

The Insignificant Role of Language Mindset, on Language Achievement of EFL Tertiary Learners at Hasanuddin University Makassar

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to uncover the emerging insignificant role of language mindset on language achievement of tertiary learners at one of the leading institutions in South Sulawesi Indonesia. It is becoming prevalent that mindset can be a bias originated from individual's surroundings; which would be pointless without being accompanied with continued and productive actions to support the attainment of learning goal. A total of 44 participants of EFL learners of batch 2021 from English Department of Hasanuddin University participated in this study. They were considered eligible for the assessment using Language Mindsets Inventory (LMI) and TOEFL ITP score. This study employed mix-method to find out the potential relations between the two assessed variables by gathering data from the learners during the semester. The result showed that language mindset and language achievement were negatively correlated of -0.377 indicating that language mindset played insignificant roles in promoting language learning outcomes. The finding confirms that this negative correlation was due to the absence of relevant prolonged actions to expect the learning results. In addition, the mindset they had were mostly influenced by their surroundings which were not genuinely invested to their real life. This finding can shed the light of further study regarding the long-year proven significant role of language mindset towards language achievement. The study bears an important pedagogical implication for tertiary lecturers to encourage and strengthen the students' mindset to improve their learning.

Keywords: Language Mindset, Language Achievement, Insignificant Correlations

1. INTRODUCTION

Language mindset has been long proven to have significant role in contributing language learning success. As it yields to psychological states regarding the certain beliefs on achieving particular goals, it helps design relevant actions to get nearer the goals. In language learning domain, Liu (2021) stated that these emotional states are very influential to foreign language learning states. Besides, these emotions are considered critical on students' learning success or failures as it is manifested to real action lining to a particular prior intention (e.g., Lou et al., 2017; Blackwell et al., 2007; Ozdemir et al., 2021; and Eren et al., 2020).

Language Mindset according to Lou et al (2019:537) refers to beliefs on one's abilities, such as personality and intellectual attribute, are mutable that can be cultivated along with efforts and strategies (i.e., a growth mindset/incremental theory) or immutable hardly to be improved through relevant activities (i.e., a fixed mindset/entity theory).

These two language mindset types promote a significantly distinguishable result on language learning achievement. Growth mindset has been year-profoundly discovered to have positive correlation with great language achievement. Blackwell et al (2007), Dweck (2006) and Lou et al (2021) evidenced that growth-minded students were consistently more engaged in learning activities and achieved grades with flying colours compared to the fixed-minded ones. They confirmed that the positive traits generated by the growth mindset led students to keep themselves on target regardless of factors that might hinder them to achieve their goals. They will always perceive any kind of situation as a puzzle to solve. On the contrary, students with fixed mindset were proven to have less engagement with learning activities which consequently result in low performance. Connecting to the language learning setting, it shows similar indifferent discover that fixed-minded students indicated themselves to be less interested and inattentive in engaging with the learning processes, and they consequently were captured to be unsuccessful language learners (e.g., Lou & Noels, 2017 and Dweck 2008).

However, the prior findings were mostly only focused on uncovering the relations between language mindset and language achievement which most of findings revealed constant; that growth mindset contributes better language achievement than fixed mindset as it can affect positive behaviour and emotions to later define an individual's learning strategies through consistent learning engagement (Aronson et al., 2002, Blackwell et al., 2007, and Farrington et al., 2012). Having certain mindset without accomplished with relevant prolonged actions could be ineffective as well. Certain mindset can be a bias which could be injected from the individuals' surroundings. Dweck (2006), an American Psychologist, notes that everyone is born with a love of learning; they build up and cultivate certain mindset based on what they see from their environment.

