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What If Learners Are Not Involved in Reading? Reading Ability and Reading Motivation of EFL Learners

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During reading instruction, sustaining learners' reading motivation (RM) may be a challenge but a requisite when the goal is to keep learners reading. In the context of the present study, it was examined as to how RM may be sustained in a reading course. For this purpose, information on learners' RM was collected in a semester-long university reading course with 118 Korean learners of English at the pre- and post-instructional stages of reading. RM was assessed with *Motivations for Reading Questionnaire* before and after reading instruction. Results indicated that *reading involvement* had decreased for all learners whereas the less skilled learners demonstrated an increase of *reading efficacy* and a drop in *reading for grades.* A linear multiple regression further indicated that *reading efficacy* was a significant predictor of reading proficiency only for the skilled learners. Implications are presented on how reading needs to be conducted by allowing learners to choose their own materials, which in turn may have an effect on developing more robust forms of RM.

Key words: reading motivation, English reading proficiency, reading efficacy, reading involvement, reading for grades

1. INTRODUCTION

While second language (L2) reading is an essential language skill in learning a foreign language (Grabe & Stoller, 2002), the extent to which learners are able to sustain reading

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motivation during a reading course is open to question, particularly when the course is mandatory for the learners. Reading motivation is important for it can help learners to read in larger amounts, and subsequently develop reading ability. As such, an impetus for the study was to observe if academic reading instruction can have an effect on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' motivation in a reading course and contribute to reading ability. Being able to motivate learners to read in an EFL situation may be more critical since the learning of the language is often restricted to classroom contexts.

Motivation has been recognized as an important predictor of learning in L2 contexts (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 1988; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991), but a need has been recognized to study reading motivation as a domain-specific construct (Wigfield, 1997). That is, students may be motivated to read, but not to speak or listen. Most of the work on conceptualizing reading motivation has been conducted in first language (L1) reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1995, 1997), but research on L2 reading motivation has not been conducted at the same level. As such, the studies on L2 reading motivation (RM) are still in their infancy for demonstrating how it can be considered a dynamic construct when L2 reading instruction can transform the motivational characteristic of L2 learners. For instance, as to how L2 university learners' motivational profile may develop over a semester with possible improvements of L2 reading proficiency has not drawn sufficient attention. Also, studies lack report on how learners' L2 proficiency prior to reading instruction may affect learners' transformation of RM.

Previous studies on RM (Kim, 2011; Komiyama, 2013; Mori, 2002) have been able to characterize the factors that constitute RM, or have examined the relationship between RM and L2 reading behaviors (Mori, 2004; Takase, 2007). However, the studies mainly take a static view of RM so that an account of how reading instruction may contribute to changes in RM over a period of time and how this change may have a relationship to reading proficiency is still left to be examined. As such, the aims of the present study were: (a) to seek the subscales underlying L2 RM for Korean EFL learners, (b) to examine how L2 learners' RM and its subscales may develop over a semester, and (c) to observe how RM and its subscales can contribute to reading proficiency over a semester.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. What Constitutes L2 Reading Motivation?

The impact of motivation on L2 learners' reading development cannot be emphasized more since without it, learners are unlikely to read continuously at their own will. While a noticeable amount of research on motivation has been researched for general language

learning, relatively little attention has been given to the concept of L2 RM and its relationship to L2 reading ability. More specifically, a restricted number of studies have explored the nature of the motivation to read in EFL, and this is not an exception with Korean university learners.

Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined RM as "the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading" (p. 405). RM has been noted as a significant factor that affects the amount and breadth of students' reading, which as a result is expected to facilitate the development of reading competence (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). By using motivational theories as references, Wigfield and Guthrie (1995, 1997) conceptualized RM and developed the *Motivation for Reading Questionnaire* (MRQ). Wigfield and Guthrie (1995) classified L1 RM into 11 sub-components: Two of them were related to self-efficacy: *reading efficacy* and *reading challenge*. Intrinsic motivation was represented by *reading curiosity*, *reading involvement, importance of reading*, and *work avoidance*. Extrinsic motivation consisted of three sub-scales: *competition in reading*, *recognition for reading*, and *reading for grades*. Social motivation was associated with *social reasons for reading* and *reading compliance*.

