EXPLORING MOTIVATION IN READING: A STUDY OF FEMALE STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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EXPLORING MOTIVATION IN READING: A STUDY OF FEMALE STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Illahi Bux Gopang¹, Dr. Tariq Umrani², Dr. Habibullah Pathan³, Dr. Faraz Bughio⁴

¹Lecturer (M.Phil. leading to PhD scholar) Department of English, Lasbela University Baluchistan
²Assistant Professor, Institute of English Language and Literature, University of Sindh
³Assistant Professor, Director, English Language Development Centre, Mehran University (PAKISTAN)

ibenglican@gmail.com¹

ABSTRACT

The current study was conducted to investigate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for reading in second language learning. With it, reading efficacy, fluency and accuracy including reading anxiety were main components to be examined. Participants of the study were 29 female undergraduates studying English at Department of English, Lasbela University, Baluchistan, Pakistan. The students took part in the study and they were provided a questionnaire adapted from Wigfield (1995) on reading motivation. An employed questionnaire was modified because some open ended items were added to have in depth understanding of the concerning research topic. The results of the study have indicated that students are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated toward reading various authentic materials. Regarding students level of reading abilities, the findings suggest that they are at mediocre at reading. The study concludes that students' level of reading motivation stands neither high nor poor but in between.

Keywords: motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: reading motivation:

1. INTRODUCTION

The present study is designed to explore students reading motivation in academic life. Since motivation has played an important role in learning second/ foreign language. While in the context of reading, the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is of a great significance. In spite of vast amount of research done on motivation, there is a lack of sufficient study on importance of motivation in reading. So therefore, this study demonstrates reading motivation along with reading efficacy, reading competition, reading fluency and accuracy and reading anxiety. It tends to examine students' reading motivation as foreign language learners at Lasbela University, Baluchistan. This study is significant because it will help teachers, researchers to be aware of students' reading motivation and their reasons for reading. The study can also be basis for future research done on the same area with large samplings. It is likely to provide a clear framework of undergraduates’ reading motivation for concerned language teachers in particular, and Pakistani researchers and language teachers in general.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is considered as an important construct in SLA studies. It has significance in terms of learners who display it through some activities. If it is second language learning, motivation plays a part in motivating learners to show interests meet their needs as individuals. A large body research talks about intrinsic/extrinsic, integrative/instrumental motivation in the study of English language (Gardner, 1985; Dornyei, 2001, 2010; Ushioda, 2005). Lightbown and Spada (2004) state ‘motivation in second language learning is a complex phenomenon which can be defined in terms of two factors; learners' communicative needs and their attitude towards the second language community” (p. 56). Further, in L2 framework, motivation is an affect which stimulates learners to be consistent in an act of learning. It has made the way easy for researchers, linguists and language teachers who searched out learners' orientations for the purpose of learning L2. Researchers have offered same opinions regarding motivation that it is responsible construct which seeks to identify and discover human behavior and gives right direction (Dornyei, 1998). This idea has been furthered by many scholars in the framework of L2 motivation. One of them is Ushioda (2005, p. 5) who explained that, language teachers are the best source of researching students’ motivation in their classrooms. And however, such research can be contributing high in the area of second language motivation. This contribution in fact can enhance teachers’ knowledge and make them professionally strong and sound. However, different linguist schools of thought view motivation in quite different perspective.
2.1 BEHAVIORIST AND COGNITIVIST VIEWS OF MOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Motivation has been interpreted in different ways by both schools of thought in SLA. For behaviorists, motivation plays a role of reinforcement or stimuli in act of learning (Gambrell & Codling, 1997). It is this process which makes learning happen in the classroom settings. Therefore; researchers who follow this school of thought in research deem motivation an instrument functioning as' stimuli" or "reinforcement" in learning second language. On the other hand, cognitivists do not agree with ideas of behaviorists. However, they view motivation as a "systematic process of ideas and decisions making in learning", and our decisions are influenced by our feelings of competence in state of learning (Gambrell & Codling, 1997). These theories have contributed a lot in the domain of education. Many researchers and theorists have generated many thoughts in case of defining human motivation. Congruent are these ideas offered regarding human motivation in general, and reading in particular. Intrinsic and extrinsic issues supplant for educational insights.

