

ESL PERFORMANCE IN READING MOTIVATION AND READING COMPREHENSION IN DEMOCRATIC AND AUTHORITARIAN CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

In spite of much great research since the last three decades, still there are many essential things about motivation that we need to know. It becomes a mystery because although it exists in everyone but the way of showing is different in terms of degree, time and context. One of the important responsibilities of school administrator is discovering and nurturing motivation between individuals in any educational process. The purpose of the study is to investigate the process of reading motivation and Reading Comprehension in relation to both Malaysian higher educational context types namely, Democratic and Authoritarian with learners' gender to find out whether the degree of performance qualitatively vary as educational context and learners' variable vary. To this end, three hypotheses were raised, which were tested through lengthy and multi instrumental procedures. Results showed that educational context have significant effect on learner performance. Students out performed in Democratic context in both reading motivation and reading comprehension and the Democratic educational setting gender groups showed highest performance level and the Authoritarian setting groups stood as a lowest performance.

Keywords: *Intrinsic Motivation, Educational Context, Reading Motivation, Reading Comprehension, Learners' Variable*

INTRODUCTION

According to Old father (2002), behaviors of reading can be influence by motivation in terms of culture and language. In addition, Watkins & Coffey (2004) note that without motivation even the advanced level readers hardly can be effective readers. Intrinsic motivation in terms of reading, as states by Wigfield (1997a, b) is consists of significant components which are essential for the students to become more proficient reader such as curiosity in learning in interested topic, the pleasure which can be gained through reading interesting materials, also challenging in difficult idea or complex learning. It needs to be concerned that individuals can be motivated through a large variety of needs. It is one of the important qualities that all members of community such as, teachers and students must have and it needs to be rewarded and increased.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985), Based on intrinsic motivation there is no any outside pressure and it is drive by an interest and satisfaction, but in Extrinsic motivation getting rewards is the main part and is called the reflection of outside control which is considerably varied in its relative autonomy. Skillful readers, according to Wigfield & Guthrie (1997), from grade 3 to above show the behavior which is intrinsically motivated and they are interested in reading and they are reading for the sake of reading.

Readers, who are intrinsically motivated, are completely involved with reading process, enjoying the reading experience and reading for the long period of time with excellent cognitive proficiency. Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox (1999), postulated that curiosity, involvement,

enjoying reading the complicated materials, predicting reading comprehension and reading frequency of students, are the significant elements of intrinsic motivation for reading. According to Cox & Guthrie (2001), connection between essence and achievement in reading is the most potent measurement in education. When achievement is increasing reading is increasing too. Similarly, when the volume of reading is increase causes great amount of achievement. When students are highly motivated without having any competence, they want to read but they can't, and in the situation that students having high competence without any motivation, although they can read but they avoid. Having competence and commitment in reading, in fact are essential for educational process. Obviously, because majority of tasks that needs to be performed by the students are neither fascinating nor pleasurable, using extrinsic motivation strategy is one of the paramount way for successful teaching.

RATIONAL FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

Wilson and Trainin (2007) note that, teachers by using classroom environment can have a significant capacity to motivated students. They can consciously make instructional decisions in order to escalate students' motivation. Now the question is: what if educational contexts vary? is it true that the more democratic the language learning context, the high degree of motivation, then the better language learners and does the degree of motivation ascend from more authoritarian to more democratic educational context? By reviewing the existing literature, we can see that many studies have been done to explore the relationship between motivation and reading in usual and conventional type of context but so far to the best of author knowledge no research study in Malaysia has explored the exists relationship between two tests of reading motivation and reading comprehension in two different educational contexts (Authoritarian & Democratic) with considering gender as a variable.

This study is trying to make a great effort and shed some light on the interplay among reading motivation and reading comprehension in Democratic and Authoritarian contexts and is grounded in the opinion of many researchers in the field of motivation, self-efficacy and gender (Harter, Whitesell, & Kastelic, 1998; Matsui & Onglatco, 1991).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does the degree of performance on reading motivation and reading comprehension among ESL learners vary as educational context vary?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female performance on the reading motivation in democratic and authoritarian contexts?
3. Is there any significant difference between male and female performance on the Reading comprehension in democratic and authoritarian contexts?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. The degree of performance on reading motivation and reading comprehension among ESL learners does not vary as educational context vary.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female performance on reading motivation in democratic and authoritarian context.
3. There is no significant difference between male and female performance on reading comprehension in democratic and authoritarian context.

DEFINITION OF BASIC TERMS

Democratic context and Authoritarian context were defined by Puhl and Klerk as follows,

- I. **Democratic Context:** in such a context freedom is associated in formal situation or between learners in casual condition. Formality is considered as a less important factor in the class and between the learners, and there is more flexibility in economic considerations with applying policies conservatively.
- II. **Authoritarian Context:** this context is mostly related to educational context and inflexibility, strict rules and teacher centeredness are the most important characteristics of this context. Undoubtedly, such a strict approach automatically will affects teachers and students attitudes about education and also it has a great effect in the management policy of the whole classroom.

