



MOTIVATION AND CRITICAL READING IN EFL CLASSROOMS: A CASE OF ELT PREPARATORY STUDENTS

(İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ HAZIRLIK SINIFI ÖĞRENCİLERİNDE
İNGİLİZCE ELEŞTİREL OKUMA DERSLERİ VE MOTİVASYON)

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the ways in which Critical Reading (CR) practices can be adapted to traditional EFL reading lessons to increase student motivation. More specifically, this research aims at identifying the role of three main features of CR courses in increasing motivation, decreased external control, giving room for the students' own realities in classroom procedures, and optimal arousal. The study was conducted with ELT preparatory year students. The findings point out that adapting these three features into EFL reading lessons enhances student motivation. However, the results also show that for students with high self-efficacy and high English proficiency, traditional reading lessons will lack the essential novelty of CR courses, which is mastering a new skill, within the adaptation. Thus, this study suggests that for students with high levels of English proficiency, provided that the former two features are supported through tasks designed to raise optimal arousal to compensate for the lack of novelty in traditional reading classroom, students' intrinsic motivation will be increased for EFL reading lessons.

Keywords: EFL Reading, motivation, critical reading

ÖZ

Bu çalışma eleştirel okuma dersleri pratiklerinin, öğrenci motivasyonunu arttırmak için geleneksel okuma derslerine adapte edilmesinin yollarını araştırmaktadır. Temelde bu çalışma, eleştirel okuma derslerinde içsel motivasyonu arttırdığı gözlenen üç temel noktanın geleneksel okuma derslerinde oynayabileceği potansiyel rolü incelemektedir, öğrencilerin kendi öğrenim süreçleri üzerindeki kontrollerinin artması, öğrencilerin kendi deneyimleri ve yaşamlarının sınıf içi kolektif bilgi yaratımında yer bulması, ve yeni, merak uyandıran beceri geliştirme. Bu çalışma İngilizce öğretmenliği hazırlık sınıfı öğrencileriyle yapılmıştır. Bulgular, bu üç temel noktayı geleneksel okuma beceri derslerine adapte etmenin öğrenci motivasyonunu arttırdığını göstermektedir. Ancak sonuçlar ayrıca, yüksek öz-yeterlilik ve İngilizce yeterliliğe sahip olan öğrencilerde, sınıf içi faaliyetlerde yapılan bu uyarlamada eleştirel okuma derslerinin sunduğu yeni, merak uyandıran beceri geliştirme hususunun eksik kaldığını göstermektedir. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma öğrenci kontrolünün artması ve sınıf içi faaliyetlerle öğrencilerin yaşamları arasındaki bağı kuvvetlendirmenin, yeni ve merak uyandıracak aktivitelerle desteklenmesi halinde öğrencilerin içsel motivasyonlarının artacağını öne sürmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İngilizce okuma, motivasyon, eleştirel okuma

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INTRODUCTION

As in many educational settings, EFL classroom procedures also bear the risk of alienating students from learning experience. The relatively artificial nature of language classroom where language skills are broken into their components can cause frustration due to the possible discrepancy between real language use outside the classroom and language learning practice inside the EFL classroom. Thus, it leaves the students in a context where “learning becomes abstract and removed from reality” (Ushioda, 1996:42). In the Turkish context, this is perhaps most evident, ironically, in the case of foreign language department students in high schools. These students have high levels of motivation to study the language, however, their motivation gets lost in classroom practices (Icmez, 2005).

These students have high self-efficacy, clear goals, and strong extrinsic motivation, i.e. university education and job prospects; as well as an interest in the language itself. Thus, it is very surprising to see that their expectations from and interest towards the language learning classroom in formal education is much lower than their motivation to study the language. On the other hand, it should be considered that high school education in Turkey has essentially been shaped by the backwash effect of the university exam in recent years. The influence of school education having alienating effects on students can also manifest itself in the early stages of preparatory year ELT students.

Although in some cases the correlation between the CR course and student motivation is negative (Kramer-Dahl, 2001; Granville, 2003) and manifests itself as student resistance to the course, in other studies the correlation proves to be positive and results in an increase in student motivation for the reading lessons, especially in contexts where students report alienation from the educational practices (Leal, 1998; Icmez, 2005). These studies show CR procedures offer a potential for classroom practices to help increase students’ intrinsic motivation through a) helping strengthen the link between students’ own realities and reading lessons, b) decreasing external control while increasing student control, and c) providing optimal arousal. Thus it is the aim of this research to investigate whether adopting the CR procedures above in a traditional reading classroom will increase student motivation.

