



## Teaching Young Learners Reading

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### Abstract

The current era places a greater emphasis on literacy abilities in English as a foreign or second language (L2) for achieving academic and professional success. The acquisition of reading skills has assumed significant importance, mostly attributed to the rapid advancements in technology and the extensive reservoir of English-language material accessible on the internet. The present study is to examine the relationship between young learners' motivation and their growth of reading skills and achievement and investigate how the motivation of young learners specifically influences their reading skill development and subsequent achievement in reading. The results of the correlational analysis indicate a statistically significant disparity in reading outcomes based on motivation for second language (L2) learning and attitudes towards various aspects of reading. The results indicate that motivation plays a crucial role in the development of second language reading skills among young learners.

**Keywords:** reading, literacy, fluency, motivation

### تعليم القراءة للمتعلمين الصغار

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### الملخص

يركز العصر الحالي بشكل كبير على قدرات معرفة القراءة والكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أو لغة ثانية (2L) لتحقيق النجاح الأكاديمي والمهني. ولهذا أصبح لاكتساب مهارات القراءة أهمية كبيرة ، ويعزى ذلك إلى التقدم السريع في التكنولوجيا والتوفر الواسع لمواد اللغة الإنجليزية التي يمكن الوصول إليها عبر الإنترنت. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص العلاقة بين دافعية المتعلمين الصغار ونموهم لمهارات القراءة وإنجازاتهم والتحقيق في كيفية تأثير تحفيز المتعلمين الصغار بشكل خاص على تطوير مهارات القراءة لديهم وإنجازاتهم اللاحقة في القراءة. تشير نتائج التحليل الارتباطي إلى وجود تفاوت نو دلالة إحصائية في نتائج القراءة بناء على الدافع من وراء تعلم اللغة الثانية (2L) والمواقف تجاه



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جوانب القراءة المختلفة. تشير النتائج إلى أن الدافع يلعب دورا حاسما في تطوير مهارات قراءة اللغة الثانية بين المتعلمين الصغار.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القراءة ، معرفة القراءة والكتابة، الطلاقة

## Introduction

While there is a considerable body of research that acknowledges the importance of motivation in the process of learning English as a foreign or second language (L2) at a young age, particularly in relation to factors such as motivation (Cable et al., 2010; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Drew, 2009; Edelenbos et al., 2006; Enever, 2011; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2013, 2014; Mihaljević Djigunović & Lopriore, 2011; Nikolov, 1999, 2009; Pinter, 2011; Saville-Troike, 2006; Szpotowicz & Lindgren, 2011), there is a lack of extensive research on the significance of young learners' attitudes and motivation towards the initial stages of reading in English as a foreign language. Correlational studies indicate that certain individual factors have a noteworthy impact on L2 reading outcomes and L2 proficiency. However, establishing causality or directionality for certain factors can be challenging. For instance, individuals who are considered "good learners" may exhibit a more proactive approach to language tasks due to their higher proficiency, rather than being more proficient because they are more active. Alternatively, their increased self-confidence may also contribute to their proactive behavior (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 92). According to Oxford (2005, p. 62), individuals who struggle with language acquisition tend to exhibit lower levels of self-esteem compared to those who excel in language learning. This discrepancy in self-perception arises from their tendency to compare their proficiency in their native language (L1) with their proficiency in their second language (L2), leading them to feel constrained and inadequate. Given the undeniable significance of attitude and motivation in the initial stages of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading acquisition among young learners, as highlighted by McKay (2006), it becomes crucial to examine the influence of motivation on the reading progress and accomplishments of young children. This skill is crucial not only for the acquisition of academic competence and interpersonal communication, but also for advancements in scientific research and technology (Grabe and Stoller, 2011; Graddol, 2006; Saville-Troike, 2006).

### Research Questions

The contemporary era emphasizes the critical role of literacy in English as a foreign or second language (L2) for academic and professional success. Despite acknowledging the significance of motivation in young learners' L2 acquisition, there exists a research gap concerning the influence of attitudes and motivation on the initial stages of reading in English as a foreign language. The study aims to address this gap by investigating how young learners' motivation impacts the development of their reading skills and subsequent achievements. The research problematic centers around understanding the complex interplay between individual factors like motivation,



contextual elements such as the learning environment, and the overall reading outcomes of young learners in diverse global contexts.

