

## The ESP and EGP Students' Perceptions of Situational Factors Which Can Motivate Them to Read

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**Abstract** – The present study aims to investigate EGP and ESP students' views on the situational factors which may motivate them to read English texts, and to explore the differences which may exist between these two groups. Huang's (2006) questionnaire is used in this study. It is a 5-point Likert scale type questionnaire including 18 items. After gathering the data from questionnaires, the data is analyzed through the use of frequencies, percentages and T-test. The results of this study show some situational factors may motivate ESP and EGP students more than the other situations. Besides, the results of T-test show there is not a significant difference between ESP and EGP students regarding their willingness to read English texts.

**Keywords:** ESP, EGP, perception, motivation, reading

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### I. INTRODUCTION

English is an important subject in many EFL contexts of Asian countries. Students may need to learn English in different levels of their educational life in order to be successful in their exams and enter higher levels of education (Huang, 2006). Moreover, students may want to learn English in order to communicate properly and to be successful in jobs and economy. Therefore, they should read different English text books depending on their purposes. For example, some students may need general knowledge of English. However, other students of physics, engineering, etc. may need to read English scientific textbooks (English for specific purposes text books) in their own fields.

Generally, students should develop the required reading skill competence which is related to their own purposes. Specifically, scholars consider reading skill which ESP students need to acquire as “the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate” (Levinson, 1983, p. 24). Besides, Halliday & Hasan, (1976) believes that a reader should be capable of differentiating a text from a piece of language which is not text. Sentences in a text are not used randomly, but they have unification and unity which is known as texture. Therefore, students should be aware of this texture to be successful reader.

Moreover, students should be motivated enough to be successful reader. However, language teachers have felt that most students are not highly motivated to read in target language on their own (Arnold, 2009; Day & Bamford, 2002). Therefore, there is a need to study on the situations which can motivate learners. However, the effect of motivation as a predictor of reading comprehension and as a factor which can affect students' decisions regarding how often and how much they will read, is not studied a lot (Wigfield & Guthrie,

1997). Due to the importance of motivation in the in the process of reading to learn and learning to read ,the present study aims to investigate EGP and ESP students' views on the situational factors which may motivate them to read English texts, and to explore the difference which may exist between these two groups. It is hoped that through this study, we can assist students and teachers pedagogically and make a better learning environment. The research questions are:

1. Under what situations would learners be most willing to read texts for ESP purposes?
2. Under what situations would learners be most willing to read texts for EGP purposes?
3. Is there a significant difference between ESP and EGP students regarding their willingness to read English texts?

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Reading seems to be an importance skill in foreign language learning context. According to Grabe and Stoller (2001), reading is the most important academic language skill because it can be used as the main means for learning new information. Furthermore, successful L2 reading can be a helpful way for academic success and a useful way for independent L2 learning (Carrell & Grabe, 2002; Koda & Zehler, 2008). However, reading involves a complex process and it would be difficult for most L2 students to develop fluency in reading (Carrell & Grabe, 2002; Field, 2006; Koda & Zehler, 2008). Because developing reading skill in L1 and L2 is a long term process which requires considerable cognitive effort (Grabe, 2006); besides, reading comprehension can be achieved through complex interactions between text, setting, reader, reader background, reading strategies, L1 and L2, and reader decision-making (Erler & Finkbeiner, 2007). Moreover, Anderson (2003, p.1) asserts that, “reading is an active, fluent process which involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning” From this statement, one can infer, a reader should make use of different sources of information such visual, semantic, conceptual and linguistic to understand the meaning of sentence and phrases.

Additionally, there are a number of factors which can affect reading comprehension. For example, cognitive and metalinguistic skills are required to develop effective active and interactive reading (Anderson, 2003). Thinking skills and critical reading are also important factors which are studied by Pressley (2002). Furthermore, Rivers (2001) states that critical reader can easily choose the most suitable reading skills which are needed in each specific situation. Literacy skills and language proficiency are other variables which can influence text comprehension (Kamil, Pearson, Moje, & Afflerbach, 2011). Moreover, the results of Hauptman’s (2000) study show that readers with sufficient background knowledge but low language ability can select the required information from the text. Hauptman (2000) believes that signaling can be an effective factor in this regard. He suggests teachers to use authentic texts which are adequately signaled rather than linguistically simplified texts. In his opinion, highly signaled texts should have iconic signaling (pictures, graphs, charts, tables, maps, etc.), as well as non-iconic signaling (boldface, underline, margin notes, titles, subtitles, outlines, etc.). In addition to these factors, students’ motivation levels can positively affect reading comprehension (Lau & Chan, 2003; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Among the above variables, motivation is one the most essential factor. According to Gardner et al. (1997), motivation is one of most important variables which can affect L2 learning. There are two types of motivation in reading including intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. When a learner is intrinsically motivated he/she is motivated by his/her interest in reading, understanding the necessity of being a good reader, and the extent of his/her involvement with the text while he/she is reading the text (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2006; Logan, Medford, & Hughes, 2011). Furthermore, the results of several studies indicate intrinsic motivation positively correlates with reading comprehension (Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, & Guthrie, 2009; Schaffner & Schiefele, 2013; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). However, extrinsic motivation is considered to be negatively related to reading outcomes (Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Participants

