



ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างแรงจูงใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ
และความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ : กรณีศึกษา
นักเรียน แผน อังกฤษ-คณิต โรงเรียนวัดสุทธิวราราม

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH READING MOTIVATION AND ENGLISH
READING COMPREHENSION : A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH-MATHEMATICS
PROGRAM STUDENTS AT WAT SUTTIWARARAM SCHOOL

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ (1) ศึกษาแรงจูงใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนแผน อังกฤษ-คณิต (2) ศึกษาความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนแผน อังกฤษ-คณิต (3) ศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ของแรงจูงใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนที่มีต่อความเข้าใจในการอ่าน กรณีศึกษานักเรียนในระดับชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 5 โรงเรียน วัดสุทธิวราราม แบบสอบถามมี 2 ชุด แบบสอบถาม ชุดที่ 1 มี 57 ข้อ เป็นคำถามในเรื่องแรงจูงใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ แบบสอบถาม ชุดที่ 2 มี 20 ข้อ เป็นคำถามในเรื่องการทำความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ และแบบสัมภาษณ์มี 10 คำถาม การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติเชิงบรรยายข้อมูล ผลการ วิจัยพบว่า นักเรียนแผนอังกฤษ- คณิต ที่เป็นกรณีศึกษา มีแรงจูงใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษน้อยซึ่งอ่านแล้วไม่เข้าใจ ดังนั้น นักเรียนจะอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะสิ่งที่เขาสนใจแต่จะไม่อ่านเพื่อรับผลการเรียน จากผลของข้อมูลสะท้อนให้เห็นว่า แรงจูงใจมีผลกระทบต่อ การอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ

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Abstract

The purposes of the study is to: (a) to assess the motivation of students in an English - Math program; (b) study the reading comprehension of students in that English-Math program; (c) study the relationship between English reading motivation and reading comprehension. I used case study of Grade 11 students at Watsuttiwararam School for this study. The study used two sets of the questionnaires. The first set contained 57 questions on English reading motivation. The second set contained 20 questions on English reading comprehension and 10 interview questions. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data from the questionnaire. The case study showed that students in the English – Math program who have low reading motivation tend to have difficulty comprehending English. Poorly motivated students have no interest in reading to improve their grades. The data shows that if a student is not motivated to read English, that student is less likely to read the English academic material necessary to succeed in school or the modern economy.

คำสำคัญ: แรงจูงใจในการอ่าน / ความเข้าใจในการอ่าน

KEYWORDS: READING MOTIVATION / READING COMPREHENSION

Introduction

English is widely regarded today as the main language of international communication, education, academic study, business and other important aspects of life at this point of history. Thailand will become a part of ASEAN Economics Community (AEC) in 2015 and English will be the main language that is used for communication among members of *the* AEC. Moreover, English is the most commonly understood foreign language of foreigners in Asia. Indeed, in some Asian countries (e.g., Singapore) English is the primary language. This trend will only continue will continue for the foreseeable future.

According to Basic Education Core Curriculum of Thailand, B.E. 2551, students need to learn English as a foreign language for communication and are required to have the following four English language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading is a prime source of education and students must have a basic foundation in English literacy to access a diverse range curriculum and information. Without at least basic English language skills, students will be at a disadvantage in the modern economy.

Reading is considered the most important of the four English language skills and is necessary in acquiring knowledge in both the classroom and the extracurricular environment (Carrell, 1998; Grabe and Stoller, 2011). The students in these studies learned English as a foreign language. They were required to read written English resources in order to obtain knowledge to access opportunities for higher education. In most educational institutes and professions, credible academic texts are primarily available in English. Moreover, even when such texts are available in other languages, they are often still not available in the Thai language.

According to reports on Language Assessment Scales (LAS) of 507 and 447 Grade 11 students at Wat Suttiwararam School in 2012 and 2013 the English – Math program students scored 38.14 and 43.27 out of 100, which was lower than the average. The English – Math students also scored 42.40 and 43.80 on English for communication. Out of 26 questions posed in the reading section the highest score was 23 and the lowest scored was 1 whereas in the Languages – Art program students scored higher (scored 48.70 and 47.40). The LAS reports showed that students who have low English proficiency have severe difficulty reading English. This will obviously handicap their educational and work opportunities. Professionals, and even highly skilled labour, require strong English skills.

