

The relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency among students of Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Institute Binjai

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ABSTRACT

Indonesian language proficiency is an important component of academic communication in higher education; however, differences in students' abilities to use the language effectively in academic contexts are still frequently observed. One factor that is considered to influence students' language competence is learning motivation, which encourages active engagement in the learning process. This study aims to analyze the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency among students at the Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Institute, Binjai. The research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. A total of 30 students were selected as research participants using a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected through a learning motivation questionnaire and an Indonesian language proficiency test covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The data were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation with the support of SPSS software. The descriptive results show that students have a relatively high level of learning motivation with a mean score of 79.80, while the mean score of Indonesian language proficiency reached 82.13, indicating good language competence. The correlation analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency ($r = 0.621$; $p < 0.05$). In addition, the analysis indicates that learning motivation contributes 38.6% to the variation in students' language proficiency. These findings suggest that improving students' learning motivation may support the development of their Indonesian language skills in academic settings.

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INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian language plays a strategic role in higher education as a medium for academic communication, the dissemination of scientific ideas, and the development of knowledge.

In the academic environment, students are expected to demonstrate adequate proficiency in Indonesian in order to comprehend academic literature, articulate ideas logically, and produce scientific writings in a systematic manner. Therefore, Indonesian language proficiency is not only related to linguistic competence but also closely associated with students' critical thinking abilities and their capacity to communicate ideas effectively in academic contexts (Krismawati, 2024).

In the context of higher education, Indonesian language proficiency encompasses several fundamental skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are essential for supporting various academic activities such as participating in classroom discussions, understanding scientific references, and composing academic papers. Students with strong language skills tend to be more capable of expressing ideas clearly, organizing arguments logically, and actively engaging in the learning process. However, in practice, many students still experience difficulties in using Indonesian appropriately, particularly in academic writing, oral presentation, and the comprehension of scholarly texts (Lakawa, 2024).

One factor that is often associated with students' language proficiency is learning motivation. Learning motivation refers to internal and external drives that encourage individuals to engage actively in learning activities and strive to achieve learning goals. Motivation plays an important role in shaping students' learning behavior, as students with high levels of motivation tend to participate more actively in academic activities, demonstrate persistence in understanding course materials, and make greater efforts to improve their academic competencies (Alfiana, 2024).

In language learning, motivation is considered a crucial factor because language mastery requires continuous practice and active involvement in various language-related activities such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students who possess strong learning motivation are more likely to seek opportunities to develop their language abilities through academic engagement and independent learning. Conversely, students with low learning motivation tend to show limited participation in learning activities, which may hinder the development of their language skills (Liu, 2025).

A similar condition can also be observed among students at the Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Institute in Binjai. The level of Indonesian language proficiency among students still varies considerably. While some students are able to use Indonesian effectively in academic contexts, others encounter difficulties in expressing their ideas both in written and oral forms. These variations indicate that students' Indonesian language proficiency still requires improvement and that certain supporting factors may influence its development. Among these factors, learning motivation is considered one of the most important determinants.

High learning motivation can encourage students to be more engaged in learning activities, demonstrate persistence in understanding academic materials, and develop a stronger desire to improve their competencies. Students with strong motivation are generally more inclined to read academic literature, practice academic writing, and actively use Indonesian in academic settings. Therefore, learning motivation is assumed to have a significant relationship with students' Indonesian language proficiency.

Despite the growing body of research examining factors influencing language proficiency among students, previous studies have primarily focused on instructional methods, learning media, or pedagogical strategies in language teaching. Empirical studies that specifically investigate the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency among university students remain relatively limited. Furthermore, many previous studies tend to examine language skills separately, such as writing or reading skills, rather than investigating Indonesian language proficiency as a comprehensive construct that includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities.

Based on these limitations, this study offers a novel contribution by examining the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency among university students in a more comprehensive manner. This research considers language proficiency not only as

a linguistic competence but also as an outcome influenced by psychological factors, particularly learning motivation. In addition, the present study focuses on students at the Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Institute in Binjai, a higher education institution that has rarely been explored in previous language and education research. By addressing these aspects, the study is expected to provide empirical insights into the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency and contribute to the development of more effective language learning strategies in higher education.

Therefore, the main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency among students at the Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Institute, Binjai. The findings of this research are expected to provide empirical evidence that may support the improvement of Indonesian language learning practices in higher education, particularly in efforts to enhance students' motivation and language competence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research approach employing a correlational design. The correlational method was selected to investigate the relationship between two variables, namely learning motivation as the independent variable (X) and Indonesian language proficiency as the dependent variable (Y). This research design was considered appropriate because the primary objective of the study was to determine the extent to which learning motivation is associated with students' Indonesian language proficiency without manipulating or controlling the variables under investigation (Sugiyono, 2023).

