Student Perception of Their Effectiveness in English as A Subject in Public Secondary Schools in Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study investigated student perceptions of their effectiveness in learning English as a subject in public secondary schools in Tanzania. It specifically focused on four key areas: students' attitudes toward English, their interest in the subject, motivation to learn, and student-teacher interaction during English lessons. The study was guided by Aaron Chao's theory of learner autonomy in language learning, emphasizing that students must actively "push" their linguistic boundaries through frequent, intense, and effective communication. A descriptive research design was used, drawing a sample of 720 students and 79 teachers from 158 public secondary schools through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, and analyzed using SPSS and thematic content analysis. Findings showed that most students held moderately positive attitudes toward English, with many viewing it as a favorite subject. However, intrinsic motivation and enjoyment of English lessons were relatively low, indicating a need for more engaging teaching methods. Interest in English was also mixed, with many students participating in class but showing little initiative to study outside of it. Motivation was generally high, especially for achieving good grades, but fewer students recognized the social benefits of learning English. Student-teacher interaction was rated moderate; while teachers were seen as clear and dependable, they were often perceived as unapproachable and unresponsive to students' learning difficulties. The study concludes that student engagement in English could be improved through interactive, student-centered teaching, more supportive teacher communication, and encouragement of autonomous learning practices.*

Keywords: English language learning, Student attitudes, Motivation, Student-teacher interaction, Learner autonomy

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1. Introduction

In the 1990s, English solidified its role as the main medium of communication across many global sectors such as broadcasting, media, academia, and international transport (Davies, 2005). Over 70 countries adopted English as their official language, and more than a hundred regard it as a foreign language (Liou, 2002). English's global reach means it is now a key part of education systems worldwide, especially in former British colonies where it often serves as a second or official language (Crystal, 2006). In Europe, for example, learning multiple foreign languages, including English, has become a common educational goal

to equip students with diverse language skills (Lagmur, 2012).

The search for effective methods to teach English has evolved over centuries, beginning with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) used in the 14th and 15th centuries for classical languages like Latin and Greek (Brown, 1994; Shastri, 2010). GTM focused heavily on memorizing grammar rules and translating texts, prioritizing reading and writing over speaking. Later, the Direct Method emerged in the late 19th century to counter GTM by emphasizing oral proficiency through immersive, monolingual instruction without translation (Khalil & Semono-Eke, 2020; Liu & Shi, 2007). While it promoted fluency and inductive grammar learning, the method had limitations, such as its reliance on native-like teachers and difficulty progressing beyond beginner levels.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, the Oral-Structural Situational approach and the Audio-lingual method focused on behaviorist principles, drilling grammar and pronunciation through repetition (Brown, 1994). Later, the Communicative Approach shifted focus to developing learners' ability to use language appropriately in real-life social contexts (Richards, 2006; Grenfell & Harris, 1999). This approach aims to build communicative competence—encompassing sociolinguistic, linguistic, and discourse skills—through active learner participation and interaction, making it central to modern English teaching curricula worldwide (Friedrichsen, 2020; Saville-Troike, 2012; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

English plays a central role in Tanzania's education system, serving not only as a subject in primary and secondary schools but also as the medium of instruction from secondary education onward (MoEVT, 2010). Mastery of the English language is therefore essential for academic success, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels (Qorro, 2006). In response to global trends and national educational goals, the Tanzanian government has revised the English language curriculum to emphasize communicative competence, aiming to shift from traditional grammar-based instruction to more learner-centered approaches that encourage fluency, critical thinking, and real-world language use (URT, 2005; Rubagumya, 2003).

Despite these reforms, students in public secondary schools continue to perform poorly in English, as reflected in national examination results over several years (NECTA, 2013, 2014, 2015). This underperformance raises concerns about the effectiveness of teaching methods and the actual learning outcomes experienced by students (Roy-Campbell & Qorro, 1997). One critical aspect often overlooked in evaluating English education is how students themselves perceive their competence and effectiveness in using the language. Student perceptions can provide valuable insight into whether the teaching strategies employed are meeting learners' needs and whether they feel confident and capable in applying English skills both in and beyond the classroom (Ngololo, 2013).

