

## The impact of authentic context in an EAP setting on reading motivation

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### Abstract

While authenticity is recurrently associated with higher motivation, the question remains how an authentic context can affect reading motivation in an English for academic purposes (EAP) setting. To investigate the effect, two groups of 30 EAP students were selected through cluster random sampling as control and experimental groups. Having administered the pre-test of the reading motivation questionnaire at the beginning of the study, the researchers administered the post-test after the 8-week intervention of providing an authentic context. The findings revealed that the experimental group (authentic context) had a higher reading motivation after the intervention as compared with the control group (traditional context). Moreover, the data from the diaries shed more light on the students' general views of the two contexts such as their impressions of the tasks and activities, impressions of what was enjoyable and what was not, and the reactions to the instructor and the peers.

**Keywords:** Reading motivation, EAP, authentic text, authentic task, authentic context.

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## 1. Introduction

English has been increasingly growing as a prominent language for academic knowledge dissemination and this has revolutionised the educational experiences of many students who need to be fluent in English academic discourse for comprehending their disciplines and successfully navigating their knowledge. Thus, English for academic purposes (EAP) emerged as a response to fulfil this demand and as a way of developing academic literacy rather than just preparing learners to study English (Hyland, 2006). However, EAP may seem to have a more vital position in countries where English is not spoken as a native or a second language. As such, the Iranian EAP setting is not an exception. The need to do research in this area is believed to be inevitable (Eslami-Rasekh & Simin, 2011) as these courses play a fundamental role in Iranian universities (Eslami-Rasekh, 2010). While a large group of students and lecturers have to deal with the courses, there is a consensus among numerous Iranian EAP practitioners on the inefficacy of the courses. Among several criticisms made of the EAP courses in Iran (Afrough, Rahimi & Zarafshan, 2014; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Fathi, 2008; Hassaskhah, 2005; Soleimani, 2005; Tayebipour, 2005), students' lack of motivation or their demotivation stand in a remarkable position (Ajideh, 2009; Atai & Nazari, 2011; Atai & Shoja, 2011; Eslami-Rasekh, 2010; Eslami-Rasekh & Simin, 2011; Farhady, 2005; Hassaskhah, 2005; Hayati, 2008; Rahimi & Zolfaghari, 2015). Accordingly, several reasons are proposed, including finding no trace of real-life communication, ignoring learners' purposes and interests and lacking the motivational principle. On the other hand, authenticating the context is attributed to the enhancement of motivation among many of its other advantages.

Thus, a review of the language teaching literature of the Iranian EAP context reveals that there is a dearth of research in this area and the practicality of using an authentic context is still under question. Hence, as a quasi-experiment, the present research was conducted to investigate the effect of authenticating the context (through the inclusion of authentic texts and tasks) on the Iranian EAP learners' reading motivation.

### 1.1. The Iranian EAP context

Iranian EAP students have to complete several English courses as a prerequisite of graduation. These comprise Basic English and EAP (Atai & Shoja, 2011; Sadeghi, 2005). The aim of these courses is to fill the gap between the students' general English reading competence and the ability to read 'authentic discipline-specific texts' (Atai & Nazari, 2011). Consequently, the EAP courses are primarily focused on the reading skill (Akbari & Tahririan, 2009; Alimohammadi, 2003; Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009; Atai, 2002; Fathi, 2008; Jodairi, 2005; Mazdayasna & Tahririan, 2008; Soleimani, 2005; Suzani, 2005; Tayebipour, 2005; Ziahosseiny, 2005).

In Iranian EFL context, a traditional teaching approach is dominant which is closely comparable to the grammar-translation method with an emphasis on text analysis (Amiryousefi, Dastjerdi & Tavakoli, 2012; Hashemi, Lamir & Namjoo, 2011; Hasrati, 2005; Hassaskhah, 2005; Hayati & Jalilifar, 2010; Moghimizadeh, 2008; Noora, 2008; Zohrabi, Torabi & Baybourdiani, 2012). Some of the main activities carried out in classes include reading aloud, translation and answering the reading comprehension questions. Similarly, there are some conventional activities such as cloze tasks, true/false questions and multiple choice questions while academic reading sub-skills are absent (Atai & Shoja, 2011). Students in these classes have a passive role and the teacher is the authority (Hayati, 2008).

