

# The Correlation Between Students' Motivation and Their Speaking Achievement

Rizka Annisa<sup>1</sup>, Ridha Ilma<sup>2\*</sup>, Eka Sartika<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> rizkaannisa249@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup> ridhailma\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id, <sup>3</sup> ekasartika\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

## Abstract

Speaking is a vital skill in language learning, and a student's motivation significantly influences their willingness and ability to improve their speaking Achievement. This study aimed to determine the significant correlation and influence of students' motivation on their speaking achievement. A quantitative research approach with a correlation design was employed. The population consisted of 246 eleventh-grade students at a private high school in Palembang. The researchers used a cluster random sampling technique to select the sample. Data were collected using the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire and a speaking test. The results showed no statistically significant correlation between students' motivation and their speaking achievement, as the obtained correlation coefficient ( $r$ -obtained) of 0.106 was lower than the critical value ( $r$ -table) of 0.339. Additionally, the two-tailed significance level was .550, indicating that the  $p$ -value (.550) exceeded the threshold of .005. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was accepted.

**Keywords:** Speaking Achievement; Students' Motivation

## INTRODUCTION

English is a universally spoken language. It is spoken by people all around the world and has emerged as the dominant global language, offering limitless opportunities (Rao, 2019). Villar (2018) stated that English has experienced significant global expansion and now serves as a universal language, enabling communication for countless people worldwide. Panggean (2015) states that English is one of the few subjects widely taught and is commonly used as a secondary language in Indonesia, particularly within government, business, and education sectors. Consequently, proficiency in English is crucial. Despite its status as the most widely taught language globally, English proficiency in Indonesia remains inadequate. According to Richard (2017), the critical importance of English has not yet sufficiently motivated Indonesians to achieve the required level of mastery. According to a poll by Education First (EF, 2023), Indonesia exhibits the highest level of passive English use among Asian countries. The English Proficiency Index (EPI) ranks Indonesia 79<sup>th</sup> out of 100 countries globally (EPI, 2023). Research by Alrajafi (2021) reveals that English proficiency in Indonesia remains notably low, with usage levels below 8%. This highlights concerns about the effectiveness of English teaching and its adoption in Indonesia, resulting in a competency level that does not meet the necessary standard. To achieve proficiency in English, students need to develop expertise in two distinct skill sets. The English language skills are divided into receptive and productive categories (Serena & Ilankumaran, 2018). Productive skills, also known as active skills, involve the ability to communicate effectively through speaking and writing. These skills require the active creation of sounds and symbols, such as verbal communication and written expression (letters, etc.). On the other hand, receptive skills encompass reading and listening, which involve receiving and understanding information. In these cases, learners adopt a more passive role, gaining knowledge through listening or reading (Mundhe, 2015; Masduqi, 2016). Mastery

of both productive and receptive skills is crucial for language acquisition, as it significantly enhances students' proficiency in English. Speaking, in particular, is a fundamental aspect of learning a foreign language. Effective communication, which educational systems must prioritize, enables students to acquire and articulate knowledge, exchange ideas, and improve their language abilities (Sara, 2015). Saeed Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) stated that the importance of focusing on oral communication skills and the need for teachers to understand effective teaching methods for speaking. According to Haidara (2016), students' underachievement can be influenced by psychological factors such as confidence, motivation, and self-belief. Thus, speaking is a vital skill in mastering English or any language, and successful communication depends on both verbal and non-linguistic elements.

The level of motivation that students have plays a crucial role in their ability to learn speaking skills. Astiti (2012) states that motivation, a psychological factor, influences both the learning process and its outcomes. According to McDonald (2016), motivation involves changes in an individual's energy levels, marked by subjective experiences, and is triggered by external stimuli. It can be understood as a series of efforts aimed at creating conditions that foster a desire and inclination to engage in a particular activity. If an activity is not enjoyable, individuals may actively resist or avoid it (Sadirman, 2016). Therefore, motivation is the psychological driver that influences learning and its results, characterized by emotional expression and efforts to achieve favorable conditions. Motivation is especially important for language acquisition. Siska (2015) emphasizes that motivation is key to improving students' proficiency in speaking English as a second language. Those with intrinsic motivation tend to put more effort into their academic work compared to those who lack it. Long et al. (2013) argue that motivation is a powerful force that energizes, sustains, and directs behavior toward specific goals. Ilma (2018) supports this view, describing motivation as the internal drive that leads individuals to actively pursue their desired objectives. Thus, student motivation is vital for their language learning journey, as it builds confidence. A lack of enthusiasm for English conversation among students can often be linked to factors such as the learning environment and the resources available for teaching and learning.