In many Tanzanian schools, challenges such as limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and underqualified English teachers hinder the successful implementation of communicative and interactive teaching methods (Osaki, 2000; Vuzo, 2010). As a result, students may not be receiving adequate support to develop the four essential language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Kitta & Tilya, 2010). Understanding students' self-perceived effectiveness in these areas is crucial for identifying instructional gaps and guiding future improvements in language teaching practices (Vuzo, 2007).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Ideally, students in public secondary schools in Tanzania should possess a strong command of the English language, as it is both a subject and the medium of instruction from secondary education onward. Effective mastery of English is essential for academic achievement, communication, and future career opportunities in a globalized world. The curriculum reforms introduced by the Tanzanian government emphasize communicative competence, aiming to enhance students' proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening through student-centered and interactive teaching methods.

However, the current reality presents a different picture. Despite these reforms, students in many public secondary schools continue to perform poorly in English, as evidenced by persistent low pass rates in national examinations (NECTA, 2013–2015). Many schools face challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, a lack of teaching and learning resources, and underqualified English teachers (Vuzo, 2007; Osaki, 2000). These constraints limit the effective implementation of the communicative approach and hinder students' language development. More critically, there is a lack of research that directly considers how students themselves perceive their learning effectiveness in English, which is vital for evaluating whether educational reforms are having the intended impact at the learner level.

This study seeks to address that gap by exploring students' perceptions of their effectiveness in English as a subject in public secondary schools in Arusha, Tanzania. By understanding how learners evaluate their own competence

and the challenges they face, the study provides insights that can inform future teaching strategies, policy decisions, and resource allocation, ultimately aiming to improve English language outcomes in Tanzanian schools.

1.2 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research question:

1. How do the students rate their effectiveness in English as a subject in terms of ;

   a) Attitude towards the subject
   b) Interest in the subject
   c) Motivation to learn the subject
   d) Student-teacher interaction while learning the subject

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the theoretical framework of language learning in light of learner autonomy as proposed by Aaron Chao (in Benson, 2011), who stated that language was learned through "pushing against one's limits of communication concerning frequency, intensity, and efficacy." This theory emphasized that effective language learning involved active student engagement in communication, where learners were aware of their own linguistic boundaries and consciously strived to expand them. Communication was not only the end goal but also the process through which learning occurred, and autonomy involved students recognizing what they could and could not do in the target language. The concept of "pushing" highlighted the importance of active, self-driven effort, both within and beyond the classroom environment. Furthermore, the dimensions of frequency (how often students engaged in language use), intensity (how much effort they exerted), and efficacy (how effective their learning strategies were) framed the way learners interacted with the English language. Therefore, this study examined how students perceived their own engagement with these elements—how often, how hard, and how effectively they pushed their limits to better understand their self-assessed effectiveness in English as a subject.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Students' Effectiveness in English Learning

2.1.1 Attitude towards Learning English

There appears to be general agreement that students always learn better when they understand what the teacher is saying (Klaus, 2003). The situation in most classrooms in Africa (where a foreign language in not lingua franca of a country) is that secondary school students do not understand what the teacher is saying, and this is especially when the teacher follows the official policy she/he is supposed to follow, that is teaching using a foreign language only, a language children do not use outside of school, have little exposure to and are not familiar with.

Kiswahili is the official language in Tanzania, 90% of the population speaks Kiswahili (Laitin, 1992:140). In Tanzania English is a foreign language, language children are not exposed much outside of school at the same time language of instruction in secondary and tertiary education. Holmarsdottir et al (2003) has found the distinction made by Ringbom (1987) between second language and foreign language. Ringbom suggested that in a situation of second language acquisition the language is spoken in the immediate environment, the learner has positive opportunities to use language in natural communication, and it may or may not be supplemented by classroom teaching. However, in foreign language learning context the language is not spoken in the learners" immediate environment, there is little or no opportunity for the learner to use the language in natural communicative situations.

Studies indicate that most teachers in Tanzania teaching in secondary schools use strategies we term as code mixing, code switching or regular translations. The term code means different languages. Code switching refers to switching in languages that takes place between sentences also called inter-sentential change. (Brock Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003). Code mixing is looked at negatively than code switching. Code mixing often indicates a lack of language competence in either language concerned. It does not necessarily indicate efficiency on the part of speaker but may result from complex bilingual skills (Myers-scotton, 1993). Pair work and group work in the classroom are very essential as they require cooperation among learners. It is very crucial to develop student confidence and so the teacher should use a lot of fluency-based activities. The most common activities in Communicative Approach class are role play, interview, information gap, games, pair work, and learning by teaching or surveys.