Most of the conventional EAP materials, usually published by SAMT publication, follow a high level of uniformity concerning the organisation, structure and methodology (Eslami-Rasekh & Simin, 2012). For instance, the Engineering EAP course book consists of three sections: pre-reading, reading for comprehension and homework (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009). Every unit begins with a pre-reading section including pronunciation practice (Fathi, 2008), technical terms introduction (word study) and vocabulary introduction. A grammatical point is introduced deductively (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009).

There is rather limited focus on grammar (Eslami-Rasekh & Simin, 2012). Linguistic features of the texts are emphasised while minimal attention is given to the skills and strategies which can help with extracting the meaning out of the context (Soleimani, 2005). The homework section includes vocabulary exercises (parts of speech, fill in the blanks and matching), grammatical exercises (mechanical drills and exercises), reading comprehension exercises, translation and terminology practices (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2009).

## **1.2. Authenticity**

Dating back to over a thousand years ago, initial thoughts on authenticity reappeared in the 16th century for teaching Latin (Mishan, 2005). Later, during the 1890s, Henry Sweet advocated teaching authentic texts and preferred them to non-authentic believing that natural texts 'do justice to every feature of the language' (Gilmore, 2007). However, the idea and its applications are still mentioned by the 21st century scholars such as Shrum and Glisan (2000), Kilickaya (2004), Mishan (2005), Khaniya (2006), Gilmore (2007), Richards (2013), etc. Authenticity has also played a focal role for developing materials, designing syllabi, as well as language teaching approaches such as, task-based, communicative language teaching, humanistic, autonomous and materials-based approaches (Bax, 2003; Mishan, 2005)

As for the definition of the term, there is a general agreement that an authentic text is the one produced for communicative purposes rather than language teaching purposes and which is not only genuine but also corresponds to its essence in the real world. Several authentic materials are suggested including essays, stories, magazines and TV news (Hwang, 2005), recipes, advertisements and editorials (Awasthi, 2006; Kilickaya, 2004), brochures, plays and realia (Crossley, Louwse, McCarthy & McNamara, 2007), classified ads and food packaging (Horwitz, 2008), songs and literature (Berardo, 2006) and the Internet (Bell, 2005; Berardo, 2006; Le Loup & Ponterio, 2000; Lowe, 2009). Among all, the Internet favours most as not only it is authentic, immediate, stimulating and interactive but also it is unceasingly updated and includes a variety of genres.

Furthermore, tasks used as models to approximate authenticity in pedagogical contexts must have real-life applications. Authentic task examples include problem solving, game playing and information sharing (Bastola, 2006), discussing (Oura, 2001), letter writing (Jacobson, Degener & Purcell-Gates, 2003), report writing (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Martens, 2005), following descriptions or instructions (Prabhu, 1987, cited in Mishan, 2005) and listing (Willis, 1996, cited in Mishan, 2005). Among the different forms of the proposed authentic tasks, summarising, listing, fact-finding, following instructions in completing figures or tables, sharing and skimming/scanning can be used for practicing reading.

### **1.2.1. Authentic context**

While it is axiomatic to consider the efficacy of authentic texts in providing an authentic context (Shrum & Glisan, 2000), one may not ignore the importance of the presentation of authentic tasks (Anderson, 1999; Breen, 1985; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Guariento & Morley, 2001; MacDonald, Badger & Dasli, 2006; Velazquez & Redmond, 2007). In defining the context of authentic text and task used to form a 'social construct', several factors must be considered including the student and teacher roles (Breen, 1985; MacDonald et al., 2006), the participants' interpretation, language use, the setting and the interaction nature (Taylor, 1994).

As far as the reading skill is concerned, Berardo (2006) remarks that authenticity as an on-going process is the interaction established between the text and the reader. However, for carrying out authentic tasks, the students will have to take roles similar to real-world activities. The teacher also takes the role of a facilitator and supporter rather than an instructor (Woo, Herrington, Agostino & Reeves, 2007). Moreover, social interaction, cooperation and critical thinking are involved (Oguz & Bahar, 2008). Thus, the central point of departure in providing an authentic context is not only to bring the authentic materials into the classroom context but to prepare the tasks that simulate the real-life.

### **1.3. Reading motivation**

Motivation can be domain-specific (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). However, the factor of domain which, in turn, may influence a number of constructs has been overlooked in defining motivation. As Landelle (2004) mentions, theories proposed for motivation are either classified as general motivation theories (Goal setting theory, expectancy-value, self-efficacy, need theory, reinforcement theory, equity theory and Skehan's theory) or as motivation theories which relate to foreign language learning and second language acquisition such as those proposed by Crookes and Schmidt, Dornyei, Clement, and Gardner. However, according to Mori (2002), many of the recent motivation theories bases are established on Gardner's motivation theory and thus their categories are mainly developed based on the assumptions of interaction with native speakers. These results may not be applicable in contexts where English is used as a foreign language.

