

## **STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH IN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the learning process, motivation has an important role because motivation can foster interest in learning. This research will be conducted on semester 1 students of the Islamic Religious Education study program at IAIN Palopo with the aim of describing student motivation in learning English and the factors that influence student motivation in learning English. This research is a descriptive research, which describes existing events by combining quantitative and qualitative. Data collection techniques are questionnaires, observations, and interviews. The subjects of this study were first semester students of the Islamic Religious Education study program who took Basic English courses. The results showed that second semester students of Islamic Religious Education had high motivation in learning English, which consisted of internal and external factors

Keywords: Higher Education, Learning English, Learning Motivation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Motivation is an effort made to create a certain situation so that someone has the desire to do something that can be obtained from outside or within a person. In the learning process, motivation has an important role because motivation can foster interest in learning. Someone who has motivation will study harder than someone who does not have motivation. Research has shown that there is a relationship between student motivation and success in learning English (Christiana, I. O, 2009: 30, Choosri, C and Intharaksa, U, 2011: 1, and Alizadeh, M, 2016: 11).

English has been taught from Elementary School level to University level. In the Islamic Religious Education Study Program at IAIN Palopo, English is taught for 3 semesters, namely semesters 1, 2 and 4. In semester 1, students receive Basic English courses, semester 2 students receive Applied English courses, and semester 4 students receive English for Specific Purpose (ESP) courses.

This research was conducted on semester 1 students of the Islamic Religious Education study program at IAIN Palopo. Students in the first semester need to know their motivation to improve their English skills. Ihsan (2016: 33) states that motivation needs to be known before someone joins a program. In addition, the motivation that students have can encourage them to study harder, for example a student's motivation in learning English is to be able to speak with foreigners, then these students will study English harder in order to be able to speak with foreigners.

Lecturers also have an important role in knowing the motivation of their students. Lecturers can use student motivation as a consideration in choosing the right teaching methods and strategies. Lecturers who already know the level of student learning

motivation in learning English can carry out the learning process according to the needs and interests of students so that learning objectives can be fulfilled. Yufrizal (2007: 11) states that the factors that influence success in learning English include motivation and behavior in speaking English. Thus, research on student motivation and the factors that influence student motivation in learning English is important to do.

Theories regarding motivation have existed since the 1950s due to the influence of behaviorist theory (Oletic and Ilic, 2014: 24). Motivation is something related to psychology, level of behavior and interest and cannot be seen (Ihsan, 2016:32). Motivation encourages someone to do something. In learning, motivation is one of the factors that can increase interest in learning. Dornyei in Xiao (2010: 61) explains the importance of motivation in learning English which can affect learning outcomes. Motivation has a positive correlation and influences learning outcomes (Warti, 2016 and Sobandi, 2017).

Gardner in Long, et al. (2013: 136 – 137) states that there are four aspects of motivation to learn English, namely one's goals in learning, the effort to learn, the desire to achieve goals, and attitudes in learning. Indicators of learning motivation consist of the desire and desire to succeed, the encouragement and need for learning, the hopes and aspirations for the future, the appreciation in learning, the interesting activities in learning, and the existence of a conducive learning environment so that it is possible to study well (Uno, 2010).

Effective learning is when the learning reflects the new atmosphere around it and changes the views of the learner based on that reflection (Kim, 2014). Suardi (2018: 10) mentions two important elements in learning, namely understanding and change in a person. In the learning process, a person will experience interactions that can come from within or outside of oneself. With this interaction will cause changes in the individual. The learning process is successful if there is a change from within the individual who is learning. This change must be directed and in accordance with the norms or values that are related to and embraced by society.

## METHOD

This research is a descriptive research, which describes events that have existed. In this study combining quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative method is used to describe the level of student motivation in learning English and the factors that influence students in learning English. While the qualitative method is used to describe the description of motivation and the factors that influence student motivation.

The subjects of this study were first semester students of the Islamic Religious Education study program at IAIN Palopo who took Basic English courses. This research will be conducted for 6 months, from July to November 2022. In this study, data collection techniques were used including questionnaires, observations, and interviews.

### *Questionnaire*

The questionnaire used in this study is student learning motivation. The questionnaire used is a closed questionnaire. The use of closed questionnaires is based on the advantages of closed questionnaires, namely data that is easy to process, respondents who do not need to write down their thoughts, filling in a short amount of

time, and being able to capture a relatively large number of respondents (Sudaryono, 2013). The score weight on student answers is detailed as follows:

- 4: Strongly Agree
- 3: Agree
- 2: Disagree
- 1: Strongly Disagree

### *Observation*

Observations made in this study were direct observations, namely observing the learning process in class. The researcher filled out the observation sheet by giving a tick according to the conditions at the time the learning took place. The observation sheet uses a multilevel scale, with the following weighted values.

