Students' Interest in Speaking English and How It relates to Their Speaking Achievement

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Abstract

The background of this research was the need to investigate the interest in speaking English and speaking English achievement. It mainly aimed to study the relationship between the two variables. The study was quantitative research using descriptive, inferential, correlational, and survey methods conducted upon students at a private senior high school. The findings of the study showed that the students are interested in speaking English and that their English-speaking achievement is good. The last finding showed that there is a correlation between the students' interest in speaking English and their English-speaking achievement.

Keywords—interest, achievement, interest in speaking, speaking achievement

Abstrak

Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah perlunya diteliti minat berbicara bahasa Inggris dan prestasi berbahasa Inggris. Ini terutama bertujuan untuk mempelajari hubungan antara kedua variabel. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif, inferensial, korelasional, dan survei yang dilakukan pada siswa sebuah sekolah menengah atas swasta. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa tertarik untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris dan bahwa prestasi berbahasa Inggris mereka baik. Temuan terakhir menunjukkan bahwa ada korelasi antara minat siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris dan prestasi berbahasa Inggris mereka.

Kata kunci—minat, prestasi, minat berbicara bahasa Inggris, prestasi berbicara bahasa Inggris

INTRODUCTION

Interest is crucial in doing particular activities successfully. When someone tends to do an activity like studying, there should be a strong motivational process that energizes them to start or continue their learning. As stated by Harackiewicz et al. (2016), interest has become a motivational factor to energize the learning process that can lead them and their career to become successful. Also, people want to continue doing an activity if they know it as something that is meaningful to them. As cited from Zhao (2014), interest is a variety of emotions that have arousal status and people tend to know more things that they are doing. That means if somebody is interested in some activities for an extended period for a certain orientation, this person is interested in that thing. Due to that, people will have more enthusiasm to finish their activity and have the willingness to give up in gaining their activity. Hence, the importance of interest could have both affective and cognitive domain qualities that combine feelings of relish or enjoyment and curiosity that make them want to know more or learn something, whereas the attention focused on the value and the personal importance Hidi & Renninger (2006).

There are three important qualities combined with an interest in learning. First, enjoyment is a feeling that people are happy to do an activity. It also means that they are interested in their actions and feel satisfied. To know that students are interested in their learning meant that they are enjoying the instruction. According to Schukajlow et al. (2012), interest is related to feelings of enjoyment. If the students enjoy their learning it means they are interested in that activity. In addition, Frenzel et al. (2009) assumed that teachers and students have a positive link to the outcomes of classroom interaction. In other words, enjoyment links to the positive process of learning in the classroom.

Second, in developing an interest in speaking, students should have curiosity in mind. According to Stokoe (2012), curiosity is defined as a strong emotion that continually keeps up our minds to discover and develop skills we will acquire. Peterson and Hidi (2019) stated that curiosity had been identified as a positive learning motivator. It relates to their interest in speaking English. Therefore, Ainley (2019) explained that curiosity is mentioned in descriptions of developing interests, implying that experiential states of curiosity and interest are intertwined in interest development. These statements strongly stated that curiosity is such an important emotion that can develop students' interest in speaking.

Third, attention is a cognitive domain is crucial that can influence students to be interested in speaking. In line with that, Arnold (2011) stated that if students have attended the learning process, they will effectively communicate to share their interest in speaking. This reason means that the instructional will be more active between the students if the teacher can stimulate their attention. Sujanto (1986) also defined attention as an exhibit of the concentration of someone to the perception of understanding by their own. Therefore, if students show positive attention to English, directly the students have an interest in English, especially to their speaking. So, indirectly an interest in speaking comes from attention in learning. In addition to that, attention plays a significant role in the speaking activity, when they start to have better attention in learning class, speaking will be easier and students can freely speak.

Interest in English language learning has been studied for years in many language studies. Specifically, there has been research conducted on the relationship between speaking English interest and achievement in English. In some studies, learners' interest in speaking English is found significantly correlated with their speaking achievement.

