The correlation between students' background knowledge and their speaking ability at SMA Negeri 1 Parigi

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the correlation between students' background knowledge and their speaking ability. The research design was quantitative ex post facto research. The research was conducted at SMAN 1 Parigi in the 2029/2020 academic year. The sample was 32 students. The data collection was carried out by giving several tests to students, namely a test of previous knowledge on a predetermined topic, and continued with a speaking test in front of the class, with a total of forty-eight questions for a previous knowledge test and nine questions for a speaking ability test. The data was analyzed by using SPSS version 16.0 (descriptive analysis and inferential statistics). Descriptive analysis was used to describe the maximum score, minimum score, average score, and standard deviation, while inferential statistics were used to test the hypothesis. The results of this research showed that there was a relationship between prior knowledge of a topic and students' speaking ability. In order to prove this hypothesis, the researcher drew conclusions by comparing the Sig (2-tailed) value with the α significance value, which showed that the Sig (2-tailed) value was 0,000, while the α significance value was 0.05. Therefore, it could be concluded that the Sig value (2-tailed) was lower than the significance value α (0.000 <0.05). In other words, the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted, indicating a significant correlation between students' background knowledge and their speaking ability.

Keywords:
background knowledge, speaking ability

1. Introduction

Speaking is a key for us to communicate as an interactive process of developing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing messages or information. Speaking is an oral communication that maintains a social relationship with others (Setyawati et al., 2023). Through speaking, students can communicate, exchange ideas, and convey their thoughts and express their attitudes. For instance, teaching and learning process in the classroom, teachers and students will speak each other to make them understand, create interaction, and understand about the lesson.

Speaking is a form of communication that humans use to express their feelings or ideas to each other orally. According to Harmer (2001), humans have a specific reason to speak such as to say something, to complain about the wrong

thing, or to get feedback from others after delivering a message orally. In communication, the first thing occurring in our thoughts is about the speaker and listener. In addition, Taufik et al. (2022) mentioned that speaking is like an impulsive action when speakers develop ideas on what they are visualizing and hearing, the speaking activities continue unplanned as speakers shares their ideas as both recipient and speaker. Speaking requires the speaker to communicate as the sender of information or speaker and the receiver of the information or the listener based on the given topic or question. In speaking, of course, it cannot be separated from a listening assessment. Brown (2004) stated that speaking is an effective skill that can be observed empirically and without delay. So, speaking is a tool for communicating with other people.

Shabani (2013) stated that speaking is a fundamental and yet demanding skill that should be mastered by students of English as a foreign language (EFL). Chastain in Shabani (2013) added that speaking a language involves more than simply knowing the linguistic components of the message and developing language skills that require more than grammatical comprehension and vocabulary memorization. It means that teachers and students come to language classes with conscious or subconscious attitudes, expectations, interests, and needs.

Yulis et al. (2016) also stated that speaking is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language, including in learning English. Nunan in Asmawati et al. (2023) added that speaking becomes the most significant skill to be learned by the students because this skill is grouped as productive skill. The aim of speaking is to make people communicate with others in their daily activities. It means that students are expected to be able to produce some languages that they learn by speaking. This is related to what they know before speaking because their background knowledge about the familiar topic when speaking is very important. Therefore, speaking is needed to be practiced, there is no way for students to learn English without practice and they will be fluency in speaking if they have background knowledge.

Background knowledge is one of the most critical components of helping English language learners (ELLs) to success academically. To learn more about the role of background knowledge. According to Gebhard in Shabani (2013) background knowledge is related to our real-world experiences and expectations that we have in our daily activity. Schmidt-Rinehart in Shabani (2013) also concluded that background knowledge in the form of topic familiarity emerges as a powerful factor in facilitating speaking, reading, and listening comprehension. Background knowledge is one aspect that can not be separated when students read text, especially in descriptive text, students need background knowledge and experience to develop or recognize the text (Robert J. Marzano, 2004). Therefore, background knowledge plays an important role for students in improving their speaking ability in the classroom.

Shabani (2013) also found that background knowledge has a significant effect on speaking ability. Providing the students with background knowledge as well as systemic knowledge provides students with the necessary information to facilitate speaking on a previously unfamiliar topic. Background knowledge facilitates learning whereas lack of background knowledge impedes comprehension (Huang et

al., 2015). This study implies that topic familiarity is an important aspect in improving speaking about that topic. The background knowledge that students bring with them helps them to perform the speaking task more successfully.

In applying the correlation between students' background knowledge and their speaking ability, the researcher has determined the school and class that are the subjects in this study. The researcher chose SMA Negeri 1 Parigi as the subject because the researcher has observed class XII in the learning process of English subject by doing pre-observation. Based on the result of this pre-observation, the researcher decided to choose XII IPA 2 as the subject or sample. In this class, the researcher found that students with good skill of speaking can do well when the teacher gives a certain topic to be presented in front of the class. But, some of them still cannot speak well because they were lack of idea about the topic that presented by their teacher. This was because their background knowledge about the topic was poor.