The researchers conducted a preliminary study at a private school in Palembang, interviewing an English teacher and several eleventh-grade students. The study highlighted a major issue: an environment that hampers learning and fails to engage students effectively. Most students have limited practice time during class and lack partners for practice outside of class. As a result, they struggle with motivation to achieve fluency in spoken English. Additionally, the students' disinterest in speaking activities can be linked to limited access to necessary equipment. Motivation has been shown to significantly influence the teaching and learning process, affecting students' speaking proficiency. Studies have demonstrated that motivation is crucial for enhancing task performance. Herdiani and Suminar (2019) found a significant correlation between students' motivation and their speaking abilities, while Fadly (2020) also noted a positive link between learning motivation and speaking skills. However, Pratiwi and Mustajib (2023) found no significant correlation between motivation and speaking ability. Given this context, addressing the psychological aspect of motivation is vital for students' success in speaking. The goal of this study was to determine the relationship between students' motivation and their speaking achievements.

## **METHOD**

The researchers adopted a quantitative methodology with a correlational study design to examine the correlation between students' motivation, the independent variable, and their speaking achievement, the dependent variable, among eleventh-grade students at one of private senior high schools in Palembang. The study targeted a population of 246 students, from which

a sample of 34 students was selected through cluster random sampling using a lottery. Two instruments were employed in the study. The first was the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire introduced by Gardner (2004), comprising 30 items. The second instrument was a speaking test, where students completed an oral assessment based on a set of themes. The students' performance was evaluated by a rater using a speaking rubric developed by Brown & Abeywickrama (2019).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### a. Students' Motivation

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistical analysis of students' motivation. The results show a minimum score of 51, a maximum score of 90, and a mean score of 71.50. The data is summarized in the table below:

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Students Motivation

Descriptive Statistics					
Students' Motivation	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	34	51	90	71.50	9.414

It was later determined that students had varying perceptions across all five categories of motivation, as reflected in their questionnaire responses. The corresponding data is presented in the table below:

**Table 2.** Allocation of Students' Motivation

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
85-100	4	12%	Very High Level of Motivation
76-85	7	20,5%	High Level of Motivation
66-75	13	38%	Average level of Motivation
56-65	9	26%	Low Level of Motivation
0-55	1	3%	Very Low Level of Motivation
Total	34	100%	

The data analysis of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire uncovered the subsequent findings among the participants: Out of the total number of students, one student (3%) had a significantly low level of motivation, scoring between 0 and 55. Nine students (26%) had a low level of motivation, scoring between 56 and 65. Thirteen students (38%) had an average level of motivation, scoring between 66 and 75. Seven students (20.5%) had a high level of motivation, scoring between 76 and 85. Lastly, four additional students (12%) had a very high level of motivation, scoring between 85 and 100.

**b. Speaking Achievement**

The table 3 presents the descriptive statistical analysis of students' speaking achievement. The findings indicated that the lowest score obtained was 13, the highest score was 32, and the mean score was 19.09. The data is displayed in the table provided below:

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Achievement

Descriptive Statistics					
Speaking Achievement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	34	13	32	19.09	4.535

According to the statistics provided, students achieved varying results in four main categories of speaking achievement. The data is presented in the table below:

**Table 4.** Allocation of Speaking Achievement

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
16-20	1	3%	Very Good
11-15	7	20,5%	Good
6-10	26	76%	Fair
1-5	0	0	Poor
Total	34	100%	

According to the findings presented, none of the students (0%) were considered to have poor speaking achievement. The majority of students, twenty-six (76%), were classified as having fair speaking skills. Additionally, seven students (20.5%) were categorised as having good speaking, while one student (3%) was classified as having very good in speaking.

