

EAP Students' Reading Motivation of English Academic Expository Texts: A Mixed Methods Design

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Abstract

This mixed methods research study explored the nature of reading motivation of selected EAP students majoring in medicine at an Iranian Medical University. In addition, this study examined the relationships between reading motivation constructs and reading proficiency (RP). In the quantitative part of the study, 95 students responded to the adapted version of the Reading Motivation Questionnaire (RMQ). In the qualitative part of the study, eight students (4 high and 4 low achievers) participated in semi-structured interviews concerning their perceptions of reading expository texts. The quantitative results indicated that the students were motivated more intrinsically than extrinsically when reading English. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed a significant and positive correlation between RMQ and RP. The qualitative results indicated that selected EAP students majoring in medicine are motivated to read academic expository texts because of a wide variety of reasons including intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy, to name just a few. Based on these mixed methods data, it is concluded that reading motivation is a multidimensional construct with multiple components.

Keywords: EAP students, Reading motivation, Reading comprehension, Intrinsic motivation, Extrinsic motivation

1. Introduction

College students' English reading comprehension ability is deemed to be an important indicator of academic achievement at tertiary level (Swalander & Taube, 2007 cited in Khajavi & Ketabi, 2012). Although, in EFL contexts, English is not the medium of instruction, receiving information on a variety of topics is virtually contingent upon having a good reading proficiency in English. Komiyama (2009) lays great emphasis on English reading proficiency and maintains that "well developed L2 reading abilities enable learners to access a wide range of L2 materials (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, Internet material, and Web sites) for personal enjoyment, professional development, practical everyday information, and academic work" (p. 1). Therefore, the ability to read English effectively and efficiently is perceived as an essential tool for professional success, and personal development.

For Iranian EAP practitioners, L2 reading comprehension is also considered as an important skill, because so much scientific and technological information is published in English (Erfani, Iranmehr & Davari, 2010; Tabatabaei & Assari, 2011). However, many Iranian university students' reading comprehension is lower than that is required to succeed in academic settings (Amiryousefi, Vahid-Dastjerdi & Tavakoli, 2012; Atai & Nazari, 2011; Atai & Shoja, 2011; Hashemi, Lamir & Namjoo, 2011; Jalilfar, 2010; Mazdayasna & Tahririan, 2008).

Because some Iranian students lack adequate English reading proficiency for access to academic sources, some of them avoid reading English texts and consequently they are unable to acquire the content of academic courses taught in English (Hashemi et al., 2011; Khajavi & Ketabi, 2012). The reading comprehension problems that they encounter can probably result from a variety of reasons including ineffective use of reading strategies, not appropriately developed teaching methodologies, lack of sufficient technical vocabulary, and motivation to read, to name just a few (Ghyasi, Safdarian & Amini-Farsani, 2011; Erfani, Iranmehr & Davari, 2011; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Kim 2011).

In order to investigate EFL learners' reading abilities, a great deal of research has been conducted on various aspects of L2 reading. For example, general reading ability and reading strategies have been frequently studied (see Kim, 2011). By comparison, motivational aspects of L2 reading have received less attention. Only a small body of empirical research has investigated the affective domain of reading (e.g., Alsheikh & Elhoweris, 2011; Habibian, 2012; Kim, 2011; Lin, Wong & McBride-Chang, 2012; Takase, 2007).

Research studies with first language (L1) readers indicate that motivation has a crucial influence on their reading development (Morgan, Fuchs, Compton, Cordray & Fuchs, 2008; Lau, 2004; Guthrie, Wigfield, Humenick, Perencevich, Taboada & Barbosa, 2006; Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Therefore, a reasonable implication would be that the reading achievement outcomes of EFL learners might be affected by their motivation towards reading as well as by a dearth of reliable information on L2 learners' attitude toward reading, since these factors could have an adverse effect on reading instruction programs (Nishino, 2005; Yamashita, 2004).

Since the impact of motivation on L2 reading development is in its initial stages in Iran, further research on L2 reading motivation is necessary in order to understand its nature and its potential influences on various L2 reading behaviors. With respect to the Iranian EFL context, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no published research has investigated L2 reading motivation of Iranian EAP students. Furthermore, the previous studies on the reading motivation of these EFL students ignored the variations in the text types as a variable that can have an effect on the process of L2 reading. For example, expository text is one of the main genres with which EAP students are constantly in contact during their course of study at tertiary level.

