

# The Correlation between Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency of the English Department Students.

Aventia Wilona  
Agustinus Ngadiman  
M.G. Retno Palupi

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the research was to find out whether there is a correlation between intrinsic motivation and speaking proficiency. The correlation research was conducted with the assistance of a motivational questionnaire and speaking proficiency level as the instruments. Twenty nine respondents, who were the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, participated in the research. They took part in filling out the questionnaire and giving out their recent Speaking Class grade. The data gathered were soon correlated using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient formula. The findings show that there is a moderate correlation between intrinsic motivation and speaking proficiency. Having Intrinsic Motivation in the process of learning a foreign/second language helps people to achieve better speaking proficiency. And through the research, the writer suggests that motivation is indeed an important factor for the success of language learning and acquisition in all aspects and skills; therefore, educators and learners should perceive the importance of being intrinsically motivated. The writer also suggests that in the future time, there should be deeper researches regarding the types of motivation, as well as the orientations of motivation.*

## Introduction

It is generally acknowledged that English has become the official language of the world which is spoken by almost all the people around the world. English is used to facilitate people who do not speak the same language to be able to communicate and share ideas. Nowadays people are aware that possessing the ability to speak English is essential. In order to face the globalization era, which requires people to be able to compete not only with people in the range of a nation but also in the entire world, people need English. Therefore, knowing the importance and the popularity of English, some countries such as Malaysia, South Africa, India, and the Philippines have claimed English as their second language while other countries such as Indonesia, China, Korea, and Germany have been encouraging their citizens to learn English as a foreign language.

In the theory of Second Language Acquisition by Stephen Karshen in his book *Language Acquisition and Language Education (1989)*, he concluded that the cornerstone of his theory is fundamentally the distinction between *acquisition* and *learning*. *Acquisition*, as it relates to a second language, is a subconscious process that is identical to the process

used in first language acquisition in all important ways. While acquisition is taking place, the acquirer is not always aware of it and she or he is not usually aware of its result. *Learning* is a conscious knowledge, or “knowing about” the language. In everyday language, when we talk about “grammar” or “rules”, we are referring to learning, not acquisition. (Krashen, 1989)

From this theory, it can be seen that learning and acquisition are clearly distinct processes. Acquisition appears to play far more central a role than learning in second language performance. Our ability to use a second language mostly comes from what we have acquired, not from what we have learned.

Acquiring a second language cannot be accomplished easily. Some fundamental factors are needed in order to achieve the highest level of acquisition. The level of cognitive development; socio-economic and cultural background; the ability to acquire a language; age and motivation of the person can be expressed as the factors affecting second language acquisition.

Motivation takes an important role in this process since the success or failure of acquiring a second language depends on how motivated a person is. One will be successful in acquiring the language with proper motivation. Likewise, he or she may fail if motivation is not owned. It is very difficult to acquire a second language if a person does not have the desire to immerse in the language. Clearly, the importance of motivation cannot be understated.

In Second Language Acquisition theory, there are two main types of motivation: Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Motivation. As defined by Edward Deci, intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. Extrinsically motivated behavior, on the other hand, are carried out in anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self (Edward Deci 1975, 23).

Intrinsic motivation refers to the desire to fulfill a task that leads individuals to feel a sense of personal enjoyment and control when taking part in the task. When individuals’ motivations are self-determined, they become more involved in activities and make efforts to reach challenging goals (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Intrinsically motivated activities are not means to an end. They are the ends themselves; the motivation to perform an activity is for the experience of the activity itself and not for the gain of future rewards (Deci, 1980). For example, the ones who are intrinsically motivated may say that they are taking a grammar class because of their interest in how the rules of the English language operate.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to motivation that exists because of the presence of “an externally mediated activity or constraint” (Deci, 1980, pp. 30–31). Extrinsically motivated activities are means to an end. That is, the activity is performed not for the enjoyment of the activity, but in order to gain a reward if the activity is completed or to avoid a negative consequence if the activity is not completed. For

example, extrinsically motivated English-as-a Second-Language (ESL) students may say that they are taking English classes in order to improve their chances of getting a good job. *Abraham Maslow (1970)*, a behavioral psychologist, claimed that: *“Intrinsic Motivation is clearly superior to extrinsic. We are ultimately motivated to achieve “self-actualization” once our basic physical, safety, and community needs are met. Regardless of the presence of absence of extrinsic rewards, we will strive for self-esteem and fulfillment.”*