READING MOTIVATON

According to Schiefele (1999), motivational achievement and specific areas in motivation for instance reading, are constructed as 'multidimensional phenomena'. The goals of using reading motivation were explored by Guthrie (2000). He explained different aspects of motivation in terms of reading, such as intrinsic motivation, self-efficiency, social motivation, and mastery of performance orientation and noted that when children start going to school the degree of motivation is decreasing (p.10). One of the possible reasons is that they may become aware of their inability to read as well as their classmate, and another possible reason is learning strategies which are not covering students' educational needs. Few suggestions for solving lack of motivation in reading was provided by him, for instance, when teachers and students designing goals together, self-monitoring in student will be improve.

LIMITATION

Certain limitations are imposed on this study. The results, thus, should be interpreted by taking the limitations into consideration.

1. The sample is limited to undergraduate students in Language School Teacher in Malaysia.
2. There was no control over some extraneous variables that could influence the subjects' performance, among them intelligence, fatigue, etc.
3. There was no any control group utilized.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Pressley (2000), knowledgeable and strategic reader is considerers as a person who can comprehend a text perfectly. This kind of comprehension, as stated by Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, needs cognition and motivation. On the other hand, Old father (2002) and Wigfield (1997a) believe that performance in reading are influenced by motivation in terms of languages and cultures and according to Watkins & Coffey (2004), without motivation, expert readers also can not be a successful readers. Different types of motivation have influence on reading performance; for instance, in order student become more skillful essential factors such as intrinsic reading motivation, which is included curiosity in learning and pleasure that comes from interested materials is required. (Wigfield 1997).

For develop students reading motivation, creating a positive and supportive conditions are necessary. By reviewing of literature we can realize that, many researchers have concentrated in motivation and reading, for example Lau (2004) and Wang & Guthrie (2004) investigation was in Chinese native language and some studies were focused on relation between reading motivation and reading comprehension in ESL context. Lau (2004) investigates motivational factors such as self efficiency, intrinsic and extrinsic and social motivation on Chinese reading in terms of reading comprehension and academic achievement. Their findings revealed strong relation in reading comprehension and academic achievement between aspects of self-efficacy, ability in attributing strategy and intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, the role of motivation in reading comprehension between two cultures of Chinese and American was examined by Wang and Guthrie (2004). Their findings show that reading comprehension can be predicted positively in both cultures with intrinsic motivation in terms of gaining pleasure from reading activity and, reading comprehension negatively predicted in terms of skills, grads, identifying from others and having activities with expecting external demand. Differences in motivation can be explained in terms of different cultures and different contexts.

According to Carrell (1991); Grabe and Stoller (2002), one of the critical view in academic success is toward reading ability. During reading activities many processes are occurring which can be vary between the readers. Gender is one of the variables in process of reading and have been studied by many researchers and they come up with the different conclusions. Some of their conclusion supported females as out performer and others supported males (Brantmeier, 2001, 2003; Bügel and Buunk, 1996; Myers, 2002). O'Reilly and McNamara (2007) in measuring knowledge of science, science test and comprehension passage, explored that male with the high score is out performed females. As indicated by Bugel and Buunk (1996) study regarding gender differences in L2 comprehension, male's scores were higher in reading comprehension tests. They concluded that one of the important factors to explain gender differences in L2 reading comprehension is the topic of the text.

ATTITUDE AND INTEREST AS FACTORS IN MOTIVATION

The terms attitude and interest are frequently used together and the both concepts are related to entirely different parts of reading motivation. Brophy (2004) and Stipek (2002) divided interest in two distinct categories, namely situational interest and personal interest.

Feeling of the person in certain activities, influences of environmental factors which are briefing the activity, are refers to situational factors, meanwhile personal interest is refers to students' temperament in specific topic which continue to exist for a long time. In addition, they are not completely separate (Brophy 2004 and Stipek 2002). If, for instance, excitement in situational interest happens constantly, personal interest in topic and the connection between them can be happen. Generally speaking, choice of reader's in reading is related to interest which is changing based on likes and dislikes, for instance, they may like descriptive writing about business because they are interested in business and on the other hand, readers feeling toward reading is called attitude which can be change in different situation, such as having absolutely positive attitude about reading at school but refuse reading at home.

