

INTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover and provide a descriptive description of the internal elements that influence the high speaking achievement of the students. To gain additional knowledge regarding the elements that contribute to the student's high speaking performance, this research utilised a case study approach supported by quantitative and qualitative data. The data resources included two kids from SMKN 8 who had achieved high success in speaking English, their parents, teachers, classmates, and the headmaster of SMKN 8 Makassar. Observation, interviews, inventories, the TOEIC test, and documentation reviews were the instruments that were utilised in this study. Analysis of the data was performed according to its nature. A qualitative analysis was performed on the information gathered through observation, interviews, and the reading of documents. According to the findings, the internal factors that contributed to the student's high achievement were as follows: (a) a highly positive attitude; (b) a high level of motivation; (c) a high level of interest; (d) a learning style that was very high and positive in both visual and auditory terms; (e) a metacognitive learning strategy; (f) a very low level of anxiety; and (g) a high level of English proficiency as well. After considering all of these elements, it became clear that the student's great accomplishment in speaking was unquestionably due to factors that were internal to the kid..

Keywords: Speaking, Internal Factor, Positive Attitude, Motivation, Interest, Learning Style, Learning Strategy, Anxiety, English Proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Numerous factors affect how well students acquire English as a foreign language. Dube and Mlotshwa (2018) have classified the elements that impact students' speaking proficiency into internal and external influences. Students themselves are the source of internal factors, while external influences originate from outside the student body. Skehan (2014) states that several internal elements affect students' accomplishment of a foreign language. These factors include interest, age, cognitive domain, learning style, learning method, motivation, linguistic ability, and IQ.

The researcher conducted a preliminary survey in SMKN 8 Makassar to investigate students' success in learning English. She discovered that some students at the school have excelled in English, as evidenced by their numerous awards in various English competitions. For example, Indira Arum Puspitarani achieved first place in a storytelling competition organised by the Language Centre UNM and second place in a speech competition hosted by the English Debate and Speech Competition, UMI. R. Gladys also achieved second place in a speech competition organised by John Robert Power and first place in a Tourism Speech Contest. The present researcher is intrigued by this fact and is interested in exploring the aspects contributing to students' performance. She views it as an intriguing case worthy of further investigation.

Another crucial factor that must be considered is the research's viability. The study in SMK 8 Makassar was feasible due to the researcher's preliminary survey. The teachers and students enthusiastically appreciate the endeavour to find the aspects that impact pupils' exceptional speaking performance. The present researcher is interested in investigating the

internal elements contributing to high speaking achievement among students at SMKN 8 Makassar. This study is based on the achievements of these students.

The factors that influence foreign language learning are internal and external factors. The internal factors cover students' attitudes, motivation, interests, learning style, learning strategy, anxiety, and English proficiency tests.

a. Attitude

Attitude can be understood in various ways. According to H. Douglas Brown (2001), attitude is defined by a high degree of emotional involvement, including feelings, self-awareness, and community interactions. According to Gardner (1985), attitudes are one's beliefs or perspectives regarding the language being taught or learned. Listyaningrum (2017) echoes this sentiment, arguing that one's learning attitudes and other psychological factors are vital in deciding how well one learns English. Furthermore, she mentioned that issues related to psychological aspects might impact both educators and their students, resulting in inefficient instruction and learning. "Attitudes are seen as important factors influencing learners' engagement in language learning," Yosintha (2020) adds, echoing this sentiment.

b. Motivation

A key component of learning a new language is maintaining the necessary level of motivation. To be motivated is to have a desire to learn. If the student wants to learn something other than English, teaching them will take a lot of work. What drives an individual to act is called "motivation" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2008).

c. Interest

Essentially, interest is a state of mind that causes one to react in a way that brings them joy and fulfilment about a specific circumstance or item. A desire to learn more about someone or something is defined as an interest in the Oxford English Dictionary (2008). Additionally, it denotes an aspect of the character that is typically characterised by the thing or things that Hilgard (1962) mentions. The preceding definitions lead us to believe that interest is a desire to learn anything when one has a favourable outlook on something one truly loves and appreciates.

d. Learning Style

In all three types of learning—cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor—individuals have preferences regarding how they take in new information and adjust to their surroundings (Davis, 1989). Based on the definition above, researchers are interested in digging for information linked to learning style, as Sternberg et al. (2008) supported. According to them, students' learning could be significantly improved if teachers could identify their learning styles and adapt their lessons accordingly.