A study by Sebonde and Sane (2014) aimed at assessing the suitability of the CA in Tanzania, the study revealed the

practical problem encountered by both teachers and students over the use of the approach in Tanzania. Their study was conducted in four districts of Dodoma Region (Chamwino, Bahi, Dodoma urban and Kongwa and they used 13 schools in the region.The study revealed that the learning environment in Tanzania does not support the use of the approach because there are a big number of students in classes, a large number of people use Kiswahili and ethnic community language as their language of communication. It was seen that few students use English only when they are in schools, use Kiswahili language as their language of communication, and also teachers in these schools use Kiswahili when teaching in the classes though the stipulated language of instruction in English. They also observed that teachers in Tanzania are overloaded with subjects to teach and so they do not have time to prepare the necessary activities for the CA and they observed that most of English teachers in Tanzania are not well prepared to use the approach. Most of teachers' lack understanding of CA.

Rubagumya (2010: 190) has done extensive research on the issue of the language of instruction; it was noted that there is a discrepancy between policy and practice with regard to the medium of instruction in Tanzania school system. The policy is to use English, but teachers continuously use Kiswahili to enable better understanding, also students are not proficient enough in English to follow lectures. Allen (2021) analyzed the obstacles in the effective pupil centered teaching and learning of English language in Tanzania government primary schools; it was noted that majority of primary school teachers have insufficient command of English to be able to teach it effectively. Teachers with insufficient knowledge on the subject matter have very little confidence in teaching. Her paper attempted to show that the standard of English has declined dramatically over the years. Allen (2021) found that the pupil centered training is not taking place on any significant scale. The researcher states that many primary school teachers have insufficient command of English so as to teach effectively.

They are lacking good command of grammar and vocabulary which goes hand in hand with striking failure in pronunciation, where interference from Swahili and particularly its ultimate vocal sound is a problem. Many teachers do refuse to teach English, and when assigned to do so they feel victimized and may not teach all their timetable periods, also it was noted teachers are not assisted with materials, that is the materials are not prepared with the level of available teacher expertise in mind. She (Allen, 2021) commented that the only way to stop the decline of English is to help teachers as much as possible. Teachers' textbooks need to set out many more classroom activities and exercises.

2.1.2 Interest in English

Interest plays a powerful role in how students engage with learning, especially when it comes to subjects like English. When learners are genuinely interested, they're more likely to be curious, motivated, and willing to put in the effort. According to Schiefele (2009), interest isn't just about enjoying a subject, it actually helps students process information more deeply and retain it longer. In the case of English learning, this means students with a strong interest are more likely to understand, remember, and apply what they learn. Gardner (1985) emphasized that interest in learning English often stems from students' attitudes toward the language and their reasons for wanting to learn it. For example, some learners may be driven by the desire to travel or communicate with people from other cultures, while others might be motivated by academic or career goals. These internal motivations can greatly shape how engaged they are in learning English.

Lamb (2004) found that in today's globalized world, many students are interested in English because they see it as a tool for connecting with the wider world. Whether it's watching international movies, using social media, or preparing for global job markets, English often feels relevant and useful to students, which naturally builds interest.

Recent studies also highlight the importance of technology and autonomy. Reinders and White (2011) argue that giving students more control over their learning, like choosing the topics they explore or the tools they use can make them more invested. Similarly, Ushioda (2011) emphasized that when students feel their own identities are valued in the language learning process, their interest deepens.

Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) also remind us that while interest is crucial, it's just one part of a bigger picture. Teachers still need to address challenges students face, such as difficulty understanding spoken English or anxiety about speaking. Supporting students through these challenges can help maintain their interest and keep them motivated over time.

2.1.3 Motivation to Learn English

Motivation plays a central role in students' success in learning English as a second or foreign language. It not only influences the level of effort students put into learning but also affects their persistence, engagement, and overall language acquisition outcomes.