With respect to the Iranian context, although Iranian EAP students are required to interact with expository texts to a great extent (e.g., experimental reports, journal articles, or textbooks), it has been reported that many students have difficulty in comprehending expository text structures (Ghyasi et al., 2011). Hence, the current study aims to: (A) identify Iranian EAP students' attitudes toward reading expository texts, (B) determine the sub-components of motivation to read expository texts, and (C) find whether Iranian EAP students' reading motivation has a significant relationship to their comprehension of expository texts.

To summarize, the current study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the sub-components of motivation to read academic expository texts for selected EAP students majoring in medicine at an Iranian Medical University?
2. Is there any relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension of selected EAP students majoring in medicine at an Iranian Medical University?
3. How do the selected EAP students' perceptions of reading academic expository texts contribute to our understanding of their reading motivation practices?

1.1 Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study can be summarized in the following way:

Although a great deal of research has been conducted on cognitive and linguistic aspects of L2 reading in the Iranian context, no published studies have investigated L2 reading motivation among EAP students. Due to the lack of such research in this area, this study aims to shed light on, and address the issues of reading motivation in the Iranian EFL context.

Most studies that have been carried out regarding reading motivation in EFL contexts have adopted a quantitative approach. The present study aims at filling this methodological gap by adopting mixed methods. According to Mertens (2005 cited in Dörnyei, 2007) mixed methods have particular value when the researcher wants to examine an issue that is embedded in a complex or social context.

The findings of the present study are significant in that they will have relevance to EAP instructors, EAP students, and EAP students' parents. By understanding EAP students' perceptions and attitudes towards reading expository texts, EAP practitioners can design

more effective instructional methods and materials in expository reading that would improve EAP students' reading comprehension.

The findings of this study would be useful to the Ministry of Education, policy makers, EAP curriculum planners, curriculum designers, EAP textbook developers and EAP test constructors.

2. Literature Review

Little research has investigated the relationship between motivation and L2 reading comprehension. Chen (2009), for example, investigated the relationship between reading motivation and reading achievement. A total number of 287 Chinese university EFL students took part in the study. The findings indicated that intrinsic motivation constructs and self efficacy were positively and significantly correlated with participants' reading achievement.

Alsheikh and Elhoweris (2011) examined United Arab Emirates (UAE) students' motivation to read. The data were collected from 513 high school students. The variables *intrinsic value* and *extrinsic value* were the significant predictors of reading English achievement scores. The findings indicated that intrinsic value was the best predictor of UAE high schools students' motivation to read English as a foreign language. In another study, Han (2011) studied motivation in reading EFL among a group of Chinese university students. Based on the data collected, three sub-components of motivation in foreign language (FL) reading emerged: '*intrinsic motivation*', '*utility value*', and '*academic value*' in FL reading. The results also showed that, although these three scales of motivation were all positively and moderately associated with reading amount, only intrinsic motivation appeared to be related to reading achievement, and this relationship was positive. With respect to the connection of reading motivation between first language (L1) and L2, for instance, Kim (2011) examined the relationships between L1 and L2 reading motivation and differences in reading motivation based on the learners' academic majors and L2 reading proficiency. A total of 259 Korean EFL students at university level participated in the study. The findings showed that *learning goal-oriented motivation* and *utility value* of L2 reading were the two primary indicators for the participants' desire to read in English. The study also revealed that the factor-based L2 reading motivation scales correlated with some of the L1 reading motivation scales at a relatively low range.

Using a population of undergraduate ESL students in Malaysia, Habibian (2012) investigated reading motivation and reading comprehension in relation to two higher education context types, namely democratic and authoritarian style, as well as with learners' gender to determine whether the degree of performance varied qualitatively in relation to educational context and learner variables. Authoritarian setting is based on a teacher-centered approach, in which the teacher as an authority conveys knowledge to students 'who do not know'. However, democratic context is on the basis of student-centered approach, in which "the teacher facilitates communicative educational activities with students" (O'Dwyer, 2006, p. 1). The findings indicated that educational context had a significant effect on learners' reading performance. Students in the democratic context outperformed in both reading motivation and reading comprehension and the democratic setting gender groups showed the highest

reading performances compared with the authoritarian setting groups. Lin et al. (2012) studied reading motivation and reading comprehension among bilingual students. A total of 104 Hong Kong Chinese fifth graders participated in the study. Motivation as related to self-efficacy, curiosity, involvement, recreation, and social-peer attitudes were significantly higher for L1 readers as compared to EFL readers. No difference appeared between EFL and L1 readers for the motivational sub-scales in the areas of school grades, instrumentalism, and social-family attitudes. Moreover, instrumentalism was particularly strongly correlated with EFL reading comprehension, whereas recreation had the highest association with L1 reading comprehension.

