Students' Motivation in Reading English Text: A Qualitative Study in EFL Context

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Abstract

This article addresses an objective description and reasons for the student's motivation in reading English text. Sixty students of tenth grade at SMA Negeri 55 South Jakarta participated on filling in 50 statements of 11 domains of motivation. An interview, another method to collect data needed and to meet a methodological triangulation, was employed to capture the participants' perspective. Findings revealed that reading curiosity is the highest domain of the students' motivation (92.22%), and social reason for reading is the lowest one (55.56%). Some interpretations are included in this paper.

Keywords: *learning motivation, reading curiosity, factors of reading achievement*

Introduction

Though language, in general, is changeable (Dakhi, 2011), treating English as a compulsory subject at Indonesian schools (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 19 Tahun 2005 Pasal 9 Ayat 2) confirms the importance of language as a means of communication (Dakhi, 2016) and its learnability. It is interpreted, according to Curriculum 2003 of Indonesia, in a real teaching and learning process of reading, one of the four major

skills taught in an English language classroom. There are two sides to reading. The first views it as a skill including phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, vocabulary, and simple comprehension. Secondly, it is language attitude on reading. An attitude on English reading is identical to the motivation to read (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).

Cambria and Guthrie (2010) stated that motivations refer to interest, dedication, and confidence. An interested student reads because he enjoys it; a dedicated student reads because he believes it is important; and a confident student reads because he can do it. Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox (1999) defined motivation as characteristics of individuals, such as their goals, competence-related beliefs, and needs that influence their achievement and activities. They argued that students want to read because they are motivated and have a desire to read.

There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Students voluntarily try to learn what is very important to them. They have an internal desire to learn and they do not have the need for external results. Intrinsic motivation pushes the learners to learn without rewards because the need is innate and depends on their own desire. On the other hand, according to Arnold (2000), extrinsic motivation is a desire to obtain a reward and stop a punishment. This kind of motivation emphasizes external needs assignment, grade, or performing something that pleases teachers to urge the students to participate in learning activities. Kinley and Ben-Hur (2015) stated that it is the belief that if you reward certain behaviors you will get more of them; and if you punish certain behaviors, you will get less of them. Harmer (1991) said both integrative and instrumental motivations are classified under the branch of extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation has a negative effect on the learners because they do not learn with their strong intention, but they learn because they are pushed by the concern in the rewards or the punishment. Finally, Gambrell (2011) stated the highly motivated students choose to read, which in turn, will develop into a lifelong reading habit.

Reading is an effort to a conscious knowledge, the most important academic language skill (Gilakjani, 2011), that has been perpetuated by humanity. In other words, it is an activity often carried out parallel to the learning process to understand the core of a reading passage. Reading is defined as a thinking process which requires a response from the reader, may it be through making generalizations, drawing new inferences and planning succeeding steps based on what was read. The act of reading is a process involving steps to achieve and reinforce

understanding, namely word perception, comprehension, reaction and integration (Zintz & Maggart, 1986).

Dakhi (2018) reported that there were only nine reports on reading researches out of four hundred and twenty-five nationally accredited articles, or 2.12%, made by Indonesian academicians from 2014 to 2018. This indicates that there was negative academicians' response to the urgency of Indonesian reading interest level. Indonesia was the 60th rank out of 61 countries, a study by Central Connecticut State University in the US reported in 2016. To meet the standard competency and consider the Dakhi's finding, a scientific work in evaluating the students' reading English motivation as one of determining factors of English language proficiency has to be taken into account. This article describes the result of a study concerning students' motivation in English reading text at SMA Negeri 55 South Jakarta in English reading class. It is expected that patterning the students' motivation in English reading will make English teacher easier to identify student's psychological obstacles. Finally, it will offer some solutions to overcome problems encountered.

