EXPLORING THE CORRELATION: STUDENTS’ INTEREST AND THEIR ENGLISH LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT
This research aim was to find out the correlation between students’ interest and their English learning achievement. The research question was “Is there any significant correlation between students’ interest and their English learning achievement?” This research applied correlational method. The subjects was the tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar. The data was collected through questionnaire and English score documentation. In analyzed the data, the researcher used quantitative data analysis. The result of data analysis showed that there is positive significant correlation between students’ Interest and their English learning achievement at tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar. This was proved by the coefficient correlation score $r_{count} = 0.814 > r_{table} = 0.344$ in 5% significant degree. Based on a correlational table, the correlation index ($r_{xy} = 0.814$) is in interval $0.70 \quad 0.90$, this means that the correlation belongs to “strong correlation”. Therefore, the higher the tenth grade students’ interest in SMKN 5 Makassar the higher their English learning achievement will be.

Key Words: Interest, Achievement, English learning.

INTRODUCTION
English is an essential to the field of education. In many countries, children are taught and encouraged to learn English as a second language. Even in countries where it is not an official language, such as Indonesia. Currently English is seen as need for development. It is needed for instrumental reasons, as a tool which provides access to international markets, scientific knowledge and expertise. English has the status of ‘first’ foreign language, but nothing more as policy makers fret that an increased use of English might have an adverse effect on Indonesians (Huda, 2000). In Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject learned by the students in the formal or non-formal education. It started from primary school to university. As the compulsory subject, English is one of the subjects to be tested in final exam.

For some students, learning English as a second language is one of the most difficult subjects they have learnt. Due to the difficulties in learning, English language can make students lose their interest easily. Interest is one of the
strongest motivations for learning English. Motivation has long been identified as one of the main factors affecting English language learning (Gardner, 1985). Parsons, Hinson and Brown (2001) define motivation as an important component or factor in the learning process. Learning and motivation have the same importance in order to achieve something. Learning makes us gain new knowledge and skills and motivation pushes us or encourage us to go through the learning process (Wimolmas, 2013). We know that it is natural for people to soak up all sorts of information when they have an interest in learning about that particular subject.

Fakeye (2010) investigated the correlation between interest and achievement in English among 400 senior secondary students selected randomly from five secondary schools. A significant relationship between interest and achievement was the result found in that study. Additionally, it was explored that students’ interest is not gender-related. Thus, there was not a statistically significant difference in the interest of male and female students. If learners are not interested in acquiring the target language, they possess a negative attitude and are not motivated and enthusiastic in language learning.

Interest is often thought of as a process that contributes to learning and achievement. That is, being interested in a topic is a mental resource that enhances learning, which then leads to better performance and achievement (Hidi, 1990). Indeed, research has demonstrated that both situational and individual interest promote attention, recall, task persistence, and effort (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002; Hidi, 1990; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). From this perspective, then, interest appears to play a very important role in learning and academic achievement.

According to short interview with Mr. Arifin (English Teacher in SMKN 5 Makassar), the achievement of students which interested to English will be great, but the problem is at the students who lack of interest towards English because their achievement score are not as good as the students who interested in English. So, based on that problem the researcher want to know how significance is the correlation between students’ interest and their English learning achievement. Based on the conditions above, the researcher is interested in studying the correlation between students’ interest and their English learning achievement at tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar.

METHOD

In this study, the research method used is quantitative research method to find the correlation between two variables. Correlational research is concerned with establishing relationships between two or more variables in the same population or between the same variables in two populations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In popular usage the term correlation refers to any type of relationship between events or objects. In statistical correlation, there must be two measures for each subject (person) in a group. In this study, two variables was compaared. Those are students’ interest score and students’ achievement score. The population of the research was the tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar which is consist of 540 students from 18 classes and 12 majors. The sample was
taken one class from the population at tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar which is class X GB (Gambar Bangunan) 2 consist of 33 students.

**FINDINGS**

In this research, there are two data sources. The first one was the questionnaire and the second one was students’ score documentation. The questionnaire was given to 33 students to answer about their interest towards English. After the data collection, data analyzing was performed to find out the amount of students with high interest score and low interest score. The second data source was students’ English score documentation from the teacher of second semester. Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula then used to find out about the correlation between two variables.

**Students’ Interest Score**

Students’ interest Score is an independent variable (X). The data was taken by giving a questionnaire to 33 students. The questionnaire consist of 20 statements which has 5 indicators (Enjoyment, motivation, attention, need, and desire). According to the result, the highest score of the questionnaire is 86 while the lowest score of the questionnaire is 53 and the total of students’ interest score (X) is 2296.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>86 – 81</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>80 – 75</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>74 – 69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>68 – 63</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>62 – 58</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>57 – 53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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The questionnaire result of students’ interest can be seen in histogram below.

![Chart 1 Students’ Interest score Histogram](image)

Table 1. shows that there are 4 students (12%) are in interval 86 – 81, 8 students (23%) are in interval 80 – 75, 9 students (26%) are in interval 74 – 69, 6 students (18%) are in interval 68 – 63, 3 students (9%) are in interval 62 – 58, and 4 students (12%) are in interval 57 – 53.

