

The Relationship Between Language Learning Aptitude Beliefs and English Achievement in Students of SMA Advent Unklab Airmadidi Manado

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Abstract—This research aimed to determine the level of students' aptitude beliefs and English achievement in learning. The research also examined the correlation between language learning aptitude beliefs and students' English achievement. A quantitative design was adopted, and Horwitz's (1987) questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The population comprises 86 Grade XI students from a private school in Airmadidi, North Sulawesi, all in Grade XI. The result showed that students' aptitude beliefs were high and English achievement was reasonable. Furthermore, there was no correlation between language learning aptitude beliefs and students' English achievement.

Index Terms—aptitude beliefs, students' achievement, language learning, self-management

I. INTRODUCTION

English is widely spoken globally as a first, second, or foreign language, making it one of the most commonly used worldwide (Ilyosovna, 2020; Mardiana et al., 2023). The English language is common, enabling individuals to adopt the language to obtain an international personality (Reddy, 2016; Anggrawan et al., 2019). Many individuals research languages for various purposes, such as facilitating international travel, securing employment opportunities, and making friends from foreign countries. According to previous studies, language is a communication tool that attributes internal motives, intentions, objectives, and life plans (Kuswanty et al., 2023; Kaharuddin et al., 2024). Due to its importance, English has also gained popularity worldwide, including in Indonesia. However, in learning English, students often need help with several obstacles, such as the inability to use proper pronunciation, vocabulary selection, and good grammar (Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019). These obstacles are commonly caused by several factors, such as intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation, attitudes, learning preferences, beliefs, and age (Arafah et al., 2020; Kaharuddin et al., 2021; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023b). Therefore, learning English is essential for achieving mastery in today's globalized world (Arafah et al., 2024).

Previous studies show that students' beliefs about language learning can majorly impact achievement in class. Moreover, in acquiring a foreign language, the influence of each belief is significantly significant because of the ability

to change the learning direction (Iswati, 2019; Kaharuddin et al., 2023). Different language learners are universally believed to have several methods of learning language (Hasyim et al., 2023). Therefore, in language learning, beliefs are seen as an individual variable different from abilities and trait-like tendencies (Ellis, 2008; Baa et al., 2023). Beliefs affect motivation, attitude, achievement, proficiency, anxiety, success, behaviour, and learning strategy used for learning language (Hasjim et al., 2020). Any anxiety or problems frequently growing when learning a language can automatically be overcome when students have advanced beliefs (Mokoginta & Arafah, 2022; Arnawa & Arafah, 2023). Beliefs significantly influence an individual's success in learning a language different from their mother tongue (Yulianti et al., 2022; Yudith et al., 2023).

An essential component of language beliefs is language learning aptitude. In this context, language learning aptitude is the ability that enables some learners to acquire new language material more quickly and with greater ease than others (Dörnyei, 2014; Asri et al., 2023). Aptitude reflects a prediction for proficiency and a potential acquisition rate by older learners. The assurance of this prediction under optimal conditions depends on the quality of instruction, opportunity, and motivation (Carol, 1981; Asriyanti et al., 2022).

Achievement is the tangible outcome of an individual's dedicated and concerted efforts (Iksora et al., 2022; Arafah et al., 2023c). Achievements can be categorized into two kinds, namely success and failure (Arifin et al., 2022; Halil et al., 2024). When students succeed, consistent motivation in learning increases (Arafah et al., 2021). As a foreign language, English can be challenging to learn due to its unique pronunciation, but this difficulty does not necessarily hinder the learner's ability to become proficient in speaking English (Arafah et al., 2020; Arafah & Hasyim, 2023a). Success in learning and mastering language depends on students' dedication, consistent practice, and commitment. The result will only be satisfactory when activities are carried out with seriousness and discipline (Kaharuddin et al., 2022; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023a). Learning achievement in a subject matter is influenced by factors from both students and the environment, and a positive self-concept can generate the correct energy within an individual (Hasyim et al., 2020; Fadillah et al., 2022). According to previous studies, students must be able to change their ways of learning and mindsets to achieve better outcomes (Dewi & Rakhmawati, 2021; Arafah et al., 2023c). Therefore, this research examined the correlation between students' beliefs and English achievement. The study also determined the level of students' learning aptitude beliefs and English achievement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Language Learning Beliefs*

Beliefs are an individual's opinions while learning the language (Sunardi et al., 2018; Suhadi et al., 2022). Horwitz (1987) defined beliefs as an individual's opinion about language learning. According to Nikitina and Furuoka (2006), language learning beliefs are context-specific, showing different perspectives from cultures. Horwitz (1987) stated that language learners' beliefs are only sometimes obvious or well-considered. Consequently, each learner has a unique learning philosophy or beliefs concerning the nature and acquisition of language (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Sunyoto et al., 2022). According to Saminy and Lee (1997), students with higher grades had greater confidence in learning foreign languages and were more eager to practice with native speakers.