According to Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Wigfield & Guthrie (1997) reading motivation is multidimensional. Their studies identified nine components of reading motivation among students, which can be applied to upper secondary school students. Two of these components have been found to be of primary significance in studies on reading engagement: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to doing something for external rewards, demands and recognition: when children are extrinsically motivated to read, they are primarily responding to the external environment or to social benefits (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Intrinsic motivation refers to participation in an activity on the basis of one's own internal interests. Wigfield & Guthrie, (1997) described students intrinsic reading motivation as consisting of: curiosity, the desire to learn about a particular topic of personal interest; challenge, the satisfaction obtained from mastering complex or difficult ideas from reading materials; and involvement, the pleasure gained from being engaged in reading interesting materials. Students with intrinsic interests and have demonstrate better conceptual learning than students with extrinsic goals.

When students have low motivation, they have serious problems comprehending written English. A better attitude about reading can lead to a more engaged reader. Guthrie (2001:2) says that an 'engaged' reader is "intrinsically motivated to read for knowledge and enjoyment". An internally motivated reader reads "because of personal interest and desires to learn, relax, escape, or empathize" (Block, 2005). Comprehending words, sentences, and entire texts needs not only linguistic knowledge but also needs knowledge of and interest in the world outside of Thailand (Anderson, Goetz, Reynolds, Schallert (1977). Coady (1979) supported the need for interest and background knowledge for enabling students to comprehend and involve themselves in the text despite difficulties understanding syntax.

There is a relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension: if students have low motivation to read, they will have difficulties comprehending what they read. Conversely, readers will gain confidence when they can comprehend what they read. This confidence will, in turn, lead to more positive attitudes about reading, which will result

in students reading more. When they read more, the influx of lexical items into the brain will occur more, which in turn bring about better comprehension and confidence to read (Koda, 2005; Pulido and Hambrick, 2008). The motivation of reading will produce, maintain and promote reading activity. In addition, reading and comprehending texts in the native language is different than doing so in a foreign language. Grabe (1991) suggested that students begin reading in a second language by using a different knowledge base compared to when reading in their native language. He stated that most of the mother tongue readers already know many words and much of basic grammar before they start to read, whereas most of the second or foreign language readers are new to the language and do not have those abilities.

English – Math students group were selected for this case study according to their grades and their performance in the classes where they do not have enthusiasm and motivation and therefore cannot share the information and ideas to help each other. This study investigates the relation between reading motivation and reading comprehension.

Objectives

The purposes of this study was to (a) investigate English reading motivation (b) investigate English reading comprehension (c) study the relationship between English reading motivation and reading comprehension of students studying in English-Math program of Grade 11 Students at Wat Suttiwararam School.

Methodology

Population and Participants

The participants of this case study were 34 students who studied in the English-Math program of Grade 11 academic year 2014 at Wattstutiwararam secondary school in Bangkok. They were selected based on low scores. Their average grades on English reading and writing class were grades 1- 2.5. This study aimed to determine the relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension on English reading.

Research Instruments

The research instruments in this study are two questionnaires and interview questions: (1) the motivation questionnaires created by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) and Schmidt et al.'s (1996) were adapted. There are 57 items in the questionnaire which conceptualized 11 different dimensions of reading motivation reading efficacy, reading challenge, reading work avoidance, reading curiosity, reading involvement, importance of reading, competition in reading, competition in reading, recognition for reading, reading for grades, social reasons for reading, compliance. This motivation questionnaire used a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly

disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, strongly agree) to assess participants' motivation toward learning and reading in English. (2) English reading comprehension questionnaire was adapted by Xiubo Yi and Dan Zhang (2006), Jilin University. The questionnaires consisted of 20 items divided into 5 categories; language knowledge, reading strategies, motivation, background knowledge, reading process. The questionnaires used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 to 1 (strongly agree, agree, not decide, disagree, strong disagree). (3) Interview questions included 10 questions covered reactions, difficulties, and suggestions. In order to obtain deeper understanding of the participants' reaction to academic reading and the difficulties they encountered on English reading materials, the researcher interviewed three students who were selected from their grades (high, mid, low) and they were asked about their attitudes towards reading English in the class.

Data collection

Data collection was inducted in 2 phases: 1) the survey phase: The researcher distributed two questionnaires, the English Reading Motivation questionnaires, reading English comprehension questionnaires to 34 students directly and explained the objective of this study; 2) the interview phase: 3 students (high, mid, and low- achievers) were asked for more in-depth information about their reading practice.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the two Questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical analyses. For the questionnaires, the mean score above 2.00 was interpreted as they agree to the statements and the mean score below 2:00 was interpreted as the students disagree with the statements. The researcher used SPSS 21 for calculating the total groups, individual mean scores, standard deviation, correlation and percentage. Qualitative data obtained from the interview were analyzed based on content analysis.

