

## Research article

# Students' Interest in Reading English Texts

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The purpose of this study was to examine students' reading habits and the factors that influence their desire to read English texts. A total of thirty-four EFL students were chosen. A qualitative descriptive approach was used. A questionnaire and interviews were used to gather information. The study's findings revealed that the students had a strong desire to read. Several factors influenced students' interest, including their effort in reading, their motivation and assumptions about reading, all of which were categorized as at 'high' levels. The motivation of students had a significant impact on their desire to read. The desire to learn new things about interesting topics became the primary motivator for students to read. Given the importance of reading, it is critical to prepare an engaging reading text as well as engaging teaching methods to pique students' interest in reading.

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Published 08 April 2022

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Selection and Peer-review under  
the responsibility of the ICONIK  
Conference Committee.

**Keywords:** Students' Interest, Factor, Reading English Texts

## 1. Introduction

One of the language skills which might assist students in the process of learning English is reading. It serves as a source of information for students to acquire knowledge during language learning. Reading is also recognized as the most required skill for anybody, particularly students [1]; [2]. Reading improves students' vocabulary knowledge, their ability to pronounce words correctly, and their comprehension of the information and meaning contained within the text. It also has an effect on the extent and accuracy of information as well as their attitudes, morals, beliefs, and judgments. [3]; [4]; [5]; [6]. Therefore, it is important to teach reading to foster students' interest and reading habit in expanding their knowledge. In addition, reading activity should be formed and developed as an interest instruction which will gradually turn into a reading habit [7]. As Harmer [8] explains, the purpose of reading instruction is to provide an additional skill for language comprehension, vocabulary development, spelling, and writing. At least, the language they acquire can be put away in their minds as part of the process of language acceptance, particularly for interesting reading.

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Interest is a crucial thing for enjoying reading activities. Students should consequently be encouraged to read more, because strong enthusiasm and sufficient knowledge will be very helpful in mastering reading [5]. Interest is the tendency of an active soul to understand language pattern to obtain information that is closely related to the will, activity and sensations of pleasure, which may enable humans to choose, pay attention to, and accept something external to themselves [9]; [10]. While interest in reading involves both internal and external factors such as attention, willingness, encouragement, and enjoyment [1]. Reading will be more meaningful and beneficial if the reading interest that precedes the reading is based on one's intrinsic motivation rather than the force of other parties or extrinsic rewards. [11]. So, it is commonly considered that reading will occur meaningfully if an interest in reading precedes it. [12]. For that reason, it is necessary to increase students' interest in reading in order to foster an awareness of the importance of developing students' knowledge and skills.

A number of researchers have investigated various aspects of reading interest. Nafisah et al. [13] and Khairudin et al. [14] found similar findings that students have relatively low interests in reading English materials. It is because of their limitations in accessing their favorite books. Akmal et al [5] investigated students' interest in reading journal articles. They found that most students read journal articles for preparing assignments. Their favorite reading materials are website articles and social media captions, followed by non-fiction readings and newspapers. Noortyani [12] and Rachman [4] found that the students' reading interest was at medium level with several positive reading behaviors, students have an interest in reading because their parents require them to read English on a regular basis, having a hobby in listening lyric songs and English movies increase vocabularies and that they take notes and recollect English difficult words then find out the that means. Reading activity has given positive influence on students' vocabulary growth, reading comprehension, self-quality development, and reading interest. While Andayani & Maryam [7] revealed that 40% of people like to spend their leisure time on reading activities, and some people do not get a conducive environment that contributes to the growth and development of reading habits.

Considering the importance of reading, this study aims to investigate EFL students' interest in reading English texts. Specifically, this article addresses the reasons behind the selection of a reading English text, what students read in their leisure time, their habits of reading, and their opinions about the book they read.

## 2. Literature Review

The process of distilling information from print and visual evidence is known as reading activity. It is a strenuous activity that requires extensive practice and a variety of abilities. In other words, it refers to the manner in which a reader comprehends the text. Comprehending implies that readers understand the goal of reading, the context, and the meaning of the text, as well as the information contained inside [15]. Reading is regarded as a key goal that students should strive for in order to be successful in school and in life in the EFL context. [16]. While Wallace [17] mentioned that reading has become a big part of the public's daily life especially now that literacy is given emphasis

In understanding the text, everybody may read for many purposes, and that purpose helps them better understand what they are reading. Lado [18] explains that if individuals are reading for pleasure or enjoyment, they may read quickly or slowly, depending on their preferences or feelings. However, whether they are reading for academic purposes or obtaining information such as news or assignments, they do so slowly and attentively. This shows that interesting reading will encourage students' awareness of reading based on its purpose. According to Anderson [19], there are seven purposes of reading; reading for details and facts, reading for main ideas, reading for the sequence of organization, reading for inference, reading for classifying, reading for evaluating, and reading for comparing.