Motivation in language learning is commonly categorized into two broad types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to learning for the sake of enjoyment or

interest, while extrinsic motivation involves external rewards such as grades, future job opportunities, or social recognition (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the context of English language learning, both types are evident. For instance, students may be intrinsically motivated by an interest in Western culture or entertainment, while others may be driven by the need to pass exams or enhance career prospects.

English continues to be viewed as a "global language," essential for academic success, international communication, and access to better job opportunities. This perception significantly influences students' motivation. According to Khan and Khan (2023), students often associate proficiency in English with upward mobility, both socially and professionally. The promise of broader opportunities can act as a strong motivational driver, especially in non-English-speaking countries like Tanzania where English serves as a foreign language.

Teachers play a critical role in fostering or hindering motivation. A supportive, engaging classroom atmosphere can inspire students to put more effort into learning English. A study by Atmowardoyo et al. (2021) highlighted that when teachers use diverse teaching strategies such as games, group work, and real-life communication activities, students show higher motivation and interest. This underscores the importance of adopting learner-centered approaches to maintain motivation in language classrooms.

The use of technology and digital media has also become a major factor in motivating students. Platforms like Duolingo, YouTube, and even TikTok are increasingly integrated into English learning routines. Prayudha (2023) notes that these tools make learning more interactive and enjoyable, especially for younger learners, which in turn boosts their motivation and commitment to learning English.

Despite the many motivating elements, students can also face challenges that reduce their motivation. These include a lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, poor teaching methods, or limited exposure to real-life English use. Hidayat et al. (2022) found that students who felt underprepared or anxious about speaking English in front of others were more likely to lose interest, even if they recognized the importance of the language.

Social influences, such as encouragement from peers and family, also affect motivation. According to Rahman (2022), students who receive support and recognition from parents or friends regarding their English studies are more likely to stay motivated. This suggests that motivation is not only a personal trait but also shaped by the learner's broader social environment.

2.1.4 Student-Teacher Interaction

Student-teacher interaction is a vital component of effective language learning. In English classrooms, especially in contexts where English is a second or foreign language like Tanzania, the quality of interaction between students and their teachers can greatly influence learners' motivation, confidence, and communicative competence. Student-teacher interaction provides meaningful opportunities for students to engage in authentic communication. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, learning is a social process, and language development occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable others—in this case, the teacher (Vygotsky, 1978). When teachers actively engage with students through questioning, feedback, and conversation, they create a space for scaffolding and linguistic growth.

More recent studies have supported this notion. For example, Wu et al. (2021) found that students who experienced frequent and constructive teacher interactions demonstrated higher levels of speaking fluency and confidence in English. Interaction, in this sense, is not just a method of instruction, but a key to deeper engagement with the language.

Effective interaction is not limited to verbal communication. Non-verbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice also contribute to a supportive and encouraging learning environment. Teachers who demonstrate enthusiasm and responsiveness through body language tend to foster more active participation from students (Mahmoud & Tanni, 2022).

A positive student-teacher relationship has a significant impact on learner motivation. Students are more likely to participate, ask questions, and express their thoughts in English when they feel respected and supported by their teachers. In a study by Nawaz and Ahmad (2023), learners reported feeling more motivated and confident in classrooms where teachers used interactive strategies, such as open-ended questions, peer discussions, and individualized feedback.

Furthermore, frequent and constructive interaction helps to reduce anxiety common barrier to speaking a second language. When students perceive their teacher as approachable and patient, they are more willing to take risks in using English (Alqahtani, 2021).

The overall classroom environment also influences the quality of student-teacher interaction. In crowded or rigidly structured classrooms, interaction may be limited to one-way teacher talk. However, classrooms that encourage dialogue and collaborative learning are more conducive to language development (Ghosn-Davis, 2020). Teachers

who intentionally design communicative tasks and allow room for student voice create a more dynamic and responsive learning space.

With the shift toward online learning, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the nature of student-teacher interaction has evolved. Digital platforms have posed both challenges and opportunities. While some studies highlight a decrease in spontaneous interaction during remote learning, others point to the increased use of discussion boards, breakout rooms, and chat features as tools for maintaining communication (Zhang & Zheng, 2022). This shift highlights the need for teachers to adapt interaction strategies to virtual contexts.

