

Impact of Reading Strategy Use on Reading Motivation in Turkish EFL Context: A Mixed Method Study

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of using global reading strategies on L2 reading motivation. In addition, it probes into if any discrepancy exists between female and male students regarding their use of global reading strategies through using questionnaires on global reading strategy use and reading motivation. Furthermore, underlying reasons for the possible discrepancy was discussed by providing students' perspectives on the issue with focus group discussion. For this research, 66 ELT first grade students participated in the research, answered the global strategy use questionnaire and reading motivation questionnaire. The study reveals a positive correlation between strategy use and motivation. It also shows consistent results when focus group students' strategy use, motivation questionnaire scores and their interview replies were compared.

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Introduction

Reading is a multifaceted process comprising various affective and cognitive components. When we are cognizant of the complexity of reading, it becomes clear that the cognitive and affective processes that operate while reading is also complex based

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on numerous purposes and its many specialties. The importance of reading in EFL instruction varies according to what is intended because reading plays a crucial role in the development of both spoken and written language. It could be argued that reading helps in improving pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary development, and structural knowledge, and in addition to that, it serves as a gateway for immersing in larger social and cultural contexts as well as getting to know diverse discourse forms through exposure to different genre conventions. Even though the importance of reading is acknowledged, the readers are still varied in their performance, and this led them to be categorized as good readers and struggling readers. The use of global reading strategies partly explains the reason why there is variance among the readers' performance. Green (2007) noted that "to comprehend is not to simply absorb the author's meanings" (as cited in., Savaşkan, 2017). This saying is a hint at the situational level of comprehension, which is allowable if an individual is involved in the higher level of reading comprehension by using strategy. Likewise, Gunes (2013) study argued that "reading is the learning domain that provides contributions upon mental skills besides the language skills." This is something not emphasized in Turkey where the focus is language skills rather than raising students as strategic readers who know how to read according to different purposes. In line with this statement, Pisa results made public in OECD reports in December 2016 revealed that L1 reading results were underwhelming for Turkey in that the ranking of Turkey in PISA since 2003 was noticed to be decreased from 441 to 428 in 2015. Therefore, 31.2 percent of Turkish students below 15 years of age underperformed in reading and Turkey scored 50th out of 72 countries in reading (OECD, 2016). The findings of PISA 2009 Results: *Learning to Learn Student Engagement, Strategies, and Practices* indicated that Turkey is under OECD average with 5.1 points showing low reading performance along with poor awareness and use of effective reading strategies when compared with peers in other OECD countries (OECD, 2010).

In fact, the main concern of this paper is L2 reading comprehension, but the earlier studies on reading literary skills and strategy use presented compelling evidence that there is positive transfer between L1 and L2 as evidenced by Interdependence Hypothesis (Grabe, 2009: 145). A study by Upton and Li-Chun (2001) revealed that

the reading in L2 is not a monolingual event but includes interaction between L1 and L2, and the cognitive use of the L1 facilitates comprehension of an L2 text. The less skilled L1 readers resort to their L1 repertoire when confronted with unknown words when they do not understand the meaning of a sentence, and along with this, they also show the tendency to translate the L2 sentence into L1 to make sense conceptually. However, within the context of Turkey, the positive transfer effect is somehow crippled as indicated in OECD reports because the students' L1 reading comprehension and strategy use is weak. For this reason, the transfer from L1 to L2 is also affected negatively.

In addition to strategy use, motivation is another multifaceted construct that affects students' reading performance. Day and Bamford (1998) argue that L2 reading motivation consist of four major components including materials, reading ability in L2, attitudes toward reading in L2 and sociocultural environment. However, the main hypothesis of this paper suggests, strategy use makes students motivated to read. In that regard, this paper aims to show strategy and motivation are closely knit factors or somehow mutually inclusive in terms of its effect on the readers' performance.