A previous related study to interest in speaking was conducted by Sembiring dan Ginting (2019) which studied how to improve speaking achievement by using storytelling techniques. The respondents of the study were the eighth-grade students of Public Junior High School 22 Medan in the academic year 2018/2019. The researcher applied Classroom Action Research (CAR) that was conducted in three meetings. The instruments in collecting the data were quantitative data (speaking test) and qualitative data (observation checklist

and field notes). The findings of this study show that the mean score of the pre-test is 40, the formative test is 46.34, and the post-test is 62.89. The study shows that the mean scores are improved from the pre-test to the post-test. The result of the observation checklist and field notes exposed that the students indicated significant improvement in their speaking skills and were interested in teaching and learning English by using storytelling techniques.

A study related to speaking achievement was done by Serawati et al. (2018). The study found that there was a positive moderate correlation between interest in speaking and their speaking achievement of students at MAN 2 Filial Pontianak. The relationship between the two variables was moderate and positive. Based on the data presented above, it is possible to conclude that interest in speaking English played a significant role in their ability to speak. In other words, there is a positive relationship between interest in speaking English and their ability to speak. The study recommended the English teacher to stimulate students' interest through concrete actions such as motivating them to be relaxed in speaking and not be afraid to make mistakes because it is a process, as well as making the classroom atmosphere more conducive so they will feel enjoyable, interested, and also enrich their ability in learning English.

In addition, a survey was done by Firmani (2009) to discover the relationship between students' interests and achievement in English learning. In the study, thirty second-year students from SLTPN 1 Pamulang participated in the survey. The data was gathered through observation, documentation, and questionnaires. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient formula was used in this study to analyze the relationship between those variables. The study's findings revealed a positive relationship between interest in learning English and their achievement with r = .75 in the range of .60 - .80, which was classified as a strong correlation. It found that students with a high interest in learning English were more likely to engage in the knowledge than those with a low interest. Those students tended to be more focused on the lesson, and they enjoyed every class task. In addition, these students were eager to practice their English outside of the classroom. Conversely, students with a low interest seemed bored and tended to bother their friends while doing the task in class.

Another study was conducted by Nurjanah (2011) whose purpose was to see if there was a link between students' interest in speaking English and their speaking grades. To examine the relationship between the variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. The study's findings revealed that there was a relationship between the interest in learning English and their grades in speaking. This significant correlation means that the greater the interest to speak in learning, the higher the speaking grades. Students with a strong interest attempted to learn more than those with a weak interest and they had fun while learning. They were always cheerful and eager to complete any tasks assigned to them by the teachers. They did not only learn to speak in school but also outside of school. When they were outside, they tried to put what they had learned in school into practice. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that teachers provide ongoing motivation to students to speak English and create a friendly environment to assist students in studying without stress, particularly when they speak English.

A related study of Zuhri Dj and Wahyuni (2017) inferred that there is a correlation between students' interest and their speaking scores. The research consists of two variables: independent variable and dependent variable. The Independent variable is students' interest in speaking and the dependent variable is students' speaking score. The population in this research is all the students of the sixth semester of English Education Department of STAIN Watampone in the academic year 2014/2015 which consists of 4 classes with 82 students. To obtain a representative sample, the research used proportional random sampling which was drawn from a population that has been classified equally or proportionally. The results show that there is a positive correlation between students' interest in speaking and their speaking scores.

Another related research was conducted by Pratiwi et al. (2022). It was a study about the correlation between interest in speaking materials and debate speaking competence of students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. The findings showed that there is a significant correlation between students' interest in speaking materials and debate speaking competence. In conclusion, interest in speaking materials positively correlated with speaking competence and achievement debate. The similarity of the finding in this study and other previously discussed studies' findings relies on the fact that speaking interest is a significant aspect to speaking ability. This also means that the greater the interest in speaking English, the better speaking ability the students may achieve and that it is manifested in better speaking achievement students may perform in classroom.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using the quantitative approach design. It was a descriptive and correlative research which employed both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. For this reason, this study applied the principles of a quantitative research to the choice of instrument used, the way the data were collected, how the analyses were done, and how the results were interpreted.