Students who are motivated intrinsically are likely to perform better in the process of learning. This is because they are interested in the learning process and they want to do well for the sake of the learning and not for any rewards or recognitions. They will also find their learning to be meaningful as they will be prepared to delve deeply into the things they are learning in order to master it. This is also applicable for the process of second language acquisition. The more people engage in any activity that triggers them to use the target language, the more they will achieve a greater level of acquisition.

The acquisition of a language can be seen through two proficiencies, oral proficiency and written proficiency. It is generally known, listening and speaking are oral communication proficiencies while reading and writing are written communication proficiencies. Oral language is extremely pervasive. In the other words, it is everywhere and we are surrounded by it. Therefore, its development plays a key role in the process of second language acquisition. It is believed that the more input a person receives the more output the person will produce. One can be seen as someone who has acquired a second language when he or she is able to perform a communicative and effective conversation.

Since researcher was aware of the importance of intrinsic motivation and oral language in the process of second language acquisition, researchers inquired as to whether these two major elements have a relationship in order to generate more success in learners' acquisition of a second language.

The respondents for the research study were university students in the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University in Surabaya. They were brought into the research study because the English Department was the perfect place to find the correlation between motivation and oral proficiency. The Department has the population of people who are learning English, a language that should be regarded as a second language, in a country that considers it as a foreign language.

The Department is under the Teacher Training and Education Faculty that edifies students to be excellent and competent English teachers. It can be seen through its mission: *to create superior English educators, with good morals, and able to pursue lifelong learning through the development of science, cultures, arts, and information technology. (Pedoman Akademik UKWMS 2011-2012)* To be able to teach a language properly, one must undoubtedly master the language before

the knowledge is shared with students in order to obtain excellent results in the students' learning. This is one strong reason why the writer believes that the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University regard English as their second language in attempting to master the language in or outside of the classroom.

The background of the study above leads to the following research problem. Is there a correlation between intrinsic motivation and speaking proficiency of the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?

## **The Methods**

The respondents of the research were 32 students from 2008 and 2009 academic year in the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. The researcher made use of them as the respondents because most of the 2008 and 2009 academic year students have taken all of the 4 speaking subjects in the Department, specifically Speaking 4 subject, which is used as one of the variables in the research. The writer chose convenience sampling in order to gather the data needed. A convenience sampling is a sample where the respondents are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher. The researcher makes no attempt, or only a limited attempt, to insure that this sample is an accurate representation of some larger group or population. (McMillan, 1992) In total, there were 32 respondents included in the research. There were 12 respondents from the 2008 academic year and the other 20 were from 2009 academic year.

There were two kinds of data needed for the research. The first was motivation data and the second was speaking proficiency data. Motivation data was obtained through a motivation questionnaire; meanwhile, the speaking data obtained is the grade of the respondents Speaking 4 class.

For the research, one kind of data used is data of motivation. The data is utilized to see how much someone is intrinsically motivated in learning and acquiring English as a second language. The data was obtained by conducting a form of a questionnaire which consisted of some questions developed by the writer based on the Motivation Questionnaire constructed by Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassaby for their study in 1966.

Their questionnaire was chosen to be developed and used for the research by the writer because the questions were specifically composed to find intrinsic motivation of the respondents. Later, the writer modified Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassaby's questionnaire because the writer wanted to specify the questions related to Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency. The questionnaire uses a four-point *Likert* scale by which respondents indicate how much they agree with each item. The scale 4 (four) indicates that the respondents strongly agree with the statements.

The scale 3 (three) indicates if they agree, 2 (two) if they disagree and 1 (one) if they totally disagree with the statement.

There are twenty-one items used to obtain the data of Motivation. The statements given are the indicators of having Intrinsic Motivation in the process of learning English as a foreign/second language.

The two variables, X (Intrinsic Motivation) and Y (English Speaking Proficiency), were correlated using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient or Spearman's rho.