60 male ESP students studying oil engineering and 60 male EGP students at Lamerd University participated in this study. All of them were Iranian students and English was their foreign language. The average of ESP students' ages was 21.46 and the average of GEP ages was 22.54.

#### B. Instrument

Huang's (2006) questionnaire was used in this study. It was a 5-point Likert scale type questionnaire including 18 items. This questionnaire required respondents to read each statement and select one of these choices: *very willing read* (1), *willing to read* (2), *neutral* (3), *unwilling to read* (4), and *very unwilling to read* (5).

#### C. Procedure

The written Persian questionnaire was distributed to 60 male ESP students and 60 male EGP students. The questionnaire was given to them in their classes. A clear instruction for completing the questionnaire was written in the questionnaire. They were asked to fill out the questionnaire anonymously.

### IV. RESULTS

As the results of table 1 show, ESP students are most willing to read when special terminologies are explained (66.66%), the organization and layout of the books are easy to follow (63.33%), there are clear graphs, tables, and illustrations in the texts (58.33%), and reading skills and strategies are taught (56.66%).

**Table 1. ESP students' perceptions of situational factors**

Item	very willing read(1)	willing to read(2)	neutral(3)	unwilling to read(4)	very unwilling to read (5)
1	<b>58.33</b>	23.33	10	6.66	1.66
2	43.33	31.66	23.33	0	1.66
3	26.66	38.33	18.33	10	6.66
4	33.33	36.66	16.66	8.33	5
5	10	11.66	35	8.33	35
6	<b>63.33</b>	30	3.33	3.33	0
7	18.33	15	16.66	13.33	36.66
8	20	15	11.66	13.33	40
9	25	16.66	13.33	8.33	36.66
10	33.33	38.33	18.33	3.33	6.66
11	33.33	30	25	3.33	8.33
12	20	35	11.66	15	18.33
13	20	35	11.66	13.33	20
14	<b>66.66</b>	13.33	11.66	8.33	0
15	38.33	35	11.66	8.33	6.66
16	15	30	28.33	18.33	8.33
17	<b>56.66</b>	16.66	11.66	6.66	8.33
18	40	25	10	16.66	8.33

**Table 2. EGP students 'perceptions of situational factors**

Item	very willing read(1)	willing to read(2)	neutral(3)	unwilling to read(4)	very unwilling to read (5)
1	53.33	31.66	10	0	5
2	<b>68.33</b>	20	8.33	3.33	0
3	23.33	28.33	26.66	5	16.66
4	50	25	11.66	8.33	5
5	5	3.33	25	16.66	50
6	<b>71.66</b>	13.33	5	6.66	3.33
7	13.33	26.66	21.66	13.33	25
8	11.66	25	15	30	18.33
9	15	21.66	23.33	10	30
10	50	21.66	15	10	3.33
11	<b>68.33</b>	11.66	3.33	1.66	15
12	31.66	33.33	18.33	5	11.66
13	<b>76.66</b>	10	10	3.33	0
14	<b>66.66</b>	18.33	5	6.66	3.33
15	43.33	23.33	18.33	11.66	3.33
16	26.66	23.33	23.33	5	21.66
17	<b>66.66</b>	13.33	15	1.66	3.33
18	53.33	26.66	10	5	5

As the results of table 2 indicate, General English students are most willing to read when English vocabulary is taught (76.66%), the organization and layout of the books are easy to follow (71.66%), key points are highlighted in the texts (68.33%), the exams are directly based on the English reading (68.33%), special terminologies are explained (66.66%), and reading skills and strategies are taught (66.66%).