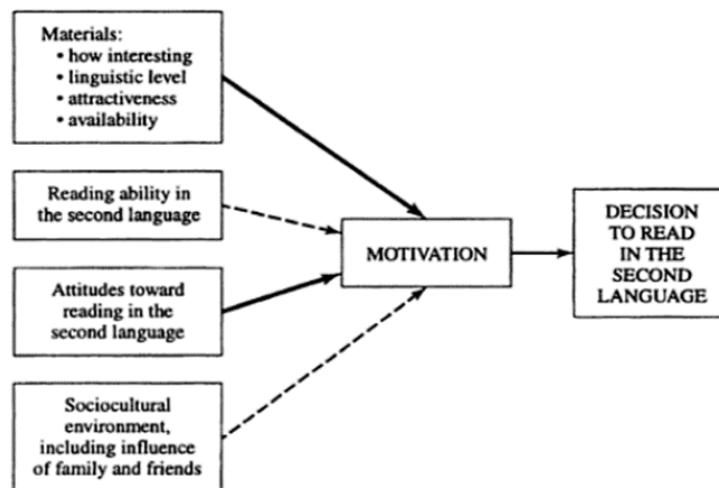


Fig.1. Aspects of motivation affecting the reader to make the decision to read (Day and Bamford 1998, 28).

Being strategic is very important for L2 readers to compensate for their deficiencies in “accuracy, automaticity, and pace, and prosody” which are four components for being a fluent reader (Grabe, 2009: 292). This fluency, as Fuchs et al.

(2001) maintained, divided in two: passage-level fluency and word-level fluency. Passage-level fluency involves multi-faceted processes (e.g., lexical access, sentence-level processing, background knowledge activation, and inferences) and it is far beyond decoding text using lower level processing. At this point, strategy use becomes very critical to increase the time management, automaticity, the experience of flow in reading, and save more time for situational level processing in reading comprehension. In addition to that, the strategy is very influential in enhancing the student's motivation level by increasing their engagement with the text and overcome their sense of low ability when they feel they have no knowledge of strategy. This idea presented in Weiner and his colleagues' theory of attribution, which is one of the important motivational theories that discuss learner's attribution, their low or high performance to ability, luck and task difficulty (Jones et. al., 1972).

Through our analyses of the students' perspectives to the issue of strategy use, we aim to highlight the perceptions of the students' strategy use and with focus group interviews on reading motivation, it will be possible to find out whether there is a relation between strategy use in reading and reading motivation. In this light, it would not be wrong to expect that as they become the strategic reader, their comprehension abilities and their motivation are likely to develop in accordance. For this reason, the following three research questions are posed;

- Do the males and females differ regarding their use of global reading strategies?
- Is there any correlation between being motivated and being the strategic reader?
- From the students' perspectives, does using strategies have any effect on their motivation in reading tasks, and using reading strategies make them continue reading in L2 through motivating?

Methodology

Participants and procedure

The participants are 66 first-grade English Language Teaching students who took the advanced reading course. The students are going to be asked to fill out

Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) Version 1.0 developed by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002), but 13 items chosen out of 30 items of this questionnaire to see whether they use global strategy. Questionnaire involves 5-point Likert scale that ranges from one, always or almost always, to five, never or almost never. In addition to strategy use questionnaire, reading motivation questionnaire developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (2000) consisting of 53 items was used to see if the participants are motivated to read. Later, four students got the highest score and four students who got the lowest score from the questionnaire were chosen to conduct focus group interview. The interview was conducted with two absents, six participants in total with different ages. Finally, with these two groups, the focus group interviews based on L2 reading motivation was conducted to see if there is any correlation between being a strategic reader and being motivated. Our primary purpose is to find out whether strategy use and motivation is in direct proportion to one another or whether students' reading motivation and strategy use is inversely correlated (i.e. students show high motivation regardless of strategy use for some reasons). If any discrepancy occurs, and what factors are involved, is a further topic to be discovered.

Data Analysis

Differences between females and males in global reading strategy use

For foreign language learners, reading is one of the most crucial skills to acquire and there are many types of research investigating diverse aspects that have an effect on reading comprehension including reading strategy use.

The fundamental aim in most of these researches is to reveal how using reading strategies contribute to effective reading. This current study also aims to reveal if any discrepancy exists between females and males. Empirical studies have shown that females and males perform differently in their use of strategy use and as a result of their reading performance. A study conducted by Griva et.al. (2009) has found that females outperformed males regarding their reading comprehension skills and these female students were reported as making use of a variety of both cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies. Yet, the underlying reasons of this variance were investigated by Brantmeier (2003) and it was found that female and male participants differ regarding their reading performance since they tend to use different strategies based on their

background knowledge about different text topics. Furthermore, Chavez (2001) also showed that females and males use different strategies especially in reading comprehension tasks. All these studies revealed that females can be evaluated as more active strategy users. Within the scope of this research, the question whether any difference exists between females and males regarding their strategy use was answered and in addition to this, the possible underlying reasons of the discrepancy was shed light on through focus group discussion.

