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The Impact of Motivation on Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

Motivation is one of the important factors which impact greatly on language learning. One of the most important factors which receives the special focus in foreign language teaching is reading motivation. More recently, studies on reading motivation have also gained much interest. This review paper is going to consider the impact of reading motivation on reading comprehension. In this paper, the researcher explains the terms reading motivation, different types of motivation, reading comprehension, and different models of reading comprehension. The review of this study showed that reading motivation had a considerably positive effect on reading comprehension activities.

Keywords: reading motivation, types of motivation, reading comprehension, models

1. Introduction

According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), English language learning is one of the important factors that affect international communication activities. Learners use English language in different areas such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing for their communication purposes. One of the most important factors for learning is the method that teachers use in their classes to facilitate language learning. Along with the improvement of international communication activities in the world, reading motivation is becoming more important and focuses on the four language skills and reading comprehension is of vital importance in English language learning.

Grabe and Stoller (2002) also emphasized that reading motivation is very important for learners and it increases learners' reading comprehension. It is important for learners to read and understand texts easily and effectively. Therefore, all EFL learners need to improve their reading motivation for a better understanding of written texts.

According to Seymour and Walsh (2006), motivation affects learners' reading comprehension activities. While it has a significant role in language learning, many do not know its great importance in reading comprehension. Reading motivation helps EFL learners read more efficiently. This has also been supported by Wang (2008) and Rosenfeld, Leung, and Oltman (2001) who emphasized that learners who learn a foreign language should develop their reading ability for the better comprehension of written texts.

According to Kintsch (1998), van Dijk and Kintsch (1983), and Pourhosein Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text. The aim is to understand a text rather than to acquire meaning from individual words or sentences. Ahmadi, Hairul, and Pourhosein Gilakjani (2012) stressed that reading comprehension is one of the significant elements in language learning because it provides the foundation for a substantial amount of learning in EFL learners.

2. Reading Motivation

According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), reading motivation is the enormous quantity of motivation that learners should consider their positive or negative idea about reading. For example, learners who read for pleasure and engaging approaches to support their understanding are extremely motivated readers. Learners of this kind usually consider reading to be a significant element in their daily activities, receive challenges in the reading process and are likely to be effective readers. Furthermore, reading motivation is one's own purpose, idea, and interest related to the title, action, and the consequences of the reading.

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Pachtman and Wilson (2006) stated that it is vital to motivate learners to read by giving them opportunities to select their interest materials. In other words, readers want to read more when they are permitted to select their reading materials because they must discover that reading is a pleasurable activity. According to Hairul, Ahmadi, and Pourhosein (2012), reading motivation is the large amount of motivation that students have to concentrate their positive or negative opinions about reading. For instance, learners who read for pleasure and employing approaches to help their comprehension are extremely motivated readers. Learners of this kind typically consider reading to be an important factor in their daily activities, accept challenges in the reading process and are likely to be successful readers.

Hairul, Ahmadi, and Pourhosein (2012) said that reading motivation has a great impact on reading comprehension. The researchers continued that reading motivation impacts all aspects of motivation and reading comprehension strategies in different conditions. They also emphasized that students' motivation absolutely affects their reading; it means that students with stronger reading motivation can be expected to read more in wider range.

According to Hairul, Ahmadi, and Pourhosein (2012), one of the most important factors which help learners read more is reading motivation and it has an important impact on reading comprehension. Therefore, many investigators have been well aware of the significance of motivation in the target language learning and how motivation increases comprehension among language learners. There are different types of motivation and they are explained in the following section.

3. Different Types of Motivation

There are four types of motivation. They are integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation. They are explained in detail.

3.1 Intrinsic Motivation

Arnold (2000) stated that intrinsic motivation is learning itself that has its own reward. Students voluntarily try to learn what is very important for them. They have internal desire to learn and they do not have the need for external results. There are not any negative effects in having intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation pushes the learners to learn without rewards because the need is innate and depends on their own desire. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), teachers do not have great effects on their learners' intrinsic motivation because they are from various backgrounds and the sole way to motivate learners is to make the class a supportive environment.