## Findings and Discussion of The Findings

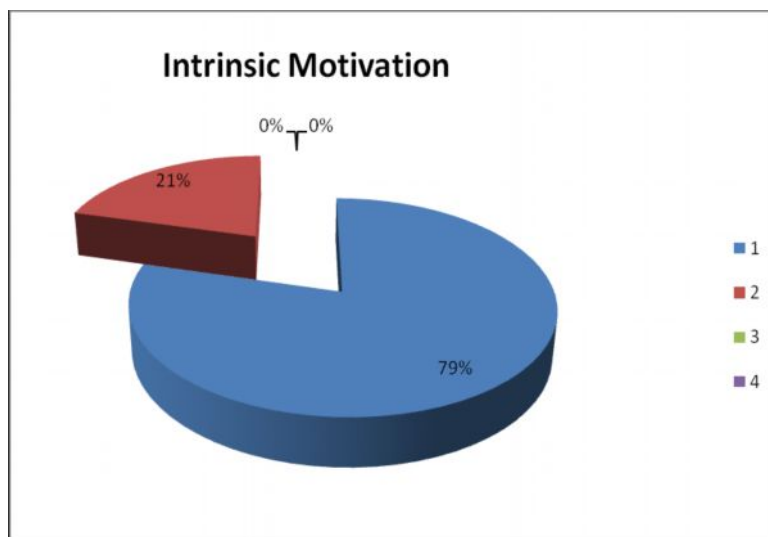
In line with the research design and the objective of the study, this chapter aims at presenting the results of data analysis, the hypothesis testing, and also the interpretation.

### Results of Data Analysis

#### 1. The subjects' Motivation

The chart of Intrinsic Motivation that shows the percentage of the numbers of people in each level can be seen below:

Figure 1 Intrinsic Motivation Level Chart



- Entirely Intrinsicly
- Mostly Intrinsicly
- Slightly Intrinsicly
- Hardly Intrinsicly

The chart of Intrinsic Motivation shows that most of the respondents are entirely intrinsically motivated in the process of learning

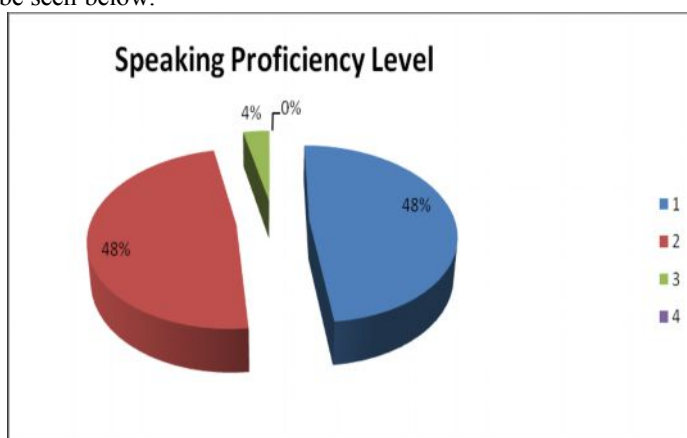
and acquiring English as a foreign/second language. They know exactly that the learning process they are in at the moment is definitely going to benefit them in the near future. Meanwhile, the 21% percent of the respondents who are mostly intrinsically motivated are aware that the reason they are studying in the English Department is because it is in line with the will they own however they are not purely enforced by all the intrinsic factors.

There is a distinction between slightly and hardly intrinsically motivated. When someone is slightly intrinsically motivated, some factors that motivate them in learning English comes within them but most likely they are more influenced by extrinsic motivation. Meanwhile when they are hardly intrinsically motivated there is a big possibility that they rather to be more extrinsically motivated. Moreover, there is a chance that they have no motivation in learning the language at all.

## 2. Speaking Proficiency

There were twenty nine (29) grades of Speaking 4 Class received by the researcher, one grade from each respondent. After putting them in the levels of Speaking Proficiency, *Bridging*, *Expanding*, *Developing*, and *Beginning*, it is found that there are 14 respondents who are at *Bridging* level, 14 respondents are at *Expanding* level, and 1 respondent is at the *Developing* level, and the researcher found no one at the *Beginning*, and *Entering* levels.

