

Received: 18 June 2020

Revision received: 20 October 2020

Accepted: 20 December 2020

Copyright © 2021 JESTP

www.jestp.com

DOI 10.12738/jestp.2021.1.010 ♦ January 2021 ♦ 21(1) ♦ 131-139

Article

Improving Reading Comprehension in EFL situation: A Correlation Analysis

Ninuk Lustyantie

Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

Ninuk.lustyantie@unj.ac.id

Rusnadi Ali Kasan

UIN Antasari, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

rusnadi@gmail.com

Abstract

Reading interest and Achievement motivation are two important factors that can improve students' language acquisition. Reading interest is intrinsic, while achievement motivation is extrinsic. This study determined the direct impact of reading interest and achievement motivation on improving text reading comprehension in EFL classrooms. Quantitative methods using path analysis methods can achieve this goal. Questionnaire surveys and reading comprehension tests of English texts were used as tools and were assigned to 60 undergraduate English literature and English education students. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The results showed that that reading interest and achievement motivation have a positive influence on reading comprehension. The learning process applied in formal and non-formal institutions must be adjusted and supported by facilities to foster interest in reading to achieve achievement motivation. In this way, this helps improve EFL reading and writing skills in the 21st century, especially English texts' comprehension.

Keywords

Reading Interest • Achievement Motivation • Reading Comprehension • English Texts • EFL

Correspondence to Ninuk Lustyantie, Universitas Negeri Jakarta. Jakarta, Indonesia, Correspondence Author: ninuk.lustyantie@unj.ac.id

Citation: Lustyantie, N., & Kasan, R.A. (2021). Improving Reading Comprehension in EFL situation: A Correlation Analysis. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 21(1), 131-139 <http://dx.doi.org/10.12738/jestp.2021.1.010>

Introduction

Among all language skills, reading is an exceedingly difficult skill for EFL students to master, mainly due to their comprehension ability. In addition, it not only involves pronunciation symbols or letters, but it also has the goal of deepening a concept through understanding and meaning of words. Reading is defined as a multi-activity that involves physical and psychological activities. Although the use of electronics has been comprehensive and progressing in this era, electronics' function has not been able to change or replace written language. In today's 21st period, we cannot give up information dissemination through written means. Based on this phenomenon, reading skills are becoming more and more important. It is of greater significance in developing understanding in the early stages of learning and academic achievement in the later stages in other disciplines such as science and humanities (Abbott et al.,2017).

In the world of education, reading activities and assignments cannot be exchanged. This is because students' knowledge is obtained through reading activities; almost all reading activities are needed. Reading is a communication process connecting four basics: readers, texts, fluency, and tactical reading. This activity is creative and is required for understanding the meaning of the message, explaining, analyzing, or predicting the text to reach an understanding. In addition, readers are active participants, playing the core role of text interpretation, analysis, and prediction. In this case, the reader is a passive person who receives information from the text and stretches sense to the text.

Learning success is strongly influenced by the ability and motivation to read. In real, students need to have sufficient skills in reading to achieve well in gain information. The ability concern with the ability to comprehend the content of the reading. Moreover, the reader's symbol of the text appears at three recursive ranked stages, namely (a) language level (exact words and sentences), (b) level of semantics (real meaning produced by a single speech and sentence structure), and (c) Context level (the connotation of the text combined with the background knowledge of the text and the reader) (Bilal, Tariq, Masood, Nasim & Iqbal, 2013).

Reading comprehension is an important skill, which helps students acquire superior skills in obtaining information from various English language sources where reading is required. For students, English reading comprehension is one of the keys to achieving success in schools and colleges. Reading comprehension is assessed both verbally and in the writing form. It contains assessment exercises such as answering questions, filling in the missing words, acting out stories, group discussions, and peer assessments based on reading passages (Boyratz& Altinsoy, 2017). In countries such as Indonesia, where English is studied as a foreign language, reading ability is considered an important skill for students majoring in English. The English course is mainly related to text and narratives written in English, where students must read and understand them to develop good reading skills.