2.2 INTRINSIC AND EXTRINIC MOTIVATION

These terms intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are associated with the self-determination theory which has remarkable significance in motivation psychology. The pioneers of this theory are Deci and Ryan (1985). As researchers; they have developed a theory of motivation which they name it as self-determination theory covering concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. They interpreted it as "motivated actions are self-determined to the extent that they are engaged in wholly volitionally and endorsed by one’s sense of self--- whereas actions are controlled if they are compelled by some interpersonal or intrapsychic force" (Deci et al., 1997, p. 326-327, cited in Gambrell & Codling, 1997). The role of these two types of motivation in the theory is of great importance. Extrinsic motivation implies forces which are external to involve individual in behavior. For example, to offer something in form of reward to individual in classroom setting, to asking her/him behave properly is called extrinsic motivation. In contrast, intrinsic motivation refers to internal needs which incline behavior in any setting, is known as intrinsic behavior (Gambrell & Codling, 1997). From these definitions, it is viewed that learners are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to perform any task on the basis of internal and external incentives.

2.3 READING MOTIVATION

Moreover, some studies done on L2 motivation (Dornyei, 1998; Pathan, 2012; Vaezi, 2009)suggest that learners learn English for instrumental and integrative reasons. Gardner and Lambert (1972, cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2004) coined the terms "integrative motivation to refer to language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment, and instrumental motivation for language learning for more immediate goals" (p. 56). Since discussed literature shows that a vast amount of research has been conducted in exploring motivation/ intrinsic/ extrinsic/ integrative and instrumental orientations.

On the other hand, Lack of systematic research on motivation in reading is strongly observed through reading literature on L2 motivation. This issue needs much attention of linguists and scholars to explore as they have done a great deal of research on motivation. This idea is also supported by Mori (2002) that most research including that of Gardner and his research fellows lay emphasis on students L2 motivation to interact or communicate with the natives. But less concentration is given to motivation in reading context.

Reading motivation theory proposed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995) was basically centered on L1 reading motivation. This theory was framed with the idea that students’ motivation was domain specific. It implies that students may be motivated to listen and speak but demotivated to read in English. Scarcity of literature on reading motivation supported the model with many motivational constructs related to reading. As a result, the model was employed as L2 reading theory because of lack of theories and models except that of Day and Bamford (1998). The former model is widely employed in research whereas; the latter is still a matter of concern for researchers.

Within past few decades, research has proved that motivation had a main part to play in students and lack of it in reading is deemed as a big problem. On the one hand, students are interested in reading because they always look for extrinsic reward in form of prizes and wholly rely on these prizes for their motivation. On the other hand, they show less interest when these rewards are not guaranteed or ensured. Contrary to this is continuity in reading performance observed in readers who show intrinsic interest without expecting any reward (Guthrie et al., 1998). This means that some students read for some incentives external, whereas others read for internal incentive. Thus, a number of studies advocate that motivation plays a vital role in learning specifically in reading; and these numerous studies are (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dweck & Elliot, 1983). Intrinsic motivation absolutely displays pleasure of reading and
comprehension, refers to reward less reading; whereas extrinsic motivation engages those readers who have desire for external rewards, all this, is suggested by studies of (Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

Keeping in view the above literature, the researcher intended to explore students’ reading motivation. The study sorts out reading efficacy, reasons for reading, fluency and accuracy in reading, and motivation behind reading. Significantly, reading motivation has been touched and researched in less quantity in the paradigm of SLA research. To address the less touched area in motivation in general, the researchers’ context in particular, the present study is meant to explore it among Pakistani undergraduates who show motivation for reading and be good reader, compete with others, and get good grades. This study addresses these research questions as the basis to show and discuss results.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What motivates undergraduate university students to read?
2. What is the level of students’ reading efficacy at university level?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine motivating reasons among students for reading.
2. To explore Pakistani undergraduates’ reading efficacy at university level.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study employs reading motivation questionnaire set and developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995) to assess the level of students’ motivation in reading and investigate various aspects of their motivation. This study has adapted questionnaire based on 18 items divided into open ended and close ended statements. However, 14 items are close ended questions, while 4 items are open ended questions in order to get deep understanding of the researched issue. However, statements of the questionnaire focus on reading accuracy, fluency, reading competition, reading motivation and reading anxiety.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

Participants of the study were randomly selected from Bs 4th and Bs 6th major courses in English language and literature. Only 29 female students were the part of the study because the rational behind it was to encourage them to be contributors in the study. Their age ranged from 18 to 25. They showed their keen interests to participate in the study. It was feasible for the researcher to collect data from respondents because he has been teaching them major subjects entitled “advanced academic reading skills” and “critical approaches to literature”.