MOTIVATION

The literature on motivation reflects different understandings of people, shifting from the conception of people as subjects in a structure to the conception of people as active agents. In the earliest studies, human beings are seen as relatively predictable beings, who are assumed to react in certain ways to their environment given that the conditions are equal, as in ‘reinforcement

theory' (Stipek, 2002: 19). These theories not only fail to provide an explanation for the highly complex and at times unpredictable nature of human behavior, but also disregard human agency.

The reductionist approach of this understanding gave way to research suggesting an alternative understanding of motivation. One of the most well known of such research studies is integrative versus instrumental motivation (Gardner, 1985). Integrative motivation refers to an interest in the language, the culture, and the people who speak that language, whereas instrumental motivation refers to the motive to learn a language for practical and economic advantages (Gardner, 1985), for example, finding a job. Although Gardner's studies (1985) suggest that the integrative – instrumental dichotomy provides valuable insight for the immersion contexts, recent research presents contradicting results both in EFL contexts (Brown, 1994), and in immersion contexts (Kouritzin, Piquemal, and Renaud 2009). The results of this study also challenge the initial research findings that integrative motivation is likely to result in persistence in the task as opposed to instrumental motivation.

Cognitive Approaches to Motivation

With the shift in understanding human beings to a more conscious, agency oriented one, the theories in motivation also shift to an understanding where people are regarded as active beings that chose to engage in a task consciously. Cognitive approaches to motivation is a result of this understanding; that human beings are conscious, and that the same stimuli may result in different outcomes in different individuals, as these individuals will have different thoughts and beliefs.

Cognitive approaches to motivation are valuable to understand how different motives to learn a language result in persistence in the task for different individuals. This aspect gains more importance for EFL contexts, where the instrumental – integrative dichotomy, reviewed above, is absent by nature and where all language learners have instrumental motivation, yet, only some persist in learning the language. In some cases, for example, self-respect is “valued more highly” than any external, “material reward” (Stipek, 2002: 40-41). Thus, these theories provide valuable insight on understanding the motivation of the participants of this study, as will be discussed below.

Social Cognitive Theory claims three interactive motivational factors: 1) people's own “cognitive/emotional factors”, like beliefs of capabilities, 2) “environmental factors”, and 3) “behaviour or performance” of people (Alderman, 1999: 16). This theory proposes that encouraging individuals to set goals for themselves will provide effort for the goal without the need to be reinforced externally on a regular basis (Stipek, 2002: 41). It will be discussed in 3.2 below that the learners participating in this study also had clear extrinsic goals, which resulted in their persistence of learning the language.

Self-efficacy, perceptions of one's own capabilities, is another important factor in motivation (Dornyei, 2001; Alderman, 1999). Similar to Social Cognitive Theory, Achievement Theory proposes that motivation is determined by the learner's expectancy of success (Dornyei, 2001). However, he proposes a linear model where the tendencies to achieve and avoid failure exist as opposite poles (Atkinson, 1966; Stipek, 2002). Yet, self-efficacy is built upon more than the expectancy of success or avoidance of failure, where interpersonal and social interactions play an equally essential role (Gu, 2009).

Although, the linear model of Achievement Theory risks failing to capture the complex nature of human beings, and indeed has been subject to criticism (Stipek, 2002), Rotter's addition of the locus of control, i.e. an individual's beliefs and values, to Achievement Theory is important for this study as it helps account for the individual differences in motivation and has reportedly played an important role in increasing student motivation in CR practices (Icmez, 2005; Leal, 1998).

Learners' beliefs and values operate on the dimensions of "internal/contingent", or "external/ not contingent" (in Weiner, 1974: 5). Attribution Theory takes the contingent – non-contingent distinction further. Emphasising people being conscious, it claims that people analyse their past experiences to figure out what caused success or failure (Ushioda, 1996). That is, it brings the role of past experiences into the construct in addition to "people's expectations related to future events" (Stipek, 2002: 63). Weiner proposes two more categories for distinction: "stability" and "controllability" (Weiner, 1974: 6). While effort is contingent / internal, unstable, and controllable; ability is contingent, stable, uncontrollable; and luck is non-contingent / external, unstable, and uncontrollable. As Ushioda points out, such an approach offers a recursive pattern; motivation can be the "cause or product of learning success" (Ushioda, 1996: 9). Ushioda's insight finds its place in this study, as will be analysed in more detail in 3.2, where the participants express success both as result and cause of their motivation.