Against this issue, studies on scrutinizing the potential insignificant influence of language mindset towards language achievement is considered little. This rough assumption could lead another different uncover of the language mindset's roles on language achievement. Since such study is not yet further explored, this present article, therefore, endeavoured to reveal the potential insignificant effect of language mindset on language achievement neatly reviewed from the actual action along the learning processes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mindset

The term of mindset has been long abstracted to psychological study reflecting a certain belief of an individual that according to Robinson (2017) refers to someone's ability, intelligence, and aptitudes towards something that could yield to academic fields, sports, and so forth. In an essence, the mindset here defines two possibilities of those aforementioned psychological traits whether it is a born gift of an attribute that can be developed through practices and efforts. Basically, this mindset term was firstly initiated by an American scholar of Psychology named Carol Dweck with the similar concept as mentioned. Through his writing published in 2006, he proposed the distinct categories of mindset, called growth mindset and fixed mindset. Fixed mindset or entity belief is an individual's belief echoing that intelligence is a fixed attribute, whereas growth mindset or incremental belief refers to the belief of one's ability perceived malleable trait that someone's ability can be cultivated along with efforts and practices.

In academic domain, numerous studies have profoundly revealed steady findings of these two types of mindset that growth mindset is more associated with successful academic achievement than the fixed mindset (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2007, and Yeager & Dweck et al., 2012). These scholars explained the main distribution of growth minds dreads people to be reliant on their goals, efforts they bestow, learning strategies when experiencing difficulties considered to be effective to keep on target which later promotes great achievement. They strengthened the arguments saying that students' perseverance is generally built up by the growth mindset that can lead them to long-term achievement. In short, such mindset functions to help students design achievable goals to later construct appropriate strategies to guide them reach the outcomes.

Language Mindset

The language mindset basically holds no major difference from the root mindset definition. Lou and Noels (2019) stated that mindset applies the belief of human's traits, including intelligence, language aptitude, and personality; which is also classified into two main concepts, they termed pre-determined attribute (fixed mindset/entity belief as formed mentioned) or malleable properties (growth mindset/incremental belief). It

covers whether a capacity can be developed or not. They furthered language mindsets serve as domain particular belief regarding the malleability and intractability of an ability to learn a new language. This also is in line with Ryan & Mercer (2012) promoting that language mindset is students' belief of their own ability in improving language skills. Thus, it can be inferred that mindset is considered pervasive to be extracted to language playing a very important contribution to language learning success.

Types of Language Mindset

Lou & Noels (2017) generated from the language mindset theories developed by Dweck (1999) and recent research findings on language mindset conducted by Mercer & Ryan (2010) build up a framework of the language mindset dividing them into three related but distinct aspects as following details:

- ***General Language Intelligence (GLB)***

A belief of whether an individuals' language intelligence is an innate gift or a trait that can be cultivated, shortly termed immovable or malleable. Lou and Noels said that this concept of GLB is in line to the Dweck's theory of mindset on intelligence.

- ***Language Aptitude (L2B)***

Someone's belief of her/his own capacity that can be cultivated through efforts. This particular mindset makes the believer to keep making improvement along with the applied strategies.

- ***Age sensitivity beliefs about learning language (ASB)***

A capture of the belief of the significant role of age to contribute the ability of mastering a certain language that is in further fixed or malleable all around the lifetime.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed mixed method or Quan-QUAL Model which directed the researcher to firstly conduct quantitative method to be analysed descriptively and inferentially, and next followed by qualifying the data using triangulation approach (Cresswell, 2012:15). This design has brought enormous effects to research field that can provide more reliable and comprehensive data due the design focus to obtain qualitative and quantitative data source; the obtained data can mutually strengthen in order to minimize biases. Furthermore, an exploratory correlation design was used to discover the relationship between the variables being examined which was in further explained inductively (Creswell, 2012).

As for the participants, this current study hired purposive sampling as a method to select sample considered to have represented the whole populations (Sugiono, 2016). A total of 84 English department students of Hasanuddin University year 2021 was populated in this study with the sample of 46 based on the calculation of Slovin Formula. Statistically, this formula has been massively used to determine the qualified samples for research. Also, the number formulated is considered to have fulfilled the sample criteria of quantitative data that is specifically to investigate mutual or casual relations between examined variables which actually enables 30 participants in bare minimum. Regarding the selected participants, they were considered best suit to be the data source of this current research for they are all under the English studies which surely remains variation in terms of their English ability. Besides, for one of the main variables investigated is English achievement, the participants employed are ensured to have had TOEFL with two-year valid score.