**c. The Correlation between Students' Motivation and their Speaking Achievement**

The researchers computed the correlation coefficient using the Pearson Product Moment technique and employed the statistical software SPSS for analysis. The data is presented in the table below:

**Table 5.** The Correlation between Students' Motivation and their Speaking Achievement

Correlation		
	Pearson Correlation	.106
Students' Motivation to Speaking Achievement	Sig. (2-tailed)	.550
	N	34

**Table 6.** The Correlation Based on Gender between Students’ Motivation and their Speaking Achievement

Correlation		
Female Students	Pearson Correlation	.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.460
	N	23
Male Students	Pearson Correlation	.229
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.371
	N	11

Based on the result table, the p-value or significance (sig. 2-tailed) was .550, indicating that the p-value (0.550) is higher than the threshold of 0.05. The lack of a meaningful relationship between the two variables is indicated by the correlation coefficient (r-obtained) of .106, which is lower than the crucial value (r-table) of .339. Consequently, there was no correlation between students’ motivation and their achievement speaking. Based on the findings of this research, it can be inferred that the null hypothesis H01 was supported, while the alternative hypothesis H<sub>a</sub>1 was rejected in this study. The researchers calculated the correlation coefficient among each of the five categories in the students' motivation questionnaire. The findings indicated that there was not a statistically significant correlation between students' motivation and their speaking achievement when examined according to perspective gender

**Discussion**

Based on the data collected, the researchers conducted a study involving 34 students, utilizing the AMTB questionnaire and a speaking test as instruments. The findings revealed no significant correlation between the variables, as indicated by a two-tailed significance value of 0.550, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold. The statistics showed that a considerable proportion of the eleventh-grade students at the school exhibited a high level of learning motivation. Specifically, four students (12%) were categorized as having a very high level of motivation, followed by seven students (20.5%) with a high level of motivation. Thirteen students (38%) were found to have average motivation, while nine students (26%) demonstrated low motivation. Only one student (3%) was classified as having a very low level of motivation. This indicates that students’ motivation levels significantly influence their speaking proficiency, as motivation drives them to acquire a language in various ways (Hanyeq & Suhatmady, 2018). Furthermore, Steinmayr et al. (2019) stated that students’ motivation depends on specific contexts or environments. This perspective emphasizes the strong influence of students’ beliefs, their interpretations of real-life experiences, and the role of the learning environment in shaping motivational dynamics. Consequently, motivation plays a key role in driving students to achieve their goals. In this study, the speaking achievement variable is influenced by multiple factors. The speaking achievement scores were obtained from assessments of speaking proficiency. During the test, students were asked to choose and elaborate on one of six provided topics. Most participants achieved satisfactory scores in the speaking section.



The results showed that among all the students, one (3%) achieved a very good score, while seven students (20.5%) achieved a good score. The majority 26 students (76%) achieved only a fair score in their speaking skills, indicating an inability to reach satisfactory or exceptional levels of achievement. The students faced difficulties in verbal communication due to various challenges, including limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, and poor pronunciation (Fitriati & Jannah, 2016). These obstacles also included issues like restricted vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, lack of fluency, and trouble expressing coherent thoughts (Ihsan & Wahidah, 2019). Students struggled with vocabulary and pronunciation and felt timid when asked to speak English in front of the entire class, highlighting their limited language proficiency. This restriction in language skills made it difficult for them to express their views effectively (Rahmat, 2019). Furthermore, Jamila (2014) identified other factors that hinder student participation in speaking activities, such as the absence of a structured framework (10%), inadequate training facilities (5%), insufficient institutional support (2%), lack of practice opportunities with peers (4%), and feelings of fear. In summary, communication can be impeded by both internal and external barriers. Internal barriers include psychological and attitudinal issues, while external barriers involve physiological and physical constraints. Based on the information above, the findings indicated no significant correlation between students' motivation and their speaking achievement. Although motivation is often considered key to academic success, it's important to recognize that motivation alone does not guarantee success in speaking without the application of effective techniques and strategies. While motivation can encourage more practice, if this practice is poorly guided or ineffective, it may not lead to improvement in speaking skills. Additionally, highly motivated students may experience increased anxiety about speaking, which can negatively impact their performance despite their motivation.

The findings of this study align with prior research by Pratiwi and Mustajib (2023), who found no significant correlation between students' motivation and their speaking ability. Students with low motivation tend to put in minimal effort in their learning, which limits their ability to achieve their goals, particularly in terms of speaking proficiency. Similarly, Beni (2020) found no correlation between self-motivation and speaking ability. On the other hand, Lasiyah (2017) emphasized the importance of confidence in language acquisition, defining self-confidence as a strong belief in one's capabilities, regardless of past successes or failures. Students who consistently exhibit confidence are more likely to achieve academic success. This self-assurance is crucial for effective communication. Szyszka (2017) noted that speaking anxiety, driven by the fear of not being understood, can hinder foreign language learning. Communication apprehension stems from the anxiety associated with speaking in a foreign language.

