

An Analysis of English Language Learning Interest at Eleventh Grade Students of SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted on eleventh grade students of SMA N 2 Muaro Jambi. The purpose of this study was to determine students' interest in learning English with five indicators, namely: attention, motivation, pleasure, perception, and activity. In this case, the research design used was quantitative research. The population of this study was eleventh grade students, while the sample was selected using cluster random sampling. There were 36 samples involved. This study used a questionnaire instrument with a total of 20 questions. The data analysis technique used was to calculate student scores and analyze using SPSS. The analysis results show that the attention indicator shows an average score ranging from 2.75 to 2.97. The motivation indicator has an average score ranging from 2.47 to 2.75. In the pleasure indicator, the average score ranges from 2.31 to 2.81. The perception indicator showed an average score between 2.64 to 2.81. The activity indicator showed a more positive response with an average score between 2.72 to 3.03. Overall, the total score of learning interest shows an average value of 54.83 with a median value of 56.00 which indicates that most students have an interest in learning in the "Less Interested" category.

Keywords : *Interest, Learning English*

INTRODUCTION

English, as an international language, plays a vital role in global communication and professional development, making its mastery essential for individuals seeking broader opportunities. The increasing number of people learning English reflects its importance, not only in fostering interactions between people from different backgrounds but also in meeting job market demands, where proficiency in English is often a prerequisite.

Students' interest in learning English is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, psychological aspects such as motivation, perception, intelligence, and aptitude shape their enthusiasm for the subject. A student's prior experience with English, their ability to process new information, and their general curiosity about the language affect their learning trajectory. Externally, the school environment, family support, peer influence, and exposure to foreign cultures contribute significantly to shaping attitudes toward English learning. Many students become interested in English due to their admiration for international artists, movies, and social media content, which makes them more engaged in learning the language. However, while this exposure offers benefits, it also raises concerns about preserving cultural identity, prompting educational efforts to maintain a balance.

The Indonesian government has integrated English language learning into its educational system, ensuring that students are introduced to it from an early stage. The curriculum emphasizes four key language skills—listening, reading, speaking, and writing—while also focusing on grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary development. Despite these efforts, various challenges hinder students' progress in mastering English. While many studies explore effective teaching methods and instructional media, fewer have examined how personal motivation, perception,

classroom dynamics, and environmental influences collectively shape students' learning interest.

This research seeks to fill that gap by conducting a comprehensive analysis of English learning interest among grade XI students at SMA N 2 Muaro Jambi. By investigating the interaction between internal and external factors affecting students' motivation and engagement, this study aims to provide valuable recommendations for educators and institutions. Understanding these elements will allow teachers to refine their teaching strategies, adopt innovative approaches, and create more engaging learning experiences that resonate with students' interests. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader effort of enhancing English language education by recognizing the key drivers of students' enthusiasm and involvement in learning the language.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Nature of Interest

Interest is a crucial internal variable in the learning process, driven by an individual's desire toward a subject or activity based on environmental influences. It manifests in preferences for what a person likes to see, listen to, or read, providing satisfaction and engagement. Interest is a positive reaction to stimuli formed by existing cognitive structures (Winkel, 1983), shaping motivation and behavior in learning. Dewey (1913) argued that interest must be present in the classroom to fulfill students' intellectual and personal needs, while Mangal (2007) emphasized its role in keeping students attentive and focused on learning materials. Moreover, Hurlock (1997) highlighted that interest fosters long-term knowledge retention and motivation. Teachers play a key role in cultivating interest by creating engaging learning environments, supporting students who struggle with motivation, and linking academic content to students' intrinsic preferences.

Over the past century, vocational interest research has advanced significantly, stemming from empirical studies designed to support career guidance (Strong, 1943). While most research has focused on interest's relationship with academic and career outcomes, theoretical explorations of its nature remain underdeveloped. Arnold (1906) described interest as a force directing behavior, sustained by the pursuit of a specific goal, ensuring effort continues until achievement. This relationship between interest and goal orientation highlights its essential role in educational success, as tasks that align with students' interests are more likely to sustain engagement and promote meaningful learning experiences. In essence, fostering interest in learning not only enhances cognitive capacity but also influences students' academic and professional pathways.

The Factor that Influence Interest

Interest in learning English is influenced by internal and external factors. Internally, aspects like health, attention, readiness, intelligence, and motivation shape students' engagement. Externally, family support, school environment, teacher influence, and peer interactions play a crucial role in fostering interest. A positive learning atmosphere, effective teaching strategies, and supportive surroundings help students develop enthusiasm and persistence in learning English, ultimately enhancing their academic success.

Theory of Learning

Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and understanding through experience, practice, and teaching. According to Skinner (1958), learning is a gradual adaptation of behavior influenced by reinforcement and punishment (Operant

Conditioning). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) highlights autonomy, competence, and social connection as key motivators, while Expectancy-Value Theory suggests that students' expectations and perceived value of learning affect their interest.