Dörnyei (1990), Pourhosein Gilakjani, Leong, and Saburi (2012), and Alizadeh (2016) defined intrinsic motivation as the motivation to engage in an activity that is enjoyable to do. Bomia et al. (1997 as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011) defined intrinsic motivation as the abilities that stem from within an individual which cause him/her to act or learn. Examples are one's self-concept, self-respect, self-confidence, and emotional needs. Self-motivation leads the learners to go beyond the requirements of an educational course because they are looking for learning about the subject not just performing a restricted number of requirements.

Inner desire and internal needs and wants are defined as intrinsic motivation. For example, students would study more if they have an individual attention in what they are learning about and are permitted to select their own activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Hairul, Ahmadi, and Pourhosein (2012) explained that intrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is driven by internal rewards. This is different from extrinsic motivation which includes engaging in a behavior in order to receive external rewards or avoid punishments.

3.2 Extrinsic Motivation

According to Arnold (2000), extrinsic motivation is a desire to obtain a reward and stop punishment. This kind of motivation emphasizes external need to urge students to participate in learning activities like assignment, grade, or performing something that pleases teachers. Harmer (1991) said that both integrative and instrumental motivation 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. When learners learn something due to the rewards, they will have the high motivation to enter their classes and will also easily get the aim that are set for them. When these rewards are taken away and there isn't any punishment for the learners, they will not show any eagerness to take part in their classes and will not be certainly able to learn more (Harmer, 1991).

According to Bomia et al. (1997 as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011), extrinsic motivation is the outside sources that affect a person to act or learn. Examples are rewards, positive or negative results, and comfort or

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discomfort. When this external source provides enough conditions, learning can easily occur. When the external input stops or does not provide adequate worth to the learner, then the eagerness to learn will stop. Dörnyei (1990), Pourhosein Gilakjani, Leong, and Saburi (2012), and Alizadeh (2016) defined extrinsic motivation as the actions that are carried out to obtain some instrumental objectives such as getting a reward or preventing a punishment.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985), extrinsic motivation is defined as an individual reward which will get as a result of any instrumental activities. Extrinsic motivation refers to the motivation that comes from outside rewards such as money or grades. The motivation comes from the pleasure one gets from the task itself or from the sense of satisfaction in completing or even working on a task.

Hairul, Ahmadi, and Pourhosein (2012) said that extrinsic motivation refers to performing an activity simply for the pleasure of the action itself rather than its instrumental value. For instance, a learner who does his/her assignment only because he/she fears parental sanctions for not doing it is extrinsically motivated because he/she is doing the work in order to get the separable result**s** of avoiding sanctions. Similarly, a learner who does the work as he/she individually believes it is valuable for her chosen career is also extrinsically motivated because he/she too is doing it for its instrumental value.

3.3 Integrative Motivation

Saville-Troike (2006) defined integrative motivation as the desire to be a part of significant members of the community. It is based on interest in learning a second language due to their need to learn about or connect with the people who use it or the aim or intention to take part in the second language using the similar language in that society. Gardner and Lambert (1959), Pourhosein Gilakjani, Leong, and Saburi (2012), and Alizadeh (2016) defined integrative motivation as the language learning for personal development and cultural richness; that is, the learner is keen on learning a language to enter into the target language community.

According to Hairul, Ahmadi, and Pourhosein (2012), integrative motivation refers to when students want to learn a language to become part of a speech community. They argued that learners who want to communicate with the native speakers of the target language have a stronger need to learn the language and they achieve more success in language learning.

Saville-Troike (2005) said that learners with integrative motivation are also interested in the culture related with that language. Language learners who are integratively motivated are more successful than those who are instrumentally motivated because their motivation is stronger than that of instrumentally motivated students.