Due to the speaker being evaluated on ambiguous grammatical and sociocultural standards, it may provide challenges for them to engage in public speaking. Upon conducting the calculation, it was shown that there was no statistically significant association between each source of students' motivation and their speaking achievement. Regression analysis was unsuccessful in this study due to the absence of a meaningful connection between the two variables. The Pearson product moment analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant correlation between students' motivation and their speaking achievement. The acquired correlation coefficient ( $r$ -obtained) of 0.106 was lower than the critical value ( $r$ -table) of 0.339. Consequently, there was a lack of correlation between the students' level of motivation and their achievement in speaking. There was no significant relationship observed between students' motivation and their speaking achievement when considering gender differences. The  $p$ -value for the link between students' motivation and speaking achievement was 0.162 for female students and 0.229 for male students. Furthermore, the values obtained for each specification were consistently below the  $r$ -value of 339. Ultimately, there was not a relationship between

the motivation of students and their level of achievement in speaking, regardless of gender. Mastering the art of eloquent speaking is a more challenging endeavour than it initially appears. Various aspects were taken into account to enhance pupils' proficiency in spoken English. The factors considered in this context encompass the allocation of sufficient time, consistent and focused practice, high levels of motivation, active participation in English clubs, students' cognitive capabilities, mastery of language components, consideration of psychological factors, environmental conditions, and level of confidence.

The findings of this investigation supported Susini's (2021) stated that improving students' speaking skills requires significant time, consistent practice, and strong motivation. Susini emphasized that engaging in conversations with friends, practicing through singing, and actively participating in English clubs play a vital role in enhancing students' speaking abilities. English club activities offer students opportunities to interact with peers from the same school, allowing them to develop their English communication skills in a relaxed, informal setting. Additionally, regularly listening to and singing English songs helps students become familiar with pronunciation and improve fluency. Hermayani (2018) agrees that various factors, including cognitive abilities, vocabulary knowledge, attitudes, interests, emotions, and the social environment, contribute to this phenomenon. Lasiyah (2017) found a positive correlation between confidence and speaking achievement, suggesting that multiple factors, not just one, can influence the development of speaking skills. This study found that although students' motivation ranged from average to very high, their speaking performance remained relatively low. Other challenges contributing to poor speaking proficiency included limited vocabulary, difficulties with pronunciation, fluency issues, and problems forming coherent sentences. Therefore, this study did not explore the relationship between motivation and speaking performance among eleventh-grade students at this particular school.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted on the relationship between students' motivation and their speaking achievement revealed that there is no statistically significant correlation between the two variables. This conclusion is supported by the study's results, which indicate that the sig. value (2-tailed) of 0.550 is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) was accepted while the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>a1</sub>) was rejected. It can be inferred that initially, the motivation of students did not exert a substantial impact on their speaking proficiency. In this instance, the outcomes were deemed insignificant due to the presence of additional factors that influenced students' speaking achievement, beyond only their drive. Furthermore, there were additional influential characteristics, such as students exhibiting a deficiency in vocabulary, pronunciation, and self-confidence, as well as experiencing shyness, which may have had a more prominent role. Furthermore, it was observed that pupils with great drive did not consistently obtain satisfactory results in speaking proficiency. In addition, pupils with low motivation did not consistently exhibit poor performance in speaking achievement.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers would like to thank all of the people that helped them to finish this study. The researchers expressed gratitude to her advisors, teachers, and support staff at a private school in Palembang where she gathered information. Throughout the research process, the students provided invaluable help and collaboration, which the researcher also valued. Additionally, every participant showed pleasure in their efforts to finish this research journal assignment project.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Sobhi, B. M. S., & Preece, A. S. (2018). Teaching English speaking skills to the Arab students in the Saudi school in Kuala Lumpur: Problems and solutions. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 6(1), 1-11.
- Astiti, S. N. (2012). *The effect of cooperative learning strategy (Jigsaw II technique) and achievement motivation on the speaking achievement of the tenth-grade students of SMKN 3 Singaraja (undergraduate thesis)*. Singaraja: Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha Singaraja.
- Beni, O. (2020). *The correlation between self motivation and speaking achievement of the eleventh grade students of senior high school of Pesantren Modern Sultan Mahmud Badarudin Palembang (Doctoral dissertation)*. Palembang: Universitas Tridinanti Palembang.
- Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2019). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education, Inc
- Donald, M.C. (2016). *Interaksi & motivasi belajar mengajar*. Jakarta: PT. Raja GrafindoPersada
- Fadly, I. (2020). *The correlation between students' learning motivation and their speaking skill (A correlational study at the tenth grade of MAN 13 Jakarta in academic year 2020/2021)* (Bachelor's thesis, Jakarta: FITK UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta).
- First, E. (2023). EF English Proficiency Index. EF Education First. <https://www.ef.com/wwpt/epi/regions/asia/indonesia/>
- Fitriati, S. W., & Jannah, M. (2016). Psychological problems faced by the year eleven students of MA Nuhad Demak in speaking English. *English Educational Journal*, 6(1), 67-78.
- Haidara, Y. (2016). Psychological factor affecting English speaking performance for the English learners in Indonesia. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(7), 1501-1505. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.040701>
- Hayikaleng, N., Nair, S. M., & Krishnasamy, H. N. (2016). Thai students' motivation on English reading. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 4(6), 477-86.
- Herdiani, N., & Suminar, A. R. (2020). The correlation between students' motivation and their speaking skill. *English Education and Applied Linguistics Journal (EEAL Journal)*, 3(1), 22-27.
- Hermayani, T. (2020). Monitoring civil engineering students' metacognitive awareness during independent English speaking club activities. *PROJECT*, 3(5), 553-564.
- Ihsan, H. Z., & Wahidah, N. (2019). Teacher's efforts to overcome the students' difficulties in speaking ability. *VELES Voices of English Language Education Society*, 2(1), 62.
- Ilma, R. (2018). The correlation between english learners' motivation and their english proficiency . *English Community Journal*, 2(1), 130-138.
- Jamila, M. (2014). Lack of confidence a psychological factor affecting spoken english of university level adult learners in Bangladesh. *Language in India*, 14(10), 156-168.
- Lasiyah, (2017). *The correlation between self-confidence and speaking achievement of undergraduate students of English study program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang (Undergraduate thesis)*. Palembang: FITK Uin Raden Fatah Palembang
- Long, C., Ming, Z., & Chen, L. (2013). The study of student motivation on English learning in junior middle school: A case study of no. 5 middle school in Gejiu. *English Language Teaching*, 6(9), 136-145.
- Masduqi, H. (2016). Integrating receptive skills and productive skills into a reading lesson. In *Proceeding of the International Conference on Teacher Training and Education* (No. 1, pp. 507-511).