2. Methods

The research design was quantitative ex post facto research, which focused on the study of cause-and-effect relationships based on observing effects and searching for causes through data collection. The research was conducted at SMAN 1 Parigi in the 2029/2020 academic year. The sample was 32 students. The data collection was carried out by giving several tests to students, namely a test of previous knowledge on a predetermined topic, and continued with a speaking test in front of the class, with a total of 48 questions for a previous knowledge test and 9 questions for a speaking ability test.

The data was analyzed by using SPSS version 16.0 (descriptive analysis and inferential statistics). Descriptive analysis was used to describe the maximum score, minimum score, average score and standard deviation, while inferential statistics were used to test the hypothesis.

3. Results
3.1. Background Knowledge Test

To find out the descriptive statistics of students' background knowledge, the researcher analyzes the data using SPSS version 16. As for the rough picture of the result, the table of descriptive statistics of the students' scores is presented below.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of background knowledge test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Background	32	50	81	65.00	7.294
Valid N (listwise)	32				

Based on the table above, the minimum score in the test of background knowledge is 50, maximum score is 81, mean score is 65, and standard deviation is 7.294. It means that the students' background knowledge about the topic is about 65 on average and it is at the high level of Suhuri's score classification (2015). By stating the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of the scores, students have effectively communicated the distribution of background knowledge among the

students. Additionally, linking the average score to classification adds context and allows readers to understand the significance of the average score.

3.2. Speaking Test

After analyzing the result of students' background knowledge, the researcher analyzes the students' speaking scores by looking the descriptive statistics. The table below provides a descriptive statistic of the students' scores.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of speaking test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking	32	60	85	73.98	6.328
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The table above shows that the minimum score on the speaking test is 60, maximum score is 85, mean score is 73.98, and standard deviation is 6.238. It means that the students' speaking test about the topic is 73.98 on average and it is at a high level. In the background knowledge test, 6 topics have been provided by the researcher, when the students do the speaking test, the researcher allows the students to choose one topic from the 6 topics, namely the President of Indonesia, the Prophet Muhammad, SMAN Parigi, Mutiara Beach, Butterfly and Gorilla. The researcher lets students choose one of the topics to be used as a speaking test. Then, students are given the option to choose a topic to be presented in front of the class. After all the students finished speaking, the researcher again asks the first student to speak again to choose the topic he wants to talk about in front of the class again until the 6 topics are finished.

3.3. Data Assumptions Analysis

This research uses simple and multiple regression analysis to analyze the data. These analyses are a kind of nonparametric statistic analysis. In conducting a nonparametric analysis, however, several classical assumptions should be fulfilled. As for this research, the assumptions are normality of the data, linearity, and multicollinearity.

a) *Normality Test*

The results of the normality test are needed in order to make sure whether a test has distribution or not. In this study, the normality is tested by using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and it is calculated by using computation SPSS 16. The result is provided in the table below.

Table 3. The result of the Normality Test of the Variables Using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		32
Normal Parameters[a]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.54588666
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.073
	Positive	.073
	Negative	-.054
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.416
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.995
a. Test distribution is Normal.		

Based on the SPSS output table above, it is known that the significant value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.995 is greater than 0.05. Then, according to the basis of decision-making in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, assumptions or normality requirements in the regression model have been fulfilled.

b) *Linearity Test*

Another assumption of regression analysis is the linearity test of the variables. The linearity test is supposed to confirm the independent variables are linear to the dependent variable. This test is used to find out whether there is a relationship between students' background knowledge and their speaking ability.

Table 4. The result of the linearity test

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Speaking * Background	Between Groups	(Combined)	935.326	12	79.854	4.841	.001
		Linearity	600.625	1	600.625	37.304	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	334.701	11	30.427	1.890	.108
	Within Groups		305.917	19	16.101		
	Total		1241.242	31			

Based on the table above, it is obtained the value of Deviation from Linearity (sig. value) is 0.108 which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant linear relationship between the background knowledge variable and students' speaking ability variable.

c) *The Correlation Testing*

Person correlation in SPSS 16 is used to measure the correlation between students' background knowledge and their speaking ability. The alpha level is placed at 0.05 (two-tailed). Therefore, the result of the correlation coefficient between the variables can be seen in the following table:

Table 5. The calculation of coefficient correlation

		Background	Speaking
Background	Pearson Correlation	1	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	32	32
Speaking	Pearson Correlation	.667**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	32	32

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table above, the Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.000, because of Sig. (2-tailed) value 0.000<0.05. It means that there is any significant correlation between students' background knowledge and their speaking ability.