3.2 MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Data of close ended questions were analyzed by suing SPSS, whereas open ended data were interpreted thematically. This both type of analysis helps the researcher to have in depth understanding of the concerning issue of reading motivation.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The present study statistically shows following results of students on reading motivation. Students’ level of reading motivation is justified through descriptive statistics as shown in the table.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

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The results show that most of students want to be accurate at reading skills. They read correctly and intend to avoid mistakes. They assume reading accuracy as a good technique so they report it in their responses. Item no: (1) “I avoid making mistakes in reading” with mean score of 3 implies that students pursue accuracy in reading because they do not prefer making mistakes pre-during and post reading activities. Thus, intrinsic motivation is key factor to be noticed to read correctly. The results prove that students are mostly centered on accuracy rather than fluency. They do not want to be fluent reader, but instead, focus on impeccable reading.

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reading any material in class and this item is with mean score of 3.28. It implies that female students are aware of reading strategies but with some of interest in reading. Findings have justified female students’ efficacy as readers. In addition, it also proves Students ability to draw meaning from the text or any authentic material.

It is indicated that students are ready to compete in reading. They intend to excel others when reading competition is held. But when it comes to end reading before other fellows, it is practiced but with interest. Competition is a very motivating factor itself because when they win they hope to get some reward in the shape of extrinsic motivation. Female learners show their willingness in competition.

It is suggested through descriptive statistics that students are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to read the text. The study shows that students’ motivation is a main factor for their reading. Most of female students showed their intrinsic motivation as an important construct for reading. It implies that they read for aesthetic pleasure but if it invites them to compete for extrinsic reward they also try to be fit there.

Obviously, students feel somewhat nervous in reading because item no: 9 “I am anxious if I read at the public places” describe the result of participants with anxiety. Its mean score is high 3.28 compared to mean score 2.48 of statement 8 “I feel nervous when teacher asks me to read out in front of the class. This difference is very meaningful. Students feel shy to read at public places. In contrast students experience less anxiety when they are called to read out in front of the whole class. It suggests that students are more confident in class. Their confidence is spoken through their response in the questionnaire which was statistically analyzed.

This data analysis of female participants statistically indicates that female students are motivated to read. They are good readers. Their reading efficacy, accuracy and competition are reported at medium level. The present study doesn’t corroborate with that of Veesar et al. (in press) who did research on 20 Malaysian female students majoring in English language and literature. His findings suggest that female students were highly motivated to read. Their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were reported high. The findings of the present study are summed up in reporting that students’ level of reading motivation is medium, neither high nor poor. Besides this, the study also employs the Pearson correlation test to see relationship between variables. And the result shows that there is a significant correlation between items (see appendix 2).Later part of discussion is given to open ended statements.

4.1 FINDINGS OF OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Four items based on open ended questions were designed to get in depth understanding of female participants concerning reading motivation. These are discussed as follows:

1. WHO MOTIVATES ME TO READ?
To respond this question, participants have shown their reasons of motivating them for reading. And these are teachers, parents, friends and intrinsic motivation.

1.1 TEACHER AS A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION
Teacher motivates students to read. It is obvious from students’ response. Teacher creates interest and encourages us to read. The result shows that teacher plays an active part for motivating students.

“My teacher motivates me to read because he wants me to be good reader. He always encourages me to read inside and outside class. This motivation has made me good writer. Reading gives me what I do not find elsewhere”.
Students are inspired by teachers because they assume them as a role model and get motivated.

On the other hand, some of the participants titled friends and parents as motivating factors for reading. Truly, parents and friends play a pivotal role in reinforcing learning among learners. As it is reported in the following words:

“My parents are great source of inspiration and motivation. They always upgrade my self-esteem and never discourage me because they are highly qualified and wish me to come up their expectations. With it, I cannot forget my friends who always help me providing reading material to learn more and more”.

The results clearly indicate that teachers, parents and friends are reasons for students’ reading motivation. Along with it, participants also described intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for reading.
1.2 INTRINSIC / EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

The study suggests that students have intrinsic interest for reading. They read because they want to get aesthetic pleasure.

“I read because I am intrinsically motivated to read without any pragmatic purpose. It is my interest to read more and more”

It is obvious from the above statement that students’ intrinsic motivation is one of the reasons working for reading motivation. Besides, extrinsic motivation is also a factor which plays its part in the process of reading.

“When I find any external reward I am motivated to read. This makes me happy and excited because I always wish to get rewards in academic life. It is the only incentive which motivates, and provokes my interest for reading”.

These responses imply that students are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated towards reading in English.

2. WHY DO I READ?

There are some purposes participants have highlighted in terms of reading motivation. They read to get knowledge, seek new information, and become creative and good reader.

2.1 KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

Students stated that they read for knowledge and information. They read different books, magazines, articles and English novels to understand life, culture and socio-political conditions of the people living in the world. Reading about the world and its existing issues framed in written texts is students’ priority.

