

# Motivation in Reading Authentic Texts

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## Abstract

This research was aimed to examine the effect of authentic materials on the students' motivation to read. At the same time, it was conducted to know their perception after being taught using the authentic materials in reading class in English as a Foreign Language context. The students of English Department at Halu Oleo University Kendari who programmed Reading II course were identified as the participants in this research. It was consisted of 22 students who enrolled in the second semester of the year. To collect the data, two techniques of data collection were used observations, and administering questionnaires

The results of the research indicate that analysis of observation sheet and questionnaire indicates that students' motivation during the six weeks of treatment improved. Another finding reported positive responses are shown by most of the participants toward the use of authentic materials. To conclude, the research proves that authentic materials have an effect to students' motivation to read.

**Keywords:** authentic texts, reading, motivation and EFL

## INTRODUCTION

The increasing numbers of people who want to improve their communication skills in English have increased the demand of learning English in the world. Because of these developments, any educational institutions who serve English as one of their subjects is expected to improve the quality of the language teaching, the teaching materials and the resources/teachers.

In order to become competent users of English, every learner is required to master four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is dealing with language messages in written or printed form by extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible (Urquhart and Weir, 1998 in Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009). One becomes language learning problems today is the ability of students who highly lack to understand various reading materials provided to them

Authentic materials expose learners to a wide of natural language, they bring reality into the classroom and make the interaction meaningful. Thus, the students can practice the skills learnt in the classroom in the outside world when they come across similar materials in real life. If we encourage reading it in the classroom, we can expect students to continue doing the same long after they have stopped studying with us. Furthermore, a number of studies has proven that the use of authentic materials results in an overall increase in motivation to learn, a more positive attitude toward learning, as well as increased involvement and interest in the subject matter. Most of them perceive authentic materials as useful, lifelike and interesting. According to Bacon and Finnemann (1990:459), authentic materials can promote both cognitive and affective reasons, in cognitive terms authentic materials make available of context for relating form to meaning in language acquisition process, while affective reason, it acts as motivators and overcomes the cultural barriers to language learning. In short, authentic materials help the students to see the relevance of what they do in the classroom to what they need to do outside it, and real life treated realistically makes the connection obvious.

In the case of EFL situation, mostly English is taught as a subject at school and used only inside, but not outside, the classroom. Students who are from environments where English is not the language of the country have very few opportunities to read the real language; these students therefore are not accustomed to reading the language as it is produced by native speakers for native speakers. As the result, students from the countries have great difficulty understanding English reading when they encounter with the real objects of the language. Students who intended to be a part of English community whether in EFL or ESL context should be provided with opportunities to interact to any objects or things used or created by the native speakers. It is hoped to help them familiar to, so that they will feel that they are treated as if they are the native speaker of the language. To achieve that purposes, teachers who used authentic materials need to explain the reason for the use of authentic materials and activities in the classrooms, as it can bring them to the more meaningful and valuable activities in reading.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Location

The participants were the second semester students of English Department at Halu Oleo University Kendari who programmed Reading II course. All of them speak Indonesian as the first language and had the same learning experience of English as a foreign language which they had been learning from elementary school. The total numbers of the participants were 22 students. The students attended the class once a week, for two hours.

**Research Design and Variables**

The research was a kind of survey research, it was to see the effect of authentic texts on students’ motivation to read. During the implementation of the experiment, the researcher observed both the students’ individual and overall motivation.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The instruments used in this research were observation sheets and questionnaire. Class observation was conducted since the beginning of the research, it was recorded in each meeting of the treatment. The observation sheets were used to determine the students’ overall activities during the implementation of the treatments and students’ motivation in the classroom. There were two kinds of observation sheets in the study. Observation sheet 1 adapted from Hopkins (1985) was used to quantify learner on-task behavior. There were 12 columns for 12 scans and 22 lines for 22 subjects, and filled out by non-participant observer (the researcher). The learners were considered on-task if they were engaged in the pedagogic work of the day and they were considered to be off-task if they showed a complete lack of attention to the set task. Observation sheet 2 adapted from Nunan (1989) was used to assess overall class motivation generated by the materials in use, as manifested by level of learner interest, enthusiasm, activity (effort/intensity of application), persistence with the learning task, concentration, and enjoyment during class. There were 8 items in observation sheet 2 and each item was scored on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), 3 is an average mark for any one item. Observations were taken while the period using the target materials is ending.

Then, the questionnaire was administered at the end of the meeting. The questionnaire was a questionnaire adopted from Glikzman, Gardner, & Smythe (1982:646). The questionnaire was a semantic differential scale used to measure levels of motivation generated during class by the materials in use . This questionnaire type consists of a series of contrasting adjective pairs (e.g., good-bad, beneficial-harmful) listed on opposite ends of a bipolar scale. It consisted of seven closed items on semantic differential scale of objectives expressing motivation (e.g. interesting/boring, enjoyable/unenjoyable, etc). Each position on the continuum has an associated score value. Each item scored from 1 to 7, making a total of from 7 to 49 for each complete questionnaire, it was completed by each learner at the end of the daily activity. From this total, a class means score for the day was assessed.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

**Data Obtained from Class Observation**

Having calculated the total and percentage of ‘on-task behaviour’ (observation 1) for each students in the 6 meetings of experiment, the following table summarizes general frequency and percentage of students’ ‘on-task behaviour’ in the research.