Based on this discussion, Wigfield and Guthrie's reading motivation theory is more applicable to this research since it seeks to view motivation for a specific domain. Moreover, as the motivation in the context of this study involves an educational EFL setting, theories of motivation such as those proposed by Gardner as discussed above could not be applicable as they embed motivation in interactions with native speakers or language acquisition. Similarly as the main skill of focus in the context of the study as an EAP context is reading and the researchers sought to find the effects of the authentic context on motivation in a situation where reading is mainly emphasised, a domain-specific motivation theory is more suitable.

Educational psychologists need to study and understand motivation in relation to different activities which contribute to specific domains (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Reading motivation is an unexplored territory (Grabe, 2009) and there have not been many studies conducted or theories put forward in relation to reading motivation exclusively in a foreign context (Mori, 2002). According to Wigfield (1997), many of the studies conducted in the realm of reading generally focused on cognitive aspects rather than motivation and they did not integrate the theoretical constructs and models of motivation theories. However, research on reading motivation conducted by Wigfield and colleagues was fundamentally based on theories of motivation such as achievement goal theory, intrinsic motivation theory, expectancy-value theory and self-efficacy theory (Wigfield, 1997). Thus, their lines of research were mainly affected by major concepts of self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, goal mastery, interest, attitudes and social factors.

Based on the above-mentioned concepts Wigfield and Guthrie developed their motivation for reading questionnaire known widely as MRQ (Grabe, 2009). Guthrie and Wigfield proposed a comprehensive list of motives related to reading including 11 constructs which include reading efficacy, reading challenge, reading curiosity, reading involvement, importance of reading, reading work avoidance, competition in reading, recognition for reading, reading for grades, social reasons for reading compliance (Grabe, 2009). The list of motives was initially proposed based on interviews conducted with children. However, other researchers such as Mori (2002) and Blay, Mercado & Villacorta (2009) have used Wigfield and Guthrie's reading motivation components in their studies conducted on adult English learners in EFL contexts. The constructs measured in such studies which related to adult readers were reading efficacy (the individual's belief as being successful at reading), Reading challenge (the mastery of difficult texts), reading curiosity (the willingness to learn about some topic of interest), reading involvement (the enjoyment of reading an informational or interesting text), importance of reading (individual's perception of reading as an important skill), reading compliance (reading for the sake of some external goal) and finally reading avoidance (Wigfield, 1997). Wigfield and Guthrie's reading motivation theory advocates the emphasis on a specific domain of motivation assessment. The motivation construct of the theory specifically matches the authentic context of the study as it seeks to measure motivation related to such constituents like successful performance on a task or a person's positive feelings and enjoyment in doing a task.

#### 1.4. Research question

Based on the consensus among the Iranian EAP practitioners (e.g., Ajideh, 2009; Atai & Nazari, 2011; Atai & Shoja, 2011; Eslami-Rasekh, 2010; Eslami-Rasekh & Simin, 2011; Farhady, 2005; Fathi, 2008; Hassaskhah, 2005; Hayati, 2008; Soleimani, 2005; Tayebipour, 2005) who believe that Iranian EAP students are either demotivated or lack motivation, the present study proposed the implementation of an authentic context to answer the following question:

To what extent do the traditional and authentic contexts affect the reading motivation among Iranian EAP students?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

Since the target population (the second year EAP students who had enrolled in EAP courses at Iranian universities) was not accessible, the researchers relied on selecting the sample from the accessible population (the EAP students majoring in engineering at the Islamic Azad University of Mashhad Branch in Iran) with an approximate population of 450 who were grouped into 15 classes. Two of these intact groups (30 students in each group) were selected randomly to form the control and experimental groups. Thus, the participants in this study were 60 male and female students whose age ranged from 19 to 35. The following Table 1 illustrates the number of male and female students in each group.

**Table 1. The number of male and female students in each group**

1	Control group	Male 24 + Female 6 = 30
2	Experimental group	Male 21 + Female 9 = 30

### 2.2. Materials, content and teaching methodology

The layout for the materials presented in the control group was as follows:

**Pre-reading:** presenting the new words

- Word study: definitions or synonyms
- Reading:** presenting the main text.
- Reading for comprehension
- Post reading:** practicing different exercises.
- reading comprehension questions
- multiple choice questions
- true or false

The layout for the experimental group included the tasks which followed the texts. To be authentic, the original text could not be changed and the original layout had to be maintained (Grellet, 1981) to enhance the learners' motivation by emphasising the real world applications of the language (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Therefore, the texts were directly printed from the Internet without any modifications or simplifications.