EFL students who read regularly will understand English better than those who do not. They improve not only their English reading skills, but also their knowledge and general English skills. EFL students will not be able to demonstrate progress unless they devote a significant amount of time to reading [14]; [7]. This is in line with Putro & Lee [20] noted that students who enjoy reading will gain new insights and develop their intelligence, allowing them to deal with future challenges. It emphasizes the significance of reading in individual development, which leads to social influences. This will happen, however, if students have a strong interest to learn and it comes from within.

Interest in reading is developed by reading activity. In academic fields, effective or good reading interest enable students to quickly grasp the meaning of a reading context and respond to questions without difficulty. Reading interest is important in enhancing students' success in school and life out of it and it also plays a very important role in reading instruction and improvement [14]; [13]. Reading interest is defined as the extent to which an individual feels excited to engage in reading written materials and delighted to find new information [11]. Edgier [21] explains that interest is a significant psychological aspect in learning. Additionally, an individual's reading interests are a significant element

in determining what he or she reads and it influences their significance for one's attitudes toward reading. As Schiefele [22] stated learners' interest is believed to be their preference for doing one job or activity over another, as evidenced by their accrued attention and emotional engagement.

In addition to reading interest factors, Alexander [23] explains two factors influence the success of the reading process. There are both internal and external factors. Internal factors are those that come from within the individual, such as interest and motivation. External factors are those that exist in the surrounding environment, such as schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Experts contend that interest is a reliable predictor of student learning success. Related to previous study of factors influence students' interest is Akanda et al. [24] found lack of interesting reading materials is as the most dominant factor of lower interest in reading. While Issa et al. [3] revealed that conducive environment as the most dominant interference factor of reading. Donal [10] found some factors influencing students' reading interest are motivation and good environment. Hanah et al. [25] exposed that students' reading habits and interests remain poor. Although they have strong willingness to read, students typically do not read English outside of class during a pandemic. Instead, they tend to read books they like rather than academic ones.

Regarding the essential of reading, it is crucial for students to establish the interest in reading, in order to gain access to all the knowledge in this world. For EFL student's level, the college student can obtain knowledge quickly and easily by reading. Thus, reading should be the main activity of the academic community.

### 3. Method

This study applied quantitative descriptive method. It aims to expound students' interest and the factors influenced that. The participant of this study were four semester which consist of 34 undergraduate students of Teacher Training and Education Faculty in one University of Kendari, it was taken from total sampling. The instrument used questionnaire to explore students' interest designed based on the theories of reading interest. The questionnaire consisted of 29 items which had five options using Likert-Scale. Data analysis was done using the descriptive statistics to determine the most frequent phenomena of the students' interest in reading English textbook.

## 4. Finding and discussion

Finding of this study is presented to expound students' interest in reading English text. The result of questionnaire is divided into three point. The first explores students' respond of effort in reading English text, Students' motivation in reading and students' assumption in reading.

### a. Students' reading effort

TABLE 1: Students' reading effort

No	Questionnaire	Percentage
1.	I read English text more than my classmates do	60
2	I can learn a lot from English books	87
3	I read only if I have to	62
4	Reading English text makes me tired	70
5	I often visit the library and borrow English books	76
6	I don't like reading English book when the words are too difficult	87
7	I usually read English book only if my parents or friend remind me	71
8	If English book is interesting, I can read even a longer one	86
9	I like hard and challenging books	65
10	I like to read something (English text) before I go to bed	76
11	I read even if nobody reminds me to do it	75
12	I understand (English text) what I read	76
	TOTAL	74

Table 1 shows students' responses related to effort in reading English text. As 64% of the total percentage of students' reading effort becomes one factor in students' interest in reading English text, it is categorized as high level. The main factors which determine the students' effort are that the majority of students can learn a lot from the text using English, with 87%, and that 87% of students do not like reading English text with difficult words. It means that they want to read more because, by reading, they can get a lot of information, even though they have difficulties reading English text. Other factor, they can also read books longer if they get an interesting book.