According to Wigfield and Guthrie (1995), *reading efficacy* is associated with the belief that one can be successful at reading, while *reading challenge* refers to satisfaction of mastering or assimilating complex ideas in text. *Reading curiosity* is related to the desire to learn about particular topics of interest to the learner, and *reading involvement* is associated with experiencing the pleasure of different kinds of literary or informational texts. Another aspect is related to what learners say they do not like about reading, referred to as *reading work avoidance*. In comparison, *competition in reading* refers to the desire to outperform others in reading. As such, the construct of RM is multifaceted (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) and research of the construct would provide views to the different constellation of RM subscales that may emerge for different learner populations.

While research in L2 RM is still in its developmental stage, there have been a number of studies to research the underlying constructs of RM (Kim, 2011; Komiyama, 2013; Mori, 2002). Mori (2002) examined the underlying factors of foreign language RM with Japanese university learners of English. She found, however, that Wigfield and Guthrie's (1995) MRQ, a 11-factor solution for motivation was not applicable for explaining her students' RM and proposed a revised version of the MRQ by identifying four sub-components of L2 reading motivation, that is, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, importance of reading, and reading efficacy. Kim (2011) identified underlying factors that may motivate language learners to read in an EFL context with 259 Korean EFL college learners. By finding that a four-factor solution was most valid for explaining L2 RM, Kim found utility value of L2 reading and learning goal-oriented motivation to be the two primary indicators for the participants' desire to read in English. Komiyama (2013)

produced a five-factor structure, one intrinsically-oriented factor and four extrinsically-oriented factors. Of the five factors, intrinsic motivation was found to play the largest role in characterizing L2 reading motivation.

2.2. Learner Variables and L2 Reading Motivation

More studies are now becoming available on L2 RM and its relationship to other reading variables, but there is still a lack in the number of studies conducted primarily with interest in L2 RM. The few studies indicate that specific types of L2 RM — characterized as intrinsically oriented — are positively associated with L2 reading behaviors (Mori, 2004; Takase, 2007). Mori (2004) found students' study habits to be a significant predictor of reading amount. Takase (2007) found students' intrinsic motivation for L1 reading and L2 reading to be the most influential factors for RM among 219 female high school students who participated in an extensive reading program. On the other hand, Takase (2007) was unable to find positive correlations between motivation and students' reading comprehension. Working with school-age bilingual readers in Hong Kong, Lin, Wong and McBride-Chang (2012) found that intrinsic motivation was *not* able to predict students' L2 text comprehension, while extrinsic motivation did.

The overall results of existing research on L2 RM are rather mixed, and this calls for more research in the area for how L2 RM and the underlying constructs of it may influence L2 reading comprehension during a reading course. Also, the design of the studies, which provide mainly a stagnant view of RM (as if motivational profiles cannot be transformed), often describe EFL learners' exhibition of RM only at one point during their experience of learning. This, however, may leave a patchy view of EFL learner's motivational profile, and leave the impression that motivation is non-modifiable. Matsumoto, Nakayama and Hiromori's (2013) study may be an exception when they took interest in the development of individual difference profiles for motivation, strategy use and reading proficiency into account. Further research on the sub-constructs of RM, and developments of RM in relation to reading ability would be helpful in understanding the socio-educational aspects of L2 reading. For that purpose, the following research questions guided the current study:

1. What are the factors that characterize L2 reading motivation of Korean EFL university learners?
2. Can any changes be observed in L2 university learners' RM between pre-reading and post-reading instruction stages in a semester-long course, that is, for skilled and less skilled learners?
3. How did the RM subscales contribute to the development of reading proficiency at the pre-reading instruction and post-reading instruction stages, for skilled and less skilled

learners?

3. METHODS

3.1. Participants

The participants were 118 Korean EFL university freshmen learners enrolled in an obligatory reading English course (i.e., Freshman English 1) that lasted 16 weeks. The researchers had access to intact classes, but the learners could be classified as Group A (*N* = 48) and Group B (*N* = 70) according to the university's placement exams. Group A could be classified as the most advanced of the two groups while those in Group B were low-intermediate learners of English. The participants were from the departments of Natural Sciences (*N* = 35, 29.7%), Business (*N* = 28, 23.7%), Art and Humanities (*N* = 14, 11.9%), Education (*N* = 14, 11.9%), Buddhist Culture (*N* = 10, 8.5%), Social Sciences (*N* = 9, 7.6%), and Elective Majors (*N* = 8, 6.8%).

Comparison of the learners' previous achievement on a national standardized test validated that they were of two different proficiency groups. While the Korean College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) is regarded the most reliable standardized exam within the context where the study was conducted, the stanine levels of the CSAT indicated that Groups A and B were of different English proficiency (Group A: Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.35; Group B: Mean = 4.73, *SD* = 1.14; t = -5.785; p < .001). Stanine levels can range from 1 to 9, where higher stanine levels indicate declining proficiency. From the differences, it was found viable to label Group A as the 'skilled learners' and Group B as the 'less skilled learners.'