Intrinsic Motivation

The motivation theories reviewed above, naturally, are affected by the epistemological paradigms that view people either as passive recipients of external forces or as active conscious beings. What all the theories reviewed so far have in common, however, is that they view learning as an external force being imposed on people. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, finds its basic principles on the assumption that human beings are active beings in need of being autonomous and with an innate curiosity (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Deci and Ryan, 1992; Ushioda, 1996; Ushioda, 2003). Thus, developing mastery and arousal in the face of novelty are key concepts for intrinsic motivation, which will be reviewed below.

Mastering Competency and Optimal Arousal

Intrinsic motivation argues that developing competency is a fundamental component of motivation and is the reward itself, which is self-sustaining (Deci and Ryan, 1895). However, the learners report a feeling of boredom once the competency is mastered in that specific task (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Thus, there is also a need for an optimal challenge/ arousal (Deci and Ryan, 1992). Optimal arousal and achieving mastery manifest themselves commonly via feelings of pleasure, which is associated with intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ushioda, 1996). Stipek, for example, points out that most students do not enjoy schoolwork due to its failure to promote competence and mastery (2002). Stimuli that are not at all discrepant or novel will not arouse interest and stimuli that are too discrepant from the individual's expectations will be ignored and will cause anxiety (Berlyne, 1966: 30). It should be noted here that, in this study, the incompetence of school procedures in providing optimal arousal for the students in their later years of school education play an important role in their low motivation for classroom procedures, which will be discussed below.

External Control

Deci and Ryan (1985) argue that to be intrinsically motivated, people must feel free of external rewards or pressures. It is important that people feel that the locus of control is within themselves rather than an external factor (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Thus, students who feel that they have control over school settings and their own learning experiences are more likely to be intrinsically motivated (Ushioda, 2003).

The Self-Determination Approach suggests that although in the short term extrinsic rewards result in an increased involvement with the activity; they have a negative effect on the intrinsic motivation in the long term (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Furthermore, when the extrinsic reward is withdrawn, the involvement of those who had extrinsic reward previously decreases to a lower degree than those who were never offered an extrinsic reward (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Yet, it must be stated here that these suggestions contradict the findings of this study as well as a study conducted with foreign language students in the Turkish Anatolian High School context (İçmez, 2005), both of which suggest that extrinsic rewards can sustain motivation even after the reward is attained since, being dynamic, conscious beings, people can mould the extrinsic reward into their value systems.

Intrinsic motivation is usually measured by “whether people voluntarily choose to engage or persist in an activity or by their ratings of their interest in or enjoyment of a particular activity” (Stipek, 2002: 134).

Intrinsic motivation in language classrooms

School learning is usually separated from personal life where any formal education is involved. Besides, the longer the learners are in formal education, the greater this separation is (Corpus, McClintic-Gilbert, and Hayenga, 2009). Yet, in the Turkish context, the backwash effect of the university exam on school education causes even more alienation from school practices. In the context of this study, typically, the demands of the university exam shapes the school practices due to the vast importance attached to this exam, a very strong external control. Thus finding ways to build meaningful links with school practices and students' lives is essential.

The implications of the theories above on language classrooms in this respect are numerous. One important aspect of motivation based on the theories reviewed above is "communicative success" (Ushioda, 1996: 32). Communicative success can provide a sense of "self-confidence, satisfaction and a sense of real progress in one's own learning" (Ushioda, 1996: 33). Provided that language is used in these tasks as means to a meaningful end rather than an end in itself, they can help students relate to the learning experience (Ushioda, 1996; Dornyei, 1997). Similarly, Nikolov's study draws attention to the role of meaningful classroom tasks, which encourage student communication, on student motivation to learn a foreign language as opposed to distant integrative or instrumental motives (1999).

The use of real-life materials in the classroom is an effective way to help relate students' life outside the classroom with the classroom procedures (Ushioda, 1996). It is not surprising that Tercanlioglu's results point out the role of "curiosity, involvement, recognition" as well as "efficacy" and "grades" in school reading frequency (2001).

Critical Reading Practices and Motivation

Studies on CR and writing suggest two main fundamental principles in relation to motivation. The first one is the use of authentic materials (Wallace, 1999). Although authentic materials are also used in traditional reading classrooms, CR approaches these authentic texts in a different way, by problematising these texts in ways relating to the students' own realities.

Secondly, related to the point above, CR practices typically give more control to the students in classroom practices (Wallace, 2003; Leal, 1998). In other words, the students are expected to contribute with their own experiences, opinions, criticisms, while in the context of this study, student contribution is limited to language practice in traditional reading classes.