Methodology

This research conducting systematic procedures was a survey. It aimed to explore what type of motivation that students had in reading class, a reflection in English Foreign Language (EFL) context in Indonesia. The researcher administered a set of questionnaire to collect 60 participants' perspective. A Liker scale questionnaire, in addition to interview adopted from Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), was designed with Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1). It was developed in accordance with eleven domains of reading motivation, namely Reading Efficacy, Reading Challenge, Reading Curiosity, Reading Involvement, Importance of Reading, Reading Work Avoidance, Competition in Reading, Recognition for Reading, Reading for Grades, Social Reasons, and Reading Compliance. The questionnaires completed were analyzed by following some steps: scoring, tabulating, describing, reflecting, and concluding. Finally, a methodological triangulation through interview acted as a means to a trustworthiness building of the research finding.
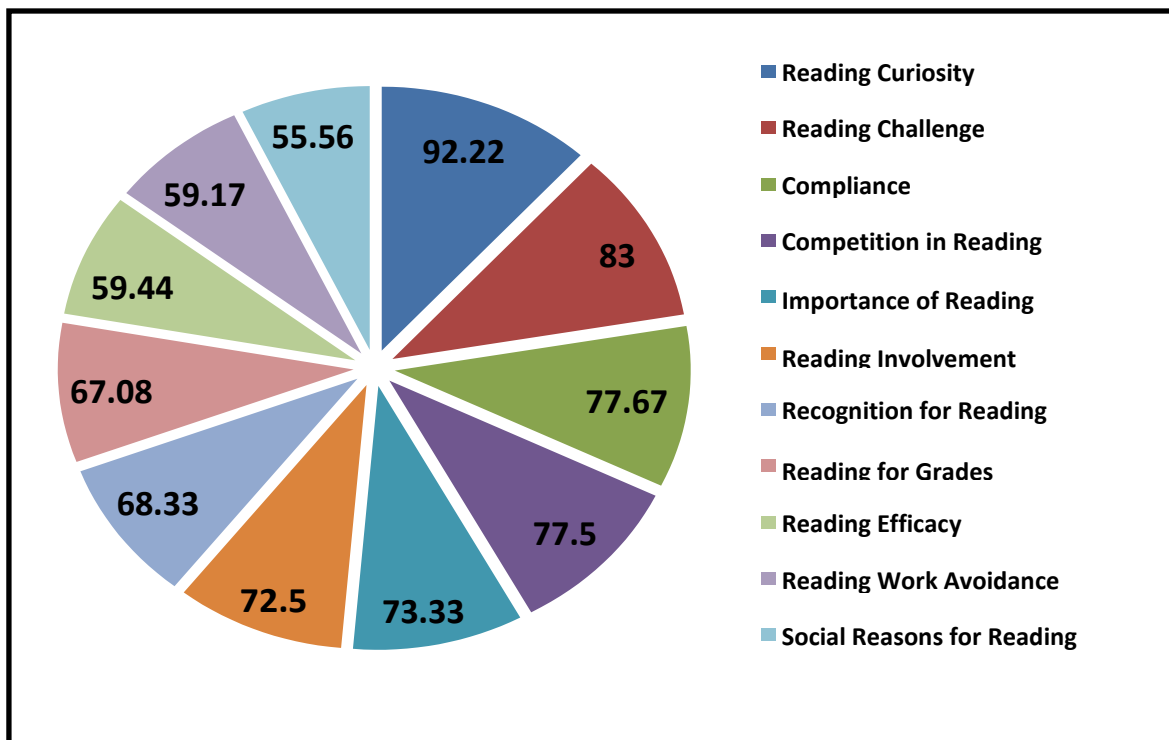
Findings and Discussion

Figure 1: Research Finding

The students' reading curiosity, based on the data analysis, is 70.00% agreed, 22.22% strongly agreed, 7.50% disagreed and 0.28% strongly disagreed. This indicates that 92.22% of the respondents are in supporting position that curiosity is a determinant factor in their reading motivation. This statement also was supported by the result of interview. The student stated that they wanted to get information written and meaning of every word in English text. Though curiosity holds an important role in motivation, the study on its biological function, mechanisms, and neural underpinning (Kidd & Hayden, 2015) remain poorly studied in this research. A response to such phenomenon Hill, Fombelle, and Sirianni (2016) confirmed that giving moderate information will boost consumers' curiosity. This finding suggests a potential implication to the way how English instructors increase the student's curiosity in English reading.

Secondly, no participant strongly disagreed with reading challenge as a reason for their motivation. Averagely 65.33% of the students agreed, 17.67% of them strongly disagreed, and only 17.00% of them disagreed. This means that 83.00% of the respondents are in line with the concept that challenge, though lower than curiosity, functions as an additional factor of

reading. More interestingly, studying to what extent and in what form a challenge effective in reading motivation is questionable as it was not studied in this research. It is thought Pratt and Yongvanit's finding (2018) on motivation and challenge of Cambodian workers potentially contributes to response to that question. Implying it to English reading teaching, motivation and challenge, primary motivations should not be pragmatic as they are having an impact on making difference in idealistic English readers. The balance between motivation and challenge, however, among "idealistic" English readers may be important in shaping future commitments and impact on society. Such finding, consequently, highlights a frame of reference that motivation and challenge are non-influential to a group of students with realistic point of view, to those who believe that learning is dependent on the physical objects and never relies on cognitive power of individual thinking (Cohen, 1999).