3.2. Context and Teaching of *Freshman English*

Students met for three hours each week for the course, and the same instructor was in charge of teaching both the skilled and the less skilled learner groups in the fall semester of 2017. The purpose of the course was to provide students with opportunities to read on a variety of academic topics in order to improve reading skills. An internal goal of the course at the university was also to help learners be able to improve their reading skills since all the students were aiming to prepare for the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). As such, learning aims for both the skilled and the less skilled learners were in improving their reading skills. However, since the less skilled learners had not reached a proficiency level to be able to study for TOEIC instantly, their use of material was more focused on practicing general reading comprehension skills.

For the skilled learners, in order to improve learners' immediate TOEIC reading scores, there was utilization of TOEIC materials that came in the form of practice booklets for solving reading comprehension items. For the particular type of learners, the instructor's main role was to help learners resolve difficulties in comprehending the reading passages. For the less skilled learners, the material used for instruction was *Skills for Success: Reading and Writing,* which consisted of reading passages with comprehension check questions. In the process, the learners were drawn to focus on vocabulary, grammar and reading strategies.

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. Motivations for reading questionnaire (MRQ)

Questionnaire for the study was adopted from Mori's (2002) *Nine Hypothesized Motivational Components* (30 items) and Wigfield and Guthrie's (1995, 1997) *Motivation for Reading Questionnaire* (MRQ) and modified for the target learners of the study. While the questionnaire was developed in the learners' L1, learners were asked to rate all items on a five-point Likert scale from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'). The questionnaire items were translated back to English to see if they reflected the intended meaning of the original items.

The internal reliabilities of the RM scales with Cronbach's alphas were as follows for pre-reading instruction: Reading Efficacy (.872), Importance of L2 Reading (.868), Reading Involvement (.813), Importance of L2 Reading (.666), Reading Curiosity (.723), and Reading for Grades (.799). The Cronbach's alphas for post-reading instruction were also acceptable: Reading Efficacy (.853), Importance of L2 Reading (.872), Reading Involvement (.821), Importance of L2 Reading (.797), Reading Curiosity (.758), and Reading for Grades (.684). The questionnaire items are later presented in the results.

3.3.2. Background questionnaire

Learners were asked information on their background, such as their age, gender, and majors. The learners were also asked to report their recent achievement scores, that is, their stanine levels on the English section of the previous Korean CSAT that the learners had taken to enter university. This was to ascertain their general proficiency. Asking learners to self-report on their achievement levels was valid since Caprara et al. (2008) have shown that self-reported grades are consistent with recorded school grades.

3.3.3. Reading proficiency test

Groups A and B were tested twice during the semester on their L2 reading proficiency for pre-reading and post-reading instruction. Different types of tests were used with each group due to their dissimilar L2 proficiencies. Group A (i.e., skilled learners) was tested on two versions of mock TOEIC (Total = 990 points) at both times. With interest in L2 reading (Total = 495 points), only the reading comprehension scores of TOEIC were selected for later statistical analysis. In a similar way, for Group B (i.e., less skill learners), two versions of a test developed in-house by faculty members in the university's English teaching program was administered at pre-reading and post-reading instruction stages. Similarly to the test used for Group A, the test comprised of multiple-choice questions to assess the learners' knowledge of grammar, linguistic errors, and reading comprehension (Total = 40 points; No. of Items = 40). The pre- and post-tests for both groups had been validated previously to ensure that they did not differ significantly in terms of difficulty. That is, when two separate groups of students, similar to the learner population in the present study were tested respectively for the pre- and post-tests, a statistical difference was not found.

3.4. Procedure

The learners' responses to the questionnaires were elicited in the first and last week of the semester since our interest was to measure any changes in the learners' motivational profile between pre-reading and post-reading instruction. In the questionnaire, learners were directed to read each statement and mark the number that applied to them. For MRQ, the learners were asked to think about their reasons for L2 reading. On each occasion, 30 minutes was considered sufficient for the learners to complete the questionnaires.

3.5. Data Analysis

The questionnaire data was analyzed with SPSS 21.0. For RM, descriptive statistics (i.e., means and SD) were computed for the learners' responses to the MRQ items, respectively for the pre-reading instruction (pre-RI) and post-reading instruction (post-RI) stages. Any negatively stated statements were reverse coded for analysis.