As this study deployed mixed method, there were three data sources utilized, i.e., questionnaire, English achievement, and Interview. The questionnaire was adapted from Language Mindsets Inventory (LMI) established by Lou & Noels, 2016. This inventory is the most pervasively used questionnaire to gauge language mindset in accordance with the three major language mindset types, i.e., language intelligence (GLB), second language aptitude (L2B), and age sensitivity (ASB) with 18 items in total. Whereas, the English achievement was generated from the TOEFL ITP score; a test that is massively used to indicate the level of English proficiency. As for the interview, it was extracted from the questionnaire content of the language mindset to further explore the probably undiscovered conception of how certain mindset on language learning dictates actions to accordingly result expected learning outcomes.

The data collection was sequentially performed. The researcher initially conducted small observation to allocate eligible participants. It was then followed with questionnaire distribution, and ended with interview sections by purposively taken participants considered perfect to become the representatives. Finally, those

data were analysed based on the triangulation approach; which the data obtained from the questionnaire was accumulated using long-valid formula programmed in SPSS Version 25 to verify the relations between the examined variables to be accordingly assessed with the interview data.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDING

a. Findings

Language Mindset

According to the normality test, it was captured from the Sig. Value (r) of 0.9 for growth mindset items and 0,57 for the fixed one. Those values are higher than the Conf. Level of 0.05. Thus, it can be inferred that the two major language mindset components, growth and fixed mindset, were normally distributed further indicating that the data obtained in this current research is valid.

As for the Language mindset categorization, the data shows that Growth Mindset is more dominant than the fixed mindset that roughly 28 participants were evidenced strongly growth-minded (63.6%) and found null of the fixed mindset. In other turn, there was no participant captured to have strongly growth-minded, but found 2 participants at least having strongly unfixed mindset. The most score went to the moderate level of the fixed mindset showing 21 participants 27.3% while the growth mindset was only found 3 frequency (6.8%). To conclude, basically these two types of data support to each other that is the more growth minded the data shows, the more the unfixed mindset will be captured. Those having growth minded will more likely be less in fixed mindset or vice versa. The aforementioned data is strengthened by the table above:

Table 1. Overall Level of the Subcomponent of Language Mindset Inventory

Language Mindset	Overall Mean	Overall Level	Subcomponent	Overall Mean	Overall Level	Standard Deviations (SD)	Total Participants
Growth	37.3	Strongly Growth-Minded	GLB	12.06	Growth Minded	1.4	44
			L2B	13.2	Strongly Growth minded	1.8	44
			ASB	12.04	Growth Minded	2.4	44
Fixed	24.8	Moderate	GLB	7.7	Unfixed	2.2	44
			L2B	8.9	Moderate	1.9	44
			ASB	8.2	Moderate	2.1	44

As clearly depicted on the table that most of the participants were growth minded with the overall mean score of 37.3 categorized as strongly growth minded; whereas the fixed mindset was placed moderate of 24.8. The error possibility of the two types of Language Mindset was found minor indicated by the standard deviation value lower than the median; Growth Mindset SD shows 1.9 and Fixed Mindset has 6.2 with total 44 involved participants.

As for the subcomponents of Language Mindset, termed general language intelligence (GLB), Second Language Aptitude (L2B), and Age Sensitivity (ASB), they are all aligned to the overall main items, Growth and Fixed Mindset. The three subcomponents of Growth mindset show generally positive, growth minded for GLB of 12.06 and ASB 12.04, and L2B was captured Strongly growth minded with the overall mean score of 13.2.

Meanwhile, the fixed mindset of the three component was placed in moderate level of ASB and L2B (8.2 and 8.9 as the overall mean score in a row; whereas GLB shows unfixed of 7.7. Aligned to the main component, these three subcomponents also revealed small possibility of errors proven by the Standard Deviation (SD) lower than the overall mean score. It indicates that the items in the questionnaire were homogenously distributed with satisfactory performance.