Given the existing gap in understanding young learners' motivation and reading skills, this study aims to address the following research questions:

.How does the level of motivation impact the reading skills development of young learners in English as a second language (L2)?

.What role do integrative and instrumental motivations play in shaping the reading habits and comprehension abilities of young learners in their L2?

.How does exposure to both native language (L1) and L2 contribute to the reading comprehension abilities of young learners?

.What is the influence of contextual factors, such as the learning environment and the L2 teacher, on the motivation and attitudes of young learners toward reading in English?

### **Motivation**

Motivation can be conceptualized as the fundamental underpinning of human behavior, encompassing various components such as motivational factors (e.g., interest), cognitive aspects (e.g., curiosity and engagement), and emotional elements (e.g., joy). These components collectively contribute to the understanding of why individuals make decisions to engage in certain activities, the duration for which they are willing to sustain their involvement, and the level of effort they are willing to exert in pursuing said activities (Dörnyei, 2014, pp. 519-520). Motivation is widely recognized as a crucial determinant in understanding the outcomes of language learning, both in terms of success and failure (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 518). It plays a pivotal role in shaping the level of effort exerted by learners in their pursuit of proficiency in a foreign or second language (L2) (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 85), and has a significant impact on the speed and achievement of L2 acquisition (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998, p. 203). The notion in question is characterized by its intricate nature, as it encompasses a range of interconnected elements such as social attitudes, values, and various learner characteristics (Rasinger 2008, 20). This concept, introduced by Dörnyei (2014, 520–521), comprises three distinct components: 1. The concept of the ideal L2 self refers to an individual's anticipated future self-image in relation to their second language proficiency. 2. The ought-to L2 self pertains to the traits that an individual believes they should possess in order to prevent potential negative consequences in their second language learning journey. The L2 learning experience refers to the specific motives that are associated to the learning environment. These motives can include the positive influence of achievement or the pleasurable quality of a language course.

According to a recent study conducted by Piniel and Albert (2017), it has been found that the motivational component of the learning experience plays a significant role in determining motivated behavior. The study suggests that learners who have a positive experience with a foreign language tend to invest more effort in their own language development. This finding highlights the importance of creating a favorable learning



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environment to enhance learners' motivation. (Piniel & Albert, 2017, p. 92). Research on the reading competency of children in their second language (L2) suggests that their reading comprehension abilities are impacted by their exposure to both their native language (L1) and the L2 (Grabe and Stoller, 2011, p. 49). Furthermore, the cultivation of verbal communication skills in a second language has the potential to bolster children's self-assurance in their native language, particularly in the domains of reading and writing (Cable et al., 2010, p. 4). There are two main motivational orientations towards second language (L2) learning. The first is integrative, wherein emotional or affective variables play a significant role, such as an interest in the society or individuals who use the L2. The second is instrumental, which is driven by practical reasons, such as the need to pass an L2 course in school or to enhance one's studies and work prospects (Saville-Troike 2006, 86). According to existing research, it has been found that the reading comprehension abilities of young learners are influenced by two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental motivation (Wang and Guthrie, 2004, p. 162). Moreover, it has been observed that integrative motivation plays a significant role in determining the quantity of reading and the enhancement of children's reading comprehension skills (Grabe and Stoller, 2011, p. 122). There has been scholarly debate regarding the extent of gender differentiation in motivation and attitudes at the primary level (Cable et al., 2010, p. 44). While some studies suggest that societal factors play a significant role in shaping attitudes, leading to a notable decline in positive attitudes among boys influenced by media images, elder siblings, and parents' opinions (Enever, 2009, p. 28).

The correlation between motivation and contextual factors that impact reading, such as elements of the learning environment (e.g., teacher) and exposure to L2 outside of school (e.g., extensive reading), has been widely documented. Positive attitudes towards these factors are found to significantly contribute to children's L2 learning. One contextual factor that is strongly associated with motivation and attitudes is the second language (L2) teacher, who plays a crucial role in the classroom environment for young learners of the L2 (Pinter, 2011, p. 143). However, as children grow older, the emotional connection to the teacher tends to diminish, and the internal drive to engage in classroom activities becomes more prominent (Nikolov, 1999, p. 45). One further contextual aspect that may impact children's attitudes towards and desire for reading in their second language (L2) is the implementation of classroom interventions that specifically target the enhancement of strategic reading skills in L2. According to Macaro and Erlar (2008, p. 111), previous research suggests that implementing this intervention can lead to not only increased favorable attitudes towards reading in the second language (L2), but also foster positive attitudes towards the other three language skills, as well as towards textbook and homework assignments. Research on the correlation between contextual and individual factors in early English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning has revealed that linguistic outcomes in children are influenced by both contextual factors, such as the learning environment, exposure to English outside of school, socio-economic status, and home support, as well as individual factors, including



