



Exploring EFL Learners Students-Teacher Relatedness

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose this study of to know how students' and teacher views on students and teacher relatedness in the classroom related to vocabulary learning. Specifically, the methodology used in this research was giving the researcher ability to explore students and teacher point of view on the relatedness between them inside and outside classroom. Thus, qualitative research methodology is going to be utilized to achieve the research objective. The subjects of the study were one senior high school EFL teacher, and the students of one class of English language major class consisting of 4 students. The data of this research was obtained using interview questions instrument. The scope of this study is to explore students-teacher relatedness inside or outside the classroom. However, the results of this study might not be able to be generalized. SDT believe parents also has playing role in learners' success in learning, meanwhile, this research is only focuses on the relatedness between students-teacher. In addition, it would be inconvenient to do research on every parents. The results of this study are expected to give beneficial information for other researcher who conduct study on this similar topic. The results of this study are expected to give beneficial information for the teacher which may giving better attention in the learners learning process by providing support in every chance they have. To the curriculum designer what is learners needs when they conduct vocabulary learning.

INTRODUCTION

The spread of English language usage around the globe has becoming massive and it affects the increasing demand of English language competence in daily basis. It also increases the variety of English language across the globe or commonly known as world Englishes (Jenkins, 2003). Regardless of the variety of English, English language teaching is always evolving according to the students' needs. Beginning from Grammar Translation as the first English language teaching method which focus on translation of mother language into English (Hall, 2016), to post method pedagogy proposed by Kumaravadivelu, which emerge based on how vary and unique the needs of English language learners and using one specific English teaching method in one class filled with various students is not sufficient (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Among English teaching methodology used by the teachers, vocabulary learning becomes one of the most important aspects in learning English language. This since language are the one people use in expressing something whether it is in form of audio or words.

Language is a system for people to be able to express their thinking into words or spoken structure, as stated on Oxford learners dictionary and Merriam webster dictionary. On the other words, learning vocabulary is essential for the learners to express their thinking on the targeted language. In addition, learning lexical information before structural form of the targeted language are proven to be effective way to learn second language (Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013). Which can be assumed that learning vocabulary is beneficial for the learners to be able to master the second language. Furthermore, learners who learn broaden level of vocabulary, tends to achieve better score in English language learning test score than students who possess lesser vocabulary level. Webb & Paribakht (2015) also revealed similar results, learners who possess large coverage of vocabulary would acquire better results of English proficiency test because learners are able to process large variation of vocabulary used in the test.

In addition, possessing substantial amount of motivation, increasing the chances of achieving the best results in the learning process. Reeve & Lee (2014) found that high-quality student motivation is critical in supporting the teaching and learning process, because it improves the classroom engagement that could lead into students' improvement in paying attention to the material which leads into better learning outcome. In addition, Alamer & Lee (2019) found similar results of motivation also playing a big role in the students process in achieving educational goal of learning English language. Alamer & Lee (2019) explain that internal motivation, such as positive emotion, would provide a good predictor that the students would obtain positive achievement in the learning process. In similar fashion, the same researcher, found that learning English with interest and without any pressure in doing so, would have positive affect in learners learning achievement (Alamer, 2022).

On the other hand, in the classroom, teachers need to define a clear purpose to have higher chances to achieve the desired learning outcome. However, to this day, especially on EFL context, teachers are dominating the teaching and learning process with textbook material. Teachers just deliver every material they found suitable with the curriculum guidance with one only purpose, students need to memorize the learning material. This way of teaching is acceptable, because students are needed to pass the exam at the end of the semester. However, this way of teaching could be disastrous for the classroom atmosphere, because students may give fewer attention to the material, and to the teacher. Thus, it could lead to the unfavorable learning outcome. Dicarlo (2009) also recognize similar phenomenon that students could feel overwhelmed with too many contents they have to learn with not enough time to understand them and it may demotivate the students to learn. Yet, motivation is crucial for the students to be able to do well in the learning process.

