

**MOTIVATION TOWARDS READING AMONG ENGINEERING
STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA**

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To my beloved parents,
Kuldip Singh and Harjit Kaur

And my loving sister and brother,
Balvin Kaur and Baldeep Singh

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the English reading habits among engineering students in terms of how often, how much and what the students usually read between academic and non-academic materials. Besides that, their motivation towards English language reading was also been investigate in this study. The instruments used for this study were questionnaire and interviews. Fifty respondents were randomly selected from Faculty of computing who are pursuing a Bachelor of Software Engineering for the quantitative data collection. Six of the respondents were chosen for the interview sessions. The result of this study has revealed that the respondents frequently read course materials and online leisure materials. Majority of the respondents spends between one to two hours in a day to read academic materials in English language. Moreover, majority of the respondents spend less than one hour and between one to two hours in a day to read non-academic materials in English language. Apart from that, the respondents are extrinsically motivated to read academic materials in English language and they are not intrinsically motivated to read both academic and non-academic materials in English language. The findings of this study would provide useful information for the language teachers, lecturers and university administrators in planning programme to cultivate students reading habits and to motivate students to read in English language in the future.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengetahui tabiat membaca bahasa Inggeris di kalangan pelajar kejuruteraan dari segi kekerapan, berapa banyak dan apa yang pelajar biasanya membaca antara bahan-bahan akademik dan bukan akademik. Selain itu, motivasi mereka ke arah membaca dalam bahasa Inggeris juga telah disiasat dalam kajian ini. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk kajian ini ialah soal selidik dan temu bual. Lima puluh responden telah dipilih secara rawak dari Fakulti pengkomputeran yang sedang mengikuti pengajian Ijazah Sarjana Muda Kejuruteraan Perisian untuk pengumpulan data kuantitatif. Enam daripada responden telah dipilih untuk sesi temuduga. Hasil kajian ini telah mendedahkan bahawa responden kerap membaca bahan-bahan kursus dan bahan-bahan lapang online. Majoriti daripada responden meluangkan antara satu hingga dua jam dalam sehari untuk membaca bahan-bahan akademik dalam bahasa inggeris. Selain itu, majoriti responden meluangkan kurang daripada satu jam dan di antara satu hingga dua jam dalam sehari untuk membaca bahan-bahan bukan akademik dalam bahasa Inggeris. Selain daripada itu, motivasi luaran mendorong responden untuk membaca bahan-bahan akademik dalam bahasa Inggeris dan mereka tiada motivasi dalaman untuk membaca kedua-dua bahan-bahan akademik dan bukan akademik dalam bahasa Inggeris. Hasil kajian ini akan memberikan maklumat yang berguna untuk guru-guru bahasa, pensyarah dan pentadbir universiti dalam merancang program untuk memupuk tabiat membaca di kalangan pelajar dan membina motivasi pelajar untuk membaca dalam bahasa Inggeris pada masa hadapan.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the background of the study, the statement of problems and the purpose of this study. Moreover, it will also discuss on the objectives of the research, the research questions, the significant of the study, the scope of the study and the definition of terms that have been used in this study.

1.1 Background of study

English is an official language in Malaysia and is taught as a second language in Malaysia schools. It is compulsory for all the students in primary and secondary school to learn English for at least 11 years. Despite this, Malaysian students do not seem to be able to attain reasonable English literacy even after going through 11 years of learning English in school (Naginder, 2006; Nor Hashimah Jalaludin, Norsimah Mat Awal & Kesumawati Abu Bakar, 2008 in cited in Musa et al., 2012). Ravindran (2012) also reported that “the major reason for the graduates failing to meet the expectations of prospective employers is their lack of critical thinking skills and poor communications skills and a total lack of command in the English language”. This evidence shows that students are still lack of proficiency in English language.

Reading is considered as one of the important element in developing language proficiency. According to Strauss (2008) reading skills is not only important as a single skill but it also contributes in developing the other three skills. This statement had been supported by Ling (2011) where she stated that among the four basic skills in language learning and teaching, reading is one of the very important skills because this skill helps to develop other language skills as it provides language input to the learner.