Population dan Respondents

The population studied in this research was tenth-grade students from SMA Advent Tompaso II. This school is located in Tompaso II, Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The population consisted of 120 students where 34 students were from X Science A Class, 38 students from X Science B Class, 37 students from X Social Class, and 11 students from X Language Class. Out of 120 students, because of some reasons, only 80 students took part in the data collection process. This means that, when counted using the formula proposed by Johnson and Christensen (2014), the response rate was 67% (80/120 x 100 = 67%).

Instrument and Data

To measure the data of interest in speaking, the research used a psychology scale. The scale has 13 questions or items (see Table 1) that were constructed or developed from the theories about speaking interest in English language learning. To make sure that the scale was valid to use, it was examined by three relevant expert lecturers in English language teaching field. The three experts read and gave suggestions and corrective input to the scale items. The items were then improved based on their comments and inputs. After that, as the cardinal rule in research (Johnson & Christensen, 2014), the scale was tried out or pilot tested to students who had similar characteristics to the students in the population. There were ten tenth grade students of SMA Advent Tompaso II who participated in the pilot study by filling in the scale. The data gathered in the pilot study were then used to estimate the reliability of the scale. The result of Coefficient Alpha analysis showed that the reliability coefficient of the scale was .70. This indicates that it was reliable enough because the minimum expected reliability index is at least .70 (Reynolds et al., 2009).

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection in the research was conducted through the following steps. First, the researcher asked for a permission letter from the dean of the Department of Education, Universitas Klabat. After that, the researcher submitted the permission letter from the Dean to the principal of SMA Advent Tompaso II. Under the permission from the principal, the researcher made an appointment with the English teachers to share the scale in Google Form. After making an appointment, the researcher was allowed to share the Google Form through the WA group class. It took about 15 to 20 minutes for the students to fill in the form. During the data collection time, the researcher made sure that all students understand

and know how to fill in the form correctly. The researcher waited for the students to finish filling in the scale during the class time. Later, the researcher took the students' English conversation mid semester test scores from their English teachers for analyses.

Table 1. Items of Interest in Speaking English

No	Item	Response				
		Truly Agree	Agree	Netral	Disagree	Truly Disagree
1	I love speaking English in class.					
2	I am interested in speaking English with the teacher.					
3	I am interested in speaking English with friends in group discussions.					
4	I am interested in speaking English when the teacher gives me a speaking assignment.					
5	I enjoy practicing the English sentences spoken by the teacher.					
6	I enjoy sharing information with others using English.					
7	I love sharing my opinion with others in English.					
8	I like to interact in English formally with other people.					
9	I like to interact casually in English with other people.					
10	I like to speak English through phone conversations with strangers.					
11	I like to speak English through video call conversations with strangers.					
12	I like to give instructions to others in English.					
13	I like to give speeches in English.					

Data Analysis

The data analyses were conducted quantitatively by the help of a statistical tool analysis. During the analysis process, descriptive statistical analyses were used to measure the levels or means of interest in speaking and speaking achievement. On the other, inferential statistics analyses were used to measure the probability or p-value of relationship between the two variables. Due to the non-normally distributed data, Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient analysis was used to find the significant correlation between interest in speaking English and the students' achievement in speaking English.

