

**AN INVESTIGATION OF EFL YOUNG LEARNERS' INTEREST AND
MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY OF
MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH STUDENTS**

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Abstract

This present research investigated the English learning interest and motivation of EFL Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school) students. The study employs a quantitative descriptive methodology, where by data is gathered through means of observation, documentation, and questionnaires. Participants included 30 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who were enrolled at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic primary school) located in Medan, Indonesia. The questionnaire comprises a set of inquiries that have been modified to assess the overall interest of students towards speaking, reading, listening, and writing, along with inquiries pertaining to their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The results of questionnaires and observation notes indicate that the level of interest and motivation exhibited by EFL students towards learning the English language is notably high. Based on the distribution of scores, it can be inferred that students exhibit the highest level of interest in English listening skills, followed by reading, speaking, and lastly, writing. The primary determinant of intrinsic motivation among students is their personal inclination towards acquiring proficiency in the English language. The primary factor contributing to students' extrinsic motivation is the teacher, including her instructional methods, use of media, and recognition of outstanding academic performance. Of the two components, extrinsic motivation outweighs intrinsic motivation in terms of percentage score. The findings of this study suggest that teachers have a significant role in sustaining and/or enhancing students' interest and motivation in learning English.

Keyword: *Extrinsic Motivation, Interest, Intrinsic Motivation, English Learning, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki minat dan motivasi belajar bahasa Inggris siswa EFL Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Sekolah Dasar Islam). Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi deskriptif kuantitatif, dimana data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan kuesioner. Peserta terdiri dari 30 pelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) yang terdaftar di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (sekolah dasar Islam) yang berlokasi di Medan, Indonesia. Kuesioner terdiri dari serangkaian inkuiri yang telah dimodifikasi untuk menilai minat keseluruhan siswa terhadap berbicara, membaca, mendengarkan, dan menulis, bersama dengan inkuiri yang berkaitan dengan motivasi intrinsik dan

ekstrinsik mereka. Hasil angket dan catatan observasi menunjukkan bahwa tingkat minat dan motivasi siswa EFL terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggris cukup tinggi. Berdasarkan distribusi skor, dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa menunjukkan minat tertinggi dalam keterampilan menyimak bahasa Inggris, diikuti dengan membaca, berbicara, dan terakhir, menulis. Penentu utama motivasi intrinsik di kalangan siswa adalah kecenderungan pribadi mereka untuk memperoleh kemahiran dalam bahasa Inggris. Faktor utama yang berkontribusi terhadap motivasi ekstrinsik siswa adalah guru, termasuk metode pengajarannya, penggunaan media, dan pengakuan prestasi akademik yang luar biasa. Dari kedua komponen tersebut, motivasi ekstrinsik melebihi motivasi intrinsik dalam hal skor persentase. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki peran penting dalam mempertahankan dan/atau meningkatkan minat dan motivasi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. dan pengakuan atas kinerja akademik yang luar biasa. Dari kedua komponen tersebut, motivasi ekstrinsik melebihi motivasi intrinsik dalam hal skor persentase. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki peran penting dalam mempertahankan dan/atau meningkatkan minat dan motivasi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. dan pengakuan atas kinerja akademik yang luar biasa. Dari kedua komponen tersebut, motivasi ekstrinsik melebihi motivasi intrinsik dalam hal skor persentase. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki peran penting dalam mempertahankan dan/atau meningkatkan minat dan motivasi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: Motivasi Ekstrinsik, Minat, Motivasi Intrinsik, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

INTRODUCTION

English is a global and universal language as it is spoken by a large number of individuals worldwide (Guilherme, 2007; San & Abdullah, 2014). As a global language, English is used for oral and written international communication (Sariakin, 2015). Many people need English to communicate with people from other countries when doing activities in any sectors, especially in tourism, education, technology, commerce, economics and military aid (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002). Thus, many nations where English is not used in daily communication mandate the language's instruction in formal educational institutions. In primary and secondary education, approximately 150 million students are learning English as a foreign language (EFL) (Ulfa & Bania, 2019).