Although there is a scarcity of research on critical language awareness (CLA) and motivation, Leal's study (1998) provides insight on the value of CLA in increasing student motivation through building a link between the classroom and students' own realities. The context of her study, grammar lessons in Brazil, bears similarities to that of this study in that the students are

alienated from the classroom procedures and lack motivation. However, CLA procedures, which involve asking the students to decide on the texts to be analysed and encouraging them to express their positions related to the texts analysed, results in an increase in student motivation. One student remarks,

That is it folks. That boring stuff... texts like "The cat jumped off the roof" ... the text's got to be up-to-date and directly related to our reality

(Leal, 1998: 4)

Based on these points, CR suggests relating the learning experience to the students' own realities, which affects text selection, student involvement and classroom communication. In other words, CR aims at providing an environment for genuine two-way communication in the classroom, where the students can teach the teacher as much as the opposite.

THE STUDY

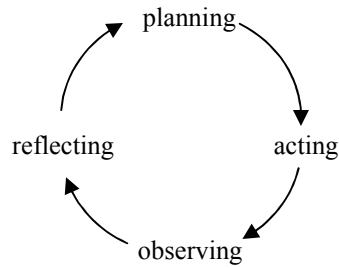
Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted with 24 preparatory year students, eight males and sixteen females, in the ELT department at Cukurova University. The students were anticipated to have high levels of motivation to study English as they had chosen to study in an ELT department. However, a group interview with the class at the beginning of the year inquiring about the students' expectations from the reading course revealed low levels of motivation for reading classroom procedures. The students were asked what they aimed to achieve at the end of the course as language learners and how they planned to achieve it. Surprisingly, the students' responses demonstrated a lack of motivation for the reading course with high alienation from high school reading practices, which entailed intensive practice for the university exam.

Thus, based on research on the relationship between CR and student motivation, reading procedures were adapted from CR to help minimize the alienation the students reported and to increase intrinsic motivation for the course.

Method of Study

Upon diagnosis of the above mentioned alienation by the teacher/researcher, adjustments based on CR practices were made in the course to overcome this problem. Thus, the methodology used was action research. Although action research essentially aims at improving practice, it offers generalisability of small-scale research into wider educational settings (Cohen et al. 2000).



(McNiff, 1988: 22)

Figure 1: Action Research Cycle

Figure 1 shows that although the very first stage of action research is planning, it follows a recursive pattern, where acting upon planning is followed by observing and reflecting upon the outcome, which in turn leads to more planning. Hence, as action research has recursive cycles, and requires constant interaction between the teacher and the students throughout the study, the teacher/researcher made adjustments throughout the course and used questionnaires and interviews to maintain the interaction.

It should also be noted here that the students were ensured throughout the course that their responses to the questionnaires and interviews would under no circumstances influence their grades for the course. It can be argued that the fact that the reading course conducted for this study constitutes only 25% of their grades, besides other compulsory courses, i.e. grammar, writing, and listening and speaking. However, the students were ensured throughout the course that their honest responses were required to make the course more beneficial to both the participants as language learners and to the researcher as the teacher of the course. Furthermore, to avoid students' possible biased responses to please the teacher, the questionnaire was given after they took their exams.

Procedure

Reading practices were adapted from CR practices that foster motivation. These are, relating students' own realities into classroom procedures, giving more control of L2 procedures to students, use of authentic texts from a wide variety of genres, and raising optimal arousal helping the students to master competency, that is CR skills.

Upon the diagnosis of the lack of motivation for the reading course, the students were asked to, 1) bring authentic texts of their own choices to the classroom; 2) express their opinion as readers of the texts through class discussions following reading the texts; and 3) make a five week-long research on global warming.

The first step was to have a class discussion on what kind of texts the students would like to read in the course, where the class decided that they all had different preferences ranging from short stories to news reports. At the end of the discussion the students and the teacher/researcher reached an agreement which entailed the students bringing authentic texts of their own choice to be collected in a folder, from which the class would choose which texts to read in the following lessons. This practice aimed to decrease external control, giving more control to the students on the choice of texts to read in the course, as well as to build a relationship between the students' realities and that of the classroom procedures. Although the aim was to decrease external control, the teacher/researcher played a role in the choice of the texts considering the requirements of the course. In this respect, the external control was still present, though to a lesser extent compared to the traditional course.

The students were also encouraged to express their opinions both as individuals and as EFL learners on the texts both before and after reading a text. As Wallace (2003) points out, EFL learners are usually outsiders to authentic texts, not sharing the historical and socio-cultural background that plays a role in the production and interpretation of the text. Thus, encouraging the students to generate their own statements and express their perspectives on the text aimed to help build a link between the text and their own realities.