An interesting finding came up after analyzing the data of speaking was the absence of the respondent who is at the *Beginning* and *Entering* levels. It proves that the students of 2008 and 2009 academic year are neither at the developing nor entering stage. After studying in the Department for about 3 up to 4 years, they are at least at the stage of expanding in their English proficiency. The chart of Speaking Proficiency Level that shows the percentage of the numbers of people in each level can be seen below:



- Bridging

- Expanding Developing
- Beginning

### 3. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was employed to investigate the correlation between Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency. The correlation obtained is presented in the following table.

Table 1  
Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient

Variables	N	Correlation coefficient	Intrinsic Motivation	Speaking Proficiency
Intrinsic Motivation	29	,015	. 1,000	447(*)
Speaking Proficiency	29	,015	447(*)	1,000

From the table, we can perceive the correlation between the two variables is **0,477** with the significant value ( $p$ ) of **0,015** ( $p < 0, 05$ ). The result obtained shows that there is a correlation between intrinsic motivation and speaking proficiency. Therefore, it can be concluded that the higher intrinsic motivation owned by a learner, the higher speaking proficiency they can accomplish, whereas, the lower intrinsic motivation owned, the lower speaking proficiency they can accomplish. And by following Guilford's Empirical rule, we can see that the degree of correlation is at moderate correlation and it has substantial relationship among each other.

#### Hypothesis Testing

There writer has an alternative hypothesis that says there is a correlation between Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency because she believes that motivation is one of the most important factors that support the acquisition a second/a foreign language. The result of data analysis confirmed her hypothesis; it is in fact that there is correlation between intrinsic motivation and speaking proficiency. The hypothesis is accepted because the significance value ( $p$ ) of the two variables is **0, 015** where there is no correlation if  $p$  is higher than 0, 05.

#### Interpretation

The correlation coefficient obtained through this research confirmed that there is a correlation, positive correlation, between Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency. The result of the research shows that Intrinsic Motivation enables language learners to increase their speaking proficiency. The higher Intrinsic Motivation they have the higher Speaking Proficiency they will acquire.

When a person learns a second or a foreign language because they are fond of the language and they have a positive attitude towards the language, the learning process grows. It enables them to participate eagerly in any classroom activities. The reason is because they know that they fit into the process of learning for their own beneficial. It is the satisfaction they earn by acquiring the language.

When someone is intrinsically motivated in learning or acquiring a second language, most of the time they have the desire to be able to perform as close as or even as authentic as a native speaker. It was answered in the questionnaire that most of them would like to sound like a native speaker of English. This desire to sound like a native speaker triggers them to make use of the time they have to practice and improve their skills. They spend an extra time having a conversation with a native speaker, getting input outside the classroom by reading English newspapers, magazines, novels, watching English movies, listening to English songs to improve their skills.

The extra efforts they make in order to acquire the language evidently affect the ability they have. They gain higher proficiency as they gain their Intrinsic Motivation. They are aware that by increasing their English proficiency they will increase their life standard of living as well as benefit them in their future studies and it was confirmed through the questionnaire given.

## **Conclusion and Suggestion**

### **1. Summary**

The correlation research was conducted to find the correlation between Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency. As it is believed by many experts in Teaching English as a Foreign, or a Second Language, such as H. Douglas Brown, Edward Deci, Richard M. Ryan, and Abraham Maslow, *Motivation* is one of the important factors in acquiring a second language.

In the theory of Second Language Acquisition, there are two types of Motivation which are Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. Intrinsic Motivation is the motivation that comes within an individual. Someone wants to acquire or learn a second or a foreign language because she or he knows that it is important and has beneficial for him/herself. In other words, the individual learns the language for the sake of the knowledge for him/herself. In contrary, Extrinsic Motivation is the motivation that comes from external forces such as parents' demands, grades, rewards, money, or even the attempt of avoiding punishment. When someone is extrinsically motivated, he or she acquires / learns a second or a foreign language not for him/herself. Someone or something else takes control on how he/she does it.