**Table 3. ESP and EGP students' scores regarding the situational factors**

Items	ESP learners' scores	EGP learners' scores	Items	ESP learners' scores	EGP learners' scores
1	36	41	31	34	51
2	39	35	32	41	35
3	42	29	33	34	39
4	29	38	34	55	30
5	40	35	35	42	35
6	51	25	36	56	39
7	26	33	37	35	36
8	34	41	38	55	48
9	41	40	39	47	34
10	38	42	40	38	44
11	39	45	41	41	39
12	38	29	42	48	58
13	44	42	43	38	38
14	58	32	44	43	26
15	44	23	45	33	45
16	29	51	46	34	66
17	39	39	47	41	39
18	47	41	48	55	52
19	45	29	49	35	47
20	47	45	50	56	43
21	34	46	51	45	57
22	54	51	52	39	48
23	46	30	53	54	41
24	47	43	54	55	37
25	38	40	55	29	37
26	44	41	56	41	43
27	43	59	57	48	54
28	42	34	58	44	27
29	35	53	59	29	41
30	62	34	60	32	28
Total				2528	2423

As it can be seen in table 3, the total score of ESP students is 2528 which is greater than the total score of EGP students (2423).

**Table 4. Group statistics**

	English	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
score	ESP participants	60	42.1333	8.29226	1.07053
	EGP participants	60	40.3833	9.03119	1.16592

**Table 5. T-test**

	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	
score	Equal variances assumed	.124	.725	1.106	118	.271	1.75000	1.58285	-1.38447	4.88447
	Equal variances not assumed			1.106	117.150	.271	1.75000	1.58285	-1.38470	4.88470

The result T-test indicates that, the level of significance is .271 which is greater than .05 ( $P > .05$ ). Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected and there is not a significant difference between ESP and EGP students regarding their willingness to read English texts.

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As the results of this study show, ESP students are most willing to read when special terminologies are explained, the organization and layout of the books are easy to follow, there are clear graphs, tables, and illustrations in the texts, and reading skills and strategies are taught.

Moreover, General English students are most willing to read when English vocabulary is taught, the organization and layout of the books are easy to follow, key points are highlighted in the texts, the exams are directly based on the English reading, special terminologies are explained, and reading skills and strategies are taught. Additionally, the result of T-test indicates that, there is not a significant difference between ESP and EGP students regarding their willingness to read.

Besides, the results of Huang's (2006) research shows that EAP students are most willing to read when teachers were available to answer questions, key points were highlighted clearly in textbooks, and reading skills were taught. Therefore, motivation can be from outside the learners (Hauptman, 2000). The format of the text book and good organization of the book could motivate students. Text facilitation and reader friendliness are factors which can trigger learners' reading motivation. Exam can also be impotent for the students. Teaching reading skills and strategies can motivate students too. As the results of Zafarania, and Kabganib's study (2014) showed strategy training can improve Iranian ESP students reading comprehension and can aid them to develop a constructive attitude. Besides, teaching English vocabulary and terminology can motivate student too. According to Williams (1985), teaching vocabulary recognition strategies such as inferring from the context, identifying lexical familiarization, unchaining nominal compounds, and synonym search, and word analysis have positive effect on ESP reading.

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#### APPENDIX A. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

If you are required to use only English textbooks in content areas, please indicate your willingness to read under the following situations between *very willing to read* (1), *willing to read* (2), *neutral* (3), *unwilling to read* (4), and *very unwilling to read* (5).

1. There are clear graphs, tables, and illustrations in the texts.
2. Key points are highlighted in the texts.
3. There are limited new vocabularies in the texts.
4. The books are written in simple grammar.
5. There are no translated versions of the textbooks.
6. The organization and layout of the books are easy to follow.
7. I am required to do written reports for my reading.
8. I am required to do oral reports for my reading.
9. I am required to participate in class discussion for the part I have to read.
10. The weekly reading coverage is clearly assigned.
11. The exams are directly based on the English reading.
12. The teacher asks us to answer post-reading questions
13. English vocabulary is taught.
14. Special terminologies are explained.
15. The sentence structures and grammar are explained.
16. The organization and structure of the articles are explained.
17. Reading skills and strategies are taught.
18. Teachers are available to answer my questions encountered in reading

#### APPENDIX B. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

If you are required to read General English textbooks, please indicate your willingness to read under the following situations between *very willing to read* (1), *willing to read* (2), *neutral* (3), *unwilling to read* (4), and *very unwilling to read* (5).

1. There are clear graphs, tables, and illustrations in the texts.
2. Key points are highlighted in the texts.
3. There are limited new vocabularies in the texts.
4. The books are written in simple grammar.
5. There are no translated versions of the textbooks.
6. The organization and layout of the books are easy to follow.
7. I am required to do written reports for my reading.
8. I am required to do oral reports for my reading.
9. I am required to participate in class discussion for the part I have to read.
10. The weekly reading coverage is clearly assigned.
11. The exams are directly based on the English reading.
12. The teacher asks us to answer post-reading questions
13. English vocabulary is taught.
14. Special terminologies are explained.
15. The sentence structures and grammar are explained.
16. The organization and structure of the articles are explained.
17. Reading skills and strategies are taught.
18. Teachers are available to answer my questions encountered in reading