The results of analyses were interpreted based on three different scales. First, to interpret the level of interest in speaking, this study used the following scale: 1.00 – 1.49 = Very Low; 1.50 – 2.49 = Low; 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderate; 3.50 – 4.49 = High; and 4.50 – 5.00 = Very High. Second, to interpret the level of speaking achievement, it used the grading system of SMA Advent Tompaso II as follows: 89 – 100 = Very Good; 82 – 88 = Good; 74 – 81 = Enough; 67 – 73 = Not Enough; 60 – 66 = Poor. Third, to interpret the correlation between variable X and Y, the p-value was compared to α (.05). If the p-value is less than or equal to α (.05), then there is a significant correlation between variable X and Y. Finally, the strength of correlation between the two variables was interpreted based on the following guidelines offered by Reynolds, Livingstone, and Wilson (2009): <0.30 = Weak; 0.30-0.70 = Moderate; >0.70 = Strong. Reynolds, Livingstone, and Wilson (2009) stated that there are two types of correlation: positive and negative. A positive correlation is indicated by a positive r value (strength of correlation) between the two variables. In a positive correlation, an increase in a variable is followed by the increase of the other variable. On the other hand, a negative correlation appears when the r value is negative. In this type of correlation, an increase in a variable is followed by a decrease of the other variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To analyze the level of interest and achievement in speaking English, the research did descriptive statistical analyses of means to find out the levels of variable X and Y. Based on the results, the interest in speaking level of the 10th-Grade students of SMA Advent Tompaso II was 3.44. According to the interpretation of the data, the mean score of interest in speaking fell between 2.50 – 3.49. This indicates that the interest in speaking of 10th-Grade students of SMA Advent Tompaso II is moderate. This finding might indicate that the students are positive enough with the use of English among them even though English is a foreign language in Indonesian context. Due to English is not used as the language of instruction in school, students may only speak it in classroom or during English learning. Nevertheless, the 10th-Grade students of SMA Advent Tompaso II show enough interest in speaking English.

The second finding has to do with the level of speaking achievement. Based on the descriptive statistics analyses, the students' speaking achievement level is 86.53 and the mean score of speaking achievement is in the range 82 – 88. This indicates that the speaking achievement of the 10th-Grade students of SMA Advent Tompaso II is good. This means that they have strong knowledge and skills in speaking English which enable them to speak English well which then resulted in good speaking achievement as assessed by their teachers.

The third finding is focused on the relationship between the students' interest in speaking English and their speaking achievement. The results of Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient analyses showed that the p-value is .05 which is equal to α (.05). Due to the p-value is similar to the significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant positive correlation between variable X dan variable Y. The positive correlation between the two variables means that an increase in students' interest in speaking achievement will be followed by an increase in their speaking achievement. Conversely, a decrease in students' interest in speaking achievement will be followed by a decrease in their speaking achievement. A similar finding was also found in the study of Firmani (2009). The finding of the study showed that there was a positive correlation between students' interest and their achievement in learning English. In this study, the strength of correlation between the two variables is r = .19. Although there is a correlation between the 10th-Grade students' interest of speaking English and their speaking achievement at SMA Advent Tompaso II, the correlation is weak. This indicates that interest in speaking English is not a variable that strongly correlates with speaking achievement. There might be other variables which have a strong relationship with learners' speaking achievement. This fact could be a foundation for other similar language teaching studies to identify these variables later in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, a few conclusions were drawn. First, it can be concluded that the 10th-Grade students of SMA Advent Tompaso II have enough interest in speaking English in school. Second, the students can speak English well as indicated by the good level of achievement in the speaking test conducted by their English teachers. Third, if the students can increase their level of interest in speaking English, there would be a slight increase in their speaking achievement. Finally, their interest in speaking English might not be the one variable correlating with their speaking achievement. Some other variables could be correlating with English speaking achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, several recommendations were proposed. Firstly, for the students, they need to build enough interest in English speaking activities done in classroom. By doing this, hopefully, they will be able to increase their speaking skills.

Secondly, for the teachers, they need to look forward about things that can fit and relate to the students to improve their English-speaking skills in classroom. They also need to discover which problems or difficulties that impede their students' interest to speak English. Lastly, future studies may conduct similar research on interest in speaking English and speaking achievement. They need to discover and dig deeper about other factors that correlate with students' English-speaking achievement. Hopefully, other studies will be successful to identify these factors and contribute to English education context in the future.

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