3. Methodology

This study employed descriptive l research design (Omari, 2011) . The population comprised 28,440 students and 158 English teachers across 158 secondary schools, with a sample drawn using a combination of purposive sampling (to select representative schools and student forms) and simple random sampling (to select schools, classes, and teachers), resulting in 720 students from 16 schools and 79 teachers from 79 schools. Data collection involved self-constructed semi-structured questionnaires, interviews, and observations, designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. The instruments underwent content and criterion validity checks through expert review and pilot testing, yielding high reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha: 0.826 for teachers and 0.828 for students). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, via SPSS 26, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic content analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Students' Rating of their attitude towards English Language

Table 1: Distribution of Students' Rating of their Attitude towards English Language

Questions (*n*=720)	D	%	TD	%	TA	%	A	%
English is one of my favorite subjects	99	13.8	84	11.7	226	31.4	311	43.2
I want to work hard in English to make myself happy	154	21.4	155	21.5	312	43.3	99	13.8
I learn important skills in English Learning English is Fun	71	9.9	142	19.7	241	33.5	266	36.9
I Feel Worried when I make mistakes in	394	54.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	326	45.3
English classes	281	39.0	0	0.0	87	12.1	352	48.9
My English teacher sets a good example of speaking English all the time at school	71	9.9	112	15.6	213	29.6	324	45.0

Key: D=disagree, TD=tending to disagree, TA=tending to agree, A=agree.
Source: Survey data, 2024

Most students (61%) felt worried whenever they made mistakes in English classes compared to 39% who did not. While most English teachers set good examples of speaking English all the time in school (75%), 25% of the students were of the opinion that this was not the case. The results showed that a proportion of English teachers do not speak the language all the time in school.

Although most students liked English and considered it one of their most favourite subjects, a substantial proportion found that learning it is not fun, suggesting that the teaching approach could be a problem.

Table 1 shows that many students generally enjoy English and view it as one of their favorite subjects (Mean =3.04). Motivation to work hard in English for personal satisfaction is weaker (Mean =2.49), indicating room for improving intrinsic motivation. Students recognize the importance of English for acquiring valuable skills (Mean =2.98), showing a positive perception of its practical benefits (Mean = 2.35). With a Low to Moderate rating of a mean of 2.35 it is apparent that the enjoyment of learning English is relatively low, suggesting that teaching methods may not be engaging enough. Students report moderate levels of anxiety about making mistakes (Mean =2.71), highlighting the need for a more supportive, low-stress environment. Teachers are seen as good role models for using English consistently (Mean =3.10), which positively influences students' language environment.

4.2 Students' Attitude towards English Language

Table 2: Mean rating of Students' Attitude towards English Language

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
English is one of my favorite subjects	720	1.00	4.00	3.0403	1.04810
I want to work hard in English to make myself happy	720	1.00	4.00	2.4944	.97677
I learn important skills in English	720	1.00	4.00	2.9750	.98073
Learning English is Fun	720	1.00	4.00	2.3542	1.49393
I Feel Worried when I make mistakes in English classes	720	1.00	4.00	2.7083	1.40273
My English teacher sets a good example of speaking English all the time at school	720	1.00	4.00	3.0972	.99595
Mean for Attitude Towards English Language	720	1.00	4.00	2.7782	1.07542
Valid N (listwise)	720				

Table 2 indicate that students generally hold a moderately positive attitude towards learning the English language (M = 2.78; SD = 1.08). The highest-rated item was **"My English teacher sets a good example of speaking English all the time at school"** with a mean score of (M = 3.10: SD = 0.99)**.** This suggests that many students appreciate their teachers' efforts to model English use in class, which can foster motivation and confidence. Another high score was recorded for **"English is one of my favorite subjects"** (M = 3.04; SD = 1.05), showing that a substantial number of students enjoy the subject and value it within their academic journey.

The item **"I learn important skills in English"** also received a relatively high rating (M = 2.98; SD = 0.98), further reinforcing the idea that students recognize English as a subject that contributes to their personal development and academic success. However, attitudes start to dip with **"I want to work hard in English to make myself happy"** (M = 2.49; SD = 0.98), suggesting that while students may value English, intrinsic motivation or personal drive to excel in the subject may be weaker.

