

EXPLORING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD ENGLISH LEARNING: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY IN AVIATION SCHOOL

Siti Nurhariza Munawaroh¹, Kurniasih², M. Faruq Ubaidillah³

^{1,2,3} *English Education Department, Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia*

Email: ¹ 22101073033@unisma.ac.id

Abstrak

English is very important in the aviation sector for technical communication, and students at aviation schools need to understand the appropriate aspects of English. However, research on students' motivation and attitudes toward learning English is still limited. This study examines students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English in an aviation school. The 11th-grade students, including 104 from two majors: airframe and power plant (AFP) and electric avionics (EA), with 75 male and 29 female, from 5 classes of 3 AFP classes and 2 EA classes. This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational design, and used purposive sampling techniques by selecting students who had been learning aviation English for one year, specifically they who had been taking the course since the second semester of their first year of school. Results showed moderate overall motivation and high individual motivation. Students also had positive attitudes towards learning English in aviation. The correlation between motivation and attitudes was strong. The findings suggest that curriculum design should be more relevant to the aviation industry, and teachers should design contextualized learning strategies to enhance English proficiency.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, motivation, attitudes, aviation field.

INTRODUCTION

English learning plays an important role in the era of globalization, especially in higher education. English is not only needed in English majors, but students in non-English fields to help them understand technical terms or material relevant to their respective disciplines. Arianti (2017) stated that learning English in a non-English field aims to develop language skills suited to the academic and professional needs of students. English learning in specific fields can be referred to as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). According to Woodrow (2017), ESP is a design method that teaches students in a class with the same goal to learn English in a specific field, which focuses on needs that align with the students' objectives. ESP learning begins with a needs analysis to design materials and teaching methods appropriate to a specific professional context, such as business, engineering, and aviation (Kitkauskienė, 2006). Syakur et al. (2022) explained that needs can be expressed in learning objectives and goals that guide learning materials, test development, teaching activities, and other evaluation strategies. One of the classifications of ESP is English aviation. Aviation English is specifically designed to meet the communication needs of the aviation industry, which places a strong emphasis on clarity, precision, and avoiding ambiguity. The proper use of English is critical as it pertains to aviation safety.

ICAO (2010) showed that aviation English helps improve operational efficiency and reduce misunderstanding in a multilingual international work environment. Students' motivation and attitude are also important factors in the success of learning English. Kashefian-Naeeni and Aminlari (2018) stated that attitude and motivation are determining factors in language learning success. Kurniasih et al. (2022) reveal that students with positive attitudes and high levels of motivation will succeed in learning their target language. Previous study from Rochmawati et al. (2023), found that anxiety, self-efficacy, and motivation among aviation students are high, where their optimism and pessimism about learning increase simultaneously because they are highly motivated, anxious, and independent, as well as their ability to understand aviation English. However, there is a gap in previous research to reveal the relationship between students' attitudes and motivation that can contribute to their English language learning. Therefore, this study focuses on students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English and the relationship between motivation and attitude variables in aviation.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach by using a correlational design. This method is used to provide general findings while providing more comprehensive findings. This study involved distributing questionnaires to 104 students regarding students' motivation and attitudes towards English learning in aviation schools. This study used longitudinal data, which is used to evaluate and analyze factors in a group or an individual.

Participants

The participants of this study were 11th-grade students from the aviation vocational school in Malang. With a total of 104 participants from two aviation school majors: Airframe and Power Plant (AFP) and Electric Avionics (EA), with 75 males and 29 females. This study used a purposive sampling technique by selecting students who have been studying aviation English for one year, especially those who have taken courses since the second semester of their first year of school.

Data Sources

The research instrument is a questionnaire, adapted from 1) Martinović and Poljaković (2010), 2) Dja'far et al. (2016), and 3) Irudayasamy et al. (2020). Furthermore, the researcher modified the statement based on the article above and produced 31 questionnaire items that were in accordance with the needs of the research. The researcher conducted expert validation related to the questionnaire statements, which resulted in 29 statements. 2 statements were discarded because they were not suitable. To ensure that the instrument to be used was understandable and accurate, the researchers tested it on 24 students who had graduated from the aviation polytechnic, which resulted in 25 statements because 4 statements were invalid.

Data Collection

The data collection of this study was distributed in an offline questionnaire to students at the aviation vocational school. The researcher carried out data collection by adjusting the schedule given by one of the English teachers at the aviation school. The researcher asked for permission to enter each class by providing directions related to filling out the questionnaire. The researcher asked the teacher to share the link to Google Forms through WhatsApp groups.

Data Analysis

The data analysis used descriptive statistics to identify the motivational characteristics and attitudes of students related to learning English in aviation schools. To investigate the correlation between students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English in aviation school, this study used Pearson correlation. The researcher used SPSS version 2.0 as a tool to analyze the data.

FINDINGS

The results of the questionnaire showed that students had moderate motivation in general, and their individual motivation was high, with extrinsic and intrinsic factors, where extrinsic factors were slightly higher than intrinsic. Students also have a positive attitude towards learning English at aviation schools. In addition, in data analysis, the two variables have an important correlation with each other, which shows a positive and very high correlation.