In traditional reading courses, one problem with raising optimal arousal and helping students to master competency in such contexts is that the students are already successful language learners with high levels of language proficiency and self-efficacy. Therefore, their improvement in reading is less likely to raise optimal arousal compared to helping them develop a novel skill. In a CR course, optimal arousal is more readily available. Thus, to provide optimal arousal for the students and to help use reading as a means and not an end, as Ushioda (2003) suggests, the students were asked to do a five week-long research on global warming, hoping the research itself would stimulate curiosity and optimal arousal. The topic was decided upon by the students themselves.

Research Instruments

As mentioned earlier, the students were given a group interview at the beginning of the academic year, which signalled low levels of motivation for reading class procedures. Next, to inquire further about the students' motivation levels as language learners, they were given a questionnaire adapted from İçmez (2005). This questionnaire inquired about students' reasons for studying English and ELT and their reading course practices prior to research, i.e. at high school (see Appendix 1).

At the end of the course the students were given the second questionnaire to investigate their motivation for reading lessons, any changes in their approach to reading lessons, and reasons for a possible change.

Finally, a follow-up interview was given to students asking them to elaborate on their answers to Questionnaire 2.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Motivation for Reading Lessons: At the Beginning of the Course

In the first week of the academic year, the students were asked about their past experiences as readers in L2 educational settings, school and language courses.

Table 1. High School In-Class Reading Practices

Reading Practices	Frequency
Practising for university exam by reading short paragraphs with multiple choice questions	24
Reading texts from texts books with true/false, multiple choice, and open ended comprehension questions	24
Translating short texts into Turkish	11
Summarising short stories	7

They reported a sense of boredom related to reading procedures. Their reported reading practices were: reading short paragraphs with comprehension questions as preparation for the university exam, translating texts and summarising short stories, all of which were chosen by the course teacher, and answering comprehension and vocabulary questions at the end of reading texts in their course books. They also reported that authentic texts were not a part of their reading courses at high school.

The students reported boredom particularly in relation to paragraph questions, "Even when we don't really understand what the paragraph was about, we could answer the questions by simply eliminating the multiple choices", one student stated. Paragraph questions were referred to as "boring", "easy", and "monotonous".

These responses suggest that these practices lack the element of optimal arousal. Due to the lack of a direct relationship between these activities and the students' lives and increased degree of external control, after the mastery is achieved in these reading tasks, the motivation fails to self-sustain itself and decreases, as the intrinsic motivation theory suggests (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ushioda 1996).

When asked what kind of reading practices they would prefer, they stated that they would prefer texts and activities that would enable them to contribute through "expressing themselves" and reading texts that would be "interesting".

Students' Motivation for Studying English

These students already chose to study in an ELT programme; therefore they had high self-efficacy and persistence in studying English. Similar to the findings in previous research conducted with Anatolian High School foreign language students (İcmez, 2005), these students also expressed high perception of past experiences resulting in high perception of future expectations. To investigate further, the participants were asked to state why they chose to study English and ELT in Questionnaire 1.

Table 2. Reasons for Studying English

Student response	Frequency
Good job prospects	20
Enjoyment of learning a foreign language	20
Communication with people from other countries	20
Travelling	15
To study abroad	12
Perception of self as good at English	10
Following technological developments	8
To be an English teacher	8
Interest in British/American culture	3
Interest in the people and culture of the English speaking countries	2
To live abroad	2
Interest in English literature	1
Other:	3
“To be a respected member of the society”	
“It was easier than other subjects in high school”	
“I was bad at science subjects”	

Table 3. Reasons for Studying ELT

Student Response	Frequency
I enjoy studying English and I want to have a good job	8
I enjoy studying English	5
I want to have a good job	4
I have always been good at English	2
I am better at English compared to other academic subjects	2
I want to get a good job and English helps me communicate with anyone in the world	2
I am not good at science and I want a good job	1

The responses in Tables 2 and 3 show that the most important reasons for studying English and ELT are feelings of enjoyment and the prospect of jobs that English offers to them. Although motivation theories suggest a dichotomy between intrinsic motivation and an extrinsic reward as reviewed above, these responses point to the dynamic nature of human beings and to the

complex nature of people's belief and value systems. Even if we assume these students started to study English for purely an extrinsic reward at the very beginning, it resulted in persistence, i.e. 17 of these students had been studying English for 7 years or more at the time of this study, which typically is attributed to intrinsic motivation. Although an interest in the language itself signals intrinsic motivation (Williams and Burden, 1997), which is self-sustaining, this motivation does not necessarily manifest itself in academic tasks, as the students' responses in the interview indicate.