Significantly, **"Learning English is fun"** received the lowest mean rating (M = 2.35; SD = 1.49), and its high standard deviation indicates a wide range of student experiences some enjoy learning English while others do not. This is a key concern, as enjoyment is a strong driver of engagement. Furthermore, "I feel worried when I make mistakes in English classes" had a mean of (M = 2.71:SD = 1.40), suggesting that a noticeable portion of students experience anxiety or fear of failure, which could hinder active participation and risk-taking in language use.

Overall, the results reflect a moderate but mixed attitude among students. While they see value in learning English and appreciate teacher modeling, enjoyment and emotional comfort in learning situations remain areas of concern. This calls for more engaging, low-anxiety classroom environments that promote fun, collaboration, and confidence in using the language.

4.3 Students' Rating of their Interest in English Language

Table 3: Distribution of Students' Rating of their Interest in English Language

Questions (*n*=720)	D	%	TD	%	TA	%	A	%
Look Forward to next English lesson	212	29.4	98	13.6	0	0.0	410	56.9
I read extra material to improve my English language	227	31.5	210	29.2	168	23.3	115	16.0
I like it when the teacher gives exercises in English	213	29.6	112	15.6	255	35.4	140	19.4
I like being picked to answer questions in English	127	17.6	126	17.5	169	23.5	298	41.4
I feel comfortable in the English class	56	7.8	211	29.3	227	31.5	226	31.4

Key: D=disagree, TD=tending to disagree, TA=tending to agree, A=agree.
Source: Survey data, 2024

Roughly a half of the students sampled looked forward to the next English lesson (57%) relative to those who did not (43%). Most students (61%) answered that they did not read extra material to improve their English language in contrast to 39% who said they did. While 45% of the students did not like it when the teacher gave exercises in English, the remaining answered that they did. Most students (65%) liked being picked to answer questions in English while 35% said that they did not. Similarly, most students (63%) answered that they felt comfortable in English classes relative to 37% who did not.

The results suggest that sampled students' interest towards English language was ambivalent.

4.4 Students' Interest in Learning English Language

Table 4: Mean rating of students' Interest in Learning English Language

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I always look Forward to next English lesson	720	1.00	4.00	2.8278	1.36244
I read extra material to improve my English language	720	1.00	4.00	2.2431	1.06432
I like it when the teacher gives exercises in English	720	1.00	4.00	2.4472	1.10882
I like being picked to answer questions in English	720	1.00	4.00	2.8944	1.12993
I feel comfortable in the English class	720	1.00	4.00	2.8653	.94929
Mean for Interest in English Language	720	1.00	4.00	2.6556	1.07480
Valid N (listwise)	720				

The findings from Table 4 reveal that students' interest in learning English is moderately positive, with an overall mean score of (M = 2.66: SD = 1.07). Among the individual items, the highest rated was "I like being picked to answer questions in English" (M = 2.89; SD = 1.13), which suggests that many students enjoy participating actively during English lessons. This is closely followed by "I feel comfortable in the English class" (M = 2.87; SD = 0.95), indicating that the classroom environment may generally be supportive or non-threatening for most learners.

Another positively rated item was "I always look forward to the next English lesson" (M = 2.83; SD = 1.36), although the higher standard deviation here shows variation some students are highly eager while others show little anticipation. In contrast, the item "I like it when the teacher gives exercises in English" received a slightly lower mean of (M = 2.45: SD = 1.11), suggesting that while some learners enjoy the practice, others may find it burdensome or less engaging.

The lowest-rated item was "I read extra material to improve my English language" (M = 2.24; SD = 1.06), indicating that independent reading and language enrichment outside class are not common among many students. This could reflect a lack of motivation, access to

resources, or awareness of the importance of self-driven learning in language acquisition.

Overall, while students appear to show general comfort and engagement in class, their interest does not always extend to personal effort beyond the classroom. Teachers may need to foster deeper, more intrinsic interest by integrating more engaging materials, promoting student agency, and encouraging reading and exploration beyond regular classwork.

