall & Goetz, 2013). Therefore, teachers need to be aware of their students' emotions. Being sensitive about how their students may react regarding teachers' behaviors is necessary. If teachers find it hard to have high expectations toward all of their students, as it is known that their realistic expectations may be correct (Jussim et al., 1996), teachers still need to regulate their behaviors regardless of their expectations.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, the possibility of teachers' expectations affects students' learning motivation on English Teaching and Learning in Indonesia may happen. This is fulfilled Borphy-Good's and self-fulfilling prophecy theory. However, these ideas may be not generally accepted in all of English Learning and Teaching in Indonesia. It still depends on the professionalism of teachers and students' characters. Also, the data used to analyze the problems are not the exact ones from the field. Therefore, further research is still needed to get more precise results.

Although there is some doubt in the idea, the possibility of it remains valid in some contexts. At least in how teachers should be professional to help their students regardless of how helpless their students may be. To conclude the ideas which have been stated so far, English teachers' beliefs toward their students may intrinsically affect students' beliefs to themselves which later on affecting their motivation to improve their skills during English learning.

## REFERENCES

- Agirdag, O. (2018). The impact of school SES composition on science achievement and achievement growth: mediating role of teachers' teachability culture. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 24(3-5), 264-276.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2018.1550838>
- Agustrianti, S., Cahyono, B. Y., & Laksmi, E. D. (2016). Indonesian EFL students' motivation in English Learning and their literacy skills across gender. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 5(4), 219-227.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.5n.4p.219>
- Brophy, J. E., & Good, T. L. (1983). Teachers' communication of differential expectations for children's classroom performance: Some behavioral data. *Journal of educational psychology*, 61(5), 365-374. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0029908>
- Cherry, K. (2022 February 08). *What is Motivation?*. Very Well Mind.  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-motivation-2795378>
- Ebata, M. (2008). Motivation factors in language learning. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 14(4), 27-36.
- Hall, N. C., & Goetz, T. (2013). *Emotion, motivation, and self-regulation: A handbook for teachers*. Emerald Group Publishing.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). England Pearson Education
- Harmer, J. (2003). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (3rd ed.). England. Longman.
- Jussim, L., Eccles, J., & Madon, S. (1996). Social perception, social stereotypes, and teacher expectations: Accuracy and the quest for the powerful self-fulfilling prophecy. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*, Vol. 28, pp. 281-388. Academic Press. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60240-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60240-3)

- Mistar, J. (2005). Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Indonesia. *Teaching English to the world: History, curriculum, and practice*, 71-80. Routledge
- Mucherah, W. (2014). Exploring the relationship between classroom climate, reading motivation, and achievement: A look into 7th grade classrooms. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 8(1), 93-110.
- Newall, C. (2016, October 2). *6 Strategies for Building Rapport with Students*. Medium. <https://medium.com/@weteachwell/6-strategies-for-building-rapport-withstudents-c693d5c5a78d>
- Saha, L. J., Dworin, G.A. (2009). *International Book of Research on Teachers and Teaching*. Springer.
- Saiful, J. A., & Triyono, S. (2018). EFL teachers' reflection in teachers' reflection in teaching English to EFL students of rural areas. *International Journal of Language Education*, 2(2), 1-13.
- Gentrup, S., Lorenz, G., Kristen, C., & Kogan, I. (2020). Self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom: Teacher expectations, teacher feedback and student achievement. *Learning and Instruction*, 66, 101296. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2019.101296>
- Sedova, K., & Salamounova, Z. (2016). Teacher expectancies, teacher behaviour and students' participation in classroom discourse. *The Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 15(1), 44 -61.
- Seth G., Nicholas P. (2017). *The Power of Teacher Expectations*. Education Next. <https://www.educationnext.org/power-of-teacher-expectations-racial-biashinders-student-attainment/>
- Szumski, G., & Karwowski, M. (2019). Exploring the Pygmalion effect: The role of teacher expectations, academic self-concept, and class context in students' math achievement. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 59, 101787. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2019.101787>
- Urhahne, D. (2015). Teacher behavior as a mediator of the relationship between teacher judgment and students' motivation and emotion. *Teaching and teacher education*, 45, 73-82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.09.006>
- Naibaho, L. (2019). Teachers' roles on English language teaching: A student centered learning approach. *International Journal of Research-Granthaalayah*, 7(4), 206-212.