Besides that, reading is an important activity in which students need to be engaged to provide them with the world knowledge. Reading helps students to be up to date with the information around them. According to Noor (2011) reading is an important tool for lifelong learning and also an important element for acquiring new knowledge and information.

Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Hou Kok Chung said that “reading is a good way of improving one's proficiency in a language” (The Star Online, 2012). He also urged that reading must be made as a habit especially English books as English language is known as one of the factor that can enhance a person's employability. Pandian (2000) found that the majority of university students are “reluctant” readers in English language materials (as cited in Abidin et al., 2011).

Moreover, reading is one of the language skills that students need to achieve success in their studies because it provides large amount of knowledge to the students. According to Kim and Anderson (2011) students achieve more success in their course if they are proficient readers.

Students' interest in reading can be developed if they are motivated to read. McDonough (1983) states that “motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language”(as cited in Tamimi et al., 2009). Research has shown that children who are motivated and spend more time reading are better readers as stated by Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding (1988) as cited in Short, 2010.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985) intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from the inner desire of the person himself and it simply gives him a sense of satisfaction. Students that are intrinsically motivated to read in English will really enjoy their reading activities because they read for their own pleasure. On the other hand, according to Wigfield (2004) extrinsic motivation refers to the external desire that direct an individual into the reading activity for the sake of reward and grades. Students that are extrinsically motivated to read in English will not feel the enjoyment in their reading activities because they are forced to do so for the sake of the external purposes. Students need to be more intrinsically motivated to read in English rather than extrinsically motivated to read in English. This is because when students were intrinsically motivated to read in English, they will not feel the burden on reading any English language reading materials.

Therefore, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is seen as important factors in developing students reading habits.

1.2 Statement of problem

According to Zazali (2012) despite the high literacy rate of 92 percent, the reading habit in Malaysia is still low. Based on the study conducted by the National library in 1982 shows that Malaysian readers reads only average of one to two pages yearly (cited in Christopher, 2010). The survey were done again by the National Library in 2005 where it revealed that Malaysian reads about two books yearly which show some improvement in Malaysian readers' reading habit (The Star Online, 2012). Another survey were then conducted in 2010 also by the National Library which give a bit more positive sight towards the reading habit of Malaysian which reported that 55 percent of Malaysian reads average of eight books yearly (The Star Online, 2012). Although there are some improvement in the reading habit among the Malaysian but it is still at the level of unsatisfactory.

Although Malaysian reading habit had shown improvement, there are still certain matter that need to been seen in term of the genre that they choose to read. According to Zul (2011) Malaysians prefer to read light materials. This statement had been commented by Associate Professor Datuk Mohamad Ali Hasan where he told that a person cannot master knowledge if he or she read only light materials. We should read materials from different genres as our nation needs people who can think globally and not those people that have limited scope of knowledge (Bernama Media, 2011).

English language is a very important language for students in the field of science and technology. Daud (2010) stated that universities and institution of higher learning in Malaysia are using English as a medium of instruction for science and mathematics subjects. Besides that, most of the reading materials such as reference books, research and journals in this field are using English language.

Motivation is crucial for reading in a second or foreign language because motivation has been reported to influence all aspects of language such as reading strategies, language proficiency and interaction with speakers of target language (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Kissau, 2006; Krashen, 1993; Oxford & Shearin, 1994 as cited in Alsheikh and Elhoweris, 2011). Apart from that, the purpose of reading in English gives influence on students' motivation to read. When the students read in English for the purpose of enjoyment, it shows that they are intrinsically motivated to read in English language. Students are extrinsically motivated to read in English language when they read for external reason such as to complete their assignments or to score well in exam.

Daud (2010) stated in her finding that engineering students in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia had difficulty in understanding English words. These difficulties were caused by the lack of interest towards the language, the poor motivation towards reading, lack of background knowledge and having low English proficiency level.

Hence, this study is conducted to find out more on the current reading habits among engineering students especially in English language. Besides that, the researcher would like to know what motivates engineering students to read in English language.

1.3 Purpose of the study

English is being widely used in tertiary level education in Malaysia and reading can contribute to the development of the other three skills in language learning, therefore it is important to know the current English reading habits of students in the tertiary level education. Besides that, reading habits of the students will also reflect on their motivation to read in English language.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to survey the English reading habits among engineering students in terms of how often, how much and what the students usually read between academic and non-academic materials. Besides that, also to investigate what motivates engineering students to read academic and non-academic materials in English language.