The two types of motivation help someone to accomplish the goals they have, however, Intrinsic Motivation appears to be superior to Extrinsic Motivation. The reason is because when someone does a certain



task without any pressure or demand from other people or other things, they seem to engage more in the activities and feel the enjoyment of the process of the task. Therefore, the researcher chose Intrinsic Motivation as the variable for research.

Speaking proficiency is important for language learners. Having a high level of proficiency, shows how much a person has mastered or acquired the language. The writer chose speaking skill because it reflects someone's language acquisition. Thirty two of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University participated in the research as the respondents. They filled out a Motivation Questionnaire and gave out their Speaking 4 grades as the main data for the research. The two kinds of data were later correlated using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient to find if there is a correlation between Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency.

The correlation coefficient attained through this research confirmed the hypothesis of the writer. The hypothesis is accepted that there is correlation between Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency.

## **2. Conclusion**

The following conclusions of the research under report are written based on the findings and the discussion of the finding presented above.

1. From twenty nine respondents, there are twenty three respondents that are entirely intrinsically motivated. Six of them are mostly intrinsically motivated. And no one is slightly intrinsically motivated or hardly intrinsically motivated. It shows that most of the respondents have Intrinsic Motivation in learning English as their foreign language
2. From the twenty nine respondents, the researcher finds that the level of Speaking Proficiency of fourteen respondents is at *Bridging* level. 14 of them are at *Expanding* level, and only one of them is at *Developing* level. None of the respondents is at the level of *Beginning* and *Entering*. The reason believed by the researcher is that because they are intrinsically motivated they can achieve better proficiency. And it enables them to perform well in their speaking.
3. After correlating the two types of data, Intrinsic Motivation Level and Speaking Proficiency Level using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient, the researcher hypothesis is acknowledged. There is a moderate correlation between them. It means that Intrinsic Motivation helps language learners to achieve higher language proficiency, specifically on the speaking skills. Even though the correlation is regarded as moderate correlation rather than high correlation, the writer at a halt believes that Intrinsic Motivation is needed by those who want to acquire a second language. It is shown in the questionnaire that those who are intrinsically motivated tend to spend some time to practice the skill by engaging in classroom activities, watching English movies, listening to English songs, and even having a conversation with a native speaker. Because they know the

importance of the learning process and the will to learn the language comes within them, they always seek a way to use the language. Therefore, their Speaking skills are improved.

### **3. The Weakness of the Study**

There are some weaknesses found in the research:

1. The validation of the speaking data appears to be weak and it is the result of not using the raw source. The data of speaking proficiency was obtained by getting the grade earned by the respondents from a Speaking Class that was examined by someone else.
2. The speaking data attained for the research has no high reliability as the result of not having a written or a legal proof of the Speaking 4 grade obtained by the respondents.

### **4. Suggestion**

This section contains several suggestions concerning the results of the research under report. They are intended to the assist students of Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Second Language Acquisition lecturers, other students and future researchers who are going to conduct the similar studies as well. The suggestions are as follows:

1. Since there is a correlation between Intrinsic Motivation and Speaking Proficiency; it is necessary for teachers, parents, or guardians to motivate the language learners. The motivation should enable them to grow fond of the language and be aware of the importance of having the skills. It is better for educators to point out to the learners that owning the self-satisfaction for having a good proficiency of a language for themselves is worthy.
2. For future research related to the topic, more respondents to be included would be highly suggested. It can show more accuracy on the reflection on second or foreign language learners' motivation.
3. It is also suggested that the data obtained to find out the level of Speaking Proficiency can be from more than one source. An interview appears to be a fine addition instrument to attain the level of speaking proficiency.
4. Having reliable and valid instruments is necessary, therefore it is highly suggested that for future studies to use instruments which can enable the researcher to obtain valid and reliable data.
5. For further research, the variables can be expanded, for example: the correlation between Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation and four language proficiencies, listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The more variables used, the more interesting and useful results can be obtained. And it will give benefits to many language learners and also educators.
6. In the Second Language Acquisition Theory, there are two orientations in motivation which are Instrumental and Integrative Orientations. Including the two orientations and comparing them with the two types of motivation, Intrinsic and Extrinsic, would be an

interesting research to conduct, since all of them affect the process of second language.

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