Based on these perceptions, beliefs about language learning cannot be separated from the actual learning process (Kaharuddin, 2022; Manugeren et al., 2023). Furthermore, learners' actions may be positive or negative depending on the perception and understanding of learning a language. Research has proposed several definitions of beliefs regarding language acquisition to discern students' preconceptions or ideas about various aspects of language learning. Belief aspects are then believed to be brought into the language learning process (Banya & Cheng, 1997; Arafah & Hasyim, 2019).

Tognimi (2000) defined beliefs as personal theories, presumptions, or general philosophies based on or evolved from past experiences. Beliefs are also the entirety of language learners' beliefs and understanding regarding their language acquisition process (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b). Considering these definitions, it can be deduced that these beliefs are connected to students' presumptions, ideas, opinions, thinking, understanding, philosophy, and ideology (Mutmainnah et al., 2022; Arafah et al., 2023b). Horwitz (1987) grouped beliefs into five categories: foreign language aptitude, learning difficulty, nature, strategies, motivations, and expectations. In this research, only one category was used: foreign language aptitude.

B. *Foreign Language Aptitude*

The prevailing beliefs suggest that specific individuals exhibit a distinct potential for mastering a foreign language, with this linguistic talent closely related to the capacity to learn the language (Takwa et al., 2022a). Horwitz (1987) defined language aptitude as the psychological formulation behind the institution that specific individuals have a gift for additional language learning while others seem to struggle. In other words, individuals may have different ideas or perceptions in some situations. For instance, age and gender differences can affect an individual's language learning (Takwa et al., 2022b; Usman et al., 2024). Viburphol (2004) stated that foreign language aptitude was discussed in a few research, such as Horwitz (1987). The research found that foreign language aptitude adversely affected learners' language learning. Furthermore, some individuals may question their language learning capabilities, assuming that learning a foreign language is an innate ability that cannot be improved (Siwi et al., 2022; Yudith et al., 2004).

According to Horwitz (1987), learning aptitude beliefs can be observed in various ways, namely:

- (1) Children are perceived to have an easier time learning a foreign language than adults.
- (2) Certain language is thought to be easier to learn.
- (3) Guessing is acceptable when encountering unfamiliar words in a foreign language.
- (4) There are beliefs that women excel over men in foreign language acquisition.
- (5) Some individuals have a unique, innate ability that helps in learning a foreign language.
- (6) Those who already speak a foreign language are considered to have an advantage in learning another one.
- (7) Learning a foreign language in its native country is seen as preferable for optimal results.
- (8) There is confidence in memorizing new English vocabulary quickly.
- (9) Confidence exists in the ability to grasp English grammar quickly.
- (10) Rapid English speaking proficiency development is likely achievable.
- (11) Effortless comprehension of English words when listening is perceived as possible.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Design

This research used a quantitative and qualitative approach, which was carried out by collecting numerical data and then analyzing them using specific statistical methods to answer the questions in this study, as suggested in Apuke (2017). The numerical data are then interpreted and described to give meaning and provide more in-depth information (Abidin & Kaharuddin, 2021). For this reason, this study adopted descriptive and correlational methods. Atmowardoyo (2018) defined the descriptive method as a research method that describes current phenomena accurately. A descriptive method was used to determine the level of English language learning beliefs and achievement. Furthermore, the statistical correlation method was used to determine the relationship between students' interest and speaking skills in learning English. A correlational research design aimed at determining the relationship between two variables (Afiah et al., 2022).

B. Research Subject, Period, and Location

The respondents of this research were 136 students from SMA Advent Unklab Airmadidi enrolled in the 2022/2023 academic year. These respondents are considered teenagers, and Youth Access (2017) stated that 16 and 17 years old are the ages to transition into adulthood. Therefore, students of XI IPA and IPS classes were chosen because they are in the transition period between teenagers and adults. Hurlock (1990) grouped teenagers into two, namely ages 11 - 16 and 16 to 18 years, referred to as "early" and the end" categories of teenager age, respectively. The XI IPA and IPS students belong to the category of 'the end of teenager age'.

The respondents were categorized into four groups, designated as IPA for science classes and IPS for social classes: XI IPA 1, comprising 30 students; XI IPA 2, comprising 30 students; XI IPA 3, comprising 28 students; XI IPA 4, comprising 30 students; and XI IPS, comprising 18 students. XI IPA 4 was excluded as it had been used for the preliminary research conducted on March 20, 2023.