3. Methodology

This study used a mixed methods approach, defined as a “procedure for collecting and analyzing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative data ...[in] the research process within a single study in order to understand a research problem more completely”(Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p. 137). This section first describes the quantitative research design (phase I) including the following sub sections: (a) participants, defined in terms of their number, age, major, (b) instrumentation, defined in terms of the reading comprehension section of a practice Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the adapted version of the Reading Motivation Questionnaire (RMQ) (Chen, 2009), the reliability of the instruments, (c) procedures, and (d) data analysis. A description of the qualitative research design (phase II) follows.

3.1 The Quantitative Phase

3.1.1 Participants

A total of 95 EAP students majoring in medicine participated in the present study. Of these, 35 were male and 60 were female. The participants represented a “convenience sample” as going through randomization was not practical. The sample included second and third years university students. Second-year and third-year students were included because they have studied in and successfully completed more courses presented in English than had first-year students; consequently, it was assumed that they had more experience with reading English academic expository texts. All of the participants were enrolled in a course entitled “English for Medicine” at an Iranian Medical University in the academic year 2012-2013. Each class session lasted 90 minutes. The class met once a week. The mean age of the participants was 22.3 years of age, ranging from 19 to 23 years. They were all native speakers of Farsi. All of the participants had been studying English as a required subject for seven years in middle school and secondary school before they entered the university.

The educational system in Iran is divided into three levels: five years of primary school (*Dabestan*), followed by three years of middle school (*Rahnamaie*), and finishing with four years of secondary school (*Dabirestan*) (Dahmardeh, 2009). Participants each signed and submitted forms of agreeing to participate in the study to allow the results data to be reported collectively. Earning a medical degree is a two-step process. First, a student must complete seven semesters of classroom study (121 units), a nine-month externship (95 units), an

eighteen-month internship (68 units), and a doctoral thesis (6 units) for a total of 290 units. Second, after successfully completing the above general course of study, the student may then enroll in a specialized field of study (three to five years beyond the doctorate) (Arani, Kakia & Karimi, 2012). The higher education system in Iran includes both state and private universities. The state-run universities are under the direct supervision of the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology (MSRT), while the Medical universities are supervised by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MHME).

3.1.2 Instrumentation

Quantitative instruments in this study included: a practice TOEFL section and the adapted version of the RMQ (Chen, 2009).

3.1.2.1 Practice TOEFL Reading Section

The reading comprehension section of a practice TOEFL test (Phillips, 2009) was used to assess participants' reading comprehension. Four reading passages were selected from Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test (Phillips, 2009) by the researchers, and each passage was followed by 7 to 9 multiple-choice reading comprehension questions, amounting to a total number of 30 questions in a given test. Thirty-five minutes were allowed for completion of each test. The Cronbach's alpha (α) for the 30-item reading comprehension test was 0.79. A value of 0.70 or higher is considered evidence of reliability (Becker, 2000 cited in Lu, 2007).

All of the selected passages were expository texts. The rhetorical organization of expository text includes, as Meyer and Freedle (1984 cited in Tsai, 2012) proposed, description, cause/effect, problem/solution, and comparison/contrast. Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of the reading comprehension passages.