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attitudes, motivation, and linguistic self-confidence (Mihaljević Djigunović 2013, 172–175). Furthermore, the interplay between contextual and individual factors in relation to linguistic outcomes undergoes temporal changes, resulting in a dynamic process. Motivation exhibits instability and fluctuation over time, influenced by a sense of accomplishment. Consequently, the motivation to acquire new vocabulary diminishes as time progresses, while the practice of reading within a classroom setting becomes increasingly favored (Mihaljević Djigunović 2013, 172–175). It appears that as children mature, their preferences shift from engaging in recreational activities to engaging in activities that build their skills. Additionally, their incentive to read increases due to a sense of accomplishment in reading and their advancing cognitive development (Mihaljević Djigunović and Lopriore, 2011, p. 47).

In conclusion, the research findings strongly suggest a significant correlation between individual factors such as attitudes and motivation, contextual factors, and the reading outcomes of young learners. These factors not only interact with each other but also have a profound impact on the overall reading performance. Furthermore, the studies emphasize the critical need for comparative research to explore the interplay between these factors in diverse global contexts. The primary objective of this study is to make a valuable contribution to the existing body of research within this particular topic.

### **The Nature of Reading**

‘An estimated 122 million youth globally are illiterate, of which young women represent 60.7% .. 67.4 million children are out of school ... deficient or non-existent basic education is the root cause of illiteracy’. (UNESCO)

Consider the hypothetical scenario wherein one lacks the ability to comprehend written language, thereby rendering them incapable of reading. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), the reported global literacy rate stands at approximately 80%.

The acquisition of reading skills is considered essential for individuals, as it serves a crucial role in both educational and everyday contexts (Traves, 1994). Reading, as defined by Grabe and Stoller (2002), refers to the capacity to extract meaning from written material and interpret it in a suitable manner (p. 9).

### **We Need to Develop Reading Skills?**

The acquisition of L1 literacy fosters an increased understanding and development of L2 literacy. The process of reading is predicated upon the foundation of oral language proficiency. Several crucial elements impact the development of reading skills in a second language (L2), including the capacity to comprehend and employ listening and speaking abilities. This is necessary because of the need to:

- **Hear** a word before you can **say** it
- **Say** a word before you can **read** it
- **Read** a word before you can **write** it (Linse 2005)

This observation suggests that young learners must possess a strong basis in auditory and oral communication abilities in order to develop proficiency in reading and writing in





any language. The acquisition of literacy skills necessitates the establishment of connections between auditory and oral language abilities and the ability to comprehend written text and generate written content.

### **How to explore reading with young learners**

#### ***Early literacy strategies***

##### *Phonemic awareness (grapho-phonics)*

The explicit instruction on the correlation between symbols (letters) in the English language and their corresponding phonetic representations is crucial for young English language learners. Providing guidance on the fundamental association between phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) is essential to facilitate the process of "blending" or phonetically decoding basic words. For instance, learners should start by blending vowel-consonant (VC) combinations, followed by consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) combinations. The UK National Literacy Strategy, known as 'Letters and Sounds,' offers valuable guidance on the sequencing of letters and sounds instruction, as well as recommended instructional approaches. Once proficiency in sound blending is achieved, young learners can be instructed on the process of segmenting sounds within words they can articulate. Developing phonological awareness skills, specifically the ability to blend and segment sounds, significantly contributes to the development of decoding and spelling abilities.

The primary purpose underlying the development of symbols by human beings is to facilitate the transmission of information among individuals. Various civilizations throughout history have employed diverse methods to communicate through written language. Notable examples include the Ancient Egyptians' utilization of hieroglyphics, the Chinese use of pictographs, the Arabic script, and the Roman alphabet, among others. There exist variations not only in symbols but also in directionality. Explicit instruction is necessary for these concepts as they are artificially constructed and lack inherent intuitiveness.

##### ***Semantics:***

The ability to decipher or orally articulate text lacks inherent utility in isolation. Symbols possess inherent meaning, necessitating the instruction of young learners in the process of "encoding" symbols and visuals to comprehend the conveyed message.