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the aim of this study, the following are the research objectives:

1. To examine the types of reading materials that engineering students read in term of academic and non-academic materials.
2. To determine how much time does engineering students spent on reading academic and non-academic materials.
3. To investigate engineering students' motivation to read academic and non-academic materials in English language.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the objective of this study, the following are the research questions:

1. What are the types of reading materials that engineering students read in term of academic and non-academic materials?
2. How much of time does engineering students spent on reading academic and non-academic materials?
3. What motivates engineering students' to read academic and non-academic materials in English language?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The finding of this study is important for the department and the university as it will provide information on the current English reading habit and on what motivates engineering students to read academic and non-academic materials in English. This information can help the university in conducting programme that can cultivate English reading habit among the students. The finding may also provide the teacher and lecturer information in finding more appropriate way in developing students' English reading habit and motivation towards reading in English language. Besides that, the result of this study can also be used as for further research in areas on how to promote good reading habit among university students.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study is conducted among the engineering students of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. The engineering students will be from the Faculty of Computing that enrolls in Bachelor of Software Engineering course.

The scope of this study is to look at the English reading habit of Engineering students on both academic and non-academic reading materials in terms of how often

engineering students read both of these materials. Besides that, this study also investigates engineering students' motivation to read academic and non-academic materials in English language.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1, describes that students are motivated to read academic and non-academic materials based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This framework is developed based on Deci and Ryan's (1985) "self-determination theory". This theory divides motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation of the students will lead them to read both academic and non-academic materials for their own inner desire and enjoyment. Extrinsic motivation of the students will lead them to read academic materials and non-academic materials in English language for the sake of external rewards such as for grades, to improve language skills and others. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation does influence students' choice on reading academic and non-academic materials in English language.

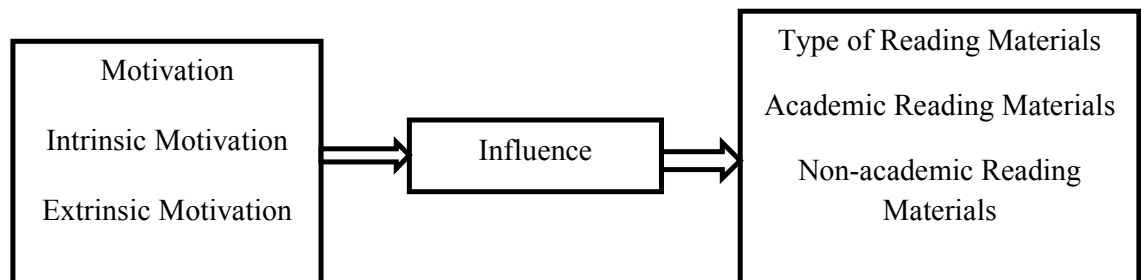


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework showing the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the choice of reading materials that the students read.

1.9 Definition of terms

Reading

According to Toit (2001) “reading is as a process of thinking, recalling and relating concepts under the functioning of written words”.

Reading habits

According to Wagner (2002) “reading habits is often considered in terms of the amount of materials being read, the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading’.

Intrinsic Motivation

According to Deci and Ryan (1985) intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from the inner desire of the person himself and it simply gives him a sense of satisfaction.

Extrinsic Motivation

According to Wigfield (2004) extrinsic motivation refers to the external desire that direct an individual into the reading activity for the sake of reward and grades.

Academic Reading materials

Materials that are read for academic purpose such as textbook, research papers, and online academic materials that is useful for learning. According to Mokhtari and Sheorey (1994) academic reading materials that are require for study such as textbooks, research paper, journal articles, library book and other materials assigned for coursework(cited in LanYing, 2005)

Non-academic materials

Materials that are read for leisure purpose such as magazines, newspapers, and online leisure materials for personal pleasure or general knowledge. According to Mokhtari and Sheorey (1994) non-academic reading materials

are materials that are unrelated to academic study such as magazines and newspapers and etc (cited in LanYing, 2005).

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