e. Learning Strategy

According to Rebecca L. Oxford (1990), learning is a learner's steps to facilitate, accelerate, enjoy, self-direct, improve, and adapt learning to new circumstances. Researchers think more information about learning strategies is just as crucial as other internal variables. Accordingly, Zonash and Naqvi (2011) contend that "if most favourable learning is dependent on learning styles, then knowing students' learning styles and how the personality character is linked to the preference of students can identify their particular potential in a particular field."

f. Anxiety

As defined by Spielberger et al. (1983), anxiety refers to the subjective experience of apprehension and tension that is consciously recognised. It is often accompanied by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system. According to Peter MacIntyre (1999), anxiety in second language learning refers to a state of concern and emotional response that occurs while acquiring or utilising a second language. Anxiety is a physiological condition that encompasses cognitive, physical, emotional, and behavioural aspects. These elements combine to generate the emotions we identify as fear, apprehension, or concern. Anxiety in learning English refers to a state of heightened unease, similar to panic or nervousness, that arises when we are aware of and engaged in acquiring English as a foreign language.

g. English Proficiency Test

Several English Proficiency exams, such as TOEIC, TOEFL, and IELTS, can be utilised to assess pupils' competency in a foreign language. Indonesia utilises English competence examinations. The researcher will use Barron's TOEIC test to assess vocational students. TOEIC is an acronym that stands for Test of English for International Communication. Barron's TOEIC test primarily covers business-related topics, focusing on the language employed in these materials. Lougheed, L. (2003). The vocabulary employed in this bundle is pertinent to the realm of business. The content-based curriculum is pertinent to the vocational school. These resources assist students attending vocational high schools, focusing on supporting students in the business section of vocational schools. Lin Lougheed wrote a book in 2003.

The researcher conducted her research on internal elements that influenced the kids' excellent speaking achievement at SMK 8 Makassar based on the background information. The research questions are formulated in accordance with the study's topic. How do internal factors influence the students' speaking achievement at SMKN 8 Makassar?

METHOD

The researcher used a case study design for this work. Hamel et al. (1993) said a case study is an in-depth look at a specific case. It lets the researcher look into people or groups by looking at complicated relationships, programs, communities, or interventions. This study aimed to determine what factors affect how well kids do in English. The qualitative model method described and made sense of the collected data. The researcher herself was the most important tool in this study. Interviews, observations, surveys, and the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC test) were used to look at internal factors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The internal factors that were found to be influential on the research participants' high speaking achievement are (a) high positive attitude, (b) high motivation, (c) high interest, (d) learning style (very high and positive visual and auditory) (e) learning strategy (metacognitive), (f) very low anxiety, and (g) high English language proficiency which are obtained through interviews, observations, inventories, and TOEIC test.

In the discussion section, the researcher presented the interpretation of the test results from both the pre-test and the post-test.

a. High Positive Attitude

The study of interviews and observation revealed that all participants held a consistently positive attitude towards their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and the learning materials used in their English studies. The results of the interviews provided evidence for a "strongly positive attitude" towards English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The findings from the interviews with the informants reveal that the students consistently arrived punctually, consistently submitted their assignments, were never absent, attentively listened to the English teacher, and consistently sat in the front row, as evidenced in the citation below.

Excerpt 4.1 A: I like the English teacher. I always come on time. And then, I like the way Ma'am. Nursyam explaining, she explained the lesson specifically so we were Comfortable in learning.

Moreover, this point is underscored by English professors in their classes. According to them, the students exhibited a favourable attitude towards the EFL professors. Their teachers clarified that they served as their assistants in the lesson, as verified in the citation below.

Excerpt 4.2 T: "E Arum. She always. She always looks active, optimistic, and creative in the classroom. When I teach her, she pays attention to me. When I gave her some assignments, she always did them quickly and correctly because she had a good base in English. She is curious and willing to expand her abilities. For example, she. I always look like she has good additional material, for example, books, sources from the internet, and even from HP sometimes. And then she is a good friend to her classmates. She always encourages some friends who lack vocabulary and speaking, and she is helpful. She is my assistant in the classroom".

The observation's findings further confirm the favourable disposition towards EFL teachers. The classroom observation revealed that both participants consistently arrived punctually and occupied seats in the first row. The students attentively listened to the teacher's explanation and diligently recorded notes in their books. Students were inclined to assist their teacher in gathering the English textbooks and their peers' tasks during the teaching and learning process. Their optimistic demeanour extends not only to their teacher but also to their buddies. Both participants enjoyed assisting their friends in translating or pronouncing words and actively moved around to aid their friends in generating ideas.