##### ***Syntactics:***

Just as languages exhibit variations in symbols, they also demonstrate differences in the organization or arrangement of these symbols. The acquisition of grammar or syntax in language is most effectively achieved through the Krashen approach, as opposed to explicit learning. Language acquisition is facilitated by repeated exposure to language usage across various contexts. The process of analyzing language may not yield significant benefits for a young student ; nevertheless, introducing basic metalanguage to learners aged 10 and above can prove advantageous. For instance, instructing them on the identification of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, articles, pronouns, and word order can be instructive.



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The rationale behind this is that disparities may exist between the native language (L1) and English, and facilitating the process of 'noticing' these disparities can be beneficial. Swan and Smith (2001) have edited a publication that serves as a valuable resource for examining the distinctions between English and 22 other languages.

### Developing literacy

Access to a comprehensive library or extensive online literature is not a prerequisite for incorporating reading activities within a classroom setting. The techniques that have been employed and found to be enjoyable by learners are presented below. It is crucial to bear in mind that the activation of prior knowledge when necessary can play a pivotal role in facilitating a reading activity that is easily understood. As Anderson (1999) asserts, our background knowledge functions as a lens through which we interpret and comprehend the text we read. Furthermore, it enables educators to introduce and clarify unfamiliar vocabulary before engaging in the reading process (p. 11).

According to Cameron (2001), it is beneficial to establish a "literate environment in the classroom" as it may serve as the primary setting where young learners encounter written language in a foreign language context. This compilation comprises:

- The implementation of labels involves affixing identification tags to various items within the classroom and school environment, including children's trays, desks, coat hooks, as well as furniture and other objects.
- Posters, characterized by their vibrant colors, possess a captivating quality that can effectively incorporate rhymes being taught or promote various activities such as reading or oral hygiene practices.
- The use of messages, whether for homework assignments or reminders such as 'Don't forget to bring...', is a common practice.

One potential instructional strategy is the practice of reading aloud, which can be facilitated by either a teacher or an older child. In addition to promoting reading enjoyment, a critical factor for achieving literacy success (Arnold, 2009), engaging in various activities can contribute to this objective. For instance, enhancing reading fluency can be accomplished through the implementation of timed repeated reading techniques (Nation, 2009).

One activity that can be implemented in a classroom setting is known as running dictation. This activity involves pairs of learners, ensuring that all participants are actively engaged in the reading process. According to Wright (1997, p.114-130), learners engage in the creation of their own story books or comics as a means of sharing their work with one another.

The task involves the development of character backstories for a puppet family, as well as the creation of a comprehensive class binder for the purpose of referencing when reading the narratives produced by fellow classmates about said family. This instructional approach involves a semester-long collaborative activity wherein students take turns working in small groups to create written dramas, which are subsequently shared with the



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class. Peers then engage in reading the written dramas and may further reinforce their understanding through participatory role plays.

- In order to enhance learner motivation, it is recommended to encourage learners to bring in materials of personal interest, such as football results, recipes, or song lyrics, which can serve as a starting point for engaging discussions and reading activities.

To ensure purposeful learning of food lexis, it is recommended to incorporate tangible resources such as packets or tins of food. Additionally, exploring the origins of various types of food and categorizing them based on country or noun classification (countable/uncountable) can enhance the learning experience. According to Ellis and Brewster (1991, p.57). Extensive reading refers to the practice in which language learners engage in substantial amounts of reading of relatively simple texts in the target language. Students have the autonomy to select their own reading materials and engage in independent reading without direct guidance from the teacher. According to Krashen (1988), This fosters self-assurance in their aptitudes and cultivates a sense of pleasure derived from engaging in recreational reading.

### Study

The paper reports part of a large-scale study of young learners' reading difficulties in English as L2 (Savić 2014).

### Aim and Research Questions

The primary objective of the study was to examine the impact of young learners' attitudes and motivation on their development of reading skills and subsequent reading achievement. Based on the aforementioned literature review, a set of four research questions were formulated: 1. How does the motivation of young learners to acquire English language skills correlate with their reading proficiency? 2. How does the motivation of young learners to participate in English reading activities relate to their reading achievement?? 3. How do children's attitudes toward different English reading formats (reading aloud, reading silently, reading on the internet) correlate with their reading achievement? 4. What are the intercorrelations between the motivation and attitudes of young learners in the context of English language learning and reading?. A hypothesis was formulated suggesting a noteworthy correlation between the participants' motivation for learning English, positive attitudes towards learning English and reading in English, and their reading success. Additionally, it was proposed that motivations and attitudes were significantly correlated with each other.