Table.1 Total Glob Scores Independent Sample Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.533	.468	3.155	64	.002	5.092	1.613	1.867	8.3162
Equal variances not assumed			3.043	35.876	.004	5.092	1.673	1.697	8.486

After the data were collected, the IBM SPSS version 22.0 was used to run independent sample t-test. In order to see if this study provides consistent result with other relevant studies, an independent sample t-test was run to see if there is a statistically significant difference between females and regarding their preference of strategy use As part of this current study, the mean score for females was 47,37 with 5,90 standard deviation whereas M=42,28, SD=1,4 for males. Comparing the mean scores obtained from females and males, the male students have a lower score. Furthermore, the Independent Sample t-test revealed that there was a significant difference between different genders, $t(64)=3,15$ $p=0,002 < \alpha$ as can be seen above. Thus, it can be said that there is a statistically significant difference between females and males regarding their ratio of using global reading strategies. Thus, the present findings are inconsistent with previously done studies about gender differences in reading strategy use.

The correlation between being motivated and being the strategic reader

This possible correlation between being motivated and being the strategic reader will be answered by understanding what motivation really is, and how and for what reasons students feel motivated while reading. With different approaches to motivation, different theoreticians come up with a different understanding of motivation. Expectancy-value theory developed and assessed by Eccles and her colleagues (e.g., Eccles, 1987, 2005; Eccles et. al., 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Meece, Wigfield, & Eccles, 1990; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992, 2000, 2002) is one of the theory that argues individuals' expectation and value influence achievement. The expectation from reading and value from the task affect individual's choices, engagement and persistence. When these three components are considered thoroughly, it was seen that choices are closely related with strategy use while engagement and persistence have to do with motivation. In forming expectation for success, as shown below in the part "I" of the model, the idea of activity specific ability or "ability beliefs" which is related with self-concept of being successful and struggling readers become essential. In that sense, what decides being successful and struggling readers and motivated or unmotivated readers in fact closely corresponds to how strategic or competent you are as a reader.

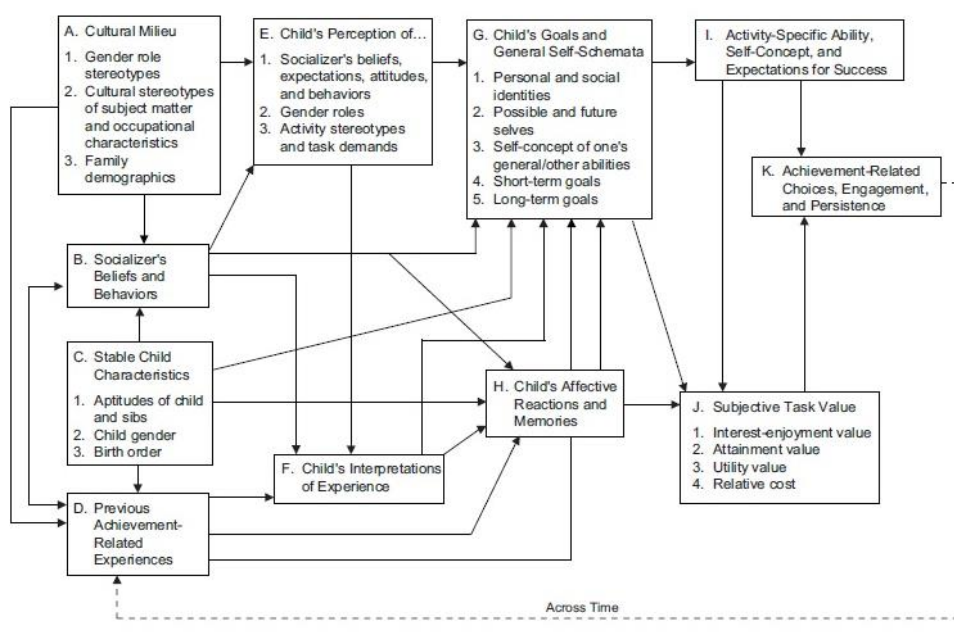


Fig.2 General model of achievement choices. (e.g., Eccles, 1987, 2005; Eccles et. al., 1993; Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Meece, Wigfield & Eccles, 1990; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992; 2000; 2002)