READING MOTIVATION THEORY

Based on Allan Wigfield and John T. Guthrie theory in concept of motivation the special field is reading motivation and the concept is quite different in comparing to traditional motivational theory. Having a clear definition of reading motivation is hard and obviously it can't be link with any concept of motivation in reading and they believe that in order to have completed reading motivation, factors such as personal motivation and social motivation are essential. After various studies they come up with the conclusion that reading motivation can't be define clearly with a single concept because it is consists of different motivational concept. However and after having further studies done by Bandura (1997); Eccles et al. (1983) and Nicholls (1990), they categorized the measuring factors in three distinct parts. Factors such as basic structure of child's ability and efficacy, takes place in the first part and basic concept of person's in intrinsic motivation, value, and goals served in the second part which is includes of reading curiosity and reading involvement. In reading curiosity children in natural tendency become interested in a desired topic and in reading involvement reader's experience, with different topics will be indicated.

The importance of reading, according to Wigfield & Eccles (1992), is the value of work which is derived from reading motivation process. They also stated another concept in which students doesn't want to read as "reading work avoidance". Wigfield and Guthrie (1997b) explained the reason that why students reading at school is involved with competition, comparing and evaluation with their classmates. Thus, another important factor in the concept of reading motivation is grades. Social aspects of reading are concerned in the third parts. One of the related factors is the social reasons for reading such as sharing important achievement from the process of reading with their friends and families. Another factor is compliance, for instance, what is the reason that children are reading just because of complying with an external objective. The ideas behind these concepts are derived from social objectives and motivational literatures (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997b).

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were 62 undergraduate students from Language School Teacher in Malaysia. Thirty one students were participated in Authoritarian class (13 female and 19 male), and thirty one in Democratic class (16 female and 15 male).

Measures and Procedures

After 10 weeks reading class student were set up for the final examination. In order to collect data required for the fulfillment of the objectives, different procedures were taken, starting from test preparation and test administration and data analysis stages.

Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

Six categories of Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) comprises 14 items were chosen, to measure reading motivation. The questionnaire is concerns the purposes that children's are having for reading. The particular aspect in this category consists of different part of motivational field such as intrinsic motivation,

achievement goal orientations, and achievement values. A learning goal orientation means the individual is focused on mastery and improvement, rather than outperforming others (Ames, 1992). For the MRQ, before starting the exam three different practice items were given to the students and author informed students briefly about the purpose of the questionnaire. They had 15 minutes to fill it up. Finally, after discarding the incomplete questionnaires the rest were used for statistical analysis. In order to increase the feasibility of the present study, to secure manageability, objectiveness, and practicality of the process, L1 version of the questionnaire was used. In order to have reliable tests both, questionnaire and reading comprehension tests were piloted on 15 students from the same school and through using K-R21 formula the reliability turned out to be .68 which was proven to be acceptable.

Reading Comprehension Knowledge

In order to measure comprehension knowledge samples of standard tests of Reading Comprehension including 15 multiple choice items taken from Oller and Perkins (1980) were given to the students. In order to measure idea and concept through comprehension it's quite complicated to differentiate those items which are focusing on literal information from those needs an inference. Therefore, students need to remember literal meaning of the text and understand what is beyond the explicit meaning of the text, and because items could not be divided to measure memory and skills separately, correct responses of students score was considered as a total number. Although using multiple-choice items for measuring comprehension levels is under question but in other hand there are some evidence shows successful use of multiple-choice items for measuring an inferences and literal information Haladyna (2004). Students were told that questions are measuring their reading comprehension knowledge, so they have to choose the correct response. Three practice tests were used before the exam and all measures were administered in early November. Learners were tested during their regularly scheduled language arts period. The measures were given over a 2-day period; to measure the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire given on day one, to measure comprehension knowledge on day two.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis No. 1

Does the degree of performance on reading motivation and reading comprehension among ESL learners vary as educational context vary?

An independent t-test is run to compare the means scores of the two types of contexts (Democratic and Authoritarian) on the motivation for reading questionnaire of the learners. The t-observed value is 20.53 (Table 1). This amount of t-value at 6S1 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical t-value, i.e. 1.99.

Table 1: Independent t-test Types of Context on Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.168	.080	20.531	61	.000	7.82483	.38112	7.06273	8.58693

20.454 57.039 .000 7.82483 .38255 7.05880 8.59087

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Types of Context on Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT	32	12.9660	1.32776	.23472
Authoritarian	31	5.1411	1.68192	.30208

Based on these results, it can be concluded that types of context have a significant effect on the motivation for reading questionnaire of the learners and they outperformed in democratic context.

An independent t-test is run to compare the means scores of the two types of contexts on the reading comprehension of the learners. The t-observed value is 6.84 (Table 3). This amount of t-value at 61 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical t-value, i.e. 2.

Table 3: Independent t-test Types of Context on Reading Comprehension

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.948	.168	6.840	61	.000	3.406	.498	2.410	4.402
			6.821	58.605	.000	3.406	.499	2.407	4.406

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Types of Context on Reading Comprehension

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT	32	10.50	2.141	.385
Authoritarian	31	7.09	1.802	.319

students performed better in Democratic context, thus the first null-hypothesis as the degree of performance on reading motivation and reading comprehension among ESL learners does not vary as educational context vary is rejected.