### Method

To examine the correlation between motivation and reading performance among young learners, the research utilized a combined methodology. Through surveys and assessments, quantitative data was collected which offered statistical insights into trends. On the other hand, interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data which provided a more detailed comprehension of students' motivations and attitudes towards reading. The combination of both techniques aimed to increase the precision and depth of results,





offering a holistic perspective on the intricate link between motivation and reading proficiency.

### Participants

The study focused on a target population of 502 young learners, specifically aged 11, who were engaged in the process of learning English as a foreign language. These individuals were selected from six state primary schools located in different geographical regions within Aljufra municipality. According to Savić and Stanojević (2016, p. 358), the survey was conducted following a four-year period of English language study, during which two years were dedicated to the enhancement of English reading skills. The interview group consisted of a subsample of twelve young learners.

### Instruments

Three instruments were employed to assess reading proficiency and investigate motivation and attitudes: The first research tool utilized in this study was a comic strip containing seven multiple-choice items with distractors. This tool was developed by the Early Languages Learning in Europe (ELLiE) Team, as described by Enever (2011). It was administered to the entire sample of participants. The second research tool employed was a three-point rating scale, commonly referred to as a "smiley questionnaire." This scale consisted of five items and was used to assess participants' motivation and attitudes. Similar to the comic strip, this questionnaire was administered to the entire sample. Lastly, a prompted think-aloud protocol interview was conducted with a sub-sample of participants. This interview involved a semi-structured approach and was conducted in the participants' first language (L1). The purpose of this interview was to collect additional data for the study.

### Procedures

The study was performed during school visits by the researcher. The schools and EFL teachers had previously been contacted and they agreed in writing to take part in the study. Consent forms signed by the parents of twelve participants (sub-sample) had been obtained before the interviews.

### Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the reading research tool and the smiley questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS package. Qualitative data from prompted think-aloud protocols were audio recorded, transcribed, and examined for repeated content patterns.

The correct responses in the reading test were allocated one point each (max. 7 points), while the three point scales were assigned numerical values (a smiley face = 3 points, a neutral face = 2 points, a sad face = 1 point).

### Results and Discussion

#### **Table 1: Reading Test Outcomes Across Educational Institutions**

Table 1 provides an overview of reading test outcomes across six participating educational institutions, presenting mean scores and standard deviations. As per Savić (2014, p. 111), the average score was  $M=4.75$ , with  $SD=1.84$ . Scores ranged from 0 to 7.



No significant gender-based differences were found ( $p=.565$ ). Across schools, School 2 had a mean score of  $M=4.40$ , while School 6 had the highest mean of  $M=5.54$ . Standard deviations were  $SD=1.67$  for School 6 and  $SD=1.97$  for School 2. This aligns with similar achievement rates among Serbian young learners, as reported in "The ELLiE study" (Munoz and Lindgren, 2011). reveals that the achievement rates of Serbian young learners are similar to those observed in the ELLiE study. The ELLiE study reports a total mean result of 4.1, with mean values in various contexts ranging from 2.8 to 5.5 (p. 113).

**Table 1.** Reading test results per school and per the whole sample (means and standard deviations).

School	Participants N	Mean (min. 0, max. 7)	Std. Deviation
School 1	80	4.94	1.80
School 2	85	4.40	1.97
School 3	75	4.43	1.73
School 4	71	4.51	1.92
School 5	101	4.57	1.73
School 6	90	5.54	1.67
Total	502	4.75	1.84

**Table 2: Motivation and Attitudes Toward English Learning and Reading**

Table 2 summarizes participant motivation to learn English and attitudes toward reading in English. Mean motivation scores were 2.75 ( $SD=.533$ ), and mean reading attitude scores ranged from 2.42 ( $SD=.782$ ) to 2.79 ( $SD=.493$ ). Additionally, the participants hold strongly positive attitudes towards various modes of reading in English, as evidenced by mean scores ranging from 2.42 ( $SD=.782$ ) to 2.50 ( $SD=.744$ ). Savić and Stanojević (2016, 358–359) previously reported similar findings on self-esteem and attitudes within this sample.