- 5: Very Good
- 4: Good
- 3: Average
- 2: Bad
- 1: Very bad

Data analysis techniques in this study used quantitative analysis. The data obtained from the questionnaire was processed using descriptive statistics. The researcher calculated the scores obtained from the questionnaire and student grades. The data is presented in a frequency distribution table of mean scores and a table of frequency distribution values. To calculate the percentage and frequency using the following

$$N = \frac{fx}{N} \times 100\%$$

formula (Bungin, 2014).

Notes:

N = Total Number

Fx = Individual Frequency

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research was conducted on first semester students of the Islamic Religious Education study program. Questionnaires were distributed to students. There were 26 students who filled out the questionnaire consisting of 4 students and 22 female students. In addition, research data was taken based on interviews. Questionnaires and interviews are used to find out the following.

*Students' Perceptions of English  
Interest in Learning English*

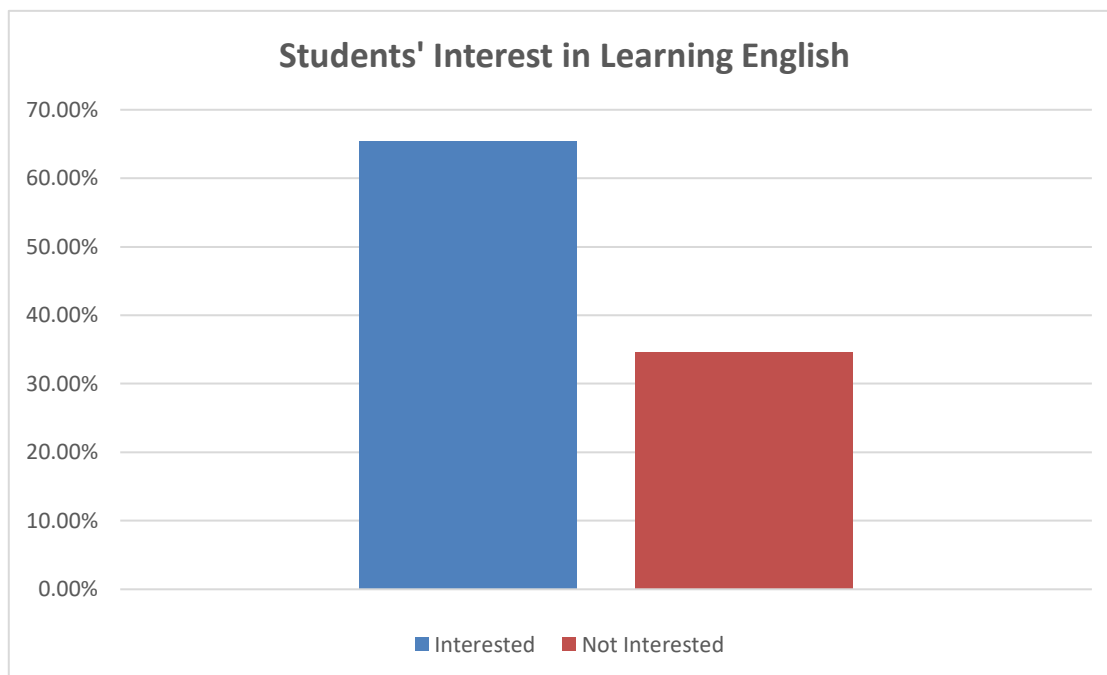


Figure 1. SStudents'Interest in Learning English

*English Learning in Class*

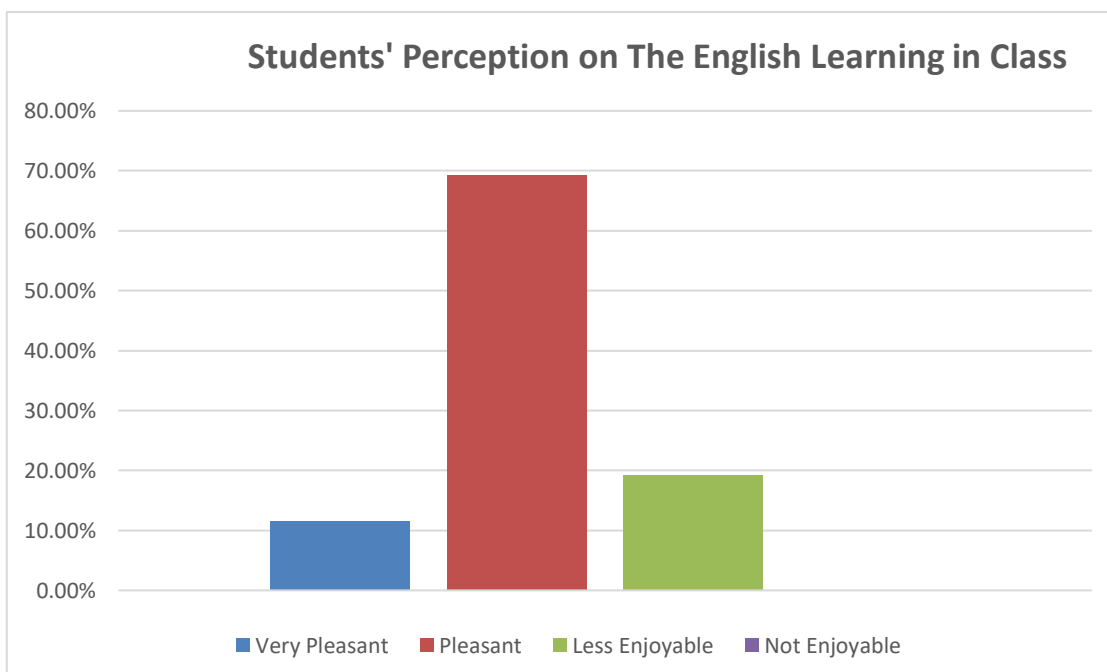
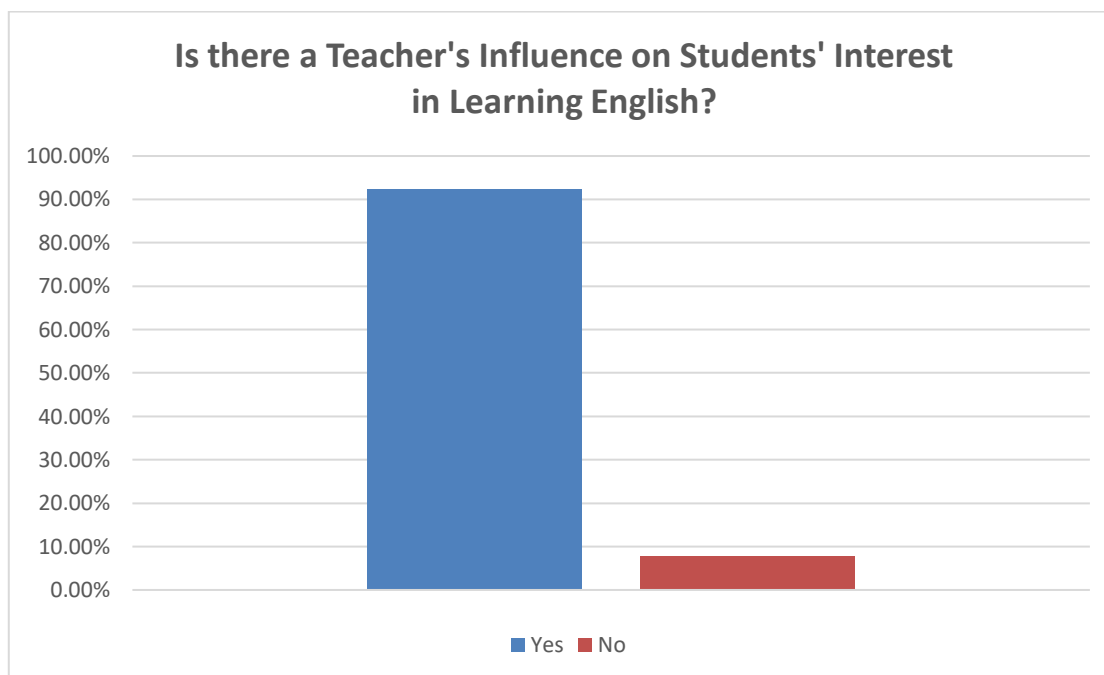


Figure 2. SStudents'Perception on the English Learning in Class

*The influence of the teacher on interest in learning English*



*Chart 3. Teacher's Influence on Interest in Learning English*

From the results of data analysis, it was found that there were 65.4% of students who liked English and 34.6% of students who did not like English. None of the students thought that learning English in class was unpleasant. Of all students, 69.2% thought learning English was fun, 19.2% students thought learning English was not fun, and 11.5% thought learning English was very fun.

Students think that learning English is fun in class. From the results of the interviews it was found that learning English is fun because the teachers are good, fun, and cool. In addition, students think that using English can increase self-confidence. The use of English can show one's intelligence. The English teaching method can be a reason for students liking or disliking learning English. Fun English teaching methods can make students interested in learning English. According to Budiana and Djuwari (2018: 201) students can be interested in learning English if the teacher knows interesting strategies in teaching. Conversely, inappropriate teaching methods also make English unpleasant, for example learning that is too serious and not fun.