Analysis No. 2

Is there any significant difference between male and female performance on the reading motivation in democratic and authoritarian contexts?

An independent t-test is run to compare the male and female students' means scores on the motivation for reading questionnaire of the learners in democratic context. The t-observed value is 6.67 (Table 5). This amount of t-value at 30 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical t-value, i.e. 2.04.

Table 5: Independent t-test Motivation for Reading Questionnaire by Gender in Democratic Context

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.354	.254	6.676	30	.000	2.05719	.30813	1.42790	2.68647
			6.253	19.993	.000	2.05719	.32899	1.37092	2.74345

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics Motivation for Reading Questionnaire by Gender in Democratic Context

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FEMALE	13	11.7445	1.02492	.28426
MALE	19	13.8017	.72188	.16561

The male students performed better than the female students.

An independent t-test is run to compare the male and female students' means scores on the motivation for reading questionnaire of the learners in strict role context. The t-observed value is 3.70 (Table 7). This amount of t-value at 26 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical t-value, i.e. 2.05.

Table 7: Independent t-test Motivation for Reading Questionnaire by Gender in Authoritarian Context

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	6.911	.014	3.701	29	.001	1.89904	.51316	.84952	2.94856
			4.098	26.125	.000	1.89904	.46340	.94673	2.85134

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics Motivation for Reading Questionnaire by Gender in Authoritarian Context

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FEMALE	13	4.0385	.83611	.23189
MALE	18	5.9375	1.70215	.40120

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the gender of the students has a significant effect on the motivation for reading questionnaire of the learners in both contexts. Thus the second null-hypothesis that gender does not have any significant effect on the motivation for reading questionnaire of the learners in strict role context is rejected.

Analysis NO. 3

Is there any significant difference between male and female performance on the Reading comprehension in democratic and authoritarian contexts?

An independent t-test is run to compare the male and female students' means scores on the reading comprehension of the learners in strict role context. The t-observed value is 6.97 (Table 9). This amount of t-value at 29 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical t-value, i.e. 2.04.

Table 9: Independent t-test Reading Comprehension by Gender in Democratic Context

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.074	.788	6.975	29	.000	-6.756	.969	4.775	8.738
			6.929	25.388	.000	-6.756	.975	4.750	8.763

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics Reading Comprehension by Gender in Democratic Context

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FEMALE	13	17.08	2.722	.755
MALE	18	23.83	2.618	.617

The male students outperformed the female students.

An independent t-test is run to compare the male and female students' means scores on the reading comprehension of the learners in democratic context. The t-observed value is .63 (Table 11). This amount of t-value at 30 degrees of freedom is lower than the critical t-value, i.e. 2.04.

Table 11: Independent t-test Reading Comprehension by Gender in Authoritarian Context

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.013	.910	.637	30	.529	.834	1.310	1.842	3.510
			.637	25.964	.530	.834	1.310	1.859	3.527

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics Reading Comprehension by Gender in Authoritarian Context

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FEMALE	13	13.69	3.637	1.009
MALE	19	14.53	3.642	.836

Based on these results, the male students outperformed the female students and it can be concluded that the gender of the students has a significant effect on the reading comprehension of the learners in both contexts. Thus the third null-hypothesis gender does not have any significant effect on the reading comprehension of the learners in strict role context is rejected.

CONCLUSION

This study offered useful hints to the educational planner, policy makers and curriculum developers to reconsider the current educational trend in general and language education in particular from the democratic-oriented toward authoritarian path. The factors which are influencing reading skills development were studied with various researchers and according to them the basic goals for instruction of reading and understanding of structure of text and organization of discourse are reading strategically and the development of strategic readers which can help students to develop their comprehension skills. Other guidelines for teaching reading, such as: making a plan for reading curricula, and to increase reading experience of student and make a decision to use meaningful instruction through vocabulary development was introduced by other scholars like, Grabe & Stoller (2001), Grabe (2004) and Koda (2005). This study confirmed that there are other factors involved in language learning process and can influence learning process seriously. It showed that educational setting type had an influence over reading motivation and reading comprehension. Analysis of data supported the conclusion that when learners are hopeful and confident in their learning condition, and feel enjoyable and relax with their surroundings and were not afraid to ask for help, they become motivated and begins to grow in terms of emotion, socialization and academic. One of the important points is the role of teacher in combination of above guidelines in reading instructions which are focusing on motivations and need of the students. He/she is the one who is discussing the reading goals with students and allowing students to read independently. Furthermore, create a positive and flexible context which, in my delight, is the central component of enhancing students learning.

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