**Table 2.** Summary of mean values and standard deviations for motivation and attitudes.



	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning English	502	1	3	2.75	.533
Reading in English	502	1	3	2.79	.493
Reading aloud in English	502	1	3	2.50	.744
Reading silently in English	502	1	3	2.48	.778
Reading on the internet	502	1	3	2.42	.782

**Table 3: Frequencies and Percentages for Motivation and Attitudes (Smiley Questionnaire)**

Table 3 compares frequencies and percentages for motivation and attitudes, offering insights into individual aspects, which will be further discussed in relation to the research questions.

**Table 3.** Summary of frequencies/percentages for motivation and attitudes

Item		Responses		
		no	not sure	yes
Do you like learning English?	frequency	24	78	400
	percent	4.78	15.54	79.68
Do you like reading in English?	frequency	19	68	415
	percent	3.78	13.55	82.67
Do you like to read aloud in English?	frequency	76	98	328
	percent	15.14	19.52	65.34
Do you like to read silently in English?	frequency	89	85	328
	percent	17.73	16.93	65.34
Do you like to read in English on the internet?	frequency	92	106	304
	percent	18.33	21.12	60.56



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The majority of participants showed a strong inclination toward acquiring English language skills and engaging in English reading activities, with percentages of 79.68% and 82.67%, respectively. Notably, a greater number of participants demonstrated a higher motivation toward reading in English compared to their motivation for learning the language. This aligns with previous research, indicating older children's preference for reading in their second language (L2), attributed to cognitive growth and feelings of accomplishment (Mihaljević Djigunović and Lopriore 2011, p. 47). About 65.34% of participants favored both reading aloud and reading silently, while 17.73% expressed a dislike for reading silently compared to 15.14% disliking reading aloud. Novice readers may benefit from auditory support for comprehension, possibly due to a preference for auditory learning. The prevalence of reading aloud among novice readers is expected due to its prominent role in reading instruction. It is noteworthy that an equal proportion of participants, approximately 65.34%, demonstrated a favorable disposition towards both reading aloud and reading silently. However, a slightly higher percentage of participants, 17.73%, indicated a dislike for reading silently compared to the 15.14% who expressed a dislike for reading aloud. One potential explanation for this phenomenon could be that novice readers may benefit from auditory support in order to facilitate comprehension, potentially due to a preference for auditory learning that slightly outweighs their visual learning style.

The utilization of think-aloud protocols revealed comprehensive data on individuals' attitudes toward reading aloud and silently. Seven respondents preferred reading aloud, while five preferred silent reading. The argument in favor of oral reading is substantiated by the assertion: 'Reading aloud aids in my understanding.' A study (L-1-1-2-13, L-1-1-1-08, L-2-2-1-15, L-4-1-1-10) found a preference for active listening during English reading. According to L-2-1-2-03, reading aloud enhances comprehension by forming mental imagery, facilitating a deeper understanding of the text. Verbal communication (L-5-1-2-09) facilitates comprehension. The provided text, "L-5-1-1-27," does not contain Another participant (L-4-1-1-10) expressed their state of confusion while engaging in silent reading. One participant expressed a preference for reading aloud, but also acknowledged that they believe they comprehend the material more effectively when reading silently. My primary concern lies in comprehending the semantic significance of a given entity, rather than its auditory qualities. Undoubtedly, the phonetic articulation of words holds significance; however, I contend that comprehending the semantic essence of a given term carries greater importance than its auditory manifestation. The provided text lacks sufficient information to be rewritten in an academic manner. Please provide a more The assertion that silent reading is preferable is substantiated by the statement: "I personally find the act of reading silently to be more effortless." (L-2-1-1-02); "My personal inclination is towards silent reading as it allows me to concentrate on comprehending and



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deriving meaning from the text." (L-3-1-3-16); "My personal inclination leans towards engaging in silent reading as it enhances my comprehension abilities." According to the data provided in L-3-1-3-05 and L-4-1-1-09, the individual expresses a preference for engaging in silent reading due to the perceived advantage of having additional time for contemplation and reflection on the textual content. According to the provided reference code (L-3-1-3-21).