The interview findings also corroborated the overwhelmingly positive sentiments toward English as a Foreign Language (EFL) resources. The initial informant preferred reading literature in English rather than Indonesian, as corroborated in the citation below.

*Excerpt 4.4 F: What kind of book do you prefer to read, English or Indonesian?
G: English book.*

The interview statement confirms that the resources, themes, and goals were provided to the students during the teaching-learning process. This significantly influenced the students' attitude towards studying English as a Foreign Language, as evidenced in the citation below.

*Excerpt 4.5 F: How is about the material?
A: The material is given based on the student's need, so it supports the teaching learning process.*

The above statistics indicate that the participants consistently held positive attitudes towards the EFL content. Using music as a tool for teaching English is an effective technique to engage pupils and capture their interest in learning the language. Arum and Gladyza expressed their appreciation for the materials provided by the teacher for discussion. The teacher's use of a trending topic is a strategic approach to encourage active student participation in the class. Furthermore, providing resources tailored to the student's needs heightened their engagement and commitment to their studies.

In addition, the students' strong positive attitude towards English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and materials significantly impacted their high speaking achievement. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Abdullah al-Mamun et al. (2012), who examined the attitude of undergraduate students at the Offline Science School of Khulna University towards the English language. The results indicate that the respondents' favourable disposition towards the English language can be ascribed to their achievements and drive to study the topic.

b. High Motivation

Through the examination of interviews and observation, the researcher discovered that Arum and Gladyza had a significant level of both integrative and instrumental drive. According to the given source, the interview revealed that both participants were driven to continue learning English due to their desire to pursue education or employment opportunities abroad and their interest in and desire to immerse themselves in English culture.

Excerpt 4.6 G: I want to stay abroad; I like the Western culture and the person. They appreciate someone on time, and their country is well organised. My aunt married a foreigner and talked about the different cultures. I want to stay there and integrate with the society.

Excerpt 4.7 A: I wish to stay in Australia, England, or overseas because of their culture. We can freely choose our choices and be independent by the 17th year-old, while In Indonesia, our parents still guide us.

Both informants expressed strong motivation to become proficient in the target language and immerse themselves in the culture of a foreign nation. Furthermore, the outcome of the observation bolstered the incentives for the high-achieving pupils. According to the Observation, both participants preferred perusing English articles and reading English publications. They are strongly interested in understanding foreign nations' cultures and current affairs. They stated that acquiring proficiency in the English language will enable them to effectively interact with individuals from other countries and thrive in an unfamiliar nation. Apart from that, they preferred to learn English by themselves. Arum used to practice the words in front of the mirror and talk alone while listening to the correct pronunciation from movies, songs, or dictionaries in a journal. Gladyza, meantime, studied English by reading a lot of novels in the language.

c. High Interest

According to Harold E. Palmer and H. Vere Redman (1932), individuals will only acquire knowledge effectively if they are genuinely interested in the subject matter. It signifies that the pupils' learning outcomes will only be as favourable if they are interested in the subject matter. Based on the analysis of interest interviews and observation, it was found that all participants had a significant level of interest in English. Their behaviour and spoken words reflect a significant level of enthusiasm. According to another study by Wimolmas in 2013,

more motivated students tend to participate actively and pay greater attention to certain learning tasks or activities. The statement supported by the observation can be seen below:

Excerpt 4.12 K: "Gladyza, Gladyza itu anak yang baik, especially untuk English yah, because I'm an English teacher. In the class, she is very active, active, and always helps her friends in doing everything. And I think for all subjects, I think."

Excerpt 4.13 T: "Her attitude? Arum? I guarantee her attitude in learning English, because every day I teach her, she always shows me good performance and pays attention in class, that's why I said her attitude in English is very good. Mmm She is diligent too".

