

HOW DOES THE PRESENTATION OF TEXTS INFLUENCE OUR MOTIVATION FOR
READING IN EFL?

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Trabajo de Grado 2
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22 de Mayo 2020

Universidad Católica Luis Amigo
Sede Medellín

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Research Question:

- How does the presentation of texts influence our motivation for reading in EFL?

Objectives:

- To analyze how the presentation of texts influence our motivation for reading in EFL, through interviews, recordings, and surveys.
- To comprehend which visual elements in the presentation of a text make students catch their attention for reading in EFL based on different pedagogical authors.
- To describe the changes in visual aspects of the text impacting reading motivation.

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Introduction

Throughout the career, there were texts and papers suggested by teachers that were really hard to read, either for the difficulty of it or the way they were presented. For some of them, the letter size was too small and they were too long, which made reading those papers a really exhausting task. Another factor affecting motivation towards reading the materials was the fact that many of the readings were in a foreign language and the vocabulary and style of the texts were really hard to understand. On the other hand, there were those texts that took advantage of visual elements in order to make the reading process a lot easier. This situation caught our attention, and, as a matter of fact, we found out that visual elements such as drawings and photos included in a textbook facilitate learning (Tomlinson, 2003). An example of visual elements in reading is picture books that tell stories in both words and pictures. Interacting with the printed word, the technical elements of illustration – color, line, shape, and composition – work to establish and enhance the story. (Tiemensma, L. (2009).

By doing further research we also found out that reading motivation is important for learners and it increases learners' reading comprehension (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). This is essential to our research since this affects students' performance, reading texts that are friendlier by having visual elements can improve comprehension, leading to better performance and to a more effective learning process. Images help the comprehension of what is being read, and therefore

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their enjoyment of reading is increased by understanding what is read (Franziska, 2019).

According to Yan's, 2012 findings in his research states: "This study provides evidence of the

function of content-based humorous cartoons. Furthermore, the student teachers felt that content-based humorous cartoons can be adopted in course materials to increase readability".

"Most of them opined the illustrations have positive impacts on their reading motivation and its use in course materials can help to enhance the concept that reading the materials can be a fun activity". (Melor Md. Yunus)

The use of visual aids enables the teachers to engage their students closely with the literary texts despite being able to facilitate students of different English proficiency levels in reading the texts with interest. Illustration in this study was defined as visual or pictorial figures inserted into reading texts to enhance reading. As claimed by Rivera 2016: "Sometimes they drew or painted something without being asked to, or they asked if they could; furthermore, most of them affirmed that pictures and colors were what they liked the most in books". As an example we can take Kasmaienezhadfad, Sara & Pourrajab, Masoumeh & Rabbani, Mohtaram words from 2015 when they state: "Students often see pictures before reading the text and these pictures can enhance the power of imagination of the students. The findings of this study show that pictures in textbooks can increase students' creativity". As Diamond (2008) considers, "students prefer images and pictures in textbooks because by using them they can understand and learn better and easier than words, students need illustrative information for leading their reaction to verbal information". (Rankin-Erickson, 2003) Therefore, "it is important for teachers to consider the role text illustrations and book cover illustrations play in the reading process. Illustrations frequently serve an affective or motivational function for students".

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It was equally surprising to find out that, according to Colombia's national administrative department of statistics (known in Spanish as DANE) found out that the reading average in the country is of 5,1 books a year. They also asked people about their interest in reading, where only 33% of the people admitted they like to read. Out of the other 67%, 28,3% do not like reading, while the rest of the people neither like nor dislike reading. These numbers are alarming due to the fact that reading is an essential part of education. Motivation towards reading might create certain attitudes which might affect students' performance in reading tasks, these reading attitudes are defined as "a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation" (Alexander & Filler cited in Yamashita, 2004, p.3). These attitudes towards reading have an impact on students' achievement in reading. Learners' attitudes affect both their motivation and future reading success by influencing the amount of time that learners spend on reading (Lazarus & Callahan, 2000).

Considering all the data we were able to gather, the purpose of this research is to find out how the presentation of different reading materials influences students' motivation towards reading in EFL in students of the English teaching program from Universidad Católica Luis Amigó. In order to achieve this goal, we will be analyzing how visual elements affect students' motivation towards reading in EFL as well as the perception of the students about the reading materials in English that teachers use for their classes.

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Methodology

It was carried out with a case study since qualitative research in the case study has an epistemological over other methods of inquiry (stake, 1978, 2005). Also, it is considered useful in the study of human affairs given its flexibility, and because it manages to capture different readers' attention thanks to an accessible style that is in harmony with the readers, and it constitutes a natural base of generalization. The population was constituted by 4 students that belong to the fifth firsts semesters in the bachelor's degree in English. The students were the ones who decided freely to participate in the study, they were informed about this research in informed consent, its purposes, and objectives. The students who accepted were asked for data such as their emails, WhatsApp numbers, so we could contact them when the information collection began, therefore we contacted them by those tools to agree their schedules with the investigation and to sign the informed consent for developing the instruments of data collection instruments with them later. Afterward, a personal interview of two students was designed and carried out successfully at Universidad católica Luis amigo'. Based on the observations in the interviews, a new type of data collection instrument was constructed: a survey that included close questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-questions. Due to the COVID 19, the questionnaires were sent via students' emails. As a consequence new strategies were implemented to carry out the data collection instruments such as, the implementation of virtual