- “Reading increases my knowledge and gives me new information about the people, society, and culture. this activity makes me knowledgeable and informative so I can talk on various issues prevalent in the society such as racism, gender inequality, dominance, power and ideology”

This response indicates that students are focused towards meaningful purpose in reading. They have clear idea or purpose for which they read the authentic material. Furthermore, reading is an activity which strengthens students bent of mind. Students report that they read to be creative and critical.

- I read to critique the text and evaluate its structural framework. It is the activity making me creative and strong in ideas. I believe to be critical is to be creative and this is only possible through reading national and international literature and this process makes me a good writer”.

Creativity is observed among respondents while looking at above response. This can be called critical creativity developed and strengthened by reading. Students read English novels, drama and poetry and prose. Moreover, students elaborated techniques which make good reader.

2. HOW TO IMPROVE READING SKILLS?

2.1 READING DIFFERENT BOOKS, ARTICLES, MAGAZINES AND NEWS PAPERS

Students have suggested that reading skill can be improved through reading various books, magazines, research articles, and any authentic material prescribed for academic courses. This, students interpret as an act of moving towards reading fluency which is rapid, interactive, efficient and communicative process. Suggestions are very meaningful because they communicate interest and motivation of female students in reading various materials for improvement. They also suggested that reading is patient activity which needs concentration. Some of the participants showed preference for fluency and accuracy in process of reading.

3.2 FLUENCY AND ACCURACY

Participants suggested that fluency and accuracy may be maintained in reading. This is possible through regular reading activities. The outcome of students’ response shows that students are somewhat fluent and accurate reader. Here are words of one of the participants:

“I am fluent and accurate reader because I read different books of language, Literature, philosophy and religion, and I suggest the same strategy for others as well”.

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This states students’ motivation in reading different authors who have written on language and other subjects. The central point to highlight is to advocate student’s intrinsic motivation for reading.

3. HOW TO BE GOOD READER

More importantly, female participants reported that consistency in reading makes good at skill. They have pointed out many factors which work for making good readers. Some of these are as follows:

1. Reading much with different purposes
2. Using reading strategies
3. Employing reading models; such as bottom up- top down and interactive approaches
4. Spending a lot of time for reading
5. Reading between the lines
6. Maintaining fluency and accuracy
7. Doing practice of reading material
8. Guessing meaning from the text
9. Focusing on grammatical construction
10. Integrating reading and writing

These ideas represent students’ views about becoming good readers. They have described all features concerning reading skills. A variety in these opinions reveals students’ reading motivation. This analysis of open ended statements indicates that students’ reading motivation is compatible with that of statistically analyzed results. Willingness to be creative and good at reading suggests that students are motivated to read intensively and extensively for personal and professional growth.

4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has some limitations to be noted. First, the size of sampling in fact is small. Second, time constraint was another factor because the researcher could not have enough time to extend the research. Third, only female participants were selected. The study could have extensive findings if comparative were made between female and male students’ reading motivation. The findings of the study cannot be generalized because it is contextualized study of female students majoring in English language and literature at Lasbela University. Last but not least, the study could be expanded if focus group interviews were added. However, the results are helpful for concerned teachers and students who were contributors in this research project.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that female students are at medium level of reading efficacy, reading competition and reading accuracy and fluency. The findings have proved that students are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to towards reading various authentic material. However, the study implies that students’ reading ability is neither poor nor high but they stand at medium level. It tends show that students’ reading motivation is a matter of further concern. The result has indicated that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have worked on students’ reading abilities. Above all, the conducted study indicates a new paradigm of research which may find out the reasons for not high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in reading.
REFERENCE


Mori, S. (2002). Redefining motivation to read in a foreign language. Reading in a Foreign Language, 14, 1539-0578


APPENDIX (1)

MOTIVATIONAL READING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Strongly Agree  2. Disagree – 3 Neutral- 4 Agree- 5  Strongly disagree

Reading accuracy, fluency- reading competition- motivation for reading and  reading anxiety

1. I avoid making mistakes in reading.
2. I always focus on accuracy in reading.
3. I am a good reader-
4. When I read in the class I skim and scan reading material. I always read to be good at reading skills
5. Teacher motivates me to read as much as I can
6. Teacher encourages me to increase reading skills
7. I wish to improve reading skills in my English class.
8. I feel nervous when teacher asks me to read out in front of the class.
9. I am anxious if I read in the public places
10. I read much because I want to see my name on the list of good readers.
11. I like to finish reading before other students
12. I read to improve my grades
13. If I fail to understand the meaning of any word, I try to understand it in the context.
14. I look forward learn more from reading than any thing else in the world

Second part of the questionnaire

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS.

1. Who motivates me to read?
2. Why do I read much?
3. What do you suggest to improve reading skill?
4. How to be good reader?
### Appendix (2) Correlations

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