Although the second most common reason reported is travelling and living abroad, the low number of responses indicating an interest in the target culture(s) show that the students value English as an international language. Similarly, 20 students out of 24 report that they study English to be able to communicate with others, however, only two of these twenty students report an interest exclusive to the culture or people of English speaking countries. Students' motivation to study English as an international language bears additional importance since the students also reported a lack of the communicative aspect of language in language courses in their high schools.

Another important point that should be noted here is that although students report a very high interest in communication in the first question where they are asked to tick all relevant statements, only two students mention the role of English as an international language in communication when they were asked to write down their reasons for studying ELT. It is possible to argue that this is an indication of the students' priorities, which involves an interest in the language and job opportunities.

Students' responses noting their academic success as language learners reveal high self-efficacy, i.e. their performance outcomes are perceived as internal and stable as a result of high ability. Ability is more likely to attain persistence in effort since it is internal, stable, and uncontrollable, hence promises success (Ushioda, 1996). These responses indicate that these students' high-efficacy is a result of their past experiences. However, at the same time, it shapes the students' expectations about future success, confirming Rotter and Skinner's theories as well (Stipek, 2002). Thus, as Ushioda suggests, results of performance outcomes are usually recursive, as is the case in this study (1996).

While these responses show high self-efficacy, the responses stating those students were bad at science subjects report low self-efficacy in that field, referring to Atkinson's Achievement Theory (Dornyei, 2001). These students' choices are shaped to a great extent by the motive to avoid failure rather than high self-efficacy as language learners or the achievement motive (Atkinson 1966).

One final point that is worth mentioning is the role of integrative vs. instrumental motivation. Although the role of this distinction has been questioned in EFL contexts for some time now (e.g. Lukmani in Brown 1994,

Williams and Burden 1997), it is worth risking the repetition that instrumental motivation can result in persistence in task in EFL contexts, such as the context of this study, where being a part of the target culture is not a priority in the participants' lives whereas instrumental rewards are.

To sum up, an interest in the language and a strong extrinsic reward, such as prospective job opportunities, are the most common reasons the participants reported for choosing and sustaining effort in studying English.

Students' Motivation for the Reading Lessons

The students were given a questionnaire at the end of the course to learn about any change in their motivation for the reading lessons (see Appendix 2). Responses in this questionnaire generate two main categories, as can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Differences in the Ways Students Approach Reading Lessons

	Students' response	Frequency
Competence	I am more confident	8
	Discussing the text makes it easier for me to read	
	Now I think it is fun and easier to read	
	I used to find vocabulary items in the text and move on but now I inspect the text (read in detail)	
	The lessons were more effective	
	I used to read texts for grammar but now I can talk about them	
	I think the reading lessons are more advanced	
Participation and Persistence	I can make research	11
	Now, just because the text looks long, I don't stop reading.	
	I read more, attend reading classes more, and enjoy reading long texts now	
	I am more active in reading lessons now	
	I read more	
	We are more active	
	I work more regularly	
	I talk about the text	
	The activities make us participate more	
I try to understand the text more		
Enjoyment	I am more careful and attentive	2
	We are more active	
	The lessons are not boring	1
	It is not boring	
Not specified	Positive	1
No response	-	1
Negative	Negative, it is stressful	1

Twenty-two students report a positive change in their approach to reading lessons. The majority of the responses fall into under two main categories, competence and participation and persistence.

The responses that indicate competence development mention developing confidence as a reader, reading in detail, reading more carefully, being able to research in L2, and finding it easier to read in L2. Furthermore, two students stated that they enjoyed reading lessons more. As reviewed previously, intrinsic motivation is measured with the feeling of enjoyment (Stipek, 2002). One student remarked that there was a positive change in their approach to reading lessons but did not give the reasons why.

The answers stating increased participation and persistence include persisting in reading longer texts, an increase in the amount of extra-tuition reading, being more active in reading lessons, studying more regularly, talking about the text, and increased participation due to activities.

The students were also asked to compare their reading lessons with the reading lessons they had before.

Table 5. Comparison of Reading Lessons with Previous Reading Lessons

Beneficial and enjoyable in prep year	Frequency of these categories in answers
Competence	8
Communication	12
Competence related to real life	10
Participation	1
Place of real life in classroom	1

When asked to compare previous reading lessons with the current one and state what they thought was beneficial and enjoyable from either of these courses, the students' answers focus on communication and developing competence through the link to their daily lives in their reading course in preparatory year at university. The answers to this question fall into three main categories, competence, communication, and competence through inclusion of daily life in classroom practices. While one student remarks on increased participation, another student states the place of real life in classroom. However, this student's answer does not connect the role of real life in classroom to competence.