Associated with the effect of motivation into learners learning results, which can be assumed that it is correlated with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Self-determination theory (SDT) emerging to the surface to provide framework to study intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the learners (Ryan & Deci, 2020). As SDT focusing on learners intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, SDT considering human to have a tendency toward psychological growth, especially about information, mastery, and relation with others. To be precise, SDT believe human are inherently possessing the passion to learn and to growth, and how it can effectively be achieved by support of relation. Furthermore, SDT also suggesting to not underestimating basic psychological needs of individual learners. Basic psychological needs consist of three needs that considered to be fundamental: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan &

Deci, 2019). Related to this research, previous study about SDT and vocabulary has showed that learners who are highly motivated are important to influence other learners in vocabulary autonomous learning (Tanaka, 2017).

In addition, Sadeghi (2022) mentioned that the effectivity of learner's vocabulary learning can be possibly influenced by motivation. Also, mentioning the effectivity of learning, we cannot ignore the participation of the teacher in the classroom. Research has shown that supportive classroom does affect learners' satisfaction and well-being in the learning (Reeve & Lee, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Yu et al., 2016). On that occasion, it is logical to assume that learners' well-being could leads into better learning outcome. All in all, after all thing considered in the previous study. The purpose of this study would be to explore learners' relatedness inside the classroom through SDT.

The scope of this study is to explore students-teacher relatedness inside or outside the classroom. However, the results of this study might not be able to be generalized. SDT believe parents also has playing role in learners' success in learning, meanwhile, this research is only focuses on the relatedness between students-teacher. In addition, it would be inconvenient to do research on every parents.

The results of this study are expected to give beneficial information for other researcher who conduct study on this similar topic. The results of this study are expected to give beneficial information for the teacher which may giving better attention in the learners learning process by providing support in every chance they have. To the curriculum designer what is learners needs when they conduct vocabulary learning.

METHOD

Research Design

Since the objective of this study is to explore phenomenon related to motivation and vocabulary, qualitative research methodology was used in this research. Specifically, the methodology used in this research was giving the researcher ability to explore students and teacher point of view on the relatedness between them inside and outside classroom. Thus, qualitative research methodology is going to be utilized to achieve the research objective.

Qualitative research methodology is the study that enable the researcher ability to understand social phenomenon (Creswell & David Creswell, 2018). The methodology used in this research is going to help the researcher to obtain an in-depth exploration on the human point of view on some issues or specific phenomenon. Likewise, the objective of this study is in accordance with the definition of the qualitative research methodology, which is to explore relatedness between students and teacher.

Research Subjects and Setting

The subjects of the study were one senior high school EFL teacher, and the students of one class of English language major class consisting of 4 students. The teacher is aged around 40 years old and have experience in teaching English for more than 10 years in the same school. The students are currently taking language major in the senior high school with experience in learning English language for about 9 to 10 years and are aged around 17 years old. In addition, the students from language major class would be chosen because the research is related to language matters, and it is related to their focus of learning language. This study

was taking place on one of the senior high schools in Lamongan. The school are located on one of the busiest areas in Lamongan which also an area for most school in Lamongan. Hence, the environment should provide helpful atmosphere for the students to learn. In addition, the school was chosen because it is convenience for the researcher to conduct the research.

Research Instruments

The data of this research was obtained using interview questions instrument.

Interview

The interview instrument, the interview process was administered to answer all of the research questions. However, the purpose of the interview was to explore students and teacher point of view on students-teacher relatedness during vocabulary learning. In addition, the teacher was asked on his point of view on students-teacher relatedness during English language learning. The sample of interview questions to answer second research question are “*does your teacher appreciate your effort?*” and “*did you appreciate your student’s effort?*”. Further details of the interview guidelines can be found on appendices (see Appendix 1).

Data Collection Procedure

The interview procedure was conducted on 27th January 2024. The purpose of the interview procedure is to explore students and teacher point of view on students-teacher relatedness. The subjects of this research were asked using guided semi-structured interview questions which researcher are already prepared. In addition, elaboration is possible mid-interview.