Table 1. Characteristics of the reading comprehension passages

Passage	Structure	Paragraphs	Sentences	Questions
1	Description	3	24	7
2	Comparison/contrast	2	20	7
3	Cause/effect	5	28	7
4	Problem/solution	4	27	9

3.1.2.2 The Adapted Version of the Reading Motivation Questionnaire (RMQ) (Chen, 2009)

The modified version of RMQ (Chen, 2009) was employed in this study. The forty items of the RMQ survey instrument were translated into Farsi in order to enable the participants more easily to understand and answer the questions. The Farsi translation was developed based on translation and back translation: one of the researchers translated the questionnaire into Farsi;

the questionnaire was then translated back into English by two PhD professors of English translation. The RMQ employed a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The RMQ included the following nine components: (a) reading curiosity for expository texts, (b) reading involvement, (c), integrative orientation, (d) reading expository texts for grades, (e) the avoidance of reading expository texts, (f) reading expository texts efficacy, (g) the challenges of reading expository texts, (h) the importance of reading expository texts, and (i) reading expository texts compliance. The researcher obtained permission to use the RMQ for this study from the premier authors (Allan Wigfield & John Guthrie, personal communication, August 27, 2012). Cronbach’s alpha was employed to estimate the reliability of the RMQ. The alpha coefficient for the overall questionnaire (30 items) achieved 0.89, which is accepted as indicative of a high level of reliability.

3.1.2.2.2 Procedures

The researchers contacted the English instructors of the three “English for medicine” classes and obtained permission to ask their students to participate in the study. The data of the study were collected in the fall semester, 2012. Administration of the instruments occurred within the context of class period. Each participant received a copy of both instruments employed in the present study: i.e., four expository passages for the reading comprehension test, and a reading motivation questionnaire. Directions and procedures were explained to the participants by the researchers. The participants were assured by the researchers that strict confidentiality would be observed with respect to all of the information and data obtained from them, and that only anonymous cumulative data results would be made public. The participants were also assured by the researchers that their performance on the reading comprehension test would have no bearing on the participants’ course grades.

The regulated administration time was 45 minutes. At first, the participants were asked to read the four reading comprehension passages and answer the 30 multiple-choice questions in 35 minutes. Then, they were asked to respond to the Reading motivation Questionnaire in the remaining 10 minutes.

3.1.2.2.3 Data Analysis

Data analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16. Descriptive statistics (mean, and standard deviation) were computed for each motivational item. Then, the relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension proficiency was analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment correlations.

3.2 *The Qualitative Phase*

Following the quantitative design, one of the researchers purposefully selected 8 participants—4males, and 4 females—for semi-structured interviews. He recruited them based on their scores on the reading comprehension test (i.e., four high and four low achievers) (see Table 4). All eight agreed to participate. 4 interviewees belonged to high English reading proficiency group and 4 interviewees belonged to low English reading proficiency group. They were Mehdi, Reza, Malihe, Sara, Maryam, Parvaneh, Nahid and Jafar. Pseudonymous names were used in order to keep the participants’ identity confidential.

The researchers used semi-structured interviews in this study because this type of interview gives the researchers “the opportunities to probe for views and opinions of the interviewee...[and] the researcher has a list of key themes to be covered” (Kajornboon, 2005, p. 6). Gillham (2000 cited in Dörnyei, 2010) urges "survey researchers to conduct semi-structured interviews to accompany questionnaire results...[because] interview data can both illustrate and illuminate questionnaire results and can bring your research study to life" (p. 82).

This procedure was primarily utilized to answer research question 3: “*How do the selected EAP students’ perceptions of reading academic expository texts contribute to our understanding of their reading motivation practices?*” It was also used to achieve fuller understanding of the results of quantitative analyses concerning the reading motivation of selected EAP students majoring in medicine at an Iranian Medical University, and the relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension. Each interview included 8 open-ended questions (adapted from Chen, 2009). Each interview began with a few general questions to build rapport based on Zhang and Willdemuth's (2009) suggestion that "only when a trustful and harmonious relationship is established will the interviewee share his or her experience with the interviewer" (p. 225). Then the participants were asked the questions about their perceptions of reading motivation constructs. Each interview lasted 30 minutes. These semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face and individually. Interviews took place in the interviewer’s office. The interviews were conducted in Farsi. The idea of using Farsi in the interview sessions was based on the suggestion of Professor Gass. She believes that using someone's native languages allows the researcher to be more confident that the comments reflect what the individual intends. On the other hand, conducting an interview in the learner's second language leaves one with the possibility of needing to interpret what is said (Susan Gass, personal communication, June22, 2012). All interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a “method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It organizes and describes your data set in rich detail” (p. 79). The use of thematic analysis in this study was due to its ‘flexibility’. In other words, this method is independent of theory and epistemology, and can be applied across a wide range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, it is ideal for a mixed methods design (Querstret & Robinson, in press). Thematic analysis included six phases. First, the interviews were transcribed and the transcripts were read and re-read many times to identify data related to students’ reading motivation for reading academic expository texts. Second, the identified data were put into meaningful groups or codes. Third, the codes were analyzed and combined to form themes. Themes were developed based on an inductive interpretation of the individual texts, as well as being theoretically influenced by Wigfield and Guthrie’s (1997) theory of reading motivation. Fourth, the themes were reviewed and refined in order to develop a satisfactory thematic ‘map’ of the data. Then, the researchers defined and further refined the specifics of each theme and generated definitions and names for each theme, followed by the sixth phase, which was writing the final report of the analysis.