The lesson plan for this study was mainly based on Cubillo and Brenes's 2009 proposal. Thus, a typical unit plan for the experimental group was as follows:

**Warm up:** brainstorming and asking the warm-up questions

**Pre reading:** the students were asked to do silent reading while they formed their groups. As a form of authentic reading (Rasinski, 2006), silent reading is an interesting activity to compare the students' interpretations of a text and initiate discussions among them (Grellet, 1981). They were discouraged to use their dictionaries during silent reading while they tried to get the gist of the text and present what they understood to the class in a short discussion.

### **2.3. Reading:**

Forming groups of four (since there were 30 students in each class two groups were formed with three students and six groups were formed with four students), the students had to follow the instructions specific to any unit. Since the materials were from different sources and the corresponding tasks differed, the instructions were diverse for every unit. For example, for one text they had to skim and scan while for another text they had to find the abbreviations and technical terms. Some other tasks included evaluating the text, writing a summary, writing a report, filling in tables and charts, summarising the text, writing the main idea, drawing figures, etc.

### **2.4. Post reading**

- The students discuss the main idea.
- The students found answers to the questions (skimming/scanning or discussing with other peers).
- The teacher helped the students with the word meanings (encouraged using dictionaries).
- The students summarised the article (text) in simple language.
- The students read the summary to the class (if the post-reading section asked them to do some decision making or problem-solving tasks, they had to present the results to the class).
- The students had to draw a figure or complete a table, a chart or a figure by providing parts with labels based on the knowledge from reading the text.

The decision on the topic of the eight units which were covered throughout the treatment was made based on the topics in the table of the contents of SAMT course book (English for the students of engineering) to assure both groups were exposed to the same topics and concepts. To do so, the researchers had to search carefully so that the texts would have the same content and difficulty level. However, the final units were evaluated for content and difficulty level in a panel of English teaching experts including three professionals to eliminate any bias. Finally eight units were designed to be included in the intervention for the experimental group.

### **2.5. Procedure**

The study was conducted over a period of 8 weeks for 3 hours per week. The control group was taught through the traditional teaching methodology and the texts provided in the conventional EAP course book (SAMT publication). The students in the experimental group used the syllabus developed by the researchers including the authentic texts and tasks. The reading motivation questionnaire was administered as a pre-test and a post-test. Finally, after the intervention, two separate focus groups, each with eight students, participated in an interview. The interviewees were selected randomly from both high and low achievers. To collect data through the diaries, the students were provided with diary slips. As the students' proficiency level was low, the diaries were in Persian, their mother tongue. The researchers directed the diaries to specific information such as their impressions of the tasks and activities, impressions of what was enjoyable and what was not or the reactions to the instructor and the peers by giving oral instructions (see Appendix I). After the 8 week intervention, the interview sessions were held asking main and prompt questions all tailored towards reading motivation by asking how their reading motivation has changed and how motivated they were to read after taking this course.

### 2.5.1. Instrument

The reading motivation questionnaire consisted of 25 items in 5-point Likert-scale format. This questionnaire was mainly based on Wigfield and Guthrie's motivation theory and model. The items which were adapted from the reading motivation questionnaires of Mori (2002), Schutte and Malouff (2007) and Dhanapala (2008) were modified to match the study and its objectives. The major components of reading motivation included reading efficacy, reading curiosity, reading involvement, reading avoidance, reading compliance and importance of reading in English (see Appendix II). Furthermore, prior to the main study, the English version of the questionnaire was translated into the native language of the students, Persian, by a translator. It was then back-translated to English again by a bilingual to check for any ambiguities or inaccuracies. Back-to-back translation involves the translation of the original questionnaire into the target language of the study or the participants' language by an independent translator. The second step involves the translation of the translated questionnaire back again to the original language. The third step is the comparison of the final translation with the original questionnaire to find out if there are any differences. To find the inconsistencies in meaning, both translators were consulted to refine the final questionnaire in the target language (Dornyei & Taguchi, 2010).