Indonesia is one of the nations implementing the policy of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) as a mandatory subject at nearly all levels of formal education, from secondary school to university, and as an elective subject for students in primary school (Fithriani, 2017). As a result, many primary schools have incorporated English into their curricula, and the language has become a social status enhancer in the nation. (Mappiase & Sihes, 2014).

Learning English for EFL students poses more challenges and requires a more substantial investment of effort compared to learning their native languages (Imanda & Mufidah, 2017). Numerous factors exert an influence on the acquisition of knowledge by students, encompassing familial background, surroundings, cognitive aptitude, physical well-being, drive, and personal preferences (Ahmad, 2005). The role of interest and motivation is crucial in the process of learning English as a foreign language, as the acquisition of the language is hindered when the learner lacks interest. Enhanced student engagement in the learning process can be attributed to their level of enthusiasm towards the subject matter (Ainia, 2020; Idami, 2022). Dedicated students of English language will prioritize active engagement in the process of learning, thereby demonstrating their motivation towards the subject matter (Othman & Shuqair, 2013). In summary, achieving success in the realm of English as a foreign language (EFL) necessitates more than mere instructions and directions from the teachers.

Learning interests and motivation have been identified as crucial elements for achieving success in the classroom and enhancing academic performance (Ainia, 2020; Jefiza, 2017; Mustafa et al., 2015). Therefore, it is imperative that EFL teachers prioritize these factors in their teaching practices (Ulfa & Bania, 2019). Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of EFL students' interest and motivation in the learning process, as well as the responsibility of teachers in enhancing their interest and motivation to learn. Ulfa and Bania (2019) research, for example, reported that motivation, both from teachers and students, plays a significant role in English language learning. Kusmaryati and Amertaningrum (2017) found that EFL students exhibited a significant degree of interest in learning, which was attributed to the teacher's ability to stimulate such interest. Moreover, they discovered that high learning interest is crucial for increasing student achievement in learning English.

Given the importance of interest and motivation in the process of English language learning, it is necessary to conduct an enquiry into this subject matter to furnish insights into the current interests and motivational factors of EFL students. The results of the study may be utilized in the future to apprise teachers of appropriate measures that can be implemented to augment or sustain their students' engagement and motivation to acquire English proficiency. Moreover, while extensive research has been conducted on this subject, many of which focus on student's learning interest and/or motivation in English learning in general. English language learning covers four integrated skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but EFL students' levels of interest in each of these skills may vary. Therefore, investigating students' interest in learning English must be individualized by taking into account their individual language proficiency levels. Furthermore, prior research on the subject of learning motivation has neglected to differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. The present research was conducted to address the existing empirical gap by examining Indonesian EFL students' interest in learning English, with a focus on the four language skills,

namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Additionally, the study explored the learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation towards learning the language.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using a quantitative descriptive methodology. Calderon (2006), defined descriptive research as a deliberate and systematic approach to collecting, examining, categorizing, and organizing data in order to depict the attributes of the population, circumstance, or phenomenon under investigation, either with or without the use of statistical techniques. Since the purpose of this study was to explore EFL students' interest in learning the four language skills and examine their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through numerical and descriptive measures, a quantitative descriptive design is deemed the most suitable for this investigation.

Data were obtained through a questionnaire, which was adapted from previous related studies (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Rahmawati, 2018). The questionnaire, written in Indonesian, consists of 18 items and divided into two categories: interest and motivation. The interest category consists of four components, namely: Reading (3 statements) speaking (3 statements) listening (3 statements), and writing (3 statements). Meanwhile, encompasses two components: intrinsic (3 statements) and extrinsic (3 statements). Each item has four response options: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). Each response is assigned a numerical value: 1 for a response indicating strong agreement, 2 for agree, 3 for disagree, and 4 for strongly disagree.