Table1 :The frequency and percentage of students “on task” behavior on authentic texts

| Meeting | Number of students attend | Frequency of ‘on-task’ behaviour | Percentage |
|---------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| 1       | 22                        | 9.09                             | 75.76      |
| 2       | 21                        | 8.33                             | 69.44      |
| 3       | 22                        | 9.36                             | 78.03      |
| 4       | 21                        | 9.86                             | 82.14      |
| 5       | 22                        | 10.09                            | 84.09      |
| 6       | 20                        | 10.40                            | 86.67      |

Observation of overall class motivation (observation 2) generated by the materials in use, as manifested by level of learner interest, enthusiasm, activity (effort/intensity of application), persistence with the learning task, concentration, and enjoyment during class. There were 8 items in observation sheet 2 and each item was scored on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), 3 is an average mark for any one item. Observations were taken while the period using the target materials is ended.

Table 11: Overall class motivation on authentic materials

| Meeting | Number of students attend | Overall class motivation |
|---------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1       | 22                        | 29                       |
| 2       | 21                        | 27                       |
| 3       | 22                        | 35                       |

|            |    |      |
|------------|----|------|
| 4          | 21 | 37   |
| 5          | 22 | 36   |
| 6          | 20 | 37   |
| Mean score |    | 33.5 |

**Data obtained from questionnaire**

Having calculated the raw score of each meeting in the questionnaire (see appendix 10), the finding of students’ self-reported questionnaire in each meeting are figured below.

Table 12:Results on self-reported questionnaire on authentic materials

| Meeting    | Number of students attend | Mean score |
|------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 1          | 22                        | 37.68      |
| 2          | 21                        | 36.86      |
| 3          | 22                        | 40.14      |
| 4          | 21                        | 39.50      |
| 5          | 22                        | 41.71      |
| 6          | 20                        | 41.90      |
| Mean score |                           | 39.63      |

**Discussion**

The result of the current research indicated that authentic materials influenced positively to enhance students’ motivation in learning. Motivation is said to be a determinant factor that can influence the success of learning, thus looking at strategies to enhance the motivation are necessary to be carried out. Some factors may affect to students’ motivation to learn, among them relates to materials and what tasks they do in classroom (Wachob, 2006 :95). Teaching materials was argued to have a great contribution to the effectiveness of learning process, thus the careful selections constantly affected to motivation. Motivation in this study refers to the positive behavior of students, where they show high interest, persistent, and enthusiasm when authentic materials used. Results indicate a high positive correlation between the three instruments. Observation of “on-task behaviour” has proved to be a good tool for collecting data on class behavior in language teaching (Hopkins (1985), Peacock (1997), and Tra (n.d). Nunan (1992:37) definition of “on-task behaviour” was adopted in this research, “on task behaviour” is defined as “ the time when the student engaged in the pedagogic work of the day ”. It is as engaging in behavior since it is in a straight line related to the activity set by the teacher.

Motivation is one of the crucial variables in language learning and one of the key factors in determining success in second/foreign language learning, thus strategies to enhance motivation is crucial to be carried out. In the context of EFL, Gardner (1985:134) comments, “motivation to learn a foreign language can be defined as a multifaceted of constructs, involving effort and desire, as well as a favourable attitude toward learning the language at hand”. For the fact that authentic materials are feasible to increase the motivation for learning, the present study utilized it to the defined respondent. Mishan (2005:26) postulates that motivation grows to be good reason for applying authentic materials in language learning. According to some proponents of authentic materials, one of the advantages of authentic materials is they have a positive effect on learner motivation since intrinsically they are more interesting and motivating than created one (see Peacock, 1997, Swaffar, 1985, Bacon and Finneman, 1990).

Another maintained that authentic materials bring motivation to learning because a large number of sources for language learning such us on the media and web which likely to attract interest or attention of the learners (Clarke and Silberstein, 1977 and Peacock, 1997). According to Dörnyei (2001:51), learners’ initial motivation can be generated, through teacher efforts to enhance the learners’ language-related values. The values can be classified into three types: intrinsic value, integrative value and instrumental value. Authentic materials are helpful to enhance these three values because they tend to be more numerous in the choices of topics, they are real cultural products from the target community and they could be easily integrated with learners’ daily life.

The positive motivational aspects of authentic materials found in the current research are in line to the findings of previous studies in the same field (Peacock, 2007 and Than Tra (n.d)). Similar to Peacock (1997) and Thanh Tra (n.d) studies on seeing the effectiveness of authentic materials toward motivation, the finding of this research indicated that authentic materials can positively enhance students’ motivation to learning. At the same time, this finding is in agreement to some literatures claimed that motivation is one of the key justification for the use of authentic materials in language learning (see for example Swaffar, 1985, Bacon and Finneman, 1990, Mishan, 2005). Additionally, in the introduction of her journal about motivation, Winke (2005:1) shows that

tapping the students' motivation become the crucial aspects of many language teachers since a long time, and they believed that it is their responsibility to motivate them. Many of these teachers prefer to create interesting and engaging classroom atmosphere by using authentic materials to stimulate further interest in the language and its native speaker.

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