In order to ensure the questionnaire's face and content validity, a panel of English language teaching lecturers including three full-time lecturers at the Islamic Azad University of Mashhad evaluated the reading motivation questionnaire. The panel decided to eliminate different items from Mori's 2002 questionnaire. These items included item 21 under the component of reading efficacy as 'My grades for English reading classes at junior and senior high schools were not very good'. The categories of 'integrative orientation' and 'reading for grades' were omitted due to their irrelevance to the purpose and context of the study each including items 3, 4, 5, 10, 19, 20, 25 and item 7, respectively.

For the category of 'reading curiosity' item 12 was changed from 'novels' to 'books' to match the purpose of the study. Two other items were added including 'I read in English to learn new information about topics that interest me' and 'If I find a label, a booklet, an advertisement in English I read them to improve my English'. For 'importance of reading in English' one item was added 'If there are reference materials in English on my specialised field, I read all those materials'. This item was added to match the context; that is, EAP. One other item was added to the category of 'reading challenge' as 'If the English material is interesting, I can read difficult materials'. The reliability of the instrument was also measured through SPSS version 16 by administering the scales to a pilot study group of engineering students. The following Table 2 illustrates the reliability indices of the pre-test and post-test of reading motivation questionnaire.

**Table 2. Reliability indices**

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>K-R21</i>
Pre-test of Reading Motivation	60	85.67	182.362	0.80
Post-test of Reading Motivation	60	94.12	218.548	0.85

### 2.6. Analysis and coding

Having met the assumptions including random sampling, independence of observations, continuous level of measurement, normal distribution and homogeneity of variances, the researchers ran an independent *t*-test to compare the means of the two groups in reading motivation.

To analyse the interview, as the researchers looked for the level of reading motivation (high and low), two codes of high and low reading motivation were specified (pre-specified themes). If the participant mentioned a positive statement to show their reading motivation as high the code high reading motivation (HRM) was allocated. On the other hand, if the statement conveyed a negative point of view, the code low reading motivation (LRM) was allocated. Also by relying on the constructs

of the reading motivation questionnaire, the researchers sought those constructs in interview sessions to relate them to high and low motivation in reading.

Based on the objectives, the researchers analysed the diaries for the emergent themes about the context of the course, the texts, the tasks, the students' roles, the teacher's role, their motivation for reading the academic English texts. The recurrent emergent themes were categorised into open codes and then the closely-related themes formed the axial codes. Finally, the selective codes were formed which were one level of generality above the axial code. Then, the researchers reviewed the initial list of recurrent themes and reduced the list based on the new codes. For instance, for the following two entries the researchers developed the same code as 'group work'.

- 'I liked the group work'
- 'I think working in groups is really interesting'

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Quantitative results

An independent *t*-test was run to compare the Authentic and Traditional groups' means on the pre-test of reading motivation. Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics for the Authentic ( $M = 86.07$ ,  $SD = 14.57$ ) and Traditional ( $M = 85.27$ ,  $SD = 12.57$ ) groups.

**Table 3 Descriptive statistics pre-test of reading motivation by groups**

	Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Pre-test of reading	Auth	30	86.07	14.577	2.661
Motivation	Trad	30	85.27	12.578	2.296

The results of the independent *t*-test [ $t(58) = 0.22$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.30$  representing a weak effect size] (Table 4) indicate that there was not any significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the pre-test of the reading motivation questionnaire.

**Table 4. Independent t-test; pre-test of reading motivation by groups**

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.455	0.502	0.228	58	0.821	0.800	3.515	-6.236	7.836
Equal variances not assumed			0.228	56.783	0.821	0.800	3.515	-6.239	7.839

As illustrated in Figure 1, the mean for the authentic group was 86.07 while for the traditional group it was 85.27. Thus, it suggests that the two groups were not significantly different in their reading motivation prior to the intervention (see Figure 1).