3.4. Hypothesis Testing

According to Sarwono (2006), the hypothesis testing for correlation study includes the $p<0.05$, H_0 is rejected; H_1 is accepted, and the $p>0.05$, H_0 is accepted; H_1 is rejected

Table 6. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Sig.	Sign	*A*	Explanation
X	0.000	<	0.05	H_1 is accepted

Based on the table above, H_1 is accepted, which means that there is a significant correlation between variables. Therefore, the students' background knowledge has a significant correlation with their speaking ability.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to find out whether there was no correlation between students' background knowledge and their speaking ability in SMA Negeri 1 Parigi. In learning English as a foreign language, it is very important to always practice our speaking skills because through speaking, we will be helped in the memorizing process about the topic. In making the memorizing and fluently in speaking, students' background knowledge about the topic is also an important one. This can help students to speak well by knowing the condition and topic that they are talking about.

In this study, the researcher has conducted the data collecting. The data were collected by using two tests. The first test was a background knowledge test, the researcher used a multiple-choice test format with four choices in order to elicit students' previous knowledge about the topic. The test was intended to discern the students who have background knowledge about the topic. Background knowledge test used in this study consisting of 48 questions related to the topic of the texts. The researcher used Bahasa Indonesia translation in order to avoid English vocabulary knowledge interference in testing background knowledge. The second test was the speaking test. The students were tested orally to know their insight about the

knowledge they have based on the topic given. The test was given by the researcher based on the students' background knowledge and it is based on their guidebook at school. The test is an oral test that systematically done by guidance rubric of speaking according to Heaton as cited in Rusdi (2015).

Speaking is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language, including in learning English (Yulis et al., 2016). Speaking aims to make people can communicate with others in their daily activities. It means that students are expected to be able to produce some languages that they learn by speaking. Then, Cameron (2001: 40) says that speaking is the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them (Cameron, 2001). On the other hand, students need to be able to express their idea, opinion, and their felling orally. This is related to what they know before speaking because their background knowledge about the familiar topic when speaking is very important. Therefore, speaking is needed to be practiced, there is no way for students to learn English without practice and they will be fluency in speaking if they have background knowledge or are familiar with the topic.

Schmidt-Rinehart in Shabani (2013) also concluded that background knowledge in the form of topic familiarity emerges as a powerful factor in facilitating speaking, reading and listening comprehension. Background knowledge is more than a crucial factor that helps students build their understanding of a material (Wijaya, 2014). Therefore, background knowledge plays an important role for students in improving their speaking ability in the classroom.

This research has been done on 32 students at XI IPA 2, Senior High School 1 Parigi. The result of calculating the correlation between student's background knowledge and their speaking ability was r=0.696 and the value of sig.0.000 indicated that there was a significant and positive correlation between student's background knowledge and their speaking ability. This is in line with a study conducted by Setiyadi (2020) who found that L2 students need to understand not only speaking and writing accurately, but also mastering the topic of discussion in order to accurately interpret what they hear and interact effectively with members of the target culture.

In general, background knowledge can be built into two ways, through direct experiences or indirect experiences (Marzano et al., 2003). By having background knowledge, students can mastery the topic of material so that when they talk about this, they can tell correctly and in detail. Teachers can activate students' background knowledge in several ways (Fisher & Frey, 2009). As an instructional leader, part of your role in observing instruction is to determine whether students' background knowledge was activated. In other words, it's not enough to look for instructional techniques, classroom management procedures, grade-level content, and background knowledge development. Putting all of this to use requires attention to how background knowledge is activated during a lesson.

Therefore, this study found that there is a significant and positive correlation between students' background knowledge and they speaking ability. The result of this study is supported by Shabani (2013) who found that background knowledge has a significant effect on speaking ability in which providing the learners with background knowledge as well as systemic knowledge provides learners with the

necessary information to facilitate speaking on a previously unfamiliar topic. It means that when students talk about the topic, they become familiar with and know what they are speaking about. It is because they can get the information through the Internet, magazines, newspapers, books, etc.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, this study can be concluded that the result of students' background knowledge about the topic is at a high level. It can be seen from the result of their background knowledge test, minimum score is 50.00, maximum score is 81.00, mean score is 65.00, and standard deviation is 7.29. Then, the result of the students' speaking ability test that is given by the researcher is also at a high level. It can be seen from the result of their speaking test, minimum score is 60.00, maximum score is 85.00, mean score is 73.98, and standard deviation is 6.238. Lastly, the result of students' background knowledge and their speaking ability has a correlation coefficient, r = 0.696 and p 0.000. Therefore, the result showed that there is no significant correlation and has a positive correlation so H1 is accepted, which means that there is a significant correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the findings of this study, background knowledge is an important thing for students to mastery about the topic when they speak. Because familiar topics are an important aspect in improving students' speaking, background knowledge can help students to match new information with what they already know about the topic. In addition, teachers must also be able to do more than just provide knowledge to students, but new information obtained must be practiced. Therefore, students must be given the opportunity to use language for communication in meaningful contexts in the classroom

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