Several studies have been conducted on the reading comprehension of EFL students in Indonesia, all of which tell unpleasant stories about the practice of reading English as a foreign language. The reason is that the main focus is only on reading in the classroom and solving problems that arise on the spot. No attempt is made to examine the reasons behind those problems and mold teaching and learning of reading skills to resolve those problems. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language, and it is too difficult for teachers and students to find the right exposure to language learning in both use and application. Students and teachers Real-world examples are needed to supplement the language taught in class. English is used as a means of message and interface within some sections and in learning media such as published and electric books (e-books) and international journals available on the internet. Despite all this accessibility, an instructor is often disappointed not to get students' required reading comprehension.

In reading foreign language text, the process must involve a bilingual interaction. First, when reading, they can use the second language and rarely choose it as a method. This will take a while and make it difficult for students to do. They will find many new words and not understand the main idea. If this problem occurs, students are usually lazy to continue reading because they do not understand what they are reading, causing the learning process to be passive. In this case, extra effort will be needed if students read in an environment they

don't come from. It will be difficult to understand if you use a foreign language. Therefore, it is important to foster reading skills for future academic development. There are two factors involved that affect reading skills, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors include (a) Physiology: eyes and ears; (b) Psychology: reading interest, intelligence, visual perception, vocabulary mastery, and reading attitudes. External factors include: (a) teaching: teaching methods and interesting courses, available courses, and facilities, (b) community: environmental motivation.

An example of internal factors that greatly affect understanding is a person's reading interest. Reading interest means an acceptance of oneself or things. Interest grows when learners are motivated by something. Therefore, to understand reading, especially in English, the reader needs to have a strong motivation, increasing his reading interest. Reading interest is one of the most important aspects to have before the reading process. Highly valued is a component that requires measurement when the information civilization is introduced. The increase in concentration depends not only on the desire and courage to read difficulties. Some factors affect both internal (individual) and external (institutions). Individual factors exist in a person, namely age, gender, intelligence, reading ability, attitude, and physical needs. Official factors are factors other than individuals, including the number, type, social status of available books, parents' economic background and race, friends of the same age, and teachers and parents' influence.

One of the external factors that affect students' comprehension is achievement motivation. When educators want to improve students' language level, it is important to open up students' motivation first. Once the motivation to learn a language is stimulated, students will continue to learn. In addition, achievement motivation is an independent factor within students. The well-inspired reality of knowledge will show good results. As an incentive, this motivation plays a leading role in each student's achievement of the highest goal. It is also the driving force for maximum learning results. Motivation can help students enhance their learning motivation to achieve the best learning effect. In addition, they will have a high degree of self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment, which of course, will affect their acting performance. People with achievement motivation have the following characteristics: coping with challenges (especially in learning), thinking rationally (in this case), always being honest and enthusiastic about learning, performing well in groups, and always being able to interact with each other. Make adjustments with friends. The effect of this motivation can be seen from their learning activities. They show high enthusiasm, desire the best performance, and withstand the learning process's challenges.

Accomplishment inspiration is also significant in psychological growth because it can inspire students to overcome challenges, solve problems, compete healthily, and impact individual achievement. Thus, those with high motivation have a high success rate in every learning activity. Students will show higher reading comprehension ability in high scores when the motivation is high. Active students have the internal motivation to carry out learning activities and have enough energy to show resistance to difficulties. These problems, for example, meeting many difficult English words that they do not comprehend, deficient grammar information, and insufficient interest in reading English texts.