NVivo was used for coding and analyzing the data. The different phases of thematic analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Phase	Description of the process
1.Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas
2.Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collecting data relevant to each potential code
3.Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4.Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic map of the analysis
5.Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis of refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6.Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study. The findings of the quantitative portion of the study are followed by the results of the qualitative analysis. In this section, the findings for each question are also discussed. Furthermore, the results are compared and contrasted to other relevant results found in the literature.

4.1 Results of the Quantitative Research

1. What are the sub-components of motivation to read academic expository texts for selected EAP students majoring in medicine at an Iranian Medical University?

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Reading Motivation Constructs.

Variables	N	M	SD
Reading curiosity	95	3.9955	.30515
Reading involvement	95	3.7000	.55015
Reading importance	95	3.6674	.43249
Integrative orientation	95	2.9614	.62050
Reading for grades	95	2.7789	.51734
Reading avoidance	95	2.6868	.51308
Reading compliance	95	2.6500	.56068
Reading efficacy,	95	2.5921	.5579
Reading challenge	95	2.2789	.52701

As can be seen in Table 3, among the nine components of reading motivation, the highest mean of 3.9955 was found in *reading curiosity* with (SD=.30515). The mean of the *reading involvement* (M=3.7000) was the second highest, followed by the mean of *reading importance* (3.6674). *Reading challenge* had the lowest score (M=2.2789). The findings indicate that the students are more intrinsically than extrinsically motivated when reading English. It can be implied that most of the students have a strong desire for reading expository texts that have topics that they deem interesting in their lives. In other words, students' curiosity motivates them strongly to read expository texts in order to obtain a huge amount of information. On the other hand, most of the students do not like to be challenged when read. In fact, the negative finding on *reading challenge* could be argued to imply that students do not seem to be equipped with critical thinking skills that allow them to recognize, resolve, assess, and figure out the complexities that emerge in reading (Waters, 2006 cited in Fahim & Barjasteh, 2012). Such a shortcoming might be due to in part to the use of grammar translation method as the basic approach and framework in the Iranian EAP classes (Erfani et al., 2010). This finding indicates the importance of intrinsically oriented constructs in explaining EAP readers' motivation as suggested in the literature (e.g., Alsheikh & Elhoweris, 2011; Blay, Mercado & Villacorta, 2009; Lin et al., 2012; Mori, 2002, 2004). Blay et al.

(2009), for instance, examined the nature of Grade-4 Filipino students' motivation to read. Based on the findings, the highest mean obtained was for intrinsic motivation.

The results, however, are in contrast with Kim (2011) and Kondo-Brown (2009) studies. In Kim's (2011) research *learning goal-oriented motivation* and *utility value of L2 reading* were the highest stimuli for the students' motivation to read in English. This inconsistency could be attributed to a number of elements, including the status of English in these two contexts, the amount of exposure to English and L2 reading, students' fields of study, and socio-political issues. In Iran, although English is the main foreign language offered in schools and universities, English proficiency is not necessarily mandatory for obtaining a good job nor for the employment progress. At the same time, however, and according to Kim (2011) English proficiency is a vital tool for career paths in general. Therefore, students "set goals or expectations based on rewards to be gained from an improved English proficiency" (p. 876). In other words, the English language has become a lingua franca in Korea, compared with Iranian EAP students that have limited exposure to English—an exposure that takes place almost exclusively—in L2 classrooms.

2. *Is there any relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension of selected EAP students majoring in medicine at an Iranian Medical University?*

Table 4. The Mean Scores of Reading Comprehension Test for Participants.