3.4 Instrumental Motivation

Saville-Troike (2006) stated that instrumental motivation includes the notions of practical value in learning a second language to enhance learners' business opportunities, giving them more reputation and power, obtaining scientific information, or passing a course of their study. According to Gardner and Lambert (1959), Pourhosein Gilakjani, Leong, and Saburi (2012), and Alizadeh (2016), instrumental motivation arises from a need to learn a second language for different purposes.

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), instrumental motivation is defined as wanting to learn a language for the need of gaining some actual aims such as an occupation, promotion, or the ability to read academic materials. Learners with an instrumental motivation need to learn a language because of practical purposes such as receiving a salary bonus or admitting into a university. Many EFL learners have a clear instrumental motivation for language learning and want to achieve a university requirement (Hairul, Ahmadi, & Pourhosein, 2012).

4. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the process of making meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that involve language, word reading, word knowledge, and fluency (Cain, Oakhill, & Bryant, 2004; Paris, 2005). According to Kintsch and Rawson (2005), Joffe, Cain, and Maric (2007), and McGrew and Wendling (2010), text comprehension includes processing at various levels.

The reader makes a semantic network of opinions as they try to identify the meaning of a text. The reader uses language and visual skills to decode words and combine words and phrases that construct meaning. That is, links and syntactic connections are shaped, revised, and revisited in the reading process as a means for making and keeping coherence. Kintsch and Rawson (2005) continued that comprehension is more than the sum of these processes but rather the holistic coordination and involvement of these processes for reading comprehension.

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Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012) expressed that reading comprehension is a cooperative mental practice between a reader'**s** linguistic knowledge (knowledge of the world) and knowledge about a given subject. Reading comprehension is a communicating procedure in which readers interact with the text as their background knowledge is activated.

According to Rahmani and Sadeghi (2011), reading comprehension is defined as the level of recognizing a text/message. This recognition comes from the communication between the words that are written and how they activate knowledge outside the text/message. Reading comprehension depends on the ability to understand words fast. If word understanding is hard, learners use too much of their processing ability to read individual words which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read.

Rahmani and Sadeghi (2011) continued that learners need to learn to analyse a text for comprehending even before they can read it on their own and comprehension instruction. According to Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012) and Rahmani and Sadeghi (2011), comprehension instruction consists of learners answering instructors' questions and writing answers to questions on their own or both.

5. Different Models of Reading Comprehension

There are three models of reading method: the bottom-up method, the top-down method, and the interactive method.

5.1 Bottom-up Method

According to Carrell (1989), the bottom-up method starts with decoding the smallest linguistic parts, particularly phonemes, graphemes, and words and eventually constructs meaning from the smallest to the largest elements. The learners relate their background knowledge to the information they find in the texts. This bottom-up method is also known as data-driven and text-based reading. This reading method concentrates on the smaller elements of a text such as its letters, words, phrases, and sentences.

Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012) and Carrell (1989) declared that in the bottom-up method, the learners will only be successful in reading if they correctly decode the linguistic elements and understand the connection between words. It is very difficult for the learners to store the meaning of every word of a text in their memory and connect one word to the other words.

5.2 Top-down Method

Nuttall (1996) and Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012) defined top-down method as the idea of reading as a psycholinguistic predicting game in which the reader uses his/her prior knowledge or written schemata to join with a text and to communicate these to new or unexpected materials found in the text to recognize it. Top down method emphasizes on linguistic guess work rather than graphic textual information. The learners do not want to read every word of a text but they focus on guessing the next group of words. While reading, they may hypothesize the message the writer wants to convey and change their hypotheses based on what they read in the text.

According to Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012), comprehension begins with the upper levels of processing and proceeds to the use of the lower levels. Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012) also emphasized that top-down method is the stepwise design or decomposition that breaks down a system to get insight into its compositional sub-systems.

5.3 Interactive Method

According to Carrell (1989) and Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012), interactive method is the interaction between bottom-up and top-down methods. The interactive method is a process based on information from many sources such as orthographic, lexical, syntactic, semantic knowledge, and schemata. When reading word by word, readers with good bottom-up skills do not comprehend the texts, they should use their background knowledge to support them which is called interactive model. This method is made on the interaction of the bottom-up and top-down models.