The observation results corroborated the kids' profound enthusiasm. It was evident that both Arum and Gladyza possessed a substantial collection of English books, magazines, novels, and movies. During classroom sessions, it was consistently observed that both participants would bring an English dictionary and independently read English books independently during their leisure time.

d. Learning Style

Learning style refers to an individual's approach to acquiring new skills, knowledge, and information, which can ultimately influence their behaviour. Each student must identify their individual learning qualities to impact the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The individuals exhibited distinct learning styles as determined by examining learning style inventories, interviews, and observation. Based on the learning inventories, Gladyza was a very high and positive Auditory Learner and high visual learner, while Arum was categorised as a very high and positive Visual learner and high auditory learner. Arum had a consistently methodical approach to processing incoming information from the environment. Arum employs two cognitive approaches to thinking, processing information, demonstrating learning, and acquiring knowledge and abilities. Her optimal learning method would involve auditory and visual stimuli. The different methods were categorised as auditory and visual learning styles by Dunn et al. (1984). The result can see it of the interview below:

Excerpt 4.14 A: There is a listening material. I'm easy to learn in listening material.

Excerpt 4.15 A: I love both of them. When I watch an English movie, I can learn how to pronounce the word and learn about the foreign country's culture. I can learn new words by listening to music.

It is in line with her friend's statement that Arum liked to watch and listen to an English song, as confirmed in the cited below.

Excerpt 4.16 T: She liked to watch an English movie and listen to a foreign language.

Furthermore, the observation highlighted that Arum prefers to listen to music and read English articles in the comfort of their own house. She shared Gladyza's preference for studying in noisy environments and gaining new knowledge through activities such as watching TV or reading English textbooks. She engaged in activities such as listening to music, studying pronunciation, and watching movies to gain new vocabulary. Gladyza's learning style was classified as highly auditory and moderately visual, based on the learning style classification of Dunn et al. (1984), as confirmed in the cited document below.

Excerpt 4.16 G: I preferred studying while listening to music rather than in quiet condition.

By listening to the music and study, it will stimulate my brain.

Excerpt 4.17 G: When I was in the 3rd class, I liked to watch an English TV show. I could

Learn new words, accents, and pronunciation by watching TV

This aligns with the outcome of her home observation: when Gladyza reads a book, she inserts headphones into her ears. Furthermore, this incident occurred during her school work, where she used headphones to listen to music. She enjoyed watching movies and observing her teacher's motions and facial expressions while sitting beside them. According to Gladyza's mother, Gladyza was fond of conversing and honing her English skills with individuals from other countries. She expressed her ability to acquire proficient pronunciation, mimic the British accent, and enhance her listening skills via repetition. The study determined that the teacher could effectively instruct both participants in the classroom using visual and aural methods. The subjects exhibited optimal learning through the use of visual and aural stimuli.

e. Learning Strategy

The utilisation of learning strategies, as demonstrated by Arum and Gladyza, played a significant role in the students' exceptional performance in speaking by facilitating their acquisition, comprehension, and assimilation of knowledge. The learning inventory revealed that both subjects exhibited a strong inclination towards metacognition. Conversely, according to the interview findings, the researcher discovered that Arum and Gladyza employed many learning methodologies. Despite employing distinct learning methodologies to enhance their English proficiency, they managed to discover methods of learning that were both pleasurable and effective, as confirmed in the cited below.

Excerpt 4.20 F: How do you study?

G: I focused on my teachers' explanation in class, so when I have a test, I just reviewed, and I remembered everything.

Excerpt 4.21 A: I rarely study because I pay attention to the teacher when explaining something. I usually write notes in my books. I do some tests to review my memory about the subject.

Excerpt 4.22 F: Why did you not join an English course?

A: I preferred to study alone.

Excerpt 4.23 G: Before I moved to SMK 8, I used to speak English with a foreigner. She Liked My sister. But now we are busy, so we seldom talk.

The provided snippets serve as evidence that the participants employed multiple learning methodologies. Gladyza saw her teacher's explanation in class and subsequently identified an error, prompting her to try rectifying it. She enjoyed conversing with individuals from other countries to enhance her English language skills and discover more effective methods for language acquisition. Arum acquired English through self-study, attentively absorbing her teacher's explanations in class. She enjoyed reading English articles, honed her speaking skills by practising in front of a mirror, and meticulously analysed tests. During classroom study sessions, she used coloured pens to take notes and actively listened to the teacher's explanations. According to the findings, both subjects were classified as using metacognitive methods.

f. Very Low Anxiety

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), anxiety in foreign language learning encompasses emotions, beliefs, and actions connected to the language-learning process's distinctiveness. There was a significant correlation between language anxiety and academic accomplishments. They were experiencing unpleasant emotions when gaining knowledge or having difficulty in language proficiency and academic performance. The researcher stated that all participants exhibited a significant reduction in anxiety levels, as determined through the analysis of interviews and observations.