TABLE 1. The Result of Descriptive Statistics between Motivation and Attitudes toward English Learning

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	104	1.36	3.93	2.97	.436
Attitudes	104	1.27	4.00	3.15	.489
Valid N (listwise)	104				

Based on the result of Table 1 above the minimum score of students' motivation is 1.36, the maximum score is 3.93, the mean score is 2.97, and the standard deviation is 0.436. Then, the minimum score of students' attitudes is 1.27, the maximum score is 4.00, the mean score is 3.15, and the standard deviation is 0.48 with 104 participants. The results show that motivation with a score of 2.97 and attitudes in 3.16, which means that overall motivation level is in the moderate motivation category and the attitude is in the positive category. After collecting the general mean score, the researcher calculated each participant's mean score to find out the individual motivation category. This process was carried out by dividing the total motivation score of each participant depending on the number of statement items.

The Profiles of Students' Motivation

TABLE 2. The Profiles of Students' Motivation

	N	Mean	Percentage
High	53	3.28	50.96%
Moderate	48	2.72	46.15%
Low	3	1.52	2.88%

Based on Table 2 above, it can be concluded that 50.96% (53) of students have a high motivation category with a mean score is 3.28, 46.15% (48) of students have a moderate category and the mean score is 2.72, and 2.88% (3) of students have a low category by 1.52 mean score. In this instance, the profiles of students' motivation in learning English at the aviation school are high based on intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The mean intrinsic motivation score is 2.89, while the total mean score of extrinsic motivation is 3.05. In summary, the factor of motivation in this study was from extrinsic and intrinsic factors, although the extrinsic factors are slightly higher than the intrinsic, such as the facilities of the school to practice aviation English, which students can

understand and improve an aspect of their English. After obtaining the result of the motivation category, the researcher calculated the attitude variables like the first variable.

The Profiles of Students' Attitudes

TABLE 3. The Profiles of Students' Attitudes

	N	Mean	Percentage
Very Negative	3	1.52	2.88%
Negative	1	1.91	0.96%
Positive	60	2.95	57.69%
Very Positive	40	3.62	38.46%

The result of Table 3 above shows that there are 2.88% (3) participants who have a very negative attitude with the mean score is 1.52, 0.96% (1) participant who has a negative attitude by the mean score is 1.91, 57.69% (60) participants who have a positive attitude and the mean score is 2.95, and 38.46% (40) participants who have a very positive attitude show that the mean score is 3.62 toward learning English in aviation school, and the factor is a vocabulary useful for them to practice an aviation English and communicate with their instructors. In conclusion, most students indicate a positive attitude profile toward learning English in the aviation field. The next analysis is about the correlation between the variables.

The Correlation between Students' Motivation and Attitudes

TABLE 4. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation

Correlations		Motivation	Attitudes
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.903**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	104	104
Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.903**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	104	104

The results of Table 4 correlation above show that the significance showed that $0.000 < 0.05$, which shows that there is a significant relationship between the two variables, as shown by the statistical analysis above. The coefficient value is 0.903, which means that there is a positive correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, the number of participants is shown by N. Symbol $N = 104$, which means that there are 104 students taking part in this study. In summary, motivation and attitudes are significantly positively correlated, the more motivated students have positive attitudes toward learning English at aviation school. Accordingly, the study's alternative hypothesis (H_a), which states that there is a significant correlation between motivation and attitudes toward learning English in aviation school, is accepted, while the null hypothesis is disproved.

DISCUSSION

The study showed that students' motivation to learn English in the school environment as a whole fell into the moderate category, while individual responses showed that most students fell into high levels of motivation. This difference occurs because the total average (overall) affects all respondents' data and can be influenced by some students who have low scores, thus lowering the total average. Instead, the calculation per individual looks at the average score of each student first, so it better reflects the state of high motivation in each student. This shows that although students are not particularly motivated to learn English in a classroom setting, they are generally highly motivated to do so in person.

It also shows that intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence student motivation, with extrinsic factors being slightly more dominant. Examples of such factors include the need to participate in school activities related to future career needs and the presence of silent practice in English (Ayu & Prastyo, 2023; Rochmawati et al., 2023). This illustrates how students understand the importance of English as a basic language for the work environment in the field.

In addition, students' attitudes towards English teaching in general are also positive. We view this course as something useful and relevant to improve technical and professional communication skills in this field. This positive conclusion is based on the findings of studies Damayanti et al. (2019) and Martinović and Poljaković (2010), which showed that students have a good view of English language learning because it subtly contributes to their own development.

Therefore, the results of the correlation test using Pearson product-moment correlation show that there is a strong and positive relationship between student motivation and attitudes towards English learning. It can be said that students who have high motivation also have a positive attitude during the learning process. This is supported by Mustafa et al. (2015) and Ming et al. (2011), showed that a high correlation between these two variables can improve student learning success. However, this is different from Pratheesha and Vijayanka (2025) and Harmanto et al. (2023), stated that the correlation between motivation and attitude was only found in the moderate category and was influenced by other factors such as the learning environment and the learning background of the students.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of students' motivations and attitudes towards English language learning in flight schools. Flight school students have moderate motivation on the contrary, their individual motivation is high in learning English in their field. The factors that influence such motivation are such as extrinsic and intrinsic factors, with extrinsic factors slightly higher than intrinsic factors. One of the most extrinsic factors is that training facilities, such as hangars to help students improve their technical vocabulary and apply it in their field. so that with this motivation, students' attitudes towards learning English in the field of aviation show positive. In addition, the correlation between students' motivation and attitudes in learning English in flight school was positive and very strong.

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