### b. Students' motivation in reading

The table above shows students' motivation for reading as a factor in building students' interest in reading by percentage is 79%. It is revealed that the students'

TABLE 2: Students' motivation in reading

No	Questionnaire	Percentage
1.	I usually learn difficult things by reading English text	74
2	I would like to read English text better	86
3	I like to read another English books that are not on the school reading list too	82
4	I read to learn new information about topic that interest me	87
5	I enjoy reading English text about people in different countries	72
6	I like to read in English about new things	85
7	I read about my hobbies and learn more about them	83
8	I am glad if the teacher praises my reading	85
9	I like to talk about what I am reading to my classmates/friends	84
10	I am one of the best readers in my class	51
TOTAL		79

motivation for reading can be categorized at a "high" level. Getting information from an interesting topic is the biggest factor influencing students' motivation to read, with 87%. Besides that, students also like to learn English better (86%), and being motivated to read new things in English (85%) are also factors affecting students' motivation in reading.

c. Students' assumption in reading

TABLE 3: Students' assumption in reading

No	Questionnaire	Percentage
1.	I enjoy reading English text	86
2	I feel Happy if someone gives me a English book for a present	85
3	English books are Interesting	85
4	I think reading English text is hard	65
5	I enjoy my self while reading English text	79
6	Some English books are too hard for me to read and I don't understand them	62
7	If one reads English text a lot, she/he will be better students	87
TOTAL		78

The table above shows that 78% of students' assumptions become factors in influencing students' interest in reading. They think that by reading English texts a lot, they will become better students. It can be seen from the result of the questionnaire that 87% of students admitted that. Other factors include the fact that most students (85%)

enjoy reading English texts and are pleased when they receive an English book as a gift (85%). They also consider that reading English books is interesting (85%).

Based on the finding of questionnaire above it is found that students' interest in reading is influenced by some factors such as students' effort, students' motivation and students' assumption. Student's interests in reading is dominantly affected by students' motivation. It is deal with the students' interview result that the students tend to read English text because they have target and purpose in developing their self in learning English language.

*"I enjoy discovering new facts and knowledge about subjects that interest me. It makes me curious. Despite the fact that the reference is in English, it encourages me to continue reading." (S1)*

*"Reading allows me to gain knowledge and learn new things; I can start by reading what interests me the most. Reading English literature is a challenge for me, but it inspires me." (S20)*

*"My hobby is reading, and I often enjoy my time reading. Reading English text is not a very difficult thing. Reading English texts frequently will increase our ability to learn the language, especially in understanding and reading texts" (S13)*

*"I often read in the library only when there is an assignment from the lecturer. However, I often read books in English from the internet. I really enjoy reading and I am used to reading English books because they increase my knowledge of learning English" (S6)*

From students' responds it can be concluded that most of students have good level of interest in reading, especially reading English text. In this case, students' have own motivation to improve and build knowledge of language.

This study have revealed some factors affect students' reading interest compared with the previous study. Dakhi [26] found that reading curiosity is the highest field of students' motivation in reading. Students who do reading activities tend to want to get written information and the meaning of each word in the English text. The students also have the tendency to be motivated to read the reading that interest them. This finding is similar to a study conducted by Andayani & Maryam [7] most of people prefer read the text from online source with the interesting topic of reading. While Al-Nafisah [13] found that students have a tendency to read based on their interests. While Dewi et al. [2] noted that there are some factors that affect students' reading interest, the more students read, the easier they comprehend the meaning of what they read both

explicitly and implicitly. Students' comprehension of reading is determined by the high and low of their reading interests. It means that students' need to make an effort and motivation to build their comprehension of reading.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, the study found that students' reading interest can be categorized as high level. Students' interest is influenced by some factors; students' effort in reading, students' motivation and students' assumption about reading. Students' motivation dominantly affected students' interest in reading. The curiosity of new information of interesting topic becomes the main reason of students' tendency in reading. The high students' interest in reading the highest of students' level of reading comprehension. Considering an importance of reading, it is crucial to prepare an interesting reading text and an interesting teaching reading method in order to encourage students' interest in reading.

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