Table 1. Brief illustration of the research methodology

Research Questions	Data Collection	Focus	Theory
1. What are students’ and teacher perceptions of relatedness between students and teacher in the classroom?	Interview with student and teacher	Relatedness, students point of view, teacher point of view, teacher autonomy support type, and teacher controlling type.	(Patall et al., 2019; Reeve & Lee, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2019, 2020; Yu et al., 2016)

Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the data were analyzed using data analysis process guidelines provided by Creswell & David Creswell (2018). Following the guideline, the data were analyzed in sequence. The first to the fifth step of the data analysis in sequence shown as follows; organizing the data, reading the data, coding the data, generating description and themes, and presenting. The detail of each analysis steps would be described at the table 2.

Table 2. Data analysis procedure

Research Questions	Data Analysis
1. What are students’ and teacher perceptions of relatedness between students and teacher in the classroom?	Listen to the audio recording a → transcribe the data → coding to obtain students point of view about their teacher criteria → generate themes of teacher type → presenting the results

Following the guidelines, the interview data analysis process was divided into five activities. The first activity is to organize the data. In detail, the data organizing process was including the activity to compile all the data fragment into one folder in the laptop based on the source of data. The second activity is to read the data in detail and try to acquire the data overall information. The second activity also the steps where the interview data that coming in form of audio recording file are being transcribed.

The third step, which is coding. Coding step in the second phase of analysis process is going to be conducted twice. The first coding is to find out whether the teacher is autonomy support teacher and controlling teacher according to the students. While the second coding is to find out whether the teacher is categorized as autonomy support teacher or controlling teacher according to the teacher themselves. The details of the codes used in this research would be explained in more details in the appendix 2. The fourth step is to generate themes and description. In this step, the code that has been generated in the previous coding step are going to be categorized according to their themes. The themes that going to be used is following the criteria of teacher types based on Patall et al (2019) and Ryan & Deci (2020) criteria of teacher types. Lastly, the fifth step, which is to present the results, would be presented in detail in further chapter of this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students and Teacher Perceptions toward Relatedness

Students Perceptions of Relatedness between Students and Teacher

To answer the research question, which is to find out the student's perception toward learning relatedness between students and teacher in the classroom, interview process was conducted on four students. The results showed that all four interviewees agree that the teacher could be categorized as an autonomy support teacher.

When asked about how the teacher handle questions whether the question is related to the subjects they are currently learning or not, all four students synchronously said that the teacher welcome every question that the students ask. If the question were about subjects' materials, the students said that their teacher would try to explain again until the students are able to comprehend the materials. If the questions were not related to subjects' materials, the teacher would respond according to the question in appropriate manner. It can be seen in the examples below:

S1 : "I'm not yet doing that, but my teacher gives the students chances to ask/tell the stories, and my teacher respond it. Either giving them solution or just listen to them."

S4 : "He tries to re-explain the materials again."

Afterward, the researcher asked a further question on how the teacher teaches them in the class, especially during the time the teacher gave them assignments. The researcher focuses on whether the teacher likes to give assignment without giving proper explanation on how the students should do the assignment or not. It was found that the teacher was never carrying out an assignment that left the students clueless. In addition, related to learning something new, the process was not always going smooth. Maybe there are students who are smart and easy to understand the materials, and maybe there are some students which need a few more time to

learn. In this situation, all four interviewed students said that their teacher would still appreciate every effort the students make during the learning process. The answer from all the interviewed students giving the researcher idea that the teacher was a teacher that give their students autonomy support.

Teacher Perception on Relatedness between Students and Teacher

To answer the third research question, the teacher of the fourth students that participate in the previous research questions were chosen to be interviewed. The previous research question was focuses on the student's perception toward their relatedness with the teacher. In this research question, the researcher was focuses on the teacher perception toward his relatedness with the students.

The teacher was asked with the same interview guidelines used on the research question number two, but the questions were focuses on the teacher perception. Via the interview, the teacher revealed an answer that is in rhymes with the answer from the students interview results. However, the teacher was able to expand the students answer with a more detailed answer.

When the teacher was asked a about how he would act on a question related to the learning materials, the answer from the teacher is approving the answer from the students point of view. The teacher would like to explain again until the students are able to comprehend the materials. Though, the teacher improves the answer with a more detailed process. As seen on the excerpt below.