Nunan (1990) and Ahmadi and Pourhosein (2012) declared that language learners may use top-down reading to compensate for deficiencies in bottom-up reading. In order to realize meaning, learners should use their schemata to compensate for the lack of bottom-up knowledge.

Stanovich (1980) expressed that learners who rely on the top-down method use textual clues and predict the meaning and try to compensate for deficits such as weaknesses in word recognition and lack of effective bottom-up processing. The interactive method leads to the most effectual processing of texts. Stanovich (1980) emphasized that while the interactive method supports language learners in gaining successful reading, teachers should find reading instructions to make better their readers' abilities.

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6. Previous Studies on the Impact of Motivation on Reading Comprehension

Dornyei (2006) and Grabe (2009) carried out a research and found that there is a strong impact of motivation on reading comprehension proficiency. The researchers demonstrated that motivation relates to all features of motivation and affected on reading comprehension and facilitated reading in different levels of learners. Schutte and Malouff (2007) described that learners' motivation affects their readings. Learners with higher motivation are expected to read more in a wider range.

Gottfried (1990) carried out a study and indicated that reading comprehension was positively related with intrinsic motivation for reading. According to Gottfried, Cook, Gottfried, and Morris (2005), learners with exceptionally high academic intrinsic motivation performed better on different reading measures from the elementary to the high school grades.

Morgan and Fuchs (2007) explained that motivation is an important aspect which helps learners read more and it has an important relationship with reading and recognizing texts. Similarly, Ahmadi and Hairul (2012) stated that many researchers have been well aware of the significance of motivation in target language learning and how motivation increases comprehension among language learners (Cox & Guthrie, 2001).

According to Schutte and Malouff (2007), it is very important to motivate learners to read through providing them opportunities to select their own favorite materials. Learners would be able to read more when they are allowed to choose their reading materials. Consequently, it can be concluded that learners with high motivation would read more than learners with lower motivation (Pachtman & Wilson, 2006).

Guay et al. (2010) found girls to have higher intrinsic motivation for reading and writing than boys did. Lucas (2010) states that learners are intrinsically motivated to learn speaking and reading skills and they are also intrinsically motivated through knowledge and accomplishment. According to Tercanlioglu (2001), Turkish learners have a positive attitude towards reading because they read both for intrinsic and extrinsic aims.

Takase (2007) carried out a study towards the factors motivating Japanese learners to read English extensively. The findings obtained from this study indicated that intrinsic motivation is the most important factor in L2 and L1 reading motivation and there wasn't any positive relationship between L1 reading motivation and L2 reading motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is a stronger indicator of the learners' larger reading amount (Wang & Guthrie, 2004) and better text comprehension (Lau & Chan, 2003; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Positive relationships between intrinsic motivation and reading amount were found in Takase (2007), Dhanapala (2006), and Tercanlioglu (2001) with EFL learners in Japan, Sri Lanka, and Turkey.

In Dhanapala (2006) and Tercanlioglu (2001), extrinsic motivation positively correlated with reading amount. Lin, Wong, and McBride-Chang (2012) found that learners' L2 reading comprehension was predicted by an extrinsically-oriented dimension. Takase (2007) found no significant correlations between motivation and text comprehension with EFL learners in Japan.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, the researcher examined some important points related to the effect of motivation on reading comprehension. This review of literature indicated that learners with higher motivation in reading comprehension would advance more than other learners with lower motivation. Motivation is one of the key factors to assist learners' reading comprehension. Motivation helps both performance and understanding of one's reading comprehension. This paper showed that the explicit instruction of motivation is a practical tool to improve learners' reading comprehension. One of the significant consequences of this study is that EFL learners should be motivated to increase their reading comprehension ability and become proficient readers. Reading motivation can lead to the improvement in language learning performance for different levels of learners irrespective of what learning context they are in. On the whole, it can be stated that EFL teachers should go beyond their traditional roles by providing opportunities for their EFL learners to become motivated and substantially improve their reading comprehension proficiency.

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