English Proficiency	N	M	SD
High	37	15.13	1.9211
Low	58	6.21	1.2512
Total	95	10.25	3.46400

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics of total score on the reading comprehension test for the entire study participants. According to the results of the reading comprehension test (M=10.25), the participants were divided into two levels: high reading proficiency level and low reading proficiency level. The students whose scores of reading comprehension test were higher than 10.25 were grouped into high English reading proficiency. On the other hand, the students whose scores of reading comprehension test were lower than 10.25 were classified into the group of low English reading proficiency.

Table 5. Correlations between Reading Comprehension Test Score and Reading Motivation.

Motivation Scales	Reading Comprehension	
	R	P
Reading curiosity	.215	.036*
Reading involvement	.518	.09*
Reading for grades	.077	.457
Reading efficacy	.068	.023*
Reading challenge	.123	.234
Reading work avoidance	.098	.345
Reading importance	.4	.029*
Reading compliance	.034	.746
Integrative orientation	.117	.260

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

As displayed in Table 5, significant relationships were found to exist between reading comprehension and *reading curiosity* ($r=.215$ $p<.05$), *reading involvement* ($r = .518$ $p <.05$), *reading efficacy* ($r = .068$ $p <.05$), and *reading importance* ($r= .4$ $p<.05$). In other words, three intrinsic motivation factors along the construct of *self-efficacy* (i.e., *reading curiosity*, *reading involvement*, and *reading importance*) were positively correlated with participants' reading comprehension test score. It can be concluded that EAP students with high intrinsic motivation (e.g., interest) could feel more confident in their capacity at reading and thus are more likely to be more efficient and competent readers. Regarding the influence of intrinsic motivation on learning, Dickson and Dörnyei (1995, 1998 cited in Han, 2011) believe that intrinsically motivated students have more 'internalized locus of control' which leads them to learn more successfully and productively. With respect to *self-efficacy*, Schunk (2003) asserts that "compared with students who doubt their learning capabilities, those who feel efficacious for learning or performing a task participate more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter difficulties, and achieve at a higher level" (p. 161).

These findings are in line with some of previous studies on L1 reading motivation (see Parault & Williams, 2010) and EFL reading motivation (Chen, 2009, Komiyama, 2009, Kim, 2011; Lin et al., 2012). Chen (2009), for example, investigated the relationship between reading motivation and reading achievement. A total number of 287 Chinese university EFL students took part in the study. The findings indicated that intrinsic motivation constructs and

self-efficacy were positively and significantly correlated with participants' reading achievement.

At the same time, this finding is inconsistent with research by Takase (2007). He examined the relationship between motivation and reading comprehension and found no correlations between Japanese EFL high school students' L2 reading motivation and reading proficiency. This inconsistency between that study and the present study might be due to a wide range of factors such as the differences between the two studies in participants' age, L2 proficiency, educational experiences, cultural and social backgrounds, and measurement instruments.

4.2 Results of the Qualitative Phase

As mentioned in the methodology section, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subsample of the participants. These interviews were primarily used to address the third question of the study: "*How do the selected EAP medicine students' perceptions of reading academic expository texts contribute to our understanding of their reading motivation practices?*" Five themes were identified from the qualitative analysis of students' responses.

4.2.1 Intrinsic Motivation

First, intrinsic motivation has been found to play a huge role in characterizing EAP reading motivation for both high and low reading achievers. Due to their strong curiosity and their intrinsic motivation for learning, they were quick to explain that they have strong desire to be engaged in reading regardless of the possible difficulties of the tasks or getting low marks. Mehdi stated "If I find a particular topic fascinating, I will keep my reading". Reza, another student, said "I will not quit my reading just because of the complexities of the reading activities ahead; I keep reading since I'm interested in that topic". Malihe also indicated that she would give priority to read intriguing topics. When asked about her ideas and thoughts about reading, she said "If that topic is compelling and related to my major, I'm so keen on keeping my reading". Sara said "Well, after finding an absorbing topic, I continue my reading and spend much more time on it".