Anxiety has been observed to have a detrimental impact on students' acquisition of foreign language skills and their academic performance in this area. Both informants stated that their lack of worry when participating in the English competition contributed to their success, as shown by the citation below.

Excerpt 4.24 F: Why did you not feel shy?

A: I feel more confident when I speak in English

Excerpt 4.25 F: When you meet with foreigners, are you afraid to communicate with them?

A: I want to speak with a foreigner. I am not afraid.

Excerpt 4.26 F: When do you practice your English with your friends or someone else, do you feel nervous?

G: No, I'm not. I'm confident but not overconfident because maybe my partner is better than me. So far, I have never felt nervous about speaking in English

As mentioned above, the interview's outcome revealed that both participants derived pleasure from acquiring and using English as a second language. Arum and Gladysa were proficient at speaking English. As mentioned earlier, the statement aligns with the statements made by their teacher and friends. She underlined that Arum and Gladysa exhibited reduced levels of anxiety when speaking the English language, as corroborated in the citation below:

Excerpt 4.27 F: I think she never worried about speaking in English. She is not afraid in making mistake

Excerpt 4.28 T: "In speaking class, Arum always has good confidence in speaking, and she is not afraid. If she finds some kind of weakness, she comes to me and asks, what is this.. what is this? That is why I said she is curious about improving her speaking ability."

The classroom observation confirmed that the children experienced a significant decrease in anxiety. Arum delivered the result of the discussion with a smile and displayed excellent organisation of her views. The second group delivered their speech within less than 5 minutes and recited a written message. A similar incident occurred in Gladysa's class, where she confidently raised her hand to speak first and eloquently described her idol. She has shown no apprehension towards her, although Gladysa was rather anxious. She perspired visibly from her forehead despite the cool temperature in the classroom.

Arum and Gladysa also stated they had prepared before participating in the English competition. They believe adequate preparation is crucial for delivering a compelling presentation and managing anxiousness. Furthermore, they emphasised the significance of self-confidence. They realised that a decrease in their self-assurance would have a negative impact on their overall performance. Therefore, engaging in thorough preparation will enhance their level of self-assurance.

g. High English Language Proficiency

The English Proficiency Test assesses the student's aptitude in foreign language fluency. The researcher employed the TOEIC test to assess the English language skills of the participants in this study. The participants' TOEIC test results indicated that Arum achieved a score of 835 (high) and Gladyza achieved a score of 815 (high).

The interview results and the analysed materials corroborated the participants' outstanding accomplishments in English Language proficiency. According to an interview with their parents, it was claimed that both individuals consistently achieved excellent scores in English and were successful in English competitions starting from their Junior high school, as mentioned in the above excerpts.

Excerpt 4.29 B: Since junior high school, she liked joining English competitions. Sometimes, she got the 1st or the 3rd winner in a speech contest or reading news competition. He claimed that he never taught her daughter an English subject. She learned everything alone. When she was an SMK student, she won many English competitions. Her teacher reported to me that she has a good achievement. She always got the 1st rank, and her English score was 9.

Excerpt 4.30 M: She liked to join the competition. Since she was in Junior high school to Vocational high school. She won some competitions, such as being the 1st Winner in a speech competition at the John Power, she won in a speech contest. Regarding tourism, she was the third winner in the English courses.

The statistics presented above indicate that the pupils' excellent achievement in speaking can be attributed to their advanced English language ability. This truth was corroborated by the findings of the document review, which revealed that Arum scored 9.00 on her National Examination. In contrast, Gladyza obtained a score of 9.40. In addition, it was discovered that all participants excelled in the English subject, which was their foreign language, from junior high school to senior high school. They achieved a score of 8 or 9 in English.

Based on the information above, the students do well in speech because they are very good at using English. Reviewing the papers showed this was true; Arum got a 9.00 on her National Examination, and Gladyza got a 9.00 at SMKN 8 Makassar. Also, it was found that all participants did well in English as a foreign language from junior high school through final year of high school. In English, they got an 8 or 9.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be inferred that the student's exceptional speaking skills were influenced by several internal factors, namely: (a) a strong positive attitude, (b) high motivation, (c) intense interest, (d) a preferred learning style that heavily relies on visual and auditory methods, (e) utilisation of metacognitive learning strategies, (f) minimal anxiety, and (g) a high level of proficiency in the English language. It could be summarised with the framework in Figure 1

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