Several factors influence learning, including internal aspects like attention, readiness, intelligence, and motivation, as well as external influences such as family support, school environment, and interactive learning experiences. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering students' engagement by creating stimulating learning environments, reinforcing positive behaviors, and supporting inquiry-based learning. Ultimately, motivation and structured learning approaches significantly impact students' academic success and interest in English learning.

Definition of Learning English

Learning is fundamentally an interactive process between learners, educators, and educational resources, aimed at achieving specific learning objectives (Uno, 2007). English, as an international language, holds significant global influence and plays a crucial role in communication, education, and professional opportunities (Lie, 2007). In today's era of globalization, mastering English has become essential for personal and professional growth.

English learning benefits various aspects of human life, facilitating global communication and access to diverse knowledge. O'Brien (2006) highlights the increasing number of people studying English due to its widespread importance, while Richards (2015) emphasizes its necessity for adaptation in literature, media, and professional settings. Recognizing its relevance, many individuals prioritize learning English, understanding that proficiency in the language enhances opportunities for effective communication worldwide.

Previous Studies

Several previous studies have explored students' interest in learning English, examining both internal and external factors that influence their attitudes and performance. Le & Le (2021) conducted a qualitative study investigating the factors affecting Vietnamese students' attitudes toward learning English in a tertiary institution. Their findings revealed that students' self-confidence, willingness to take risks, anxiety, curiosity, and awareness of English's importance significantly influenced their learning attitudes. Additionally, external factors such as curriculum design, teacher personality, instructional materials, and school environment played a crucial role.

Misbah et al. (2017) examined the difficulties students faced in learning English, focusing on 116 students from seven schools that struggled to meet national proficiency targets. The study identified three major obstacles: limited English vocabulary, first language interference, and socioeconomic background. Their findings provided recommendations for teachers, school administrators, and parents to enhance students' English learning outcomes.

Lisnawati, Hadi, & Tahir (2022) conducted research on students' interest in learning English at SMA Negeri 1 Lawe Bulan, using a Likert scale questionnaire to assess engagement levels. Their analysis found that 59.82% of students demonstrated a moderate to high interest in English learning, highlighting the role of enthusiasm, note-taking, and classroom participation.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to analyze the interest of eleventh-grade students at SMA N 2 Muaro Jambi in learning English using a descriptive research approach. According to Sukmadinata (2017), descriptive research seeks to systematically explain existing

phenomena, including characteristics, changes, relationships, and differences. The research is designed to explore and describe factors influencing students' interest based on observed data.

The population of this study includes all eleventh-grade students at SMA N 2 Muaro Jambi during the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 288 students distributed across eight classes. Using a simple random sampling method (Sugiyono, 2015), class XI 4 was selected as the experimental class, consisting of 36 students. This sampling technique ensures equal opportunity for all students in the population to be chosen, allowing for unbiased and representative findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this study were obtained from questionnaires distributed to students in class XI 4 at SMA N 2 Muaro Jambi. The data collected aimed to answer the research question: “How is students' learning interest in English subjects at SMAN 2 Muaro Jambi?” The questionnaire, based on components outlined by Kusmaryati (2017) and Suhadi (2008), measured five key aspects of learning interest: attention, motivation, enjoyment, perception, and activity. The results provide insight into students' engagement levels and the percentage of those facing difficulties in learning English.

No	Questionnaire	Respondent's Score					Total Responden	Skor total
		5	4	3	2	1		
1	Q1	3	6	16	8	3	36	106
2	Q2	2	10	12	9	3	36	107
3	Q3	2	6	12	13	3	36	99
4	Q4	2	8	11	10	5	36	100
Rata – Rata								11.44

Figure 1
The students' responses (Attention)

The data in Figure 1 shows that, within the attention category, there is a moderate level of interest in learning English, with variations across different aspects. The mean score of the overall responses is 11.44, reflecting moderate engagement

No	Questionnaire	Respondent's Score					Total Responden	Skor total
		5	4	3	2	1		
1	Q1	1	8	13	7	7	36	97
2	Q2	3	7	10	10	6	36	99
3	Q3	2	7	6	16	5	36	93
4	Q4	1	4	12	13	6	36	89
Rata – Rata								10.5

Figure 2
The students' responses (Motivation)

The data in Figure 2 shows that, within the motivation category, there is a moderate level of interest in learning English, with variations across different aspects. The mean score of the overall responses was 10.5, reflecting medium engagement

No	Questionnaire	Respondent's Score					Total Respondents	Skor total
		5	4	3	2	1		
1	Q1	2	7	14	6	7	36	99
2	Q2	2	4	8	11	11	36	83
3	Q3	4	6	11	9	6	36	101
4	Q4	2	5	13	11	5	36	96
Rata – Rata								10.52

Figure 3
The Studets' responses (Enjoyment)

The data in Figure 3 shows that, within the Enjoyment category, there is a moderate level of interest in learning English, with variations across different aspects. The overall mean response score was 10.52, reflecting moderate engagement.