According to the source (L-5-1-2-09), verbal communication facilitates comprehension. The provided text, "L-5-1-1-27," does not contain Another participant (L-4-1-1-10) expressed their state of confusion while engaging in silent reading. One participant expressed a preference for reading aloud, but also acknowledged that they believe they comprehend the material more effectively when reading silently. My primary concern lies in comprehending the semantic significance of a given entity, rather than its auditory qualities. Undoubtedly, the phonetic articulation of words holds significance; however, I contend that comprehending the semantic essence of a given term carries greater importance than its auditory manifestation. The provided text lacks sufficient information to be rewritten in an academic manner. Please provide a more The assertion that silent reading is preferable is substantiated by the statement: "I personally find the act of reading silently to be more effortless." (L-2-1-1-02); "My personal inclination is towards silent reading as it allows me to concentrate on comprehending and deriving meaning from the text." (L-3-1-3-16); "My personal inclination leans towards engaging in silent reading as it enhances my comprehension abilities." According to the data provided in L-3-1-3-05 and L-4-1-1-09, the individual expresses a preference for engaging in silent reading due to the perceived advantage of having additional time for contemplation and reflection on the textual content. According to the provided reference code (L-3-1-3-21)

Another participant (L-4-1-1-10) expressed confusion during silent reading. Preferences vary, but semantic comprehension outweighs auditory qualities. Silent reading preference is supported by statements like 'reading silently is more effortless' (L-2-1-1-02) and 'it allows me to concentrate on comprehension' (L-3-1-3-16). Participants favor silent reading for additional contemplation (L-3-1-3-05, L-4-1-1-09, L-3-1-3-21).

Notably, only 60.56% expressed a positive attitude toward reading on the internet. Think-aloud interviews with twelve participants produced consistent findings: nine preferred online reading, one was uncertain, and two had a negative view. Despite motivation, only six reported the internet as a consistent source, citing difficulties in navigation and a need for assistance in finding engaging texts. Factors contributing to this phenomenon include internet reading as an extracurricular activity, relying on internet accessibility and proficiency in English. Internet resources lack the grading system found in traditional materials, potentially impacting children's motivation. However, one participant (L-5-1-2-09) spending 7-8 hours daily in online activities demonstrated advanced English pronunciation and comprehension. Another participant (L-5-1-1-27)





frequently relied on online sources for academic information, expressing motivation when texts were easily understandable.”

A correlational analysis was conducted to assess the influence of motivation and attitudes on reading scores, exploring their interrelationships. The subsequent presentation of findings aligns with the research questions. Table 4 illustrates the correlation between reading test outcomes and motivation for learning English, as well as reading in English. Table 4. Correlation of Reading Test Outcomes with Motivation for Learning English and Reading in English

Item	Test statistics	
		Reading test results
Do you like learning English?	Chi-Square	10.952
	df	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.004
Do you like reading in English?	Chi-Square	30.201
	df	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000
Do you like to read aloud in English?	Chi-Square	21.970
	df	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000
Do you like to read silently in English?	Chi-Square	2.585
	df	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.275
Do you like to read in English on the internet?	Chi-Square	16.183
	df	2
	Asymp. Sig.	.000



### **Research Questions 1, 2, and 3: Correlational Analysis of Motivation and Attitudes with Reading Outcomes**

The correlational analysis of participants' motivation and attitudes in relation to reading outcomes reveals a substantial difference across all items, except for the attitude towards reading silently in English. Significant differences in reading test results are observed concerning motivation for learning English ( $p=.004$ ), motivation for reading in English ( $p=.000$ ), attitude towards reading aloud in English ( $p=.000$ ), and reading on the internet ( $p=.000$ ). However, no significant difference is found in reading test results concerning the attitude towards reading silently in English ( $p=.275$ ). These findings underscore a significant impact of learners' motivation on reading outcomes, offering valuable insights consistent with previous research on the correlation between linguistic results and motivation (Mihaljević Djigunović 2013; Mihaljević Djigunović and Lopriore 2011).

### **Research Question 4: Correlational Analysis of Motivation for Learning English and Attitudes to Reading in English (Table 5).**

Table 5: Correlational Analysis of Motivation for Learning English and Attitudes to Reading in English.

Items		Reading in English	Reading aloud in English	Reading silently in English	
Learning English	R sig	.403** .000	.386** .000	.045 .312	.266** .000
Reading in English	R sig	1.000 .	.479** .000	.021 .646	.207** .000
Reading aloud in English	R sig		1.000 .	-.204** .000	.185** .000
Reading silently in English	R sig			1.000 .	.132** .003
Reading on the internet in English	R sig				1.000 .