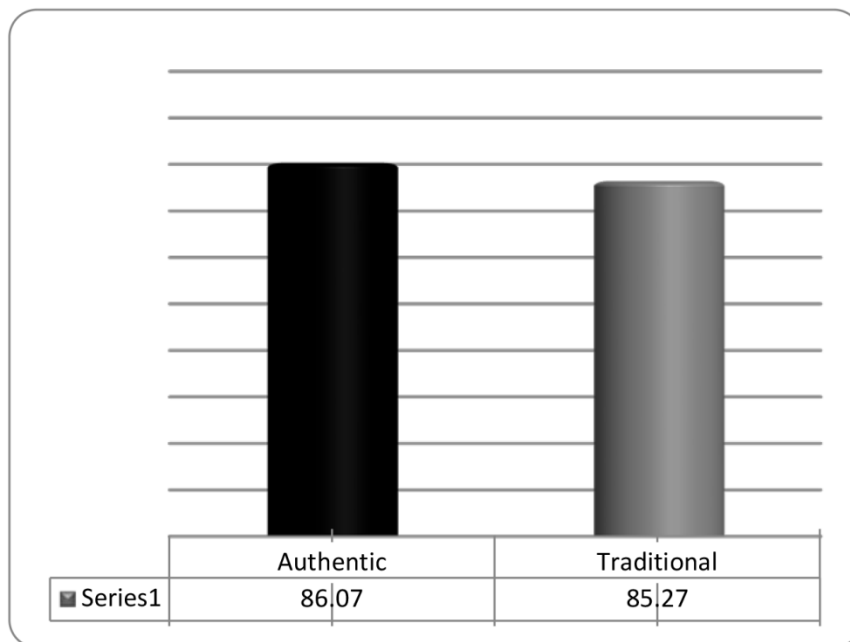


Figure 1 Graph for pre-test of reading motivation by groups

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene’s  $F = 0.093$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). As is displayed in Table 5, the Authentic group ( $M = 99.67$ ,  $SD = 12.72$ ) had a higher mean compared with the Traditional group ( $M = 88.57$ ,  $SD = 14.80$ ).

Table 5. Descriptive statistics post-test of reading motivation by groups

	Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Reading motivation	Auth	30	99.67	12.723	2.323
	Trad	30	88.57	14.802	2.702

Also, an independent  $t$ -test was run to compare the post-test of reading motivation questionnaire in order to probe the effect of type of context (authentic and traditional). The results of the independent  $t$ -test [ $t(58) = 3.11$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.37$  representing a moderate to large effect size] (Table 6) indicate that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on reading motivation.

Table 6. Independent t-test; reading motivation by groups

	Levene’s test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.093	0.761	3.113	58	0.003	11.093	3.564	3.960	18.227
Equal variances not assumed			3.113	56.721	.003	11.093	3.564	3.957	18.230

As is illustrated in Figure 2, the mean for the authentic group was 99.67; while, for the traditional group it was 88.57. Thus, it suggests that the students in the experimental group (authentic context) had higher reading motivation scores than the students in the control group (traditional context).

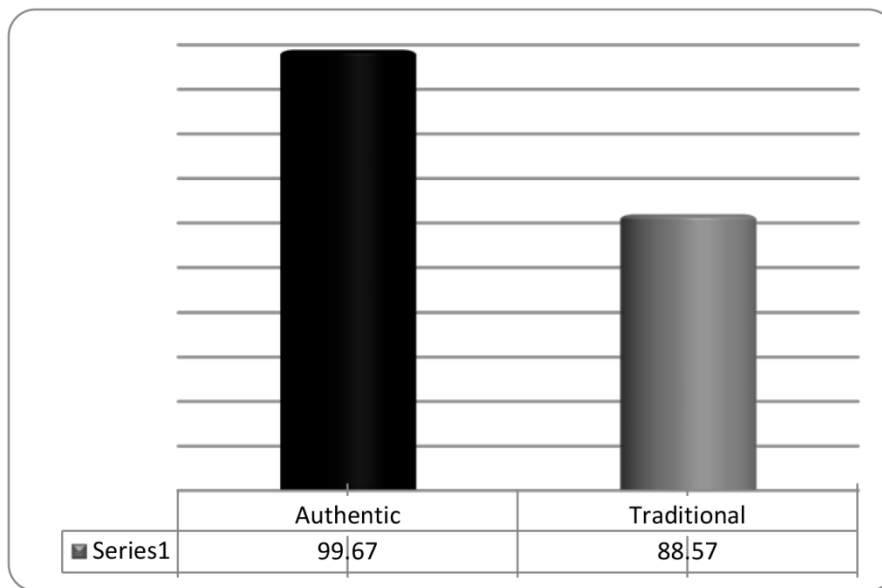


Figure 2. Graph for reading motivation by groups

The results of the quantitative data determined that while the control and experimental groups' mean scores on the pre-test of reading motivation were not significantly different (control group mean= 85.27 and experimental group mean= 86.07, a weak effect size  $r = 0.30$ ), their means on the post-test were significantly different (control group mean= 88.57 and experimental group mean= 99.67, a large to moderate effect size  $r = 0.37$ ). Thus, the conclusion is drawn that the experimental group had a higher reading motivation after the intervention.

