



TEACHER – STUDENT INTERACTION AND MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Annotation. This paper explores the crucial role of teacher–student interaction in motivating learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It argues that the quality of communication, empathy, and feedback between teachers and students significantly influences learners’ engagement and performance. The study emphasizes that motivation is not only a psychological factor but also a product of effective pedagogical relationships.

Keywords: teacher–student interaction, motivation, EFL, communication, engagement, learning outcomes.

Introduction. Motivation plays a central role in second language acquisition and academic achievement. It determines learners’ persistence, participation, and success in mastering a foreign language. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation is one of the key components of effective language learning, as it influences both the amount of effort learners invest and the strategies they use.

However, motivation does not exist in isolation. It is strongly influenced by contextual and social factors, among which the relationship between teachers and students is particularly significant. The teacher is not merely a source of linguistic knowledge but also a guide, mentor, and motivator. The quality of teacher–student interaction can therefore determine the level of enthusiasm and confidence with which learners approach English language learning. In the EFL context, where students often lack natural exposure to the language, the classroom becomes the primary environment for interaction. Consequently, teachers play an essential role in creating a supportive atmosphere that fosters both linguistic competence and emotional well-being.

Teacher–student interaction can be defined as the reciprocal communication and emotional connection established between teachers and learners. It encompasses both verbal and non-verbal behaviors such as eye contact, tone of voice, gestures, and feedback. Positive interaction contributes to building trust and reducing learners’ anxiety. When teachers create an inclusive and respectful classroom climate, students feel safe to take risks, make mistakes, and express themselves freely in English. In contrast, when communication is limited or overly authoritative, learners tend to become passive, anxious, and disengaged.

Numerous studies (Harmer, 2007; Brown, 2000) have demonstrated that effective teacher–student communication enhances motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation — the inner drive to learn for enjoyment and self-improvement. Teachers who show empathy, listen



actively, and provide personalized feedback foster students’ sense of belonging and achievement.

Additionally, interaction helps develop the affective domain of learning — feelings, attitudes, and values — which plays a vital role in language development. Teachers who integrate humor, storytelling, and supportive dialogue stimulate learners’ curiosity and make language learning more meaningful. There are various strategies to enhance interaction and motivation:

1. **Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere:** Motivation thrives in a comfortable and emotionally secure learning environment. Teachers should establish mutual respect and show genuine interest in students’ progress. Encouragement and appreciation help students feel valued and confident.

2. **Using Interactive Techniques:** Techniques such as pair work, group discussions, debates, and role-plays provide opportunities for active participation. These activities promote communication, collaboration, and critical thinking while reducing fear of making mistakes.

3. **Providing Constructive Feedback:** Feedback should be specific, supportive, and timely. Rather than focusing solely on errors, teachers should highlight progress and offer suggestions for improvement. Positive reinforcement increases learners’ self-efficacy and persistence.

4. **Incorporating Technology for Interaction:** Digital platforms such as online forums, video conferencing, and learning apps can strengthen teacher–student communication beyond the classroom. Technology can also provide immediate feedback and personalized learning experiences, further motivating students.

5. **Cultural and Emotional Awareness:** Teachers should recognize cultural and emotional differences among learners. Understanding students’ backgrounds, interests, and learning styles enhances the quality of interaction and fosters a sense of inclusion.

Motivation in language learning is closely linked to emotional engagement. Students’ attitudes toward their teachers significantly influence their attitudes toward learning itself. A teacher who models enthusiasm and commitment inspires students to mirror these qualities. Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory highlights that learning occurs through social interaction. The teacher’s role as a mediator enables learners to move from dependence to autonomy. This process requires sensitivity, patience, and open communication.

In multilingual contexts like Uzbekistan, where English is taught as a foreign language, teacher–student interaction becomes even more critical. Since students rarely use English outside the classroom, teachers must provide authentic communicative opportunities within lessons. Encouraging dialogue, problem-solving tasks, and cooperative learning builds both linguistic and interpersonal competence.

However, challenges remain. Large class sizes, time constraints, and traditional teaching methods can limit meaningful interaction. Therefore, professional development programs should focus on enhancing teachers’ communicative and emotional intelligence skills.



Training in classroom management, feedback delivery, and interactive pedagogy can significantly improve student motivation.

Conclusion. Teacher–student interaction is a cornerstone of successful English language education. Motivation does not emerge spontaneously — it grows through trust, empathy, and communication between teachers and learners. By adopting interactive teaching strategies, providing constructive feedback, and promoting an emotionally supportive classroom environment, teachers can transform students’ attitudes toward English learning. Future research should explore how online and blended learning environments can sustain motivation through digital teacher–student interaction. Strengthening these relationships in both physical and virtual classrooms is essential for achieving long-term success in language education.

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