

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English as an international language is significant in many aspects of Indonesia, such as international relationships, economics, and education. As a foreign language, English is easier to learn when students are young because children are active learners and thinkers. As a result, children will be more engaged in language learning than adults and will comprehend more easily. Teaching English to young learners differs from teaching English to adults because they have different needs, interests, abilities, and enthusiasm for learning a language. In line with this, Kasyulita and Armelida (2019) Stated that young learners have their own way of learning; they enjoy playing and having fun with their friends and the environment around them. They are often unaware that they are learning a language while having fun.

To achieve effective English learning, students need motivation, especially motivation to learn English. Motivation is an inner need that impacts the desire to achieve a purpose. Since motivation also plays a significant part in learning foreign languages, it must come from both within and outside the surroundings. Students will take the initiative to learn and have a strong desire to acquire English if they have developed a motivation to learn. Whether students want to study hard depends on their motivation to learn. If they are highly motivated to learn, they will be willing to study hard to achieve their goals. In line with this, Sardiman (2019) defines motivation as a change in energy within a person marked by the emergence of a "feeling" and preceded by a response to a goal. Motivation causes a change in energy in humans, forcing them to face psychological symptoms, feelings, and emotions before acting or doing something. Motivation can be defined as the overall driving force in students that gives rise to learning activities, guarantees the flexibility of learning activities, and provides direction to learning activities to achieve the objectives desired by the subject of learning.

At the junior high school level, students have unique characteristics requiring more teacher attention. The students are at a transitional age, meaning this condition will certainly impact their English learning. They need something unique and exciting to boost their learning motivation. Rafli and Gustari (2019) Stated that "motivation" includes personal effort, desires, aspirations, and goals. Therefore, learning activities can only run effectively with the motivation to learn. During the learning process, motivation helps students become more competent, and teachers use this to consider character development.

When students lack motivation, they feel the opposite of motivation, known as demotivation. Demotivation in this study is limited to demotivation while learning English. Dörnyei (2001) argued that "demotivation refers to the specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural or ongoing action," suggesting that demotivation is the exact opposite of motivation, in which learners have no goals in learning and even lose interest in learning. A learner who was previously motivated but has lost interest or commitment for whatever reason is considered "demotivated." Students' lack of motivation to learn English needs identification. It may help teachers resolve student motivation problems (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2017). Examining demotivation can be beneficial for raising students' motivation levels and helping them acquire English more effectively. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the factors that cause students to be demotivated in learning English.

Based on the findings of a pre-observation conducted at a junior high school in Tasikmalaya during the 2022/2023 academic year, it was found that students showed signs of demotivation in learning English, which raised concerns for researchers. Initially, students showed enthusiasm and motivation for learning, particularly when participating in enjoyable classroom activities such as games, songs, or group projects. However, over time, this motivation appeared to decline. The researcher then confirmed this with the English teacher who taught the ninth-grade class at the school during the 2024/2025 academic year, and it was discovered that this phenomenon was still happening. Only a few students seem enthusiastic about learning English in class. Most students think English lessons are irrelevant

to their daily lives, as they are afraid of making mistakes when speaking English, and fear being mocked by their peers. As a result, they become passive during the learning process. This statement was reinforced by Paramasivam (2015); it was discovered that the reasons for the learners' passiveness in class are fear of speaking in public, fear of getting negative responses, and fear of making grammatical mistakes. Passive learners quietly take in new information and usually have little interaction with what they are learning. This phenomenon gives rise to the author's idea to find out more about the factors of students' demotivation in learning English.

In addition, previous studies relevant to this research have been conducted by Wang and Guan (2020), who explored demotivation factors among Chinese learners of English as a foreign language based on positive psychology. This research was to determine the demotivation factors of Chinese learners as EFL. The findings show that psychological demotivation among Chinese EFL learners is mainly caused by factors related to teachers, themselves, and the learning environment; there is a significant negative correlation between the English test score and the intensity of psychological demotivation; there is no significant distinction between freshmen and sophomores in the institution-related factor. Moreover, Huwari et al. (2023) investigated the causes of demotivation in English language learning among Jordanian undergraduate students. Using a questionnaire adapted from Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), they identified six demotivating factors: classroom environment, teacher attitude, course content and materials, effects of poor grades, classroom atmosphere, and a lack of self-confidence and interest. Based on responses from 110 students, the study found that the classroom environment was the most influential demotivating factor, while lack of interest and self-confidence had the least impact. The difference between the recent study and previous studies is in the participants and data collection. The participants in previous studies are from higher education, while recent studies are for junior high school students. The earlier study involved over one hundred participants and used questionnaires as the primary data collection method, significantly more than the number of participants in this research. In contrast, the current study employed interviews as the primary data collection method. The similarities between the

current study and the previous study are that both studies are for search factors causing demotivation among students. Therefore, to fill this gap, this study highlights the factors that demotivate students to learn English in the ninth grade at one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the researcher addresses the following question. “What factors demotivate students to learn English at one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya?”

1.3 Operational Definitions

Below are several definitions of crucial terms that will help the reader understand how these words will be used and interpreted in this study.

1.3.1 Demotivation

Demotivation refers to a reduction or loss of a student's previous enthusiasm for learning. Demotivation in language learning can be caused by a variety of factors, including fear of making mistakes, an unsupportive classroom environment, and uninteresting material.

1.3.2 English Language Learning

English language learning is the process by which students learn English language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This process is influenced by teaching strategies, the learning environment, and student motivation.

1.3.3 Junior High School Students

Junior High School Students are typically 12 to 15-year-old learners enrolled in lower secondary education (grades 7 to 9). At this stage, students experience significant cognitive, emotional, and social development, which can affect their attitudes, behaviors, and motivation in academic learning, including English language education.

1.4 Aim of the Research

The researcher aims to highlight the factors that demotivate students in learning English at one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Use

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of students' demotivation in learning English, particularly in a junior high school setting in Tasikmalaya. It is expected to serve as a valuable reference for future research exploring various aspects of student demotivation, such as the influence of family support, the integration of technology in learning, and the differences in motivation across educational levels.

1.5.2 Practical Use

To overcome students' demotivation to learn English, this study suggests that teachers should foster more positive and supportive classroom interactions, avoid making comparisons among students, and implement varied and engaging learning activities such as interactive media and communicative tasks. Meanwhile, students are encouraged to enhance their learning efforts by setting personal goals, finding enjoyable learning methods, and building self-confidence through positive experiences and peer support.

1.5.3 Empirical Use

This research benefits the researcher by enhancing their academic writing skills, broadening their knowledge, and contributing to the existing body of literature. It may also inspire further empirical studies to expand upon or refine the findings presented in this study.