The study utilized Spearman's rank-order test for correlational analysis, revealing a statistically significant positive correlation between the motivation to learn English and positive attitudes towards reading in English ( $p=.000$ ), reading aloud in English ( $p=.000$ ), and reading on the internet ( $p=.000$ ). In terms of the motivation to read in English, a positive correlation was found with the practice of reading aloud in English ( $p=.000$ ) and engaging in online reading activities ( $p=.000$ ). An



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interesting inverse relationship was observed between the motivation to engage in reading aloud and the motivation for silent reading ( $p=.000$ ). Notably, a substantial positive correlation was identified between the motivation for oral reading and the motivation for online reading ( $p=.000$ ). As expected, a significant positive correlation was observed between the inclination towards silent reading in English and engaging in online reading in English, suggesting that individuals preferring silent reading also demonstrated a tendency for online reading.

These results were further supported by data obtained from prompted think-aloud protocols administered to a subset of twelve participants. Proficient readers expressed a positive inclination towards acquiring English language skills and engaging in English literature, aligning with data from the smiley questionnaire. The motivation behind selecting the sub-sample was clarified through statements such as, "Occasionally, while engaging with English literature, I encounter certain words that elude my comprehension, yet I still experience a sense of contentment."

The findings from interviews indicated a positive association between a preference for silent reading and a high level of fluency in independent reading. Conversely, both less fluent and fluent readers expressed a preference for reading aloud.

These results are consistent with prior research highlighting the importance of motivation, attitudes, and extensive reading in the development of reading skills and linguistic achievements among young learners (Drew, 2009; Lefever, 2010; Lopriore & Krikhaar, 2011; Macaro & Erler, 2008; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2013; Mihaljević Djigunović & Lopriore, 2011; Munoz & Lindgren, 2011; Nikolov, 1999). Align with the previously obtained data from the smiley questionnaire, further corroborating the participants' reported attitudes.

The motivation behind the selection of the sub-sample was elucidated through the following statements: "Occasionally, while engaging with English literature, I encounter certain words that elude my comprehension, yet I still experience a sense of contentment." The experience of reading in a foreign language presents certain distinctions when compared to reading in Serbian, as it possesses a heightened aesthetic quality. In line 1, the user expresses their fondness for reading in the English language. In line 2, they further elaborate on their love for reading, stating that they enjoy reading in both Serbian and English. According to the provided reference code (L-3-1-3-16), L2 readers who were not as proficient reported that they engage in reading in Serbian at their own discretion. On a monthly basis, I borrow a quantity of two to three books from the library, which I am able to complete within a time frame of four to five days for each individual book. However, I do not engage in reading books or narratives in the English language; my focus lies solely on reading and translating texts from course books. The provided text, "L-3-1-3-05," does not contain The findings from the interviews also indicated a positive association.

In the previous analysis, we highlighted :



#### In Motivation and Second Language Reading Skills:

.The analysis reveals a strong association between children's proficient reading performance and motivation.

.Discuss variations in motivation among different learner groups and its impact on reading skill development.

#### Concerning the Role of Learning Environment:

.Examine the influence of the learning environment on attitudes and motivation.

.Discuss the teacher's role in shaping young learners' perceptions of reading and its effects on reading outcomes.

#### **Conclusion**

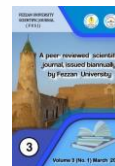
The study indicates that children's proficient performance in reading in English is very strongly associated with motivation, which corroborates previous studies. Reading comprehension results of beginning EFL readers are greatly affected by motivation for and attitudes to reading in English. As reported above, motivation for learning English and for reading in English, as well as positive attitudes to reading aloud and to reading on the internet, significantly correlate with reading achievement of young learners. Crucially, all children with high motivation and positive attitudes achieved better in the reading test. These findings appear to be well supported by previous research of the impact of young learners' attitudes on their linguistic outcomes.

Since the development of positive attitudes to and motivation for L2 learning may be considered as the main benefit of teaching languages at primary level (Cable et al. 2010, 4), it is crucial to nurture children's positive attitudes and help them strengthen their motivation for reading in English in general, and for different modes of reading in English in particular. Teachers of beginning reading should, therefore, try to create rewarding reading experiences that can assist children in developing a sense of achievement, like readers theatre, role play, or reading picture books. Moreover, teachers should provide more opportunities for authentic reading experiences, give children the necessary guidance for internet reading, and help children become autonomous readers. This will in turn lead to much better academic and career prospects for young learners when they grow up and become highly proficient EFL readers.



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