The questionnaires were distributed to the students of grade four of a government-funded *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* situated in the central district of Medan, Indonesia. The study comprises a sample size of 30 students (14 girls and 16 boys). In responding to the questionnaire, the students were instructed to select the option that most accurately reflects their English language learning experience in the classroom.

Data was analyzed using a Likert scale to gauge the level of interest and motivation exhibited by students in the process of learning the English language. Upon completion of data collection, the questionnaire responses were subjected to statistical analysis and subsequently expressed as percentages. To maintain the validity of the data, the researchers employed the method of data source triangulation, utilizing both observation and interview with the teacher who facilitated learning in the class being observed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' Interest in Learning English.

The table below shows the results of the questionnaire regarding students' interest in English which has been divided into four language skills namely, reading, speaking, listening and writing.

Table.1 questionnaire results on students' interest in learning English.

Students Interest	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
a. Reading	1. I enjoy reading English books in my spare time	43,3%	36,6%	20%	0%
	2. I read English books to do the assignments given by the teacher.	50%	33,3%	16%	0%
	3. I often visit the school library to read English books.	36,6%	23,3%	26,6%	13,3%
b. Speaking	1. I am excited to enunciate the alphabet letters and English words	46,6%	23,3%	23,3%	6,6%
	2. I enjoy responding to questions from the teacher in English.	43,3%	33,3%	23,3%	0%
	3. I often participate in memorizing English vocabulary.	30%	33,3%	36,6%	0%
c. Listening	1. I enjoy listening to English conversation	33,3%	36,6%	26,6%	3,3%
	2. I always focus on listening to the teacher's instructions in English.	56,6%	36,6%	6,6%	0%
	3. I often practice listening to animated dialogs in English	43,3%	46,6%	10%	0%
d. Writting	1. I enjoy being assigned	43,3%	30%	23,3%	3,3%

English writing tasks.

2. I always submit writing assignments in English.	46,6%	30%	16,6%	6,6%
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3. I took notes on the English lesson material that the teacher had written on the board.	36,6%	23,3%	26,6%	13,3%
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The data in Table 1 indicates that students have different interests in each skill. The first is in reading skills, where 13 students chose to strongly agree with the statement about reading English books in their spare time, while 11 students agreed and only 6 students disagreed, and there were no students who disagreed. The second statement is that students read English books to complete the assignments given by the teacher. 15 students chose to strongly agree, 10 agreed, and only 5 disagreed. Since half of the respondents strongly agree, it can be interpreted that students have an interest in reading to complete their assignments. The last statement is that students like to look for reading material, such as at the library, etc. In this statement, 11 students chose strongly agree, 8 agreed, 7 disagreed, and 4 chose strongly disagree.

In speaking skills, it turns out that students are excited to pronounce the letters of the alphabet and words in English, proving that of the 30 participants, there were 14 strongly agreed, followed by 7 who strongly agreed, 7 who disagreed, and 2 who strongly disagreed. This means that even though there are those who choose to disagree, more people are interested in the statement. In the second statement, it turns out that students are happy to respond to questions from the teacher and express their opinions, With 13 students choosing strongly agree, 10 agree, and 7 disagree, this shows that students have an interest in listening well. Likewise, in the third statement, it turns out that students always practice speaking skills by participating in the process of memorizing vocabulary in order to master English words and be able to practice them; only 9 students strongly agree, 10 students agree, and 11 students disagree; in this statement, more students disagree.

Furthermore, in listening skills it can be seen in the table above that always focusing on what the teacher says is the highest student interest, 20 students who answered strongly agree, 11 agreed and 2 disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, in listening skills it can shows that students have a fairly good interest in listening skills, then in the second statement that students often practice listening skills by often watching and listening to English animation, 13 students strongly agreed, 14 agreed and 3 disagreed and none strongly disagreed, and the third statement 10 strongly agreed 11

agreed and 8 disagreed then 1 strongly disagreed, in the statement of students who enjoy listening to conversations in English.