4.2.2 Extrinsic Motivation

Second, extrinsic motivation is also a key factor in EAP students' reading. For example, teachers' encouragement, peers pressure, and exams would promote students reading achievement. The qualitative results showed that low achieving students were motivated more extrinsically compared with high achieving ones. That is, their reading is influenced by their yearning to achieve good marks, outperform classmates, complete assignments, etc. Without the presence of such factors they would avoid reading and abandon it. Even high achieving students consider extrinsic factors as a good stimulation for reading. Maryam explained how extrinsic factors have contributed to her reading achievement:

I think both interest and teacher's encouragement contribute to my reading. It has happened for me that I found a topic interesting but did not spend time on it at all. Even if I read it, I did not read it in a way to remember its details thoroughly later. But when my teacher asked me to read a topic to present it, I spent much time on it and read with more enthusiasm. I'd better

say that the teachers' encouragement has sometimes stronger effect on my reading in comparison with just interest.

Low achieving students need much more stimulation from outside for reading, as they are reluctant to read themselves. Parvaneh, a low achiever, said "If I see no push from my teacher's side, I do not read effectively and efficiently. To be honest, I put my reading aside". Jafar, another lower achiever, said:

Well, for me intrinsic motivation is not the most important factor; it is extrinsic motivation that encourages me to read at all. If I see that there would not be an exam, I consider reading useless. Also the pleasure that I get from outperformance and competition makes me want to read more.

4.2.3 Perceived Importance

The third most salient factor that emerged from the qualitative analysis was recognition of the importance of reading expository texts. Both groups were cognizant of the importance of such genre in their academic and professional success. For example, Mehdi said:

From my point of view, learning to read expository texts is highly important. By knowing the structure and function of such genre, I can obtain a wide variety of knowledge in my field of study. For example, journal articles and experimental reports are two important sources for medical students that are highly expository based. So, learning to read expository texts will make me a knowledgeable person.

Parvaneh, a low achiever, said:

Well, no one can ignore the key role of expository texts in our major. Nearly in all of the texts I see the traces of expository structures, such as cause/effect, problems/solution and the stuff like that. I myself spend much time on learning to read expository texts, because it will guarantee my academic success. In general, I consider having the knowledge of expository texts as a password that I allow me to have access to much information". Sara said "By learning to read expository texts, I will be able to read many topics on the Internet, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, etc. Through reading them I can learn how to write articles that should be based on expository genre to a large extent. Broadly speaking, by learning to read to expository texts I'll become an expert in my major.

4.2.2 Self-efficacy

Fourth, the responses of the interviewees showed that self-efficacy is extremely important for L2 readers while reading expository texts. Students who feel more confident about their reading skills keep reading the texts. They show a high desire to read the texts. When they were asked how they realized that were a competent reader or not, their reasons were (a) being able to identify the main ideas of the writer, (b) being able to decipher unfamiliar words, (c) comparing oneself with other students' level of reading comprehension, and (d) being able to comprehend complex parts of texts. Comments of instructor, classmates, and parents were also key sources for their assessments of efficacy. For instance, Nahid said:

I think I'm a good reader concerning expository texts, because I'm able to figure out unfamiliar words, especially technical words which are abundant in expository texts. I can get the intention of the writer and I'm good at dealing with difficult parts of a text successfully. I judge myself as an advanced reader at reading expository texts because of feedback that I receive from my instructor and fellow students. When you feel confident in your reading you do not like to quit your reading.

Considering herself as a poor reader, Sara said:

I have an insufficient competence in reading expository texts. I get lost among so many details and cannot get the gist or whole theme of such texts. I'm unable to construct the meaning of unknown words. As a result I become frustrated and stop reading. Not being able to cope with such insufficiencies has detrimental effects on my reading, for example I abandon reading or to be honest, I hate it. You know, one problem is that I'm not able to use effective strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Another problem that bothers me is that I'm not familiar well with expository texts structures. My teacher has made me aware that I need to work harder.

4.2.5 Motivational Effect of Grades on Self-efficacy

Fifth, the effect of grades on students' reading is a very important factor. However, this kind of construct was stronger for low achievers than high achievers. High achieving students still give priority to interest rather than grades. In other words, intrinsic motivation is still an important factor in their reading. For example, Reza said "I do not think that grades would influence my reading as the first stimulation. I continue reading a topic, since it matches my interest. If I get bad marks, it will not hinder my reading". And Malihe said "Yes, getting bad grades might force me to think that I'm not a competent reader. But it does not mean that I stop reading a particular topic of interest. I mean, interest is still higher than grades for me". For low achievers, marks have an enormous influence on their reading habits. As for Parvaneh, marks are vital factors that persuade her to read. She said:

Well, the mark has a great influence on my perception concerning reading. I think reading a topic that has no relation to the grade is just a time consuming activity. I remember that I got a bad mark in one of my English courses last term, which tremendously affected my perception of reading. Broadly speaking, I lost my confidence and thought that I'm not a competent reader.