4.5 Distribution of Students' Rating of their Motivation to Learn English

Table 5: Distribution of Students' Rating of their Motivation to Learn English

Questions (*n*=720)	D	%	TD	%	TA	%	A	%
I Put in a lot of effort into English learning	98	13.6	126	17.5	197	27.4	299	41.5
I believe Working Hard will help me maintain good performance in English	0	0.0	98	13.6	211	29.3	411	57.1
I like the Prestige of Being good in English language	14	1.9	70	9.7	240	33.3	396	55.0
I believe that Good English comes with social benefits	141	19.6	168	23.3	199	27.6	212	29.4
I want only the best grades in English	0	0.0	0	0.0	56	7.8	664	92.2

Key: D=disagree, TD=tending to disagree, TA=tending to agree, A=agree.
Source: Survey data, 2024

Many students were of the opinion that they put in a lot of effort into English learning, with 299 (42%), and 197 (27%) students answering agree and tending to agree, respectively. Most students also believed that working hard could help them to maintain good performance in English (86%). Being good in English was also found to be prestigious, with 88% of the students in agreement. The students sampled also wanted only to have the best grades in English, with all the students either agreeing (92%) or tending to agree with the question. However, a significant proportion of students (43%) disagreed that good English comes with social benefits. This could be because it has been reported that Kiswahili is the predominant language of use in Tanzania, with English playing a secondary role (Sane & Sebonde, 2014).

Nevertheless, the study found that the sampled students had very high motivations for learning the English language.

4.6 Students' Motivation to Learn English

Table 6: Mean rating of students' Motivation to Learn English

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I Put in a lot of effort into English learning	720	1.00	4.00	2.9681	1.06549
I believe Working Hard will help me maintain good performance in English	720	2.00	4.00	3.4347	.72020
I like the Prestige of Being good in English language	720	1.00	4.00	3.4167	.74494
I believe that good English comes with social benefits	720	1.00	4.00	2.6694	1.09705
I want only the best grades in English	720	3.00	4.00	3.9250	.26357
Mean for Motivation to learn English	720	1.60	4.00	3.2828	.72892
Valid N (listwise)	720				

The results from Table 5 show that students demonstrated a relatively high level of motivation to learn English, with an overall mean of (M = 3.28; SD = 0.73). The item I want only the best grades in English had the highest mean score (M = 3.93; SD = 0.26), indicating strong academic ambition among the majority of students. The very low standard deviation here reflects strong consensus most

students are highly driven to achieve top performance in English.

The second highest-rated item was I believe working hard will help me maintain good performance in English (M = 3.43; SD = 0.72), suggesting that students generally recognize the link between effort and academic success. Similarly, I like the prestige of being good in English received a high mean score of M = (3.42; SD = 0.74), which implies that students associate proficiency in English with recognition and social status.

In contrast, I believe that good English comes with social benefits recorded a relatively lower mean of (M = 2.67; SD = 1.10). The higher standard deviation here indicates that opinions varied more widely, with some students recognizing the social utility of English while others were less convinced or unaware. Lastly, I put in a lot of effort into English learning received a moderate score of (M = 2.97; SD = 1.07), showing that while many students report investing effort, a notable proportion still may not fully engage.

In summary, students show strong academic and status-related motivation to excel in English, though actual effort and recognition of social benefits appear to be more varied. These insights suggest that while intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are present, teachers may need to further emphasize the real-world value of English proficiency and foster more consistent work habits among learners.

4.7 Rating of Students-Teacher Interaction while Learning English

Table 7: Distribution of the Rating of Students-Teacher Interaction while Learning English

Questions (*n*=720)	D	%	TD	%	TA	%	A	%
My teacher expresses himself/herself clearly	42	5.8	86	11.9	183	25.4	409	56.8
My teacher talks friendly in class	113	15.7	197	27.4	156	21.7	254	35.3
When we do not agree with the teacher, we talk about it	168	23.3	158	21.9	211	29.3	183	25.4
My English teacher listens to students' concerns	170	23.6	154	21.4	126	17.5	270	37.5
My teacher is someone we can depend on	113	15.7	114	15.8	253	35.1	240	33.3
My teacher realizes when I do not understand	128	17.8	141	19.6	198	27.5	253	35.1
My teacher is willing to re-explain what I do not seem to understand	126	17.5	128	17.8	240	33.3	226	31.4

Key: D=disagree, TD=tending to disagree, TA=tending to agree, A=agree.
Source: Survey data, 2024

While most students felt that teachers of English express themselves clearly (82%), a significant proportion (43%) found the teachers do not talk friendly in class. A substantial segment of students (45%) believed that they did not talk with teachers when they did not agree with each other. Similarly, 45% of the students answered that English teachers did not listen to their concerns. Nevertheless, most students felt that their teachers could be dependent upon (68%) and realize when students do not understand (63%). Most students (65%) also answered that their teachers were willing to re-explain what they seemed not to understand.