Finally, regarding students' interest in writing skills, in the first statement, students always collect writing assignments given by the teacher; 13 students strongly agreed; 9 stated that they agreed; there were also 7 who disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed, so it can be said that students' participation in collecting assignments given by the teacher indicates that they have a high interest in writing skills, and in the second statement, students enjoy doing the writing assignments given by the teacher. 14 students said they strongly agreed; 9 said they agreed, 5 said they disagreed, and 2 said they strongly disagreed. almost half of them stated that they strongly agreed, meaning that their interest in this statement was quite good, a sense of enjoyment in taxing assignments can indicate student interest in these skills. The last one makes notes that have been explained by the teacher: 11 stated strongly agree, 7 stated agree, and 8 stated disagree, it turns out that there are 4 who strongly disagree with this statement. Enjoying taking notes shows students have a good interest in this statement.

Meanwhile, to find the most dominant interest among the four language skills will be explained in the table below.

Table 2. Result of four language skills

NO	Language Skill	%
1	Reading	78,3%
2	Speaking	76,94%
3	Listening	81,96%
4	Writing	75,83%

Based on the table, it can be concluded that when described with four language skills in Riduan (2010) Interpretation namely reading (78.35% high level), speaking (76.94% high level), listening (81.96% very high level), and writing (75% high level), It can be seen that the listening skill has the highest percentage score. Listening becomes fun for students learning English, because the way teachers speak and deliver instructions in English and practice listening skills with video media makes students excited about this skill (Chenxing, 2005; Rose & Nichol, 2002). as it is known that listening is also an important aspect of the communication process (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). The importance of listening is recognized by Brown (2001), who states that "listening is the main component in learning language and teaching because in class students do more listening than talking." That is, listening is essential in daily activities because it allows us to be imprisoned by meaning.

Furthermore, students' reading skills are in the high category, and the students stated that their interest in reading is because they know that by reading they can complete the assignments given by the teacher. Lester et al. (1984) describe that the interest that exists in a person can generate passion and cause the use of time and energy to obtain what is desired. It can be said that students who have an interest in reading English books will gain mastery of English words and will get good learning results in English lessons, and vice versa (Sutjipto, 2006).

Then in the speaking skill, it is stated that students have high interest; the respondents stated that they were very enthusiastic in responding to the teacher's questions in class and very happy in pronouncing English words and memorizing them, showing high interest. Students were interested in concentrating on pronunciation because it is considered a complex English component or speaking sub-skill (Gilakjan & Ahmadi, 2011).

Finally, students' interest in writing skills has the lowest score of all skills. Even though students' writing skills are still in the high category, they have difficulty writing in English and doing assignments in English, which can make them feel bored during learning. Students' disinterest in writing is because they think writing tasks are tiring (Mitchell, 1982).

Students' Motivation in Learning English

The table below shows the results of the student questionnaire on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Table 3. questionnaire results of students' intrinsic motivation in learning English.

Student motivation	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
a. Intrinsic	1. I am motivated to learn English because English is my favorite subject.	33,3%	36,6%	20%	10%
	2. I am motivated to learn English because I want my English skills to continue to improve.	46,6%	36,6%	13,3%	3,3%
	3. I am motivated to learn English because I want to understand and be fluent in English.	56,6%	43,3%	0%	0%

b. extrinsic	1. My parents always encourage me to learn English, so I am motivated to acquire English.	20%	33,3%	30%	16,6%
	2. I am motivated to learn English because I want to get good grades in English lessons.	33,3%	46,6%	13,3%	6,6%
	3. I am motivated to learn English because it is a fun method to learn and my teacher frequently rewards me for doing well on my assignments.	50%	40%	10%	0%