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) argue that highly motivated readers have literacy motivation that they create on their own. In constructing positive literary motivation, some researchers consider strategy use is a great necessity, and many studies in accordance with this assumption revealed that learners with higher levels of motivation use a variety of strategies more frequently than those with lower levels of motivation (Anderson, 2003; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Pressley & Harris, 2006; Zare-ee, 2007). Likewise, MacIntyre and Noels (1996) showed that students who feel more highly motivated will have more tendency and spend more effort to make use of strategy (p. 383). Bacon and Finnemann (1990) argues that students' motivations and attitudes affect the process of choosing strategies in that instrumentally motivated students may prefer extra global synthetic strategies but abstain from decoding analytic comprehension strategies. To answer the second research question, the relation between motivation and strategy use was revealed through conducting Pearson Correlation test.

Table 2. Correlation between total global strategy use scores and motivation questionnaire scores

		Totalglob	Mot
Total global strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	,873**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	66	66
Motivation questionnaire	Pearson Correlation	,873**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	66	66

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson Correlation examined the correlation between total global strategy use scores, which shows the ratio of students' strategy use based on questionnaire and motivation questionnaire scores. The mean for total glob scores was 45,37 (SD=6,51) and the mean for the motivation scores was 80,95(SD=8,94). The correlation analysis in Table.4 above revealed that there is a statistically strong positive correlation at the level of 0.01 between total glob scores and motivation scores, $r= 0,873$, $n=66$, $p=.000$.

Increases in total glob scores were correlated with an increase in post-reading comprehension scores.

Students' perspectives on the contribution of using global reading strategies to reading motivation

The students' responses to focus group interviews were used to see the effect of strategy use on motivation. In our study, we asked our questions to six students in total with who got the highest and lowest scores from global strategy use questionnaire to see whether they base their motivation on their strategy use. The questions asked in the focus group interview help us to understand what reading means for the students, why they use strategy, what purposes to read and what factors to feel motivated while reading. By answering these questions, it then becomes possible to understand whether strategy use affects students' motivation for reading. Students' quotations can be seen below:

SA:

I read when I want to learn something new. If it is a difficult text, I just try to get the main idea through skimming and if I come across conflicting information, I try to guess the meaning.

If I read something that I already know, it becomes easier to understand it.

Having passion is more important than using strategies. I read because I have fun. I can figure out the ideas that have been suppressed by the society while reading.

I think I am a motivated reader. I keep reading because I want to be a better reader. So, reading should not be something obligatory, it should be something that comes from inside.

SB:

My purpose for reading is to find a new world in books because books have different world inside them and we are their discoverers.

I sometimes use reading strategies and it depends on what I read.

If I come across conflicting information, I usually reread and try to analyze and to get the critical parts I skim and preview the texts.

SC:

When I am reading a book, I always have a purpose in my mind and I try to take notes and highlight some points to keep it in my mind for a long period of time.

I don't think that using strategies help in comprehension process. They just help us to remember what we have read in long term.

If am familiar with the topic, I read fast.

I am not a motivated reader because I have difficulty in concentrating.

SD:

Reading is important for me because it helps me to unwind. While reading novels, I do not use any particular strategy, but if it is academic article, I use some strategies. I scan the text. I read the first sentence of the each paragraph. I check for subheadings or graphs to have a general idea about the text.

I read because I have fun. It allows me to imagine and get away from my reality. To be able to get into the mind of the author is magical to me.

I think I am a motivated because the more one read, the more they want. Reading is an habit for me.

SE:

My purpose is to learn or get detailed information while reading.

I read for fun because it feeds my spiritual mood. It enhances my moral values.

I think I am a motivated reader because I know about what I read, then I choose reading strategies according to my purposes, and thus, know what to do while reading.

SF:

Reading is not just an activity for me. It is something that helps me to transport into another world and be whomever you want.

I read because I have to. I read for my personal development. I use basic strategies like scanning.

I think I am a motivated reader because I have always an aim.

The great majority of the participants have expressed that they have a purpose in their mind while reading. Some of them defined it as to learn new information; the others have stated that they read for general comprehension or searching for information. In the present study, it is assumed that strategy use has a positive impact on students' motivation. In this respect, the focus group interviews conducted were expected to give results in correlation with the motivation questionnaire results, strategy use questionnaire results as well as Independent Sample T-test results showing students' preference for strategy use by gender.