Thirdly, though there is a limited number of studies on the effect of compliance and reading motivation, Sappington, Kinsey, and Munsayac's work (2002) can be used to discuss the finding. Understanding reading compliance and reading, according to them, allows instructors to demonstrate a connection between reading preparation and subsequent success on final exams. Different from Sharma, Hoof, and Pusel's (2013) report on an assessment of reading compliance decisions among undergraduate students who specifically reported the factors influencing students' decisions to comply with their assigned course readings, this study shows that 0.67% strongly disagreed, 21.67% disagreed, 66.67% agreed, and 11.00% strongly agreed to a view that compliance determines students' reading motivation. In other words, 22.34% of respondents did not feel that compliance functions an important role in reading motivation.

To Sharma, Hoof, and Pusel personal, external and reading instructor are three factors influencing the students' decision to read. Furthermore, time availability and inability are two indicators of personal factor. Though no an exact account of competition in reading, primal level competition manifests in rivalry (Mayo, 2016). According to him rivalrous actions, in business, intended to secure the patronage consumers. In this case, there is a need to define a consumer is for having its acceptable implication on reading. In different context, Chumacero, Mardones, and Paredes (2016) reporting that the competition has a positive, statistically significant, and economically relevant educational impact on private and public schools confirmed the urgency of competition.

Meeting a good picture of the students' reading competition, it was discovered 22.50% of respondents disagreed to the effectiveness of competition as a determinant factor of reading motivation, 0.04% higher than reading compliance. There were 1.94% of respondents strongly disagreed, and 20.56% agreed. On the other hand, 60.56% of the students positively agreed and 16.94% strongly agreed.

In addition, it was found that 0.83% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 25.83% disagreed, 63.33% agreed, and 10.00% strongly agreed for the condition that reading is important, an intrinsic reason for reading. This was supported by the interview result. It was reported tha t"*I think reading English text is very important as we know English is an international language. We must study English. One of the ways is to read English text."*

Reading involvement notion and function remain questionable. Reading involvement refers to the enjoyment involved with reading different kinds of texts, an intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Furthemore, Torres (2010) reporting that giving students choices and allowing group discussion motivate the students to read. Responding to these it was highlighted the students' involvement in reading. It was discovered that 2.22% of the students strongly disagreed, 25.28% disagreed, 49.17% agreed and 23.33% strongly agreed. This finding, 72.50% of the participants believed the reading involvement, is problematic as it needs a precise technique on how to increase both reading comprehension and engagement. To respond to it, Guthrie *et al* (2004) suggested a Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) to get both of them increased.

The seventh indicator of motivation is a reading recognition. The recognition of reading is a desire of language readers' achievements to be recognized by teacher or peer approval. A basic reason treating it is Honneth's argument (1995) as believed by Huttunen and Heikkinen (2004) that humans require inter-subjective recognition of their abilities and achievements. Another previous study testifying it is Danish and Usman's work (2010). It was reported different dimensions of work motivation and satisfaction are significantly correlated, and reward and recognition have great impact on motivation. The students' perception on reading recognition forms a similar pattern. It was found out that 2.78% of the participants strongly disagreed, 28.89% disagreed, 59.44% agreed and 8.89%strongly agreed.

Moreover, reading for grades is also regarded as another additional motivating factor. The student is motivated to read for achieving a good mark (Wang & Guthrie, 2011). It was discovered that 4.58% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 28.33% disagreed, 53.33% agreed, and 13.75% strongly agreed to this belief. It was supported by the interview result that "*I want to get good mark from my teacher, and if I get a good mark my parents proud of me".* Another student said, *"Because if I do not finish the assignment from my teacher I will fail and of course my teacher n my parents angry withme".*

Despite Hedges and Gable's (2014) and Carroll and Fox's (2017) research finding differ, they still function to empirically highlight the importance of reading efficacy. Hedges and Gable reported reading motivation and self-efficacy have a significant relationship. More specifically, Carroll and Fox (2017) argued that self-efficacy was associated with word reading, not with reading comprehension in either boys or girls. This study reveals 1.11% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 39.44% disagreed, 50.56% agreed and 8.89% strongly agreed. This means only 59.45% of students agreed that self-efficacy determines reading motivation degree, a response to those studies. Those findings do not end as we need to elaborate its efficiency solving the problem encountered by students. According to Yoğurtçu (2013) significances of self-efficacy includes richer cognitive interactions, experiences, in addition to these, readers will be able to access an effective, interactive, strategic, quick, prehensile capacity of the reading comprehension.