**Students’ English Score**

Students’ English Learning Achievement score is a dependent variable (Y). The writer took the score from teacher’s score documentation of second semester students in academic year 2017-2018. It was carried out by copying them from school’s administration. According to the result, the highest score of students’ English learning score is 89 while the lowest score of students’ English learning score is 70 and the total of students’ English learning score (Y) is 2744.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>89 – 87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>86 – 84</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>83 – 81</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>80 – 77</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>76 – 73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>72 – 70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 shows that there are 4 students (13%) are in interval 89–87, 15 students (47%) are in interval 86–84, 9 students (28%) are in interval 83–81, 3 students (9%) are in interval 80–77, 1 student (3%) are in interval 76–73, and 1 student (3%) are in interval 72–70.

**Correlation between Students' Interest and Their English Learning Achievement**

After the total of Students’ interest score and Students’ English Learning score ready, the writer counted them with the prepared formula which is Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula to find out is there any significant correlation between two variables. The analysis result shows that there is strong correlation by 0.814 between students’ interest and their English language achievement in SMKN 5 Makassar with r_{table} score is 0.344 in 5% significant degree. The result shows that r_{count} is bigger than r_{table} (r_{count} = 0.814 > r_{table} 0.344). Meaning H_{0} is rejected and H_{A} is accepted and there is a positif significant correlation between students’ interest and their English learning achievement in the tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar by 0.814. It can be seen that the correlation index (r_{xy} = 0.814) is in interval 0.70 – 0.90, this means that the correlation belongs to “strong correlation”.

**DISCUSSIONS**

Though foreign language learning is a complex and long process which involves many factors, tapping into interest is crucial for language teachers because we know that interest is one of the key factors driving language learning success. According to Hidi (1990) Interest is often thought of as a process that contributes to learning and achievement. That is, being interested in a topic is a mental resource that enhances learning, which then leads to better performance and achievement.

Based on the data above, there is a significant correlation between students’ interest and their English language achievement and it proved that there is a strong correlation between two variables, in other words it shows that if students’ interest is high, then their achievement in English learning will high too.
The data above was provided from two sources which are questionnaire and documentation, then the writer applied the prepared formula to find out about the correlation between two variables which is Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula. There are 33 students as the sample form tenth grade of SMKN 5 Makassar which from class X GB 2.

The analysis result shows that there is strong correlation by 0.814 between students’ interest and their English language achievement in SMKN 5 Makassar with \( r_{table} \) score is 0.344 in 5% significant degree.

The result shows that \( r_{count} \) is bigger than \( r_{table} \) (\( r_{count} = 0.814 > r_{table} \) 0.344). Which means \( H_0 \) is rejected and \( H_a \) is accepted. The acceptance of the alternative hypothesis implies that there is a correlation between students’ motivation and their achievement in reading. One interesting finding in this study is that better the students apply their knowledge and there is a positive significant correlation between students’ interest and their English learning achievement in the tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar by 0.814. result shows that \( r_{count} \) is bigger than \( r_{table} \) (\( r_{count} = 0.814 > r_{table} \) 0.344). Which means \( H_0 \) is rejected and \( H_a \) is accepted and there is a positive significant correlation between students’ interest and their English learning achievement in the tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar by 0.814.

According to some previous related study, there are some similarities of the research’s result. All of the previous related studies are proved that there is significant correlation between two variables and two of them also proved that there is strong correlation between two variables, also all of previous related studies using Pearson Product Moment formula to find out the correlation between two variables. Not only similarities but there are also differences, each previous studies have different correlational score. Another difference is the first previous study has the same variables with this research while anther two previous related study have different variables which are motivation and students’ achievement and the last previous related study didn’t find any significant correlation between motivation and students’ learning achievement.

Interest will become a motivation force, that, as a strength to encourage somebody to learn. They who like to the lesson will look like being encouraging to learn continually than the other who only accept the lesson. In teaching and learning process, both students and teacher have their own responsibility. The teacher is responsible to increase students’ interest while the students are responsible to doing their teacher order’s well. If both parties are running smoothly then teaching and learning process will be turned out great. Students with high interest towards English will try to find out more about English than those with low interest towards English. They tend to be more attentive in learning English and they will feel enjoy and will be ready to do any task given by teacher. Because they enjoy learning English, they might want to learn English even not in School and they might want to use English confidently and comfortably whenever and wherever they want.

Since they have high interest towards English, they will get used to English language and will enjoy learning it in school which will increase their
English learning achievement in class, while the low achievers also did not pay so much effort in learning English as the high achievers.

CONCLUSION
Based on the previous chapters we can conclude that there is positive significant correlation between students’ Interest and their English learning achievement at tenth grade students of SMKN 5 Makassar. This was proved by the coefficient correlation score $r_{\text{count}} = 0.814 > r_{\text{table}} = 0.344$ in 5% significant degree. Based on a correlational table, the correlation index ($r_{xy} = 0.814$) is in interval $0.70 – 0.90$, this means that the correlation belongs to “strong correlation”. Therefore, the higher the tenth grade students’ interest in SMKN 5 Makassar the higher their English learning achievement will be. Kohonen (1992) quotes a motto from Gene Bedley holds the view, “anything that a child should do and can do, and we do for them takes away an opportunity from them to learn responsibility”. This makes the writer realize sometimes teachers allow their students to attribute their failure in language learning to ability. It seems that students’ poor performance indicates their lack of ability and the teacher should not blame them for not working hard enough.

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