



Teaching Methods to Improve Students' Motivation in Learning English: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Motivating students in learning English is essential for effective language acquisition. This systematic literature review explores various teaching methods teachers employ to improve students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The review follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methodology. A total of 30 articles published between 2015 and 2025 were selected from Scopus, Semantic Scholar, and Google Scholar databases based on their relevance. The analysis indicates that teaching methods such as communicative language teaching, task-based learning, gamification, collaborative learning, and multimedia and digital tools are widely implemented to enhance motivation. These methods address multiple learning domains, including cognitive, affective, and social aspects, to engage students actively. The findings provide valuable insights for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational institutions aiming to foster a motivating and effective English learning environment.

Keywords: teaching strategies, teaching methods, motivation, EFL

Introduction

English has become a global language that plays a significant role in communication, education, and professional fields. As a result, the ability to master English is a key competency for students in many countries, particularly where English is learned as a

foreign language (EFL). However, learning English as a foreign language is often perceived as challenging by students, especially in non-English speaking environments where opportunities for authentic communication are limited. One of the most persistent obstacles faced by educators is the issue of students' low motivation to engage in English learning activities.

Motivation is recognized as a crucial factor in the success of foreign language acquisition. Highly motivated students are more likely to engage actively, persist through challenges, and achieve better learning outcomes. Conversely, students with low motivation often struggle to maintain interest, leading to poor performance and disengagement. Therefore, identifying effective teaching methods that foster motivation has become a major focus in the field of English language education.

In response to this challenge, numerous studies have explored various teaching methods aimed at enhancing students' motivation in learning English. These methods include communicative language teaching, task-based learning, gamification, collaborative learning, and the integration of multimedia and digital tools. These strategies are designed not only to improve cognitive engagement but also to address affective and social domains that are critical in motivating learners.

Despite the growing number of studies on this topic, there is a lack of comprehensive literature reviews that systematically analyze and map these findings within a single framework. Such a review is necessary to provide educators, curriculum developers, and stakeholders with a clearer understanding of which methods have been proven effective, in what contexts, and for which types of learners.

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Methods

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) method by adopting the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The review process was carried out in four systematic stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. This method was applied to ensure that only high-quality and relevant studies were analyzed in accordance with the research objectives.

Phase 1 : Identification Phase

The chosen article must match the pre-determined criteria. First, the databases used for this systematic literature review are Google Scholar. The platform are the databases of scientific literature comprising research findings and conceptual studies, which are easily accessed and cover different disciplines. The articles taken from these databases

▪were published between 2015 and 2025. The articles were identified by search engines using keywords in one language, which are English. The keywords are related to the focuses shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Search Keywords from English

Language	Keywords
English	"teaching strategies" OR "teaching methods" AND "motivation" AND "EFL"

Table 1 shows the keywords used in finding the relevant articles regarding teaching methods to improve students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The focus was on identifying studies discussing teaching strategies, motivation enhancement, and English language learning contexts. Furthermore, the articles were selected through an identification process using inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the chosen articles aligned with the objective of this systematic literature review, as displayed in **Table 2**.

Table 2. The inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
The article discusses student motivation in English language learning (EFL)	The article doesn't discuss student motivation
The article discusses teaching methods, strategies, approaches, or media	The article is not about English (EFL)
Participants are students (secondary school, high school, university)	The article is theory only, without practical application
Published in journal articles	Focus on teachers, not students
Published between 2015-2025	Non-journal sources
Language: English	Articles that were not published between 2015-2025
	Articles that are not published in English language

Table 2 shows that the identification process for this research has fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Therefore, the full text of each article was downloaded, except for the restricted articles.

Phase 2 : Screening phase

The articles collected from Google Scholar were filtered through the screening process by reviewing the title and abstract. Since the articles were only collected from a single database, there were no duplicates identified. The screening process aimed to ensure that the selected articles aligned with the objectives of this systematic review.

Phase 3 : Eligibility phase

The screened articles were analysed and examined for eligibility in this phase. The articles were sorted based on their eligibility with the research focus based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Phase 4 : Included Phase

After the eligibility process, 30 articles were selected as the final data set for this review. These articles were analyzed to identify the teaching methods applied, their impact on students' motivation, and the targeted learning domains (cognitive, affective, and social). The process of selecting and filtering the articles is illustrated in the PRISMA flowchart below:

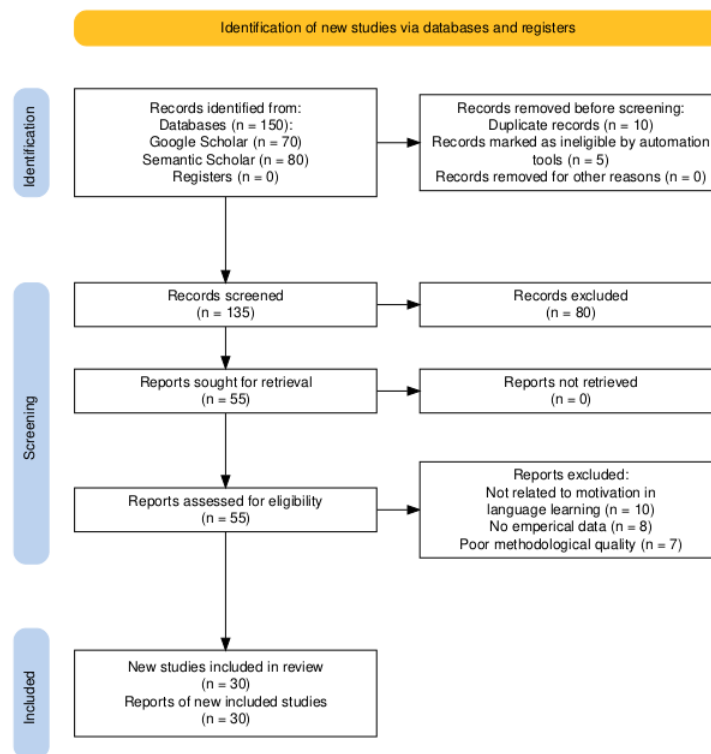


Figure 1. Flow of the systematic review process

This study employed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methodology. A total of 30 articles focusing on teaching methods to enhance students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) were selected through a systematic process. The articles were gathered from Semantic Scholar and Google Scholar databases. The publications were limited to the period of 2015 to 2025 and written in English. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure the relevance of the articles to the objectives of this review.

▪

The articles were categorized based on the research methods used:

Research methods	Quantity
Quantitative	14
Qualitative	9
Mix-Methods	7

Figure 2. Number of studies based on research methods

To ensure the reliability of this systematic review, the findings from previous empirical studies regarding the use of teaching methods to improve students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) were compared and analyzed systematically. This systematic review adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to maintain transparency and rigor throughout the review process. The review was conducted in four main phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

Findings and Discussion

A total of 180 articles were identified from academic databases such as Google Scholar and Semantic Scholar between 2015 and 2025. After screening processes following PRISMA methodology, 30 articles were selected that specifically addressed teaching methods to improve students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The systematic filtering process was carried out through identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion phases.

From these 30 articles, it was found that the research methodologies applied varied, consisting of 14 quantitative studies, 9 qualitative studies, and 7 mixed-method studies. The selection of methods indicates researchers' efforts to measure, explore, and verify the effectiveness of teaching methods on students' motivation from multiple perspectives.

The analysis shows that various teaching methods are consistently used to enhance students' motivation in English learning. These methods include:

- Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
- Task-Based Learning (TBL)
- Gamification
- Collaborative Learning
- Integration of Multimedia and Digital Tools

- In detail, the review's findings are described in Table 3, concerning the characteristics and themes of the research, as follows.

Table 3. The characteristics and themes of the research

No.	Author	Research Method	Teaching Strategies
1.	S Tsymbal (2018)	Kuantitatif	Gamification
2.	T Yang (2024)	Mix-Methods	Digital Tools
3.	E Namaziandost, L Neisi, Kheryadi, M Nasri (2019)	Kuantitatif	Collaborative Learning
4.	L Yu, J Shen (2022)	Kuantitatif	Digital Tools
5.	IF Sari et al. (2018)	Kuantitatif	Digital Tools
6.	JY Lai, LT Chang (2021)	Kuantitatif	Digital Tools
7.	S Li et al. (2014)	Kuantitatif	Digital Tools
8.	FW Arifatin et al. (2025)	Mixed-Methods	Gamification
9.	S Manurung, AE Pohan (2019)	Kualitatif	Digital Tools
10.	S Manurung, D Yana (2018)	Kualitatif	Digital Tools
11.	Emnijeta et al. (2023)	Mixed-Methods	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
12.	Ghanizadeh et al. (2020)	Kuantitatif	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
13.	A Mleiki (2025)	Mixed-Methods	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
14.	D Chen, X Yang (2017)	Kuantitatif	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
15.	Arif Nugroho et al. (2021)	Kualitatif	Digital Tools
16.	Lamija Huseinović (2023)	Kuantitatif	Gamification
17.	Mohamed Kassem (2018)	Mixed-method	Task-Based Learning (TBL)
18.	Yun-Yin Huang et al. (2017)	Mixed-method	Digital Tools
19.	P. Seraj et al. (2021)	Mixed-method	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
20.	Mohamad Yahya Abdullah et al. (2019)	Kualitatif	Collaborative Learning

21.	S. Wahyuningsih, M. Afandi (2023)	Kualitatif	Digital Tools
22.	M. Rostami et al. (2017)	Kuantitatif	Digital Tools
23.	L. Tuyền, Hồ Hải Tiến (2021)	Mixed-method	Task-Based Learning (TBL)
24.	Ming Li, Brett D. Jones (2019)	Mixed-method	Collaborative Learning
25.	E. Makarova (2018)	Mixed-method	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
26.	Dedi Aprianto (2020)	Kualitatif	Digital Tools
27.	K. Alshalan (2019)	Kuantitatif	Collaborative Learning
28.	A. Mohammed et al. (2023)	Kuantitatif	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
29.	Hashem A. Alsamadani (2022)	Kuantitatif	CLT & Task-Based Learning (TBL)
30.	A. Ariyanti et al. (2019)	Kualitatif	CLT & Gamification

Conclusion

This systematic literature review found that several teaching methods—such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Learning (TBL), gamification, collaborative learning, and the use of multimedia and digital tools—can effectively increase students’ motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). These methods help students stay interested and engaged by supporting their thinking skills, emotions, and social interaction. The findings give useful ideas for teachers and schools to create better and more enjoyable English learning experiences.

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