Language Achievement

Predicated on the English achievement from the TOELF ITP score, it was found that most of the involved participants were distributed elementary with the number of 16 participants or 36.4%. It is proceeded by the low intermediate level of 12 participant (27.3%), 10 classified high intermediate and the last was placed by 6 participant levelling advanced (13.6%). The average accordingly based on this data is 447.95 categorized low intermediate; whereas the Standard Deviations supports the distributed frequency of 71.6 that is lower than the mean score indicating that there is only minor error possibility of data distribution or has strong performance.

Correlation between Language Mindset and Language Achievement

Table 2 The Analysis of Language Mindset and English Achievement

Independent Variable (X)	Dependent Variable (Y)	Correlation coefficient (r)	Overall Correlation coefficient (r)	Category
Growth Mindset	English Achievement (TOEFL Score)	-0.206	-0.377	No correlation
Fixed Mindset		-0.232		

The data appears to disclose that Language Mindset and English achievement are negatively correlated showing -377 of the overall correlation coefficients (r). The two types of examined language mindset shows almost similar r value that is -206 for growth mindset and -232 for fixed one. This data indicates that language mindset does not role a significant contribution to the English achievement.

b. Discussion

As clearly depicted on the data quantified above, the involved participants were found strongly growth minded (37.3) and moderately fixed minded (24.8). Unfortunately, having growth mindset does not align with their language achievement as indicated that these two variables are negatively correlated which means language mindset has no effect on the language achievement. This present finding is against the previously long-year discovers that language mindset, growth mindset in particular, has profound roles in promoting language learning success (e.g., Lou et al, 2021 and Lou & Noels, 2017).

Accumulatively, most of the participants tended to be strongly growth minded with the overall score of 37.3; which detailing to the sub-components, it showed that Age (GLB) attained strong category of 13.2 while the two other sub-components, Language Aptitude (L2B) and Language Intelligence (ASB), appeared to be relative growth-mindset. Those data were evenly distributed to all participants regardless of their English achievement. The participants whose advance or elementary English level were equally indicated strongly growth minded.

For example, the range score between growth and fixed mindset of an interviewee representative with advanced English level revealed quite undistinguishable. The growth mindset showed 38 categorized strong and 30 for fixed mindset classified as fixed. According to her statement in the interview, she stated that all of the sub-components, age, hard-work, and language intelligence, seem to be generally covered by strong desire; either you start your learning in an advanced age or are intelligent at language, it will be highly determined by your cultivated desires throughout the learning process depicted from your hard-work. This response seems to become the reason behind her slight indifferent score of the two language mindset components; that she could not clearly identify herself to which stand she is more preferable. This finding implies that language mindset is quite complicated to be vertically indicated as it appears to be situated, socially and personally dependable, (Mercer & Ryan, 2012).

Besides, responses from three representatives with the same level of English achievement, i.e., Elementary Level, indicated themselves as having strong growth mindset of averagely 35 score with 25 score of fixed mindsets classified as moderate. They are obliged to be ensured that Age (ASB) and Language Mindset (GLB) have little impact on mastering a new language as long as it is equipped by genuine willingness together with the hard-work to catch up the language mastering possibility. One of the aforementioned participants (363; elementary level) shared the same perspective of the significant roles of hard-work (language aptitude) that based on her own experience, she found greater improvement on her English ability once she endowed more efforts on it keeping persistent throughout the learning process. Moreover, she explained that to be persistently on target, motivation is highly required to be secured acknowledging the prior reasons of dealing with the learning activities. As research conducted by Viña et al (2022), they found that motivation played a great factor in endorsing the growth mindset in college indicating that students need to identify their motivations to keep directing themselves towards language learning.

This proof was reinforced by the data taken from the participants who discovered themselves as high-intermediate English user. They both were captured to be strongly growth minded (scoring 37 and 40) and moderately fixed minded (scoring 22 and 27). According to their responses, it was noted that they had no objections to the language mindset items, particularly the age and language intelligence; that those are something that can be cultivated. The most basically essential to be counted on learning progress is hard work, or the language aptitude itself. They are all connected to each other. Having positive belief on learning that we can proceed our language learning progress no matter at what age we start to learn the language, or the level of language intelligence we have; mastering a new language is still possible through learning consistency or hard-work. This is similar to Viña et al (2022:107) stating that mindset is more suited to the goal of maximizing one's own potential through hard work.