4.8 Students-Teacher Interaction in English Language

Table 8: Mean rating of Students-Teacher Interaction in English Language

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
My teacher expresses himself/herself clearly	720	1.00	4.00	3.3319	.90098
My teacher talks friendly in class	720	1.00	4.00	2.7653	1.09578
When we do not agree with the teacher, we talk about it	720	1.00	4.00	2.5681	1.10547
My English teacher listens to students' concerns	720	1.00	4.00	2.6750	1.18987
My teacher is someone we can depend on	720	1.00	4.00	2.8611	1.04961
My teacher realizes when I do not understand	720	1.00	4.00	2.8000	1.10455
My teacher is willing to re-explain what I do not seem to understand	720	1.00	4.00	2.4528	1.10781
Mean for Student-Teacher interaction while learning English	720	1.00	4.00	2.7792	1.03347
Valid N (listwise)	720				

The results from table 7 indicate that students perceive student-teacher interaction in English classes as moderate, with an overall mean of M = 2.78 (SD = 1.03). Among all items, the statement "My teacher expresses himself/herself clearly" had the highest mean rating of M = 3.33 (SD = 0.90). This relatively high score and low standard deviation suggest that most students consistently understand their teacher's communication, highlighting clarity as a strength in instruction.

The statement "My teacher is someone we can depend on" also received a moderately high mean of M = 2.86 (SD = 1.05), indicating that students generally trust their teachers, although some variation exists in their responses. Similarly, "My teacher realizes when I do not understand" had a mean of M = 2.80 (SD = 1.10), suggesting moderate teacher awareness of student confusion, though the range of student experiences is wide.

Teachers' friendliness in class (M = 2.77; SD = 1.10) and their willingness to listen to student concerns (M = 2.68; SD = 1.19) both received moderate ratings, but the higher standard deviations imply inconsistent experiences some students feel positively, while others do not. Open dialogue when disagreements arise had a lower mean (M = 2.57; SD = 1.11), pointing to limited open communication in the classroom. Notably, the lowest rated item was "My teacher is willing to re-explain what I do not seem to understand" (M = 2.45; SD = 1.11), suggesting that students often do not receive the follow-up explanations they need, and perceptions vary widely.

In summary, while teachers are seen as clear in their communication and somewhat dependable, other aspects of interaction such as responsiveness to student confusion, approachability, and receptiveness to student feedback need strengthening. These findings emphasize the importance of nurturing more inclusive, responsive, and supportive classroom environments to foster better engagement and learning outcomes in English language instruction.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The findings from the study reveal that students generally hold a moderately positive attitude, interest, and motivation toward learning English, with an overall tendency to recognize the academic importance and value of the subject. English is viewed as a favorite subject by many, and a high proportion of students are motivated by the desire for good grades, prestige, and academic success. However, intrinsic motivation such as learning for personal enjoyment or satisfaction was relatively weaker. While most students acknowledge the importance of English skills, only a minority find the learning process genuinely fun, suggesting that the methods used in instruction may not be sufficiently engaging or student-centered.

Furthermore, student-teacher interaction in English classes was rated as moderate. While teachers were generally seen as clear communicators and dependable, many students reported a lack of friendliness, insufficient opportunities for dialogue, and limited responsiveness to students' confusion. Additionally, students expressed moderate comfort and engagement in class but showed limited effort outside of school, such as reading extra materials. These mixed responses suggest a classroom environment that may benefit from more inclusive, interactive, and emotionally supportive teaching approaches to deepen interest and encourage consistent engagement.

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5.2 Recommendations

1. Incorporate engaging and student-centered teaching strategies such as interactive games, group discussions, role-plays, and multimedia to increase fun and participation in English classes.
2. Enhance teacher-student communication and responsiveness by fostering open dialogue, offering regular feedback, and re-explaining concepts when needed to support deeper understanding and reduce anxiety.
3. Promote independent learning habits by encouraging students to read extra materials and linking English learning to real-life benefits, including social and career opportunities.

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