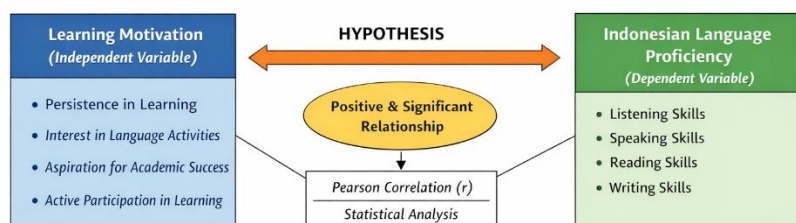


Fig. 1 Diagram Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research illustrates the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency among university students. Learning motivation is regarded as an important psychological factor that may influence students' engagement and success in the learning process. Motivation encourages students to participate actively in learning activities, maintain persistence in completing academic tasks, and strive to achieve better academic outcomes. In this study, learning motivation is represented through several indicators, including persistence in learning, interest in language learning activities, the desire to achieve academic success, and active involvement in classroom learning.

On the other hand, Indonesian language proficiency serves as the dependent variable that reflects students' ability to use the Indonesian language effectively in academic contexts. Language proficiency in this study consists of four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These language skills play a crucial role in academic communication in higher education, enabling students to understand academic sources, communicate ideas clearly, and produce scientific writing that follows appropriate Indonesian language conventions.

Research Location and Time

The research was conducted at the Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Institute located in Binjai, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The study took place during the 2025/2026 academic year, specifically during the period in which students attended the Indonesian language course.

Population and Sample

The population of this research consisted of all students enrolled in Indonesian language courses at the Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Institute, Binjai.

The sampling technique applied in this study was simple random sampling. This technique was chosen to ensure that each member of the population had an equal opportunity to be selected as a participant in the research. A total of 30 students were selected as the sample for this study.

Research Variables

Two main variables were examined in this research, namely:

1. Independent Variable (X)
Learning Motivation
2. Dependent Variable (Y)
Indonesian Language Proficiency

Research Instruments

Two types of instruments were utilized to collect the data required for this study.

Learning Motivation Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to measure the level of students' learning motivation. The instrument consisted of 20 statements evaluated using a five-point Likert scale with the following response options: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1)

The questionnaire items were designed based on several indicators of learning motivation, including: persistence in learning activities, interest in language learning, desire to achieve academic success, active participation in learning processes

Indonesian Language Proficiency Test

Students' Indonesian language proficiency was measured using a language test designed to evaluate four major language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing

These four skills represent essential components of language competence that are commonly used in academic communication within higher education environments.

Data Collection Techniques

The data for this research were collected through several techniques as follows:

1. Questionnaire
The questionnaire was administered to obtain data related to students' learning motivation.
2. Test
A language proficiency test was conducted to assess students' Indonesian language skills.
3. Documentation
Documentation techniques were used to gather additional supporting information related to students and the learning process.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected in this study were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique in order to examine the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency.

The Pearson correlation coefficient is calculated using the following formula:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}} \quad (1)$$

Where:

- r_{xy} = correlation coefficient between variables X and Y
- X = learning motivation score
- Y = Indonesian language proficiency score
- N = number of samples

Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS software. The significance of the correlation was evaluated at a significance level of 0.05. If the significance value (Sig.) obtained from the analysis is lower than 0.05, it indicates that a statistically significant relationship exists between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the general description of students' learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning Motivation	30	70	90	79.80	5.41
Indonesian Language Proficiency	30	72	92	82.13	5.26

The results show that the average score of learning motivation is 79.80, indicating that students generally have a high level of motivation in learning Indonesian. Meanwhile, the average score of Indonesian language proficiency is 82.13, which indicates that students' language ability is categorized as good.

Normality Test

The normality test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine whether the research data were normally distributed.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	Sig.
Learning Motivation	0.978	0.766
Indonesian Language Proficiency	0.966	0.446

The results indicate that the significance values of both variables are greater than 0.05, which means that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, the Pearson correlation analysis can be applied.

Pearson Correlation Test

To determine the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency, a Pearson Product Moment correlation test was conducted.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Results

Variables	Learning Motivation	Indonesian Language Proficiency
Learning Motivation	1	0.621
Indonesian Language Proficiency	0.621	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001

N

30

30

The analysis shows that the correlation coefficient between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency is $r = 0.621$ with a significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$. This indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between the two variables.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

Validity Test of the Learning Motivation Questionnaire

The validity test was conducted to determine whether each questionnaire item was able to measure the learning motivation variable appropriately. The validity test was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment correlation between the item score and the total score. The number of respondents in this study was 30 students, therefore the r -table value at the significance level of 0.05 is 0.361. An item is considered valid if the r -count value is greater than r -table.