To summarize, the qualitative results show that the selected EAP students majoring in medicine are motivated to read English as a foreign language due to a wide range of reasons related to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy. That is, they have a multifaceted motivation to read, as is the case in other EFL contexts (i.e. Alsheikh & Elhoweris, 2011; Han, 2011; Kim, 2011; Mori, 2002, 2004; Nishino, 2005). The varying levels of English proficiency of the participants could be one of the reasons for the different degrees of motivation. For example, the findings indicate that extrinsic factors for English reading are the most powerful predictors of low achieving students' engagement in reading. These results support Lau and Chan's (2003 cited in Apple, 2005) claim that "low proficiency

students have lower intrinsic motivation and higher extrinsic motivation, if they are motivated at all” (p. 3). Based on an in-depth look into extrinsic sub-components from the qualitative part of this study, all low achievers agreed that the grade is the prominent factor in motivating them to read. This result concurs with Dhanapala’s (2006) study, which reveals that outperforming classmates is one of the strong extrinsic factors for L2 readers. This finding reflects the tremendous role of scores in the educational system of Iran. In Iran, the scores of standardized tests are the sole and most important criterion for evaluation and assessment of the students’ abilities. Because of this, the students’ perceptions of their academic success being linked to getting acceptable scores on standardized tests play a vital role in motivating them to read English.

5. Conclusion

In this study, the results indicate the multidimensionality of the selected EAP students’ reading motivation. Each of these factors depicts distinctive characteristics. Intrinsic motivation reflects students’ willingness to read in an L2 due to personal interest in the topic. Students with high intrinsic motivation enjoy the experience of engagement with their L2 reading. The remaining factors emerged in this study are all associated with students’ willingness to read in L2 to gain something other than the sole sense of enjoyment. One of them is *competition factor* which taps students’ wish to show superiority in the classroom, by outperforming the peers and obtaining approval from English instructors and classmates. The other factor, *reading for grades* as an external reinforcement, reflects students’ willingness to read to receive good grades. Generally speaking, of those motivation factors identified in this study, intrinsic motivation plays the largest role in characterizing the L2 reading motivation of the selected EAP students, especially for high achievers. These students’ L2 reading proficiency also positively and significantly correlated with reading motivation. When subgroups of students with high and low reading proficiency are compared, the high L2 reading proficiency group shows higher reading curiosity, reading involvement, reading efficacy, and great perception of the importance of reading academic expository texts. The results of this study have the following implications. First, according to the results, it can be concluded that students come to class with different types of motivation, so becoming aware of them can assist EAP practitioners to adjust or modify their teaching methods to meet each student’s motivational pattern.

Second, the results showed that the low achieving students are not intrinsically motivated. EAP instructors, therefore, should build up conditions that assist students to develop and keep intrinsic motivation and lessen their negative perceptions of English reading. For example, reading activities could be designed that are both intrinsically motivating and appropriate for boosting test-taking skills.

Third, based on the finding from the current study that reveals the positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and reading proficiency, EAP instructors should try to enhance students’ intrinsic motivation dimension (e.g., *reading curiosity*, *reading involvement*, *reading challenge*, and *reading importance*) by finding interesting and related topics that

would help them to become active readers. Active readers would become more absorbed and interested in reading.

Forth, teachers could also assist students to set meaningful goals for their readings and help them to achieve their goals. Teachers should explain the goals of reading the topics of the course at the beginning of the term in order to resolve any possible differences between L2 program goals and students' goals.

Another implication of this study is to explicitly review the reading strategies with students and make them familiar with wide range of strategies that they can use in order to understand and comprehend expository texts efficiently and effectively. Students should also become cognizant of the structures of expository texts. Teachers could identify poor readers and observe their progress at different stages and provide positive comments on their work in order to enhance their self-confidence in English reading.

Last, but not least, this study may contribute to the literature concerning methodological issues. The use of a mixed methods approach in this study revealed that the researcher can obtain a clearer picture of complex phenomena like reading motivation. More studies that employ both qualitative and quantitative methods in the future are certainly merited.

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