Regarding research question one, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the MRQ items since RM factors identified previously by Mori (2002) was not found to be applicable in identical ways to Korean L2 university learners. The extracted factors and their mean values of the subscales obtained for pre-RI were also used for post-RI (reported later in 'Results'). Also, Cronbach's alphas were calculated to check the internal

consistency reliabilities for the subscales of RM.

Before conducting analysis for research question two, the subscales of RM for pre-RI and post-RI were respectively submitted for repeated-measures one-way ANOVA to seek if the subscales were different from one another. For the main comparison, the mean of RM subscales was further submitted for paired t-tests to seek any differences of RM between pre-RI and post-RI. In the final analysis, linear multiple regression was conducted to identify significant RM predictors of L2 reading proficiency.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Subscales of Reading Motivation

To determine the underlying constructs of RM for EFL learners, principal axis factoring analysis with an oblique rotation (Promax) was conducted on the results of post-RI, since this held greater implications for explaining the learners' resultant RM. The number of factors to be extracted was based on eigenvalues of 1.0 or greater, the scree test, and the interpretability of the resulting solutions (Preacher & MacCallum 2003). Three items (6, 15, 23) were excluded from the analysis due to low communalities and this left 27 items with a six-factor solution. This accounted for 60.05% of the total variance in RM. The results of the six-factor solution with means and standard deviations for each item are summarized in Table 1.

The factors were identified based on the RM labels classified by Mori (2002) and Kim (2011), but a different configuration of items emerged for the L2 learners. The six subscales of RM were: *Reading Efficacy* (6 items), *Importance of L2 Reading* (6), *Reading Involvement* (7), *Importance of L2 Reading* (4), *Reading Curiosity* (2), and *Reading for Grades* (2). Table 1 indicates the loading of each item for pre-RI and post-RI. Based on the classification by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995, 1997), *reading efficacy* could be regarded as constituting self-efficacy; *importance of L2 reading* and *reading for grades* were regarded as subcomponents of extrinsic motivation; and *reading involvement, importance of L2 reading,* and *reading curiosity* were related to the conceptualization of intrinsic motivation.

The reading subscales indicated that reading motivation was multidimensional for explaining the reading motivational profiles of Korean L2 university learners of English. When Mori's (2002) RM conceptualization of Japanese university learners of English were compared, most of the loading for the items corresponded in similar ways, which however, needed to be renamed due to the characteristic of Korean L2 university learners. Nevertheless, the overall construct of the subscales was in accordance with Wigfield and Guthrie's (1995, 1997) framework of RM.

TABLE 1

Six-Factor Solution for L2 Reading Motivation

		Loading	Pre-Reading Instruction		Post-Reading Instruction	
			M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Factor 1 ***Reading Efficacy***						
8	Long and difficult English passages put me off.	.870	2.56	0.95	2.75	1.039
11	I am good at reading in English.	.725	0.90	2.58	0.92	.854
13	I liked reading classes at junior and senior high schools.	.467	2.67	1.09	2.72	1.003
17	English reading is my weak subject.	.794	2.73	1.06	2.92	1.018
21	My grades for English reading classes at junior and senior high schools were not very good.	.754	2.98	1.10	3.08	1.001
30	It is a pain to read in English.	.406	3.53	1.07	3.58	1.008
Factor 2 ***Importance of L2 Reading***						
18	Learning to read in English is important because it will be conducive to my general education.	.449	3.58	0.74	3.51	.748
19	By learning to read in English, I hope to learn about various opinions in the world.	.429	3.53	0.94	3.52	.894
24	Learning to read in English is important because it will broaden my view.	.807	3.69	0.80	3.71	.717
25	By learning to read in English, I hope to search information on the Internet.	.618	3.75	0.91	3.65	.789
26	Reading in English is important because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.	.735	3.73	0.77	3.69	.745
27	It is a waste of time to learn to read in English.	.564	4.22	0.68	4.07	.688
Factor 3 ***Reading Involvement***						
10	I would like to get a job that uses what I studied in English reading class.	.460	2.80	1.01	2.75	1.006
12	I like reading English novels.	.510	2.41	1.00	2.45	.966
16	I like reading English newspapers and/or magazines.	.592	2.66	0.94	2.65	.946
20	I think learning to read in English learning is more important than learning to speak and/or listening in English.	.869	2.54	0.83	2.47	.781
22	I enjoy the challenge of difficult English passages.	.588	2.40	0.94	2.47	.931
28	I would not voluntarily read in English unless it is required as homework or assignment.	.481	3.27	1.03	3.05	.950
29	I tend to get deeply engaged when I read in English.	.412	2.96	0.95	3.00	.887
Factor 4 ***Extrinsic Utility Value of L2 Reading***						
1	By learning to read in English, I hope I will be able to read English novels.	.748	3.74	0.98	3.60	.898