Findings

The findings of this study were presented with the research objectives and they were presented in order as follows:

- (a) To investigate English reading motivation.
- (b) To investigate English reading comprehension.
- (c) To study the relationship of English reading motivation and reading comprehension.

English Reading Motivation

The scores of each sub-heading ranged from highest mean score the lowest mean scores.

- Extrinsic motivation ($\bar{x} = 2.38$)
- Reading efficacy ($\bar{x} = 2.25$)
- Self-efficacy ($\bar{x} = 2.19$)
- Competition in reading ($\bar{x} = 2.08$)

- Avoiding reading ($\bar{x} = 2.06$)

- Intrinsic motivation ($\bar{x} = 1.86$)

On each sub-category, the 3 top highest mean scores are from the statements:

Extrinsic motivation ($\bar{x} = 2.38$)

- 'English reading is a necessary factor for further study' (2.53)

- 'To be more competitive when you looking for a job' (2.50)

- 'To know English songs and movies' (2.50)

Reading efficacy ($\bar{x} = 2.25$)

- 'Learning English reading can widen my vision' (2.59)

- 'English reading is important for me, because it can enlarge my view.' (2.41)

- 'Learning English reading can help us to cope with the challenge of globalization' (2.26)

Self-efficacy ($\bar{x} = 2.19$)

- 'I will concentrate on it when I read English' (2.35)

- 'I always try to finish reading task in time' (2.29)

- 'My English reading score are not good when I was in Grade 7' (2.24)

Competition in reading ($\bar{x} = 2.08$)

- 'I will feel better when teacher or (and) other classmates say that I am good at English reading' (2.47)

- 'To be the person who does better in English reading than other students' (2.35)

- 'I am willing to study harder to read better than my friends' (2.26)

Avoiding reading ($\bar{x} = 2.06$)

- 'I do not like to read complex and difficult English materials (2.53)

- 'I try to do English reading homework as little as possible' (2.24)

- 'I won't do English reading voluntarily, unless it is homework' (2.09).

Intrinsic motivation ($\bar{x} = 1.86$) aspects only two statements were rated above 2:00

- 'Like the contents of English textbooks' (2.09)

- 'Enjoy reading in English very much' (2.03)

Mean scores and standard deviations of reading motivation

Extrinsic motivation

- *English reading is a necessary factor for further study* **2.53**

- *To be more competitive when you looking for a job* **2.50**

- *To know English songs and movies* **2.50**

- Learn English reading in order to pass entrance examinations

- for higher education institutions **2.44**

- Enhance individual qualities **2.44**

Reading-efficacy

- *Learning English reading can widen my vision* 2.59
- *English reading is important for me, because it can enlarge my view* 2.41
- *Learning English reading can help us to cope with the challenge of globalization.* 2.26
- I want to read variety views of the world by the study of English reading. 2.26
- I hope to find English information online by the study of English reading 2.09
- I like reading English materials about new things. 2.03

Self-efficacy

- *I learn English in order to improve my reading ability and skills* 2.44
- *I read English in order to gain more knowledge of English* 2.38
- *I read English in order to gain more knowledge of English* 2.38
- I will concentrate on it when I read English. 2.35
- I always try to finish reading tasks in time. 2.29
- My English reading scores are not good when I was in Grade 2.24
- It will make me frustrated to read long and hard English articles 2.09
- I like the challenge of reading difficult English articles. 2.00

Competition in reading

- *I will feel better when teacher or (and) other classmates say that I am good at English reading* 2.47
- *To be the person who does better in English reading than other students.* 2.35
- I am willing to study harder to read better than my friends 2.26
- I look forward to getting my reading scores and to be admired 2.24
- I like to be praised because of my good scores in English reading 2.18
- I hope to get better scores in English reading than other students 2.12
- - I will be happy when someone recognizes my ability of English reading 2.09

The scores showed that students agreed with the statements because their mean scores were above 2.00 which mean a most of students agree that English reading is a necessary factor for further study and that their background knowledge affects reading motivation. The results showed that the respondents are subject to high extrinsic motivation on reading efficacy and self-efficacy, but they have low motivation, meaning their intrinsic motivation is low.