The results suggest that the highest scored students' responses to the questions in focus group favor strategy use more when compared with the less strategic reader. As can be seen above, Student A with a higher score has expressed his/her reason to read as valuing knowledge learned through reading and he relates what strategies he/she uses when facing challenging texts as follows: *"I read when I want to learn something new. If it is a difficult text, I just try to get the main idea through skimming"*. In addition, he has expressed, *"I think I am a motivated reader. I keep reading because I want to*

be a better reader.” This gives us the perception of a strategic reader. When we looked at Student C with lower score, he/she has expressed, *“I don’t think that using strategies help in comprehension process and I prefer to learn new things from watching TV rather than reading”*, and he/she further has stated, *“I am not a motivated reader because I have difficulty in concentrating.”* These quotations elicited from interview suggest strategy use influence one’s motivation level as evidenced by words of the students with higher score and lower score. When the same respondents compared in terms of gender, female student with the higher score is strategic and motivated compared to the student with male with a lower score in strategy questionnaire.

In most of the responses, it can be seen that many students respond strategy use and motivation in relation, one after another in their responses, by linking these two different components of reading comprehension in their responses. Student E has stated, *“My purpose is to learn or get detailed information while reading. I think I am a motivated reader because I know about what I read, then I choose reading strategies according to my purposes, and thus, know what to do while reading.”* The student A (who had a higher score) also links being a good reader with being intrinsically motivated. *“I think I am a motivated reader. I keep reading because I want to be a better reader. So, reading should not be something obligatory, it should be something that comes from inside.”* Student F (who had a lower score from strategy use questionnaire) has also acknowledged strategy use and motivation relation with these words: *“I read because I have to. I read for my personal development. I use basic strategies like scanning.”* Student D (who had a higher score) has expressed his/ her reason to feel motivated as intrinsic, and yet argues the text type read (novel or academic) may affect whether to use strategy or not: *“Reading is important for me because it helps me to unwind. While reading novels, I do not use any particular strategy, but if it is academic article, I use some strategies. I scan the text. I read the first sentence of each paragraph. I check for subheadings or graphs to have a general idea about the text”* As shown above, most of the respondent link motivation and strategy use in their responses.

Discussion and Conclusion

There are many studies conducted to reveal readers' awareness of strategies and in what ways these strategies help them to cope with the possible problems while reading, but there is almost no research on the possible relationship between strategy use and reading motivation. In other words, if using strategies ease the process of reading especially with challenging texts making students feel more motivated. Ozgungor and Guthrie (2004) showed that using strategies while reading improve reading comprehension. In addition, there are studies showing that strategy use particularly contributes to readers who are struggling. If so, especially the less skilled learners may feel motivated through using strategies, which will keep them reading. Thus, this study tries to clarify the students' perspective towards using global reading strategies and investigates if there is a correlation between strategy use and motivation in L2 reading comprehension.

Correlation analysis indicated a positive strong relationship between strategy use and motivation in our study group. Our basic assumption is that strategic learners are motivated. They attentively read, analyze and evaluate the text paying close attention to given input (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). By conducting a large-scale study of a university student, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) demonstrated that motivation predicts strategy to use. The more students are motivated, the more they resort to diverse kind of learning strategies whereas the students with less motivation use less strategy.

Most of the students interviewed have expressed, they use strategy to keep information in the long-term memory (to retrieve background information), to compensate when they face challenging reading tasks and their urge to use these strategies to feel motivated rather than handicapped in understanding the text. In the replies, the most important thing is strategic users are also indicated how they are also intrinsically motivated to read. In that sense, in their case, intrinsic motivation and strategy go hand in hand.

Regarding total glob scores differences by gender, the female participants take the upper hand when compared to male students. The focus group interview results also produce results compatible with the Independent Sample T-test, and the previous

literature because the female respondents are strategic in the act of reading, and what is more, they are more motivated in reading, particularly types of reading that they can enjoy or they can learn new information.

As the sample size was small in the process of gathering data through a questionnaire, there was not a variation in the mean score. The purposive sampling method was used to choose individuals to take part in a focus group discussion and access to participants was one of the factors affecting the process of data collection. In addition, this form of sampling can be said unrepresentative because of a limited number of participants and global strategy use questionnaire can be supported with think-aloud protocols in further research to decrease the incompatibility between what is said and what is done.

Notes on the contributors

Dilan Ugur Usta is an integrated PhD student in the department of English Language Education at Yeditepe University. Her main research interest centres on EFL reading, technology use in EFL classes. She is also interested in bilingualism, code-switching, second language acquisition.

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