The answers indicating increased competence include improved competence in reading. One response states learning to make research and writing a report on it while the other responses in this category refer to developing better reading strategies, such as discussions about the text helping them to read the text more effectively.

All the answers in the next category, communication, include group work and classroom discussions about the texts. And the final category, competence through a link to students' daily lives, includes responses about the use of texts from a variety of genres on various subjects. Two responses state that the texts were about their lives and one response states that the research they made was about a problem he finds important. One student answers that the texts were related to her life but makes no further comments about whether or not she values this as a means to develop competence. Finally, one student refers to being active in the classroom, and participating, however, she does not refer to discussions or group/pair work.

Students were asked if they found reading different texts from a variety of genres beneficial. The answers state that they experience a sense of confidence, "(Now) I know that I can read any text. The kind of texts we read normally are not always essays or texts about people's lives. We read brochures, advertisements, poems, short stories...", drawing attention to the effect of these texts in her reading outside the EFL classroom. Another student commented, "If it is the same type of text in the lessons, even if the topic is interesting, it can get boring after a while. But reading different kinds of texts was enjoyable for me", referring to the role of optimal arousal in text selection.

Table 6. Practices that Make a Reading Lesson Good

Beneficial and enjoyable in prep year	Frequency of these categories in answers
Competence	11
Communication	10
Competence related to real life	8
None	1

Next, the students were asked to recall a good reading lesson and state what they thought was good in that lesson to elicit information about what classroom practices within the course they found motivating. Similar to the responses to the other questions, the answers fall in three main categories, communication, competence and real-life text/activities. One response refers to increased student control in classroom practices. Although responses related to communication also arguably are about increased student control, this response makes an explicit reference to control, "I could choose the text (to be read in the classroom)".

Other responses on communication include group work, discussion and expressing their ideas about the texts. The responses about competence can be divided into three subcategories here, their research and questioning the text through discussing it in groups and as a class and the texts.

Following Questionnaire 2, the students were given an interview where they were asked to elaborate on their responses to Questionnaire 2. In the

follow-up interview the participants expressed that the discussions about the text before reading to find out about their opinions on that topic helped them to find out about other students' opinions, which added to their own understanding, and ability to express themselves. One student commented, "... and it is not just learning from friends. I also was able to show them something by telling my ideas", remarking about the collective knowledge they produced in these discussions in relation to the texts. The responses mentioning real-life competence refer to texts from a variety of genres and on different subjects and the research they made.

In the follow-up interview, the students were also asked to elaborate further on what they thought of their research and their answers indicate that they found it beneficial to make their own research, to suggest changes in their own environment, that is, the university campus, and to learn more about global warming, which was their research subject. However, their responses to this question, as well as their answers referring to research to other questions, indicate optimal arousal for the activity itself and not for the whole course, unlike developing CR skills, which prove to provide an optimal arousal for the course affecting all the classroom practices and activities. Considering that the research was focusing on providing reading for the students and not developing research skills, the responses are not surprising. Student responses to the question about the research project focus on two main areas; learning about global warming and being aware of a real life problem. One student responded that he didn't enjoy the activity nor did he find it useful and two students said that although they learned about global warming in the process of the research, they did not really like the research topic as it made them feel helpless, thinking they could not change anything. After the questionnaires were returned, one student voiced these concerns and the researcher took the opportunity to ask the other students whether or not they had similar concerns. Although three more students stated they had experienced similar worries, after a brief discussion with their classmates, they concluded that even if they could not make a difference on a large scale, the differences in their own habits and understanding could be considered important.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most important issue rising from this study is the discrepancy between the students' motivation for studying the language and for the reading lessons. Although the students are highly motivated due to a number of reasons as discussed above, their motivation and expectations from reading courses are surprisingly low due to the inadequacy of school practices to provide optimal arousal for students with high levels of English proficiency

and the alienating effect of the university exam on students in school education.

CR practices, and studies on intrinsic motivation such as increased student control, including increase in student communication (Ushioda, 1996), asking students to decide on course materials and projects (Leal, 1998); creating an environment where students' own realities can find place in the language classroom (Dornyei, 1997), and so on; and providing a wide range of authentic texts from various genres to provide optimal arousal (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Deci and Ryan 1992; Wallace, 1999; Wallace, 2003) have proven to enhance student motivation for the reading lessons in this study.