Literature Review

Reading comprehension is considered an important and significant skill that must be taught to a child at home and in educational institutions. The level achieved in Reading skills determines the success that one can gain in the academic career and life. It has also been observed that the method of oral reading directly impacts the reading comprehension of students. It is also found out that programs involving extensive reading directly and positively influence the students' reading performance. If a person could read, it ensures a successful educational career in any higher educational institution wherever s/he goes. The Reading skill is the survival skill, especially in the current century, both in student and professional life (Wigfield, Gladstone & Turci, 2016). Another study considers reading as a skill that facilitates students' learning process, thus leading towards academic excellence. If a student lacks the ability to read, it has various negative consequences. Some of the negative consequences include weak learning in an educational career, lack of reading motivation, poor performance at the jobs, etc. (McBreen & Savage, 2020). Reading comprehension is a useful skill, but at the same time, it is a quite complex cognitive procedure. Many researchers have explored this concept deeply, focusing on different components, procedures, and aspects related to reading in different scenarios. Those researchers aimed to investigate the effective methods to impart reading skills in students (Schiefele, Stutz & Schaffner, 2016).

The concept of reading comprehension is a process through which a person tries to understand and extract some meaning from the written text. Reading comprehension is the interaction of different factors such as the reader, the reading content, and the environment in which the content is being read. Another view of reading comprehension is that it involves various cognition-based activities, skills, and dimensions. These might include the assumption related to the words in the reading text, proper understanding of the text, a reaction to the understanding, etc. (Troyer, Kim, Hale, Wantchekon & Armstrong, 2019). Various factors impact reading comprehension in one way or the other. Some examples include the language of vocabulary, the background knowledge regarding the reading context, grammatical knowledge, knowledge of the meaning of words, and different reading methods.

There are other factors too that influence the reading comprehension of students. These factors make an impact on the academic performance of students. These include the motivation to read, deep involvement in reading and understanding, useful techniques to understand the content, vocabulary information, and the text structure. A study investigated three such factors related to reading comprehension. These include sensitivity to the structure of the story being read, results or meaning-extraction, and monitoring of understanding of the concepts (Louick, Leider, Daley, Proctor & Gardner, 2016)

Interest in reading can be defined as a person's interest to read something with different aims and objectives. Interest in reading and motivation are inter-related. If students are reinforced positively to read, it might have fruitful effects on students' reading motivation. Therefore, teachers in class must develop reading strategies that are effective enough to boost students' level of motivation and trust (Nevo, Vaknin-Nusbaum, Brande & Gambrel, 2020). Different steps can be taken to boost reading motivation among children. First, teachers are provided with a strong database of words for learning and reading materials that are effective and informative. Second, teachers are provided with a community of readers where they can share their views and ideas. They must try to make the reading and learning process tense-free and full of fun and help students identify and recognize students' hidden talents.

There are studies associated with the motivation of the second language learning, i.e., English learning program. These studies indicate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors, which shows that reading motivation has more than one dimension (Hwang & Duke, 2020). Results of studies reveal that reading motivation is causally related to reading performance. There is a deep association between the reading incentive of students and the process of reading comprehension. The greater is the reading motivation, the higher will be the reading comprehension. Its level can be determined by using the motivation multiplicity concept. Different factors that are considered to examine motivation include constructs such as control, interest, involvement, collaboration.

In addition, the contexts such as general context and specific context, various sources of evidence, etc., are also taken into consideration (McBreen & Savage,2020).

The reason why the reading motivation of students is found low is that students only read when it is essentially needed. In most non-native environments, especially in Arab countries, students do not perform an extensive reading. They read the English content only in the classroom, and they are not accustomed to reading outside the classroom. The less reading by students has been an issue almost all over the world. Another reason for less reading among students is their dislike for reading. There is a great difference between what they like to read and what is required to read (Pitcher et al.,2007). It can therefore be concluded that to increase the interest and encouragement of students to start reading, it is quite necessary to bridge the gap between the preference of the students to read and the requirement to read. The teachers should be aware of students' interests, especially in the context of reading and enhancing reading motivation.

Some studies have explored the challenges faced by non-native students and other factors that might impact their reading motivation (Vaknin-Nusbaum, Nevo, Brande & Gambrell, 2018). The research results show that students are more interested in reading the content if it is a story or a play specifically related to technology, adventure, sports, and computer. The important challenge they faced was that they did not have enough reading content or substantial in libraries. Besides, there are also other challenges: less time available for reading and lack of support from teachers and parents to read (Al-Nafisah,2011).