Table 4. Validity Test Results of Learning Motivation Questionnaire

Item Number	r-count	r-table	Remark
Item 1	0.62	0.361	Valid
Item 2	0.58	0.361	Valid
Item 3	0.64	0.361	Valid
Item 4	0.60	0.361	Valid
Item 5	0.66	0.361	Valid
...
Item 20	0.65	0.361	Valid

Based on Table, all questionnaire items have r -count values greater than the r -table value (0.361). Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the learning motivation questionnaire are valid and appropriate to be used as research instruments.

Reliability Test of the Instrument

The reliability test was conducted to determine the consistency of the research instrument. Reliability analysis was performed using Cronbach's Alpha through the SPSS program. An instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.70.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.88	20

Based on the reliability test results, the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.88, which is higher than the required threshold of 0.70. Therefore, it can be concluded that the learning motivation questionnaire has a high level of reliability and can be used as a reliable research instrument.

SPSS Item-Total Statistics

Table 3. Item-Total Statistics

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Item 1	0.62	0.872
Item 2	0.58	0.875
Item 3	0.64	0.870
Item 4	0.60	0.873
Item 5	0.66	0.869
Item 6	0.59	0.874

...
Item 20	0.65	0.869

The Corrected Item-Total Correlation values for all items are above 0.30, indicating that each item contributes positively to the overall scale. The Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted values also remain above the acceptable reliability threshold, confirming that the instrument maintains strong internal consistency. The model summary table presents the results of the regression analysis used to determine the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency.

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.621	0.386	0.364	4.18

The Model Summary table shows the statistical relationship between the independent variable (learning motivation) and the dependent variable (Indonesian language proficiency). The R value of 0.621 indicates a moderate positive relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency among students at Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai. The R Square value of 0.386 means that 38.6% of the variance in Indonesian language proficiency can be explained by learning motivation, while the remaining 61.4% is influenced by other variables that were not included in this study. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.364 indicates that after adjusting for the sample size and number of predictors, the model still explains 36.4% of the variation in students' language proficiency. The standard error of the estimate (4.18) represents the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line, indicating the level of accuracy of the prediction model. These findings suggest that learning motivation has a meaningful contribution to students' Indonesian language proficiency, although additional factors may also play an important role in influencing language learning outcomes.

Discussions

The findings of this study demonstrate that students generally exhibit a high level of learning motivation and good Indonesian language proficiency, as reflected in the mean scores of 79.80 and 82.13, respectively. The normality test results confirm that the data are normally distributed, allowing for further parametric analysis. The Pearson correlation analysis reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.621 with a significance value of 0.001, indicating a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency. This suggests that students with higher levels of motivation tend to achieve better language proficiency outcomes. These results are consistent with educational theories which emphasize that motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing students' engagement, persistence, and overall academic performance, particularly in language learning contexts.

Furthermore, the regression analysis strengthens this finding by showing that learning motivation contributes 38.6% to the variance in Indonesian language proficiency, indicating that motivation is a substantial predictor, although not the sole determinant. The remaining 61.4% of the variance may be influenced by other factors such as teaching methods, learning environment, cognitive abilities, and exposure to language use. In addition, the instrument used in this study has been proven to be both valid and reliable, as indicated by all items meeting the validity criteria and a high Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.88. This reinforces the credibility of the findings. Overall, the study highlights the importance of fostering students' learning motivation as a strategic effort to improve Indonesian language proficiency, while also suggesting the need for future research to explore additional variables that may further explain students' language learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the relationship between learning motivation and Indonesian language proficiency among students at the Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Institute, Binjai. The findings reveal that students generally possess high learning motivation and good Indonesian language proficiency. The Pearson correlation analysis indicates a positive and significant relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.621$; $p < 0.05$), confirming that higher learning motivation is associated with better language proficiency. Furthermore, regression analysis shows that learning motivation contributes 38.6% to the variance in Indonesian language proficiency, indicating its meaningful role as a predictor. The primary contribution of this study lies in providing empirical evidence, within the context of higher education at a regional Indonesian institution, that learning motivation serves as a significant determinant of students' Indonesian language proficiency. These findings reinforce the importance of integrating motivational strategies into language learning practices. Practically, lecturers and institutions are encouraged to design engaging and student-centered learning environments that foster motivation and active language use. However, since a substantial proportion of variance remains unexplained, future research should incorporate additional variables and larger samples to develop a more comprehensive model of Indonesian language learning outcomes.

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