### 3.2. Qualitative results

In order to find more in-depth information, the following questions were asked during the interview session. Some prompts were used to guide the discussion around such questions as:

How do you find the overall course of English reading?

How has your motivation to read English texts changed?

In order to find out the positive/negative codes for the reading motivation, the transcriptions of the interviewees' responses were analysed. The frequency of the positive and negative responses was calculated. Table 7 presents the number of positive and negative codes based on the interviewees' responses in both control and experimental groups.

Table 7. Positive and negative codes for reading motivation in the two groups

Group	Reading motivation	
	Positive (HRM)	Negative (LRM)
Control (Traditional)	4	4
Experimental (Authentic)	7	1

Notes: HRM = high reading motivation, LRM = low reading motivation

Based on the reading motivation components, any student who mentioned a positive statement about reading efficacy, involvement in reading, curiosity for reading and importance of reading was counted as having an increased reading motivation. Also, stating a negative idea about avoidance for reading was considered as a positive point. As is illustrated in Table 7, out of the eight students who were interviewed, seven students in the experimental group (authentic context) stated that their reading motivation was higher after the intervention. On the other hand, four students from the control group (traditional context) stated that their reading motivation had improved.

Among the students in the experimental group (authentic context), one student stated that he did not improve as he could not catch up with the activities. On the other hand, half of the students from the control group who were interviewed stated that their motivation to read English texts did not improve after the intervention. Those students who believed they had improved referred to factors such as, the teacher’s explanations and repetition, understandability of the texts and vocabulary learning through translation. Conversely, the students who did not state their improvement stated the following:

- I had no improvement.
- The course is obligatory and I had no choice but to enrol.
- I dislike enrolling again in case of failure.
- I dislike studying English but I have to because it is a requirement.

Having considered all the participants’ views on their reading motivation improvements in the focus group interview findings, the researchers draw the conclusion that the findings of the quantitative section of the study are supported by the qualitative findings of the interview. Therefore, the researchers conclude that the authentic context was more effective in increasing the students’ reading motivation of English texts.

Additionally, to find evidence on the students’ general views of the two contexts, they were directed to keep diaries during the treatment course. Based on the analyses of the data from the diary entries, the researchers found the most recurrent themes. Some of the themes were common in both groups while there were unequal frequencies of the themes’ occurrences. The following Table 8 illustrates the themes common in both groups.

**Table 8. The frequency of common themes in both traditional and authentic contexts**

Theme	Group	
	Traditional	Authentic
Boring activities	15	4
Relatedness of topics	2	12
Vocabulary learning	12	10
Need teacher’s support	10	9
Exam-oriented	9	3
Insufficient background knowledge	7	4
Satisfying	5	20

As is illustrated in Table 8, 20 students from the authentic group wrote about their satisfaction of the course while 5 students in the control group made the same statement. Furthermore, as the frequencies of the themes suggest, a higher number of the students in the traditional group were exam-oriented (9) compared with the authentic group (3). Similarly, a higher number of the students in the control group stated that their background knowledge was insufficient (7) as compared to the authentic group students (4). Finally, teacher dependence (authentic group = 9 and traditional group = 10) and vocabulary learning (authentic group = 10 and traditional group = 12) were expressed as common themes with almost similar frequencies in both groups.

Likewise, Tables 9 and 10 illustrate the number of recurrences of themes for each group as follows:

**Table 9. Common themes for the control group (traditional context)**

Recurrent theme	Frequency
Outdated texts	15
Need practice	15
Teacher's explanation	12
Boring session	10
Difficult text	9
irrelevant Texts	14

As is illustrated in Table 9, a high frequency (15) was found for the views stating that the texts were outdated and the students needed practice. Similarly, depending on the teacher's explanations (12), believing that the sessions were boring (10), and believing that the texts were difficult (9) and irrelevant (14) were among the most recurrent themes.

As for the most recurrent themes for the experimental group (authentic context), Table 10 illustrates the themes as follows:

**Table 10. Common themes for the experimental group (authentic context)**

Recurrent theme	Frequency
Teaching method	19
Group work	18
Handle the reading text and task	17
Up-to-date materials	15
Motivating reading practice	15
Dictionary use	15
Improved in reading	14
Active sessions	12
Interesting materials	11
Cooperative learning	9
Exciting classes	8
Purposeful course	8

It was found out that the majority of the students were satisfied with the course (20). Moreover, many students (19) expressed their interest in the teaching methodology. Almost half of the students believed that they could handle reading the texts and doing the tasks (17), the materials were up-to-date (15), the reading practices were motivating (15) and they had improved in reading (14). As far as the classroom tasks and activities were concerned, more than half of the students (18) referred to group work as interesting, half of the students (15) stated that they liked the dictionary use, and some students (9) wrote that they liked the cooperative learning.