The reading comprehension

Mean scores and standard deviations of reading comprehension problems of **Reading comprehension difficulty**

- | | \bar{x} |
|---|-------------|
| - <i>Sometimes even if I know every word in a passage, I still find difficulty in understanding the whole passage and grasping its central idea because of my limited background knowledge.</i> | 3.94 |
| - <i>I don't know the vocabulary and idiomatic usage so I cannot understand what I'm reading.</i> | 3.91 |
| - <i>When the text is too difficult, boring, and uninteresting, I fail to read.</i> | 3.68 |
| - When I read a passage, I tend to connect its content with my own previous knowledge related to the topic, and this is sometimes different from what the author intended in the passage. | 3.62 |
| - I cannot sequence and connect ideas in reading text because I don't know the text organization. | 3.32 |
| - I must read every <u>single word</u> : otherwise, I'm afraid I might miss the important point which will affect my comprehension of the whole texts. | 3.32 |
| - I often have problems with technical terms when I read the academic articles or texts. | 3.15 |
| - I thought that I understood the passage quite well, but it turned out that I gave wrong answers to several comprehension questions after. | 3.09 |

The result showed that all students have reading comprehension problems; they fear, often justifiably, that they are not properly comprehending English language passages. The top three items showed the highest mean scored which was 3.94, 3.91 and 3.68 so it's mean that students were lack of vocabulary and idiomatic usage areas and their limited background knowledge that make students cannot understand of what they are reading.

The relationship between motivation and comprehension in English reading

Correlation between reading motivation and reading comprehension of Grade 11 students.
The level of significance was set to be 0.05. Independent t-tests

N = 34	Reading Motivation
Reading Comprehension	-.44**

** $p < .01$

The result showed that statistically significant correlation between reading motivation and reading comprehension. The relationship between two variables is negative, meaning students who have low reading motivation tend to have difficulty in English. The data reflect the effect of the motivation effects English reading. It means that the motivation effects English reading. The students don't have the confidence required to organize their ideas after read an English language passages. Their background knowledge is part of larger problem that prevents from reading and comprehending English. Further, students did not have a sufficiently expansive English vocabulary to comprehend the English language texts they read. .

In addition, there were interview questions and the results showed that the interviewees all agreed that English reading material play important role to increasing their language proficiency and promoting their interest and motivation in learning English. The students said they had difficulties while reading because of they were not familiar with the vocabulary and complicated sentence structures. Furthermore, students said that they hardly read English in their daily life; some of them said they only study for examinations. When students have chance to read English for the information, they use Google translation (which can provide misleading or nonsensical translations) for meaning or they just guess for the meaning from the sentences.

In the interview, the interviewees all agreed that reading material such as reading materials and so on play important role to increasing their language proficiency and promoting their interest and motivation in learning English. These are some statements from the interviews.

Students that lack of motivation:

- 'When I read the unfamiliar word, it stops me from reading English book.'
(student A)
- 'The major problem that prevents me from continuing to read in English is unfamiliar vocabulary, which occurs repeatedly' (student B)
- I cannot not focus on reading when I read complicated sentence structures'
(student C)

Among students that cannot comprehend the English reading, the difficulties are:

- 'Most of time I guessed the meaning from the sentences and sometimes I look them up in the dictionary.' (student A)
- 'The most difficult problem is that I don't like was the unfamiliar words stop me from reading smoothly' (student B)
- 'I do not like to read the complex sentences with idioms and slang words' (student C)

The relationship of reading motivation and comprehension

- 'I think I have made progress in English reading after I read some interesting reading materials' (student A)
- 'I think some reading English materials are useful and it looks very cool when reading English in public' (student B)
- 'Reading material is really helpful because we know many vocabularies can be used in the daily conversation and some academic words can be used in the reading journal or other writing assignments' (student C)

The results from the interview provided insightful information for researchers about students think about English language skills. This finding should provide a guide for improving and developing English-Math programs and English reading courses. It will therefore help future researchers and instructors understand what students think of the reading materials, the difficulties face when reading English and how to help them tackle those difficulties. It will help instructors select suitable materials for the students. On balance, English language reading materials that appeal to a non-native English reader's inherent interests are more likely to attract the attention of a non-native English reader.

Discussion

From the reading motivation questionnaires revealing the 3 top highest mean scores from students' self-report of high motivation : extrinsic motivation ($\bar{x} = 2.38$), reading efficacy ($\bar{x} = 2.25$), and self-efficacy ($\bar{x} = 2.19$) However, students seem to have low motivation on competition in reading ($\bar{x} = 2.08$), avoiding reading ($\bar{x} = 2.0$), and interestingly, the students' intrinsic motivation ($\bar{x} = 1.86$) is the lowest one. Moreover, the students are not quite motivated to read by themselves and they may be discouraged to read further when they experienced difficulties in reading.