A large number of respondents is better in this research because, according to Delice (2010), the respondents should be more than 50 people. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) stated that statistical error would be negligible with an extensive total of samples.

C. Data Collection Method

This research used convenience sampling, which Etikan et al. (2016) state is Haphazard Sampling or Accidental. In this type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling, members of the target population are included when they satisfy specific practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographic proximity, availability at a specific time, and willingness to participate (Arafah et al., 2023a; Takwa et al., 2024). In addition, available students filled out the administered questionnaire. According to Ary et al. (2010), convenience sampling is the selection of a sample based on accessibility, availability, timing, or location. In addition, the sampling method was adopted because it facilitated data collection.

D. Research Instrument

The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire to determine students' language learning aptitude. Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) questionnaire was adapted from Horwitz (1987). The instrument was translated into Indonesian and validated by three English lecturers.

BALLI contains 34 items to assess language learning beliefs, but only nine about foreign language aptitude were adopted based on the research title. The research added five items related to the theory, resulting in 14. After the pilot research was conducted, there were invalid items, which included 2, 6, 9, and 12. Ten items divided into two parts were used for the actual research. The first part is the question that did not need scale to measure, which was item number 1. The second part is the question that used Likert-Scale to measure items number 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. This questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, namely Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Undecided (3), Disagree (4), and Strongly Disagree (5).

E. Interpretation of the Data

The data were analyzed using statistical tools, such as the mean score, to determine the correlation between Language Learning Beliefs and students' English achievement. The interpretation of the data was based on the Likert Scale (Joshi et al., 2015) as follows:

1. Language learning aptitude beliefs
4.50 – 5.00 Very High
3.50 – 4.49 High
2.50 – 3.49 Medium
1.01– 2.49 Low
1.00– 1.49 Very Low
2. The grading system of Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Permendikbud) Tahun 2013 No.81A was used to determine students' English achievement as follows:

TABLE 1
GRADING SYSTEM

Grade	Value Allocation	Verbal Interpretation
A	91.60 – 100.00	Excellent
A-	83.26 – 91.50	Very Good
B+	75.10 – 83.25	Good
B	66.51 -75.00	Good
B-	58.26 – 66.50	Average
C+	50.10 – 58.25	Average
C	41.60 – 50.00	Passed
C-	33.26 – 41.50	Failed
D+	25.10 – 33.25	Failed
D	0 – 25.00	Failed

This research used .05 as the standard of significance level. McLeod (2019) reported that a p-value lower than .05 implies a statistically significant result. A positive correlation is when both variables move in the same direction, while a negative correlation is movement in the opposite direction (Nickolas, 2020).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Question Number 1

What is the level of students' English language learning aptitude beliefs?

The result of research question number 1 was taken from the average value obtained using the Microsoft Excel application. The result showed that the mean score of students' aptitude beliefs was 3.57 (Table 2). Based on the interpretation of the Likert scale, aptitude beliefs in Grade 11 SMA Advent Unklab were **high**. Students have a high ability to learn English.

TABLE 2
MEAN SCORE OF APTITUDE

Total Average
3.57

B. Research Question Number 2

What is the level of students' English achievement?

The second question was used to determine the level of students' English achievement using the mean score.

TABLE 3
MEAN SCORE OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
English Achievement Mid	86	51	100	79.6	9.699
Valid N (listwise)	86				

The result showed that the mean score of students' English achievement was 79.6. Based on the interpretation scale (See Chapter 3), it was categorized as a **good** level with B+ as the achievement score. This was because the mean score was more significant than or equal to 70% based on Minister of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) 2013 No.81A.

C. Research Question Number 3

Correlation between Students' Language Learning Aptitude Beliefs and Students' English Achievement?

The third research question examined the correlation between learning aptitude beliefs and English achievement. The analysis results based on this third research question are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
CORRELATION BETWEEN APTITUDE BELIEFS AND ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT

		Mid Test	Aptitude Beliefs
Mid Test	Pearson Correlation	1	.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.477
	N	86	86
Aptitude Beliefs	Pearson Correlation	.078	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.477	
	N	86	86

Table 4 shows a significance level of 0.477 between learning aptitude beliefs and English achievement. Since $p = .477$, which is greater than .05, the result showed no significant correlation between learning beliefs and English achievement. In other words, the alternative hypothesis was rejected, and the null hypothesis was accepted. This result is inconsistent with the report of Ray, Garavalia, and Murdock (2003), which found a weak correlation between aptitude and achievement.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, students in grade XI at SMA Advent Unklab Airmadidi had good self-management while learning English, suggesting high aptitude beliefs. This showed that students paid attention in English learning class. These factors helped students achieve a good level of English proficiency. Another result showed that aptitude beliefs had no significant effect on English achievement.

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