Teachers who give too many assignments also make learning English unpleasant. The teacher also influences learning English to be less enjoyable. As many as 92.3% stated that the teacher had a great influence on students' interest in learning English and the remaining 7.7% of students stated that the teacher had no influence on students' interest in learning English. Usman, et al (2016: 141) stated that students have motivation to learn English because the teachers are good, that is, have the character and competence of the teacher.

Another factor that causes learning English in class to be less enjoyable is that English is difficult to understand such as difficult pronunciation and not knowing vocabulary. Other students stated that they were afraid when pronouncing wrong and

that English was boring. This is also experienced by English learners in Asia. Research has shown that difficulties in English are caused by students' fear of making mistakes in using the language English and there are problems in mastering vocabulary which makes it difficult to understand reading (Khattak, et al and Souvannasy in Souriyavongsa, et al.,2013).

According to students, the English language skill that was the most difficult for students to master was grammar 65.4%. The next most difficult English skill is vocabulary 57.7%. Furthermore, the ability to speak is felt difficult by 53.8% of students. The next most difficult English skills are listening (46.2%), reading (19.2%). In writing skills, students have no difficulty. There were no students who chose writing as a difficult skill. This is different from several previous studies which state that writing is the most difficult skill to master by second language learners, even for speakers of that language because writing requires a long process (Humpreys, 2003 and Richards, 1990 in Gharabally, 2015).

Factors supporting success in speaking English are from internal and external factors. Internal factors, namely from yourself, including diligently practicing English, being persistent, and having motivation in learning. External factors include the teacher and the methods used by the teacher in learning English. Williams and Burner in Usman, et al (2016: 134 – 135) state that the teacher is an external factor that can influence success or failure in learning that is supported by the learning process, namely learning activities and materials, feedback, and classroom atmosphere.

***SStudents' motivation in Learning English***

To find out students' motivation in learning English, a questionnaire adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery was used (Gardner, 1960). Student motivation in learning English can be seen in table 1 below.

*Table 1. SStudents' Motivation in Learning English*

No	Statements	SA	A	M	D	SD
1	I learned English in order to be able to speak fluently with foreigners	46,2%	53,8%	-	-	-
2	I study English in order to understand foreign culture.	30,8%	53,8%	15,4%	-	-
3	I learn English so I can read the news, listen to songs or watch movies in English.	38,5%	53,8%	3,8%	3,8%	-
4	I learn English to make me more respected by other people.	15,4%	46,2%	30,8%	7,7%	-
5	I study English so I can get a job easily.	26,9%	53,8%	15,4%	3,8%	-

6	I study English to continue my studies abroad.	38,5%	53,8%	3,8%	3,8%	-
7	I like learning English because the material and learning are fun.	11,5%	65,4%	23,1%	-	-
8	I always practice language materials My new English.	-	57,7%	24,6%	7,7%	-
9	I always look forward to the schedule for learning English.	-	61,5%	26,9%	7,7%	3,8%
10	I like learning English because I always get good grades in English class.	11,5%	46,2%	42,3%	-	-
11	I feel guilty if I fail in learning English.	19,2%	57,7%	19,2%	-	3,8%
12	I will get a higher score if I study English harder.	34,6%	57,7%	7,7%	-	-

From table 1 it can be seen that students' motivation to learn English is to be able to speak fluently with foreigners. All students answered agree on this statement item. Speaking is the most important skill because speaking is a necessary skill to have a conversation (Leong and Ahmadi, 2017).

In addition, the second motivation of students to learn English is to get higher scores. A high score can be an award and a bad score can be a consequence for students given by the teacher. Getting a low score can make students who do not master English become frustrated and unmotivated (Qashoa, 2006). Furthermore, Littlejohn in Qashoa (2006) states that a teacher should be able to motivate students that they can master English.

Understanding foreign cultures is also a student motivation in learning English. This is different from the results of research by Qashoa (2006) which states that none of the respondents chose to study English to get to know American and British literature.

English course is not a subject that can motivate students to learn English. This can be seen from the students' choices on the questionnaire. There were no students who answered strongly agree on the item looking forward to the schedule learning English, even 3.8% of students answered strongly disagree. Thus, English teachers must work harder to make English a subject that students look forward to.

## CONCLUSION

Students of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program at IAIN Palopo have high motivation in learning English. The highest factor that influences student learning motivation is the desire of students to be able to talk to foreigners and get high scores in English class. In contrast, students do not have high motivation in English class as seen from the low response of students in waiting for English class.



Student motivation is also influenced by teachers and learning methods used in class. Teachers have an important role in motivating students to learn English. Students like learning English if the teacher has a good character in teaching and students do not like English if the teacher gives a lot of assignments and cannot make the class fun. Using appropriate learning methods can also motivate students to learn English.

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