The intrinsic motivation refers to participation in an activity on the basis of one's inherent interest (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Wigfield & Guthrie (1997) described student's intrinsic reading motivation as consisting of: curiosity, the desire to learn about a particular

topic of personal interest; challenge, the satisfaction obtained from mastering complex or difficult ideas from reading materials; and involvement, the pleasure gained from being engaged in reading interesting materials. Students with intrinsic and have better conceptual learning than students with extrinsic goals (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) study on reading motivation indicated that highly intrinsically motivated children read more extensively than less motivated students or students who are only extrinsically motivated. Student's reading motivation can be affected by a number of factors (e.g. interest efficacy, and goals). These factors may be important untapped dimensions for improving engagement in reading. Improving motivation should ultimately lead to better comprehension outcomes for students with poor reading comprehension skills. This suggests that the reading motivation in English reading of English-Math program of Grade 11 students were low because the student's were not sufficiently motivated to English language materials. The student's motivation to read English language materials should increase if they are reading materials they find interesting, that is, if they are intrinsically motivated to read English language materials.

The result of reading comprehension questionnaires showed that the most students have difficulties comprehending English language material because they lack background knowledge about the topic and the words in passages. Students tend to have limited background knowledge, vocabulary and idiomatic usage that preventing them to understand what they are reading. As a result, low motivation causes an obstacle to reading comprehension. In other words, the teacher can motivate students to read by selecting appropriate reading materials for their interest. Moreover, the respondents also found a problem when they read a passage; students must connect its content with their previous knowledge related to the topic. Often the student's read passages to mean to some different from what the author intended in the passage. Aslanian (1985) also stated that if readers rely too much on their knowledge and ignore the limitations given by the text or vice versa, then they will not be able to comprehend the intended meaning of the writer. This is particularly important when teaching Thai students, since their background knowledge may differ substantially from the author's. This further undermines reading comprehension. In addition, the teacher should activate students with background knowledge about an English language passage before giving a reading task to students about that passage. This study also found the high percentages of Grade 11 in English-Math program students who indicated that they had their own interests on English reading. Most of the students only read in English on what they are interested in. Students that have higher grades read more often on reading English.

This study also found the negative correlation between English reading motivation and reading comprehension. The lack of the previous studies, Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) mentioned that intrinsic motivation was found to be the strongest predictor of reading amount (reading time) (cited in Lau, 2009). And also in his study found extrinsic motivation was negatively related to reading amount (Lau, 2009). As mentioned earlier Grade 11 in English-Math program students had positive reading motivation in some dimensions of extrinsic motivation but the negative correlation with reading comprehension which consistency with the finding on the previous researches. In sum, these results suggest that the relationship between reading motivation and reading comprehension is influenced by students' interest.

Implications

This study finds that because reading motivation correlates positively with reading comprehension, language teachers should carefully select reading material that will motivate students to want to read such material. For example, moderate, attractive and interesting reading materials, which can are more likely to beef interest, should be selected and used. Day and Boomford (2004) state that "Getting EFL students to read extensively depends critically on what they read. The reading materials must be both easy and *interesting*". (Emphasis supplied). Barfield (1995) says: "if the books do not appeal to most of the class, then all the efforts will be in vain". One of the goals of the study is to help the student's motivate their interest in reading. Therefore, the teacher should consider the reading materials which are appropriate for student's levels and interest. Students must activate students' background knowledge before giving reading tasks in order to develop students' reading skill to relief the difficulties in comprehending the reading English. Furthermore, the teachers should assist students in different ways such as helping them to improve their sight vocabulary, reading speed and reading comprehension, they engage in their own choice according to their interest. Reading habits will outlast their stay at school and accompany students into their adult life. However, evidence from this study suggests that reading comprehension could be facilitated by including motivational processes into instruction, materials, activities and programs.

Limitations to the present study found that the researcher did not investigate or include the genders of the readers in the analysis. The study involves the measurement of motivation. The motivation measure researcher chose is widely used and accepted in reading. Thus, it used as a general measure of motivation, but motivation can be measured in a variety of ways tapping multiple constructs (Cain, Oakhill, & Bryant, 2004; Leslie & Caldwell, 2000; Paris and Hamiton, 2009). Using more than one information on the Wigfield measure of reading motivation (e.g. parent, teacher, and observer) may have provided a

richer estimate of reading motivation. Although comprehension strategies instruction is grounded within many cognitive models, the focus still relies heavily on teachers' goals for teaching content and anticipation for the challenges that students might face while learning.

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