Based on the data in the table above, student motivation in learning English consists of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In intrinsic motivation more than half, namely 17 students, strongly agreed that students study English because of motivation from themselves to understand and be fluent in English, and 13 agreed, none disagreed and strongly disagreed, then in the statement students are motivated in English because they hone their English to be better, in this statement there were 14 students who strongly agreed, 11 students stated that they agreed, it turned out that 4 students disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed, in the last statement, students who chose English lessons to be their favorite lesson, 10 students strongly agreed, 11 students stated that they agreed, and there were also 6 students who disagreed 1 student strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, in extrinsic motivation, the statement that students are motivated in English comes from the teacher from the way of teaching, the methods used, and giving appreciation to students, half of the participants, namely 15 strongly agreed, 12 agreed and 3 disagreed, none strongly disagreed, this statement is what influences student motivation in learning English, then in the statement that students are motivated to get good grades in English lessons, there were 10 students strongly agreed, 14 students agreed, 4 students disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed, students were motivated to pass the subject, and the last statement was support from parents, 6 students strongly agreed, 10 students agreed and 9 disagreed and 5 strongly disagreed, this negates the lack of support from students' parents.

Meanwhile, to find the most dominant student motivation in learning English in the following table:

Table 4. Result of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

NO	Motivation	%
1	Intrinsic	71,94%
2	Extrinsic	81,96%

The results of the table above reveal that extrinsic motivation is more dominant in influencing students in learning English. When viewed in terms of extrinsic motivation, the factor that most influence students in learning English is the teacher, because the way the teacher teaches, the media used, and the teacher's attitude toward students can affect student learning outcomes in English. The results of this study are in line with Gage and Berliner (1984) state that teachers are the main factor in motivating students in learning English.

Meanwhile, in intrinsic motivation, the most influential component is the student's own goal to learn English; students learn English in order to master learning and be fluent in English. Noels et al. (1999) stated that in language learning, students will have their own desire to improve their own skills. This finding is also in line with (Dauyah & Yulinar, 2018), which indicates that students' motivation is very significant because of their own desire to learn English to increase their own knowledge.

The results obtained from the questionnaire are supported by the data obtained through observation and interview. The data indicates that the students exhibited a high level of enthusiasm when the teacher started the lesson. When the teacher asked a question, the students excitedly raised their hands and even competed with each other to provide the first response. Furthermore, the students gave careful attention to the information presented by the teacher. Students engage in peer discussions and seek clarification from the teacher regarding any concepts that remain unclear. Drawing from the presented indicators of student interest, it can be deduced that the level of student interest is situated within a favorable range. Furthermore, in order to assess students' motivation towards learning, it is evident that factors such as students' enjoyment of learning, curiosity to learn, positive response to teacher's feedback, and aspiration for academic excellence can be classified as positive indicators.

During the learning process, some students were observed murmuring and occasionally playing with their peers, thereby suggesting a deficiency in their level of attentiveness. However, the students demonstrated active engagement in the learning process by inquiring about concepts that were unclear to them and participating in class discussions in response to the teacher's prompts. Furthermore, when students were asked to step forward to complete their assignments, they showed high interest by enthusiastically responding to teacher quizzes, resulting in their assignments being classified as excellent. In brief, the students display a keen interest in acquiring knowledge of the English language.

CONCLUSION

Drawing from the preceding results and discussion, it can be concluded that the students have a high interest in learning English. Among the four language skills, listening skills have garnered the highest level of student interest, followed by reading skills, speaking skills, and lastly, writing skills. Regarding motivation, it can be observed that students exhibit a considerable level of motivation, however, extrinsic motivation surpasses intrinsic motivation. In order to assess the level of interest and motivation among students, teachers may gauge the degree to which students exhibit enthusiasm and engagement with the lesson. Understanding students' interests and motivations in learning English is crucial for teachers to effectively maintain and enhance their enthusiasm towards the subject. This can be achieved by refining pedagogical approaches and techniques, fostering a relaxed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, and encouraging active participation among students to facilitate their progress in learning English.

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