While learning the second language, four important skills must be focused on. These include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, reading is a significant skill or ability that develops the major under study's knowledge and understanding. There are activities included in reading texts that help students understand the purpose of their study. Reading is important because it provides the meaning and purpose of the written text. Reading helps them to obtain and understand the meaning of the content written, find the required information, and get the conclusion of the content (Kanonire, Lubenko, & Kuzmina, 2020). The important thing of reading is, therefore, the understanding of the reading content or text written. In other words, reading comprehension can be considered as the deduction of accurate information from the text.

The success of reading is based on several factors. These factors might be internal or external, lingual or non-lingual (McTigue, Solheim, Walgermo, Frijters & Foldnes, 2019). External factors are related to teachers, the reading content, the students' surroundings, and some social factors. The internal factors relate to the student's personality, such as self-efficacy, risk-taking, and risk-averse behavior, motivation, and interest in reading. According to a study, vocabulary is the most important factor in learning a second language. If vocabulary knowledge is higher, the reading comprehension is also higher in that student (Putro & Lee, 2017). A good and high vocabulary helps the learner get the text's idea about the content and comprehend it. In second language acquisition, the learner must often translate words from one language to another. Therefore, a good vocabulary plays an important role.

Method

This study used a purely quantitative approach with data collection using a survey method. The research sample consisted of 60 students of English literature and English Language Education from two public universities in Jakarta and Banjarmasin who were drawn by random sampling. The collected data were then analyzed using multiple linear regression inferential statistics using the IBM SPSS Statistics 23 application. Reading interest and achievement motivation were independent variables and English reading comprehension was the dependent variable. The research questionnaire before being used for data collection was tested using the instrument with the results as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Reliability analysis

Variable	Number of Item Valid	Cronbach's Alpha
Reading interest	34	0,899
Achievement motivation	33	0,892
English reading comprehension	26	0,977

4. Research Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the direct influence of reading interest and achievement motivation on English reading comprehension.

Table 2: Impact of reading interest and achievement motivation on reading comprehension

Model	R Square	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
Reading interest	0.322	0.544	3.278	0.000
Achievement motivation	0.087	0.310	2.897	0.021

Table 1 shows that in column Reading interest, the coefficients of determination (R²) are 0.322 and 0.087 in column Achievement motivation. Also, in error Achievement motivation, $\epsilon = 1 - R^2 = 1 - 0.087 = 0.913$. Furthermore, in Reading interest the value of F_o obtained is = 15,636. The results showed that db1 = 1; db2 = 58, the value of p = 0.000 is less than 0.05, therefore H₀ is subtracted.

In Achievement motivation the value of F_o = 4.756, db1 = 1, db2 = 58, and the value of p = 0.021, is smaller than 0.05. For this reason, H₀ is rejected. Each reading interest and achievement motivation influenced reading comprehension in English. The path coefficients are indicated by the Beta (Standard Coefficient) columns at Reading interest and Achievement motivation. The results also showed that py1 = 0.544; t₀ = 3.278, p value = 0.000 / 2 = 0.000 less than 0.05. H₀ is subtracted which indicates that reading interest has a direct positive effect on reading comprehension in English. In addition, py2 = 0.310; t₀ = 2.897, p-value = 0.021 / 2 = 0.010, smaller than 0.05 or H₀ was subtracted, meaning that achievement motivation had a direct positive effect on reading comprehension in English.

A constant reversion value of 0.322 shows a positive effect, indicating that the higher the reading interest, the greater the reading comprehension value in English, and vice versa. This coefficient's value means that for every 1 unit increase in reading interest, reading comprehension can increase by 0.322 units. The direct influence coefficient of reading interest on reading comprehension is 0.544 (Table 2). In addition, the effective value of the regression coefficient of 0.087 shows a positive effect, which means that the higher the achievement motivation, the better the English reading comprehension, and vice versa. This coefficient's value also means that for every additional unit of achievement motivation, English reading comprehension will increase by 0.087 units. The direct influence coefficient of achievement motivation on English reading comprehension is 0.310.