- Mundhe, G. B. (2015). Teaching receptive and productive language skills with the help of techniques. *An International Journal in English*, 1(2), 1-6.
- Panggabean, Himpun. (2015). Problematic Approach to English Learning and Teaching: A case in Indonesia. *English Language Teaching*: Vol. 8, No. 3; 2015, 35-45.
- Pratiwi, F. E., & Mustajib, A. (2023). A contribution of students' motivation and their speaking ability at second grade of SMA negeri 1 Tembilahan hulu. *J-Shelves of Indragiri (JSI)*, 4(2), 148-156.
- Rao, P. S. (2019). The role of English as a global language. *Research Journal of English*, 4(1), 65-79.
- Richards, J. C. (2017). Teaching English through English: Proficiency, Pedagogy and Performance. *RELC Journal*, 48(1), 7-30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688217690059>
- Sadirman, A.M. (2016). *Interaksi dan motivasi belajar mengajar*. Jakarta: PT. Raja GrafindoPersada.
- Sara, B. (2015). Investigating the effects of efl studentss' self-confidence on their oral performance. (Master's Thesis). Biskara University, Republic of Algeria.
- Siska, S. (2015). Using film to increase motivation for speaking in English course classroom. *Tell-Us Journal*, 1(2), 51-57.
- Steinmayr, R., Weidinger, A. F., Schwinger, M., & Spinath, B. (2019). The importance of students' motivation for their academic achievement—replicating and extending previous findings. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 1-11.
- Szyszkka, M. (2017). Pronunciation learning strategies and language anxiety. *Switzerland: Springer*, 10, 978-3.
- Sreena, S., & Ilankumaran, M. (2018). Developing productive skills through receptive skills—a cognitive approach. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 7(4.36), 669-673.
- Susini, M. (2020). Strategi meningkatkan kemampuan berbahasa inggris. *Linguistic Community Services Journal*, 1(2), 37-48.
- Villar, R. (2018). The importance of language. *Journal of hip preservation surgery*, 5(1), 1-2.