2	I get immersed in interesting stories even if they are written in English.	.608	3.40	0.96	3.30	1.007
3	Learning to read in English is important in that we need to cope with internationalization.	.624	3.86	0.81	3.92	.823
4	I am learning to read in English because I might study abroad in the future.	.457	3.27	1.08	3.42	1.049
Factor 5 *Reading Curiosity*						
5	By being able to read in English, I hope to understand more deeply about lifestyles and cultures of English-speaking countries (such as America and England).	.760	3.52	1.02	3.52	.976
14	By learning to read in English, I hope to be able to read English newspapers and/or magazines.	.642	3.66	0.97	3.51	.976
Factor 6 *Reading for Grades*						
7	I am learning to read in English merely because I would like to get good grades.	.486	3.25	0.88	3.29	.925
9	I am taking a reading class merely because it is a required subject.	.804	3.33	0.88	3.32	.942

Factor 1 was named *reading efficacy* since most of the items (11, 13, 17, 21) had been used to measure the construct in Mori's scale of RM. When reverse coded, items that had previously been used to measure *reading avoidance* (8, 30) indicated that they could be used to explain *reading efficacy*. The items for Factor 2 indicated that a majority of the items were related to considering reading as an important skill for education and broadening views of the world. As such, Factor 2 was labeled *importance of L2 reading.* Factor 3 was labeled *reading involvement* since the statements indicated the extent to which learners could be interested in reading English materials, even those that may be above their current level. The statements for Factor 4 suggested that the learners were reading in order to reach utilitarian goals (internalization, study abroad, read novels). As such, the subscale was titled *extrinsic utility value of L2 reading.*

Factor 5 was labeled *reading curiosity* since the statements revealed the learners' aspiration to learn more about the English speakers' culture and lifestyles through reading in L2. Factor 6 was labeled *reading for grades* since the statements configured exactly in the same way they had loaded in Mori's scale. How learners are concerned about obtaining high grades may be a common characteristic shared by both the Japanese and Korean learners, who share similar socio-educational backgrounds.

The items (10, 19, 20, 25) indicative of *integrative motivation* (i.e., attitudes towards the target group, interest in foreign language) were intermingled with other subscales of motivation. As such, this may indicate that integrative orientation is not a distinct construct for explaining motivation to read in a foreign language. This may be due to the fact that the present study was carried out in an EFL setting where there is limited contact with the

native speaker community.

4.2. Dynamics of Reading Motivation

Before examining any differences of RM subscales (see Table 2 for the means and SD of each subscale) between pre-RI and post-RI, repeated measures one-way ANOVA with post-hoc tests was conducted to seek if the RM subscales were significantly different from one another respectively for pre-RI and post-RI. There were significant differences for pre-RI RM subscales, F (3.421, 400.310) = 40.020, p < .0001, where *importance of L2 reading* was endorsed most strongly by the learners with *reading efficacy* indicating the lowest mean. Analysis for post-RI indicated significant differences between the subscales of RM, F (3.975, 465.076) = 58.867, p < .0001, where again the learners' reasons for L2 reading was most strongly endorsed by *importance of L2 reading*, with *reading involvement* scoring the lowest of the RM subscales (M = 2.69).

TABLE 2

Descriptive Summary for L2 Reading Motivation

	Pre-Reading Instruction		Post-Reading Instruction		t	*Sig.*	Cohen's D
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Reading Efficacy (6)	2.84	0.81	2.95	0.75	-2.517	.013*	0.23
Importance of L2 Reading (6)	3.78	0.62	3.69	0.60	1.912	.058	0.18
Reading Involvement (7)	3.21	0.75	2.69	0.64	8.180	.000**	0.75
Extrinsic Utility Value of L2 Reading (4)	3.57	0.68	3.56	0.75	.140	.889	0.01
Reading Curiosity (2)	3.44	0.90	3.51	0.88	-.985	.327	0.09
Reading for Grades (2)	3.57	0.54	3.31	0.81	2.802	.006**	0.26

Note. ( ) indicate No. of items; *p < .05, **p<.01

As for differences between pre-RI and post-RI, there was no difference for *importance of L2 reading* between pre-RI and post-RI (p = .058), as seen in Table 2. However, valid differences were noted for *reading