T : "First, I try to re-explain the materials once. Second, if they still having difficulty in understanding the materials, I gave the other students (friend in the same classroom) the opportunity to teach/explain the materials to them in a way of using their own language. Third, I would explain the materials again if there is still a confusion with help of other materials sources."

We can see it in the excerpt above, that there were three steps of how the teacher would like to respond to students who ask about the materials. First, the teacher tries to explain again. Second, the teacher would like to give opportunity for the students to open a discussion between the students. With hopes that students who understand the materials would help their friend to grasp the materials. Lastly, the teacher would give another supplementary material for the students for them to learn by themselves.

The interview process also revealed that the teacher would never be giving instruction to the students under the term of students have to do this or to do that. The teacher would at least giving brief explanation about the task the students about to learn. This could act as a bridge for the students for able to execute the task with desired learning outcome. In addition, related to the learning process, the teacher always tries to appreciate his student's effort during the process of learning English. Other than appreciating the students, the teacher also tries to motivate the students to learn English, especially for those students with low motivation to learn English.

DISCUSSION

Students and teacher perceptions on students-teacher relatedness

The researcher explores the student's and teacher perceptions toward relatedness which might happen inside or outside the classroom. The purpose of the second research question is to explore whether the teacher is giving autonomy support or not. In addition, the second objective is to find out whether the relatedness needs are fulfilled or not.

The interview reveals that the teacher is responsive and helpful. It is in accordance with the characteristic of a teacher who gives autonomy support. One of the characteristics is that the teacher tries to listen to the students' questions and helps the students who are in trouble to comprehend the learning materials (Patall et al., 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Subsequently, the teacher possesses a contradictory characteristic of controlling teacher type. The teacher who gives tasks or assessments to the students with "students must learn this" mindset and unnecessary pressure (Ryan & Deci, 2020). It is safe to assume that the teacher has already fulfilled one of the students' basic psychological needs, which is learning autonomy needs.

While controlling teacher type might have a negative impact on the students, it does not mean that controlling teacher type is a bad teacher. There are times when the teacher needs to be a controlling teacher type and control the class. Especially when the students are the mischievous type of students, or it is close to the final examination date. It is related to other teacher type, which is the teacher with structure teaching type. Structure teaching type is different from controlling teacher type. The main difference is in how the teacher delivers the pressure (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). Instead of giving unnecessary pressure, the structure type teacher gives the students clear pressure in the form of guidelines, goals, and support which act as a scaffolding for the students (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012).

Related to the student's motivation, the interview reveals that the teacher is always trying to appreciate the students effort, and he would never intentionally demotivate them. The teacher also tries to motivate the students to learn English, especially for the students who have low degree of motivation. It is in line with the characteristic of teachers who give autonomy support, where the teacher can appreciate the students learning effort (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Hence, the results shows that the teacher is an autonomy-supportive teacher. It is supported by the fact that the teacher characteristics match the autonomy support teacher criteria (Murayama et al., 2015; Patall et al., 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Schutte & Malouff, 2019). In addition, it also shows that the relatedness needs are being fulfilled.

CONCLUSION

The present study was made to explore EFL students-teacher relatedness. Related to the third basic psychological needs, the teacher showed a characteristic that matched with the autonomy support teacher type criteria. Then, the relatedness needs of the students are proven to be fulfilled. It is in line with the previous study conducted by Tanaka (2017), where it was found that peer motivation could improve demotivated students learning autonomy. Even this research utilizes different relatedness variable, the result shows an analogous result. The relatedness can provide learners learning competence prediction.

However, there are limitation of the research that should be addressed. First, regarding of the relatedness variable in this research, the relatedness is limited to students-teacher relatedness, other variables might provide better understanding of the relatedness needs.

Fourth, even the results shows that the relatedness needs were fulfilled, the student might perceive relatedness differently. Also, the students-teacher relatedness in this research would be different on other school.

Some suggestions were made for future researcher who wanted to conduct research on similar field, the researcher suggest adding more variables that can be addressed other than relatedness variable. In addition, adding more variety of the subjects would also be preferred to achieve broaden results. For the teacher or learners, important to realize that the result of this study shows that the basic psychological needs are important aspect in learning. Therefore, it would be best to elaborate the needs and implement it into daily lessons purpose.

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