No	Questionnaire	Respondent's Score					Total Respondents	Skor total
		5	4	3	2	1		
1	Q1	4	6	11	8	7	36	100
2	Q2	4	8	11	3	10	36	101
3	Q3	3	3	16	8	6	36	97
4	Q4	3	4	11	13	5	36	95
Rata – Rata								10.91

Figure 4
The Students' responses (Perception)

The data in Figure 4 shows that, within the Perception category, there is a moderate level of interest in learning English, with variations across different aspects. The overall mean response score was 10.91, reflecting moderate engagement.

No	Questionnaire	Respondent's Score					Total Respondents	Skor total
		5	4	3	2	1		
1	Q1	1	9	10	11	5	36	98
2	Q2	5	7	10	7	7	36	104
3	Q3	3	8	10	9	6	36	101
4	Q4	6	5	14	6	5	36	109
Rata – Rata								11.52

Figure 5
The Students' responses (Activities)

The data in Figure 5 shows that, within the Activities category, there is a moderate but higher level of interest than the other categories in learning English, with variations across different aspects. The overall mean response score was 11.52, reflecting moderate engagement.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis Descriptive

Students in grade XI at SMA Negeri 2 Muaro Jambi show generally low interest in learning English, with variations across indicators. The attention, motivation, enjoyment, and perceptions indicators range from 2.31 to 2.97, showing moderate to low engagement, while activities, particularly learning through movies (M=3.03, SD=1.253), received the most positive response. The overall mean score of 54.83 (SD=9.110) indicates significant variation, with most students falling into the "Less Interested" category. Despite this, movie-based learning shows promise, highlighting the need for refined teaching strategies to boost motivation and engagement.

Validity Test

The validity test of the research instrument was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment correlation with 20 statement items and 36 respondents. Items were considered valid if their correlation coefficient (r-count) exceeded the r-table and their significance value (p-value) was below 0.05 ($\alpha = 5\%$). Based on the analysis, several items showed a significant correlation with the total score, such as Q1 (r = 0.39, p = 0.02), Q2 (r = 0.48, p = 0.00), Q3 (r = 0.44, p = 0.01), and Q4 (r = 0.43, p = 0.01), confirming their validity for the research instrument. However, some items did not meet the validity criteria, such as Q1 (r = 0.217, p = 0.203), Q2 (r = 0.316, p = 0.06), and Q4 (r = 0.166, p = 0.333), indicating insufficient correlation with the total score.

Realibility Test

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based On Standardized Items	N of Items
702	772	21

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DISCUSSION

The study examined students' interest in learning English at SMA Negeri 2 Muaro Jambi using a questionnaire covering attention, motivation, enjoyment, perception, and activities. Responses indicate moderate engagement, with attention, motivation, enjoyment, and perceptions showing mean scores between 2.31 and 2.97, while activities, particularly learning through movies ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.253$), received the most positive response. The overall mean learning interest score is 54.83 ($SD=9.110$), with most students classified as "Less Interested" due to significant variations in responses. A Pearson Product Moment correlation validity test confirmed several questionnaire items as valid, while some did not meet the significance criteria. The reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.702–0.772) supports the instrument's consistency. These findings highlight the need for improved teaching strategies to enhance students' motivation and engagement in learning English.

CONCLUSION

The data analysis from questionnaires distributed to grade XI students at SMA Negeri 2 Muaro Jambi indicates that their learning interest in English falls into the "Less Interested" category. Across five key indicators—attention, motivation, enjoyment, perception, and activity—students showed low to moderate engagement, with significant variations in responses. Attention scores ranged from 2.75 to 2.97, with the highest interest in learning English at home and the lowest during classroom teaching. Motivation indicators showed lower averages (2.47 to 2.75), reflecting varying levels of enthusiasm. Enjoyment scores (2.31 to 2.81) revealed low interest in peer interaction but higher engagement with the subject matter. Perception results (2.64 to 2.81) highlighted the teacher's learning style as the most engaging factor, while learning in free time received the lowest score. Among all categories, activity scored the highest (2.72 to 3.03), particularly in movie-based learning.

The overall learning interest score ($M=54.83$, Median=56.00, $SD=9.110$) confirms high variability, with most students falling into the "Less Interested" category. However, validity and reliability tests affirm that the research instrument is statistically sound, with Cronbach's Alpha exceeding 0.70, ensuring measurement accuracy. These findings highlight the need for targeted strategies to enhance student engagement, particularly leveraging interactive and multimedia-based learning approaches.

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