Students reported increased competence in reading skills, increased participation, communication and the competence they need outside the reading classroom, as the studies by Deci and Ryan (1985) and Ushioda (1996) suggest. The authentic texts from different genres served to provoke optimal arousal and create a sense of competency; and the practice of involving the students in the process of text selection provided an increased sense of student control in the EFL classroom (Wallace, 1999; Wallace, 2003; Leal 1998). Similarly, asking students to involve their own realities in relation to the reading texts served to increase student control. As a result, the student responses indicate an increase in participation in the classroom practices as well as persistence in reading as students, both of which are features of intrinsic motivation as discussed above.

Based on these findings, it is possible to suggest that adaptation of CR practices promise the much needed sense of student control on classroom practices, relating to students' own realities through the use of real-life, authentic texts from a variety of genres in contexts similar to that of this study; together with encouraging the students to express their opinion as readers of the text both prior and after reading the text.

However, optimal arousal for the reading procedures was still missing in this study, unlike in a CR course, where developing a competence in CR skills evokes curiosity and the novelty essential for students with high levels of proficiency. Although asking students to do research on global warming as a continuing project aimed to provide this novelty, this project served more like an extension of the traditional reading practices. Hence, the need to incorporate a novelty element in these courses remains. Therefore, further research on finding ways to raise optimal arousal as a fundamental component of reading practices in ELT classroom is essential.

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire 1

Name:

Age:

SECTION A: ABOUT YOU

1. Please tick the appropriate box

Male

Female

2. How long have you been studying English? Please tick the appropriate box

1-3 years 4-6 years 7-10 years more

3. How many hours do you spend studying English out of class (i.e. extra-tuition)?

Daily _____ hours

Weekly _____ hours

4. Please tick the appropriate box(es)

I'm learning English because:

- I want to get a good job.
- I enjoy learning a foreign language.
- I want to study abroad.
- I'm interested in British/ American culture.
- I'm interested in English literature.
- I want to travel and see other countries.
- I want to pursue my career in future.
- I want to be able to communicate with people from other countries.
- I like the culture and people of the English speaking countries.
- I want to live abroad.
- I want to use Internet more efficiently.
- I need English to follow the technological developments.
- Other.

Please specify _____

5. Why did you choose to study ELT? Please write below

6. Please tick the appropriate box according to how often you read the following items (in English and/ or in Turkish).

	daily	weekly	occasionally	never
books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
comics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
poems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION B: ABOUT THE ENGLISH LESSONS

1. Which of the following areas of English, i.e. speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, do you find enjoyable? Please tick the appropriate box(es)

	I enjoy very much	I enjoy	I'm not sure	I don't enjoy very much	I don't enjoy at all
a) speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How many hours do you spend studying in each of the following areas of English weekly (e.g. homework or extra-tuition)?

speaking _____ hours listening _____ hours reading _____ hours
writing _____ hours grammar _____ hours

3. Which of the following areas of English, i.e. speaking, listening, writing, grammar, do you find beneficial? Please tick the appropriate box(es)

	Very beneficial	beneficial	I'm not sure	Not very beneficial	Not beneficial at all
a) speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX 2**Questionnaire 2****Name:****Age:***SECTION A: ABOUT YOU*

1. How many hours do you spend studying English out of class
(e.g. homework, extra-tuition)?

Daily _____ hours

Weekly _____ hours

SECTION B: ABOUT THE READING LESSONS

1. What do you find the purpose of the reading lessons to be? Do you find them beneficial? If yes, please write how you find them beneficial.

2. What kind of texts did you read in reading lessons?

3. Which ones did you enjoy?

4. Think of a good reading lesson you had in this course. Why was it good?

5. Please compare your reading lessons in this course with the reading lessons you had before. Are your reading lessons in any way different from the previous reading lessons you had? If yes, please explain in what way(s).

6. Is there any difference in the way you approach reading lessons? If yes, please explain in what way(s).

7. If you find your reading lessons to be different from your previous reading lessons, please state if the difference is positive or negative and explain WHY.

8. Please write your opinions on the following components of the reading course. Did you find them beneficial? Did you find them enjoyable?

i. Selection of texts

ii. Discussions about the texts before and after reading the texts

iii. Group work

iv. Research project on global warming

9. Please circle either YES or NO and explain why.

i. I feel more confident as a reader YES NO

Because _____

ii. I feel that I have benefited from this course as a reader YES NO

Because _____

10. Please write two things you liked and two things you didn't like about the course.

• **What I liked:**

a) _____

b) _____

• **What I didn't like:**

a) _____

b) _____

Please use this space for any additional comments