The findings from interview above clearly depict that language aptitude plays more role in predicting language learning engagement. This evidence is identical with the data profoundly elaborated by Sadeghi et al (2021); he proposed that hardworking is an essential part of language mindset quoted as language aptitude.

Whereas, regarding the relations between the two examined variables, the disclosure from this current study leads the researcher to priorly assume that the negative correlation between the language mindset and English achievement might be originated from their positive beliefs that are probably not manifested to the real action. This is not aligned with the previous findings revealing that learner belief is very fundamental to influence behaviour in language learning that is in further potential to promote success especially in academic context (Horwitz, 1999).

Also, data from the interview revealed that most of the responses implied that the participants' positive beliefs were most likely reflected from their environment like seeing someone whose great English performance due to hard-work regardless of the age or language intelligence matter. This case has also been suggested by Mori (1999) saying that learner belief comes from their experience in their own sociocultural context. This fact however does not really reflect their real actions to accelerate their language learning progress; which the learners could have failed to internalize their belief to their own self environment.

In other words, even though they are very open minded in perceiving their language learning process, only does it limit to the belief without the real action, the language improvement will remain aimless. In short, mindset or belief in fact does not really align to action which later directs to result.

These findings are conformed different from the previous findings which mostly captured the same results; that language mindset is positively correlated with language achievement as it is strongly perceived that our action is the reflection of our mind-states. In detail, the long-profound discloses suggested that learners with growth mindset performed way better than the fixed minded ones in language learning. However, the current finding showed the opposite evidence that language mindset and language achievement are not correlated which could mean positive or negative perceive on language learning does not resonate actions. Being only growth minded without relevant action to reach the expected learning will be pointless. Presumably, the beliefs must be accompanied by strong willingness to be later actualized into real actions to gain the expected results.

Another assumption could be placed that the involved participants have no clear states of themselves; the way they responded from the questionnaire distributed were probably based on their belief only or things they

expected to become; while in real life, they were the opposite. In addition to this fact, things they saw from their surroundings could become the major influence on their response which did not really depict their real traits. These all assumption were verified from the interview conducted with some representatives; that most of them validated that ideally to get better language learning progress, we should have positive belief on the learning process, like we should not take serious count on age or language intelligence; the effects of those aspects could be handled with the strong persistency to get along with the learning process.

5. CONCLUSION

The finding of the present study confirms that mindset does not always become the greater predicator to assist the learners to gain success in language learning. The finding is generated from the negative correlation between the two examined variables, language mindset and English achievement. The finding is contradictory to the previous studies suggesting the strong influence of language mindset on the language learning success and failures. The finding also confirms that there is at least one major presumable reason behind the captured negative correlation that having positive states in mind is not enough without real action to direct to the learning goal. The positive mindset is actually easy to reinforce that could be originated from environment or learning expected outcomes. Additionally, the involved participants have no objection with the ideas of language mindset provided, yielding age, language aptitude, and language intelligence. They all agree that no matter what age we start to learn the language or how low intelligent we are in language, we can still succeed to learn the language as long as we keep the strong motivation through the consistency or hard-work, which is the language aptitude itself. The minor affect is only about the speed of catching up the learning progress. Starting in the earlier age or having great level of language intelligence is surely a privilege to fasten the language mastery, but they are not the main issue

This finding can shed the light of a further study about the noticeable role of language mindset towards language learning expected result. The further study can concern on whether language mindset can stand alone or not since belief cannot be defined as it shows; there must be other related factors to direct the expected outcomes. As revealed from this current finding, having positive or negative belief on learning activities are quite bias which could be influenced from surroundings or learner's expectancy. It does not directly lead to trigger the learners to design certain related action to achieve the outcomes. Furthermore, this can be a new insight to learners to make them realize that the expected result of language learning will not come true without investing long consistent actions.

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