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resources for example recordings, personal interviews with the WhatsApp platform, and google meetings. Additionally, 2 more participants were encouraged to participate with the aforementioned resources. Thus, the readers' impressions and feelings were identified when they were presented with texts without images and others with images to determine their preferences and attitudes towards reading. In the Information gathering, the procedure application of survey instrument was distributed by email after the interviews conducted by the virtual resources. Each student who agreed to participate was instructed to answer close and open questions. In the survey, participants were instructed to mark only the option with which participants would most identify, for the second case it was indicated that participants respond specifically to facilitate the results of the investigation with close and open questions with the readings or texts already presented in the virtual interview. it should be highlighted that in the first two interviews in the universidad católica luis amigo, the texts with images and without images were sent in advance to the emails of the two participants so that they could later had knowledge about the interview, then during the pandemic with the implementation of virtual resources, for example, whatsapp platform and google meetings these illustrated and not illustrated books were showed during the interviews to verify the motivation of the responses interviewed and in the survey, and so collect the data much better.

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Results

The purpose of our research was to find out how the presentation of books and text influence motivation for reading in EFL, and, as a matter of fact, these elements have a positive impact. In order to analyze the answers of the participants, the survey and the interview designed to get information about 4 key aspects, or categories, visual elements, illustrations, motivation towards reading and, book or text design.

Regarding our first category, visual elements, we found that they allow students to be engaged with the readings, one of the participants stated that " I love visual elements in readings because as I said before, visual elements facilitate to my imagination" (Daniela,interview4). She also mentioned that visual elements help students associate meaning with what they are learning without the need to translate" I consider that an illustrated reading, facilitates increasing of imagination, interpretation, and assimilation between the reading and the situation of the literature, Illustration is creativity. Also, for English learners is easier to associate what are they learning, I would say that they don't need translation".

Addressing our second category, out of the 4 students interviewed and surveyed, 3 highlighted a positive impact from images and illustrations with comments such as "the drawing help to

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understand the main idea of the text" (Juliana ,interview 3), "I think that should be possible that an illustration gives me any more interest about the text".(Pedro, interview2) and "Readings with illustrations, easy to understand, interesting." (Daniela, interview 4), while only one of them pointed out that visual aids might be helpful only to students with low English proficiency "Para alguien que tenga como lenguaje ya avanzado, tal vez no, pero alguien que esté empezando si para poder entenderlo mejor" (Maria , interview 1)

When we addressed the motivation of students towards reading in EFL, most of them admitted they did not completely read the texts that teachers sent them, because they were not interesting enough and/or because of the complex vocabulary, "La mayoría de veces, no. (risas) porque como te digo, o sea, no. Primero no son de mis gustos porque no son tan interesantes como los que a mi me gusta leer. Y segundo por las palabras tan complejas que tienen." (Maria, interview 1)

On our last category, the design of the book or text, some students pointed out some of the elements they look at when facing the readings that affect their motivation such as the length of the reading and the topic of it "I feel like a bit of stress because they give me a large document, we so many words that I don't understand".(Pedro, interview 2), and whether or not they can find summarized information about it on the internet "I looked the topic of the of the text that the teachers gives me gives me I try to investigating on internet like summaries or or conceptual maps or the rains of ideas and I introduce myself in that topic. And I try to understand more about it but without the document because the document gets more ever made for me. (Pedro, Interview 2).

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To sum up, visual elements actually help to improve understanding and motivation towards what is being read, the participants of the research highlighted the positive impact illustrations have and how their motivations are affected when readings lack these elements as well as other elements such as the length, topic, and different strategies they use to avoid the readings. This goes in hand with our exploration of previous sources that help confirm the results we got.

Authors such as Rankin and Erickson in 2003 stated “Students prefer images and pictures in textbooks because by using them they can understand and learn better and easier than words, students need illustrative information for leading their reaction to verbal information”. We got evidence of students developing actual behaviors in order to avoid reading, similar to what Alexander & Filler cited in Yamashita expressed “(...) a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation”

This opens several possibilities for further research projects, for instance, finding out which strategies students are using to avoid reading as well as which visual elements are the ones students prefer when reading. There is also the possibility to have this study be carried out with a higher number of participants and not only in university level, but it can be replicated in different contexts and not only asking about reading in a foreign language but also in their mother tongue

Discussion

Exploration of connections - theoretical triangulation

Special considerations of the research (for example the pandemic)

Conclusions and suggestions

Limitations

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Future research possibilities

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Annexes

Main Interviews Questions

1. Do you completely read the texts teachers send you?
2. What is the first thing you check on the reading?
3. How can a book or text get your attention to read?
4. Do you think visual elements help people understand readings better?

survey:

1: Did you enjoy our selection and documents or readings? yes/No, why? leave us your comments.

2: Do the visual elements help you better understand the text? yes or not and why?

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