On the other hand, avoidance is an act to avoid threatening situation, a culture of all human beings (Holforth, 2008). In this case, it is an act to avoid bad score in English writing, punishment from English teacher(s), etc. According to Krypotos, Effting, Kindt, and Beckers (2015) avoidance is a key characteristic of adaptive and maladaptive fear. The students' perception on the avoidance is that 10.42% strongly disagreed, 48.75% disagreed, 48.75% agreed and 10.42% agreed.

The least indicator surveyed was social reason. Forgas, Williams, and Laham (2005) argued that social behavior and judgment are motivated behavior and judgment. It implies social reason for reading governs language readers' motivation. In this regard, it revealed 1.94% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 20.56% disagreed, 51.94% agreed and 3.61% strongly agreed to social reason as a determinant factor.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In relation to the previous findings and discussion, three main points proposed to be the conclusion. Firstly, regardless of different perception on the variables, eleven indicators influencing students' reading motivation at SMA Negeri 55 Jakarta have been discovered. Secondly, those indicators are curiosity (92.22%), challenge (83%), compliance (77.67%), competition in reading (77.50%), reading importance (73.33%), reading involvement (72.50%), recognition (68.33%), reading for grades (67.08%), reading efficacy, (59.44%), avoidance (59.17)and social reason (55.56). Finally, curiosity became the most influential variable, and social reason is the least one.

To end the report, three suggestions are given to respond to the research finding, namely:

1) Considering motivation as one of factors influencing the teaching and learning objectives defines its substance and suggests the finding to English teachers' teaching method selection and material.

2) It is admitted that the research scope is limited, so its broader study in EFL context, Indonesia context, will be more challenging for English teachers.

3) There was no concentration of the research on parental role (Dakhi, 2016); consequently studying it will be advantageous.

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Appendix

Motivations for Reading Questionnaire

No	Statement	1 SD	2 D	3 A	4 SA
1	I like being the best at reading				
2	I like it when the questions in book make me think				
3	I read to improve my grades				
4	If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more about it				
5	I like hard, challenging books				
6	I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book				
7	I know that I will do well in reading next year				
8	If a book is interesting, I don't care how hard it is to read				
9	I try to get more answers rights than my friends				
10	I have favorite subjects that I like to read about				
11	I make pictures in my mind when I read				
12	I don't like reading something when the words are too difficult				
13	I enjoy reading books about people				
14	I am a good reader				
15	I usually learn difficult things by reading				
16	It is very important to me to be a good reader				
17	I read to learn new information about topics that interest me				
18	If the project is interesting, I can read difficult material				
19	I learn more reading than most students in the class				
20	I read stories about fantasy and make me believe				
21	I read because I have to				
22	I don't like vocabulary questions				
23	I like to read about new things				
24	I often read to my brother or my sister				
25	In comparison to other activities I do, It is very important to me to be a good reader				
26	I like having the teacher say I read well				
27	I read about my hobbies to learn more about them				

28	I like mysteries				
29	My friends and I like to trade things to read				
30	Complicated stories are no fun to read				
31	I read a lot of adventure stories				
32	I do as little schoolwork as possible in reading				
33	I feel like I make friends with people in good books				
34	Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me				
35	My friends sometimes tell me I am a good reader				
36	Grades are a good way to see how well you are in reading				
37	I like to help my friends with their schoolwork in reading				
38	I don't like it when there are too many people in the story				
39	I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends				
40	I sometimes read to my parents				
41	I like to get compliments for my reading				
42	It is important for me to see my name on a list of good readers				
43	I talk to my friends about what I am reading				
44	I always try to finish my reading on time				
45	I like to tell my family about what I am reading				
46	I like being the only one who knows the answer in something we read				
47	I look forward to finding out my reading grade				
48	I always do my reading work exactly as the teacher wants it				
49	I like to finish my reading before other students				
50	My parents ask me about my reading grade				