#### 4. Discussion

With reference to the theory related to reading motivation, motivation may be domain-specific (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). The findings of the present study were also in agreement with this theory which measures reading in a specific situation or domain rather than the general motivation level which mainly deals with motivation in relation to communication. Based on the results of the interview as well as those of the questionnaire, it was revealed that the students in the experimental group who believed that they were efficient and able in reading were also more motivated to read. Such perception was also stated in their diaries. Thus, the specific environment affects reading motivation since the participants' views concerning their reading motivation varied from one context to another.

The results of the present study also revealed that motivation can not only be domain-specific but also situation-specific since the reading motivation constructs found in the two groups differed significantly. For example, the students who were in the authentic context mentioned the constructs of the reading motivation theory such as involvement, curiosity, efficacy, challenge, and compliance. Conversely, the students in the traditional context mentioned reading avoidance. Thus, the constructs of motivation for reading skill varies based on the context in which the reading skill is practiced.

Furthermore, based on the students' views in the authentic context it is possible to list the reasons why their motivation in reading was higher. These reasons included the teaching method, the activities implemented such as 'group work' and 'dictionary use', and the materials which were extracted from the real world.

## 5. Conclusion

Apart from adding to the body of knowledge and research and bridging the gap in knowledge between authentic context effects and reading motivation, the findings of the study are applicable to English teaching in general and EAP settings in particular. A lesson plan with a focus on authentic materials, tasks and activities together with a facilitating and supportive teacher and collaborative peers will help significantly in increasing the learners' reading motivation.

Learners' views, as the stakeholders of a learning environment, can gravely improve thoughts on how to develop a beneficial learning context. Moreover, having perceived the authentic context as exciting and purposeful, the students saw reading practices as motivating. Accordingly, English language teachers in general and EAP instructors in particular are advised to benefit the use of an authentic teaching/learning context specifically in contexts where there is not enough reason and high motive for students to learn English and practice reading comprehension. Thus, having provided a detailed lesson plan and task list to simulate an authentic context in this study, the researchers sought to collect the views of the students in the authentic context. As the findings, both quantitative and qualitative, suggest, the experimental participants' reading motivation turned out to be higher than their peers' in the control group. Such results can be helpful not only to the teachers but also to the material developers and syllabus designers.

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**Appendix I**

**Diary slip**

**Session .....**

Your diary of today's class

Please write mainly about the selected texts and activities/tasks in your class, specially reading practices.

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## Appendix II

### Reading Motivation Questionnaire (English version)

Dear students,

Please specify your opinion about the following statements in the table below.

Age:..... field:..... gender: male.....female.....	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Reading efficacy</b>					
1. I am good at reading in English.					
2. English reading is my weak subject.					
3. I like reading classes.					
<b>Reading curiosity</b>					
4. Even if reading were not a required subject, I would take a reading class anyway.					
5. I like reading English articles.					
6. I like reading English newspapers and/or magazines.					
7. By learning to read in English, I hope I will be able to read English books.					
8. By learning to read in English, I hope to be able to read English newspapers and/or magazines.					
9. I read in English to learn new information about topics that interest me.					
10. If I find a label, a booklet, an advertisement in English, I read them too improve my English.					
<b>Reading involvement</b>					
11. I get immersed in reading English texts.					
12. It is fun to read in English.					
13. I tend to get deeply engaged when I read in English.					
<b>Importance of reading in English</b>					
14. Learning to reading in English is important because it will broaden my view.					
15. Learning to reading in English is important because it will be conducive to my professional life.					
16. Learning to read in English is important because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.					
17. It is a waste of time to learn to read in English.					
18. If there are reference materials in English on my specialised field, I read all those materials.					
<b>Reading compliance</b>					
19. I am taking a reading class merely because it is a required subject.					

20. I would not voluntarily read in English unless it is required as homework or assignment.

**Reading avoidance**

21. Long and difficult English passages put me off.

22. I do not have any desire to read in English even if the content is interesting.

23. It is a pain to read in English.

**Reading challenge**

24. I like it when the questions in English books make me think.

25. If the English material is interesting, I can read difficult material.

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