In this study, reading interest directly affects reading comprehension. Thus, increasing interest in reading will improve student understanding. Therefore, reading interest has a positive direct effect on English reading comprehension. These findings empirically support experts' theory or opinion about the effect of reading interest on English reading comprehension.

Students can focus on reading if they are interested in reading the topic. Reading comprehension can be improved if students' reading interest is high because it will explore their reading comprehension level. This finding is following research from Muzaki (2017). His research intends to find out how much students' reading interest in the second language and look for gender-based differences. The result is that reading interest, and gender differences are low. In this case, there is a need for actions that can lead to boys' reading interest development. Reading interest is determined high if the understanding received is high. Low comprehension of reading interest is enhanced by encouraging them to be able to increase their reading interest. The more diligent in reading the level of understanding the easier it is to measure. Reading ability greatly influences the improvement of content comprehension skills

This study shows that achievement motivation has a positive effect, especially in English, towards reading comprehension. This research is supported by research from Ningrum and Motandang (2017) regarding the correlation between student motivation and learning attainment regarding the level of reading

comprehension. The aim is to examine how the relationship between student motivation and student attainment. The result is the relationship between learning motivation, and learning achievement is significant. The solution of how to increase student motivation is ensuring the English teacher applying effective learning strategies. Students whose reading comprehension is low tend to have low learning motivation too. This can be seen because high motivation in understanding the reading is needed.

The amount of intensity is very influential on motivation in achievement to determine the success of learning. In this case, motivation is closely related to needs and self-change. If the motivation to learn is low, laziness will arise. This greatly affects the learning process and the work of assignments. Motivation function is particularly important in the student learning process. The higher the motivation, the higher the learning ability. In this case, motivation has a particularly important role in showing achievement motivation.

There are several motivational techniques, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation. Motivational techniques can increase intrinsic motivation in EFL students. Reading comprehension skills greatly affect motivation and attitudes and greatly affect comprehension in understanding reading. Students who have high motivation can understand the reading correctly. Students who excel are having high motivation compared to those who have low motivation, especially in the context of understanding English. The results showed that reading comprehension was influenced by motivation and reading interest, which led to achievement following the supporting theory above.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis results, it can be concluded that reading interest and achievement motivation have a positive influence on reading comprehension, especially in the field of English. If the higher the students' reading interest, the higher the motivation to achieve achievement and measure their abilities. In formal and non-formal institutions, the learning process must be more effective and develop students' reading interest, especially in the 21st century. This is, of course, extremely helpful for students in developing competence in the 21st century. The success of the learning process is carried out from home. Therefore, parents need a level of cooperation in developing the level of student self-confidence to trigger high motivation and enthusiasm for learning to generate interest in reading and increase student understanding. Further research can be done by conducting a research to identify other variables such as vocabulary, diction, and socioeconomic status.

References

- Abbott, R., Mickail, T., Richards, T., Renninger, K. A., Hidi, S. E., Beers, S., & Berninger, V. (2017). Understanding interest and self-efficacy in the reading and writing of students with persisting specific learning disabilities during middle childhood and early adolescence. *International journal of educational methodology*, 3(1), 41. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.12973%2Fijem.3.1.41>
- Abbott, R., Mickail, T., Richards, T., Renninger, K. A., Hidi, S. E., Beers, S., & Berninger, V. (2017). Understanding interest and self-efficacy in the reading and writing of students with persisting specific learning disabilities during middle childhood and early adolescence. *International journal of educational methodology*, 3(1), 41. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.12973%2Fijem.3.1.41>
- Al-Nafisah, K. (2011). Saudi EFL students' reading interests. *Journal of King Saud University-Languages and Translation*, 23(1), 1-9. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksult.2009.07.001>
- Bilal, H. A., Tariq, A. R., Masood, A., Nasim, G., & Iqbal, A. (2013). Developing second language reading comprehension through short story. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 28. doi:10.5296/ijele.v1i3.4152
- Boyras, S., & Altinsoy, E. (2017). Metacognitive awareness of reading strategies in EFL context. *International Journal of Language Academy*, 5(5), 159-167. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18033/ijla.3655>
- Hwang, H., & Duke, N. K. (2020). Content counts and motivation matters: Reading comprehension in third-grade students who are English learners. *AERA Open*, 6(1), 2332858419899075. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2332858419899075>
- Kanonire, T., Lubenko, J., & Kuzmina, Y. (2020). The Effects of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Reading Motivation on Reading Performance in Elementary School. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 1-13. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2020.1822961>

- Louick, R., Leider, C. M., Daley, S. G., Proctor, C. P., & Gardner, G. L. (2016). Motivation for reading among struggling middle school readers: A mixed-methods study. *Learning and Individual Differences, 49*, 260-269. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2016.06.027>
- McBreen, M., & Savage, R. (2020a). The Impact of a Cognitive and Motivational Reading Intervention on the Reading Achievement and Motivation of Students At-Risk for Reading Difficulties. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 0731948720958128*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0731948720958128>
- McBreen, M., & Savage, R. (2020b). The Impact of Motivational Reading Instruction on the Reading Achievement and Motivation of Students: a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis: Springer. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09584-4>
- McTigue, E. M., Solheim, O. J., Walgermo, B., Frijters, J., & Foldnes, N. (2019). How can we determine students' motivation for reading before formal instruction? Results from a self-beliefs and interest scale validation. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 48*, 122-133. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2018.12.013>
- Muzaki, F. I. (2017). Teaching Discourse Analysis through Listening for ESL Learners in Indonesia: A Conceptual Review. *International Journal of Language and Literature, 5*(1), 99-102. DOI: 10.15640/ijll.v5n1a14
- Nevo, E., Vaknin-Nusbaum, V., Brande, S., & Gambrell, L. (2020). Oral reading fluency, reading motivation and reading comprehension among second graders. *Reading and Writing, 1*-26. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-020-10025-5>
- Ningrum, S., & Matondang, S. A. (2017). The correlation between students' motivation and achievement in reading comprehension. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention, 4*(7), 3636-3639. DOI:10.18535/ijsshi/v4i7.10
- Pitcher, S. M., Albright, L. K., DeLaney, C. J., Walker, N. T., Seunariningsih, K., Mogge, S., . . . Hunt, R. (2007). Assessing adolescents' motivation to read. *Journal of Adolescent & adult literacy, 50*(5), 378-396. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.50.5.5>
- Putro, N. H. P. S., & Lee, J. (2017). Reading interest in a digital age. *Reading Psychology, 38*(8), 778-807. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2017.1341966>
- Schiefele, U., Stutz, F., & Schaffner, E. (2016). Longitudinal relations between reading motivation and reading comprehension in the early elementary grades. *Learning and Individual Differences, 51*, 49-58. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2016.08.031>
- Troyer, M., Kim, J. S., Hale, E., Wantchekon, K. A., & Armstrong, C. (2019). Relations among intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation, reading amount, and comprehension: a conceptual replication. *Reading and Writing, 32*(5), 1197-1218. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-018-9907-9>
- Vaknin- Nusbaum, V., Nevo, E., Brande, S., & Gambrell, L. (2018). Developmental aspects of reading motivation and reading achievement among second grade low achievers and typical readers. *Journal of Research in Reading, 41*(3), 438-454. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12117>
- Wigfield, A., Gladstone, J. R., & Turci, L. (2016). Beyond cognition: Reading motivation and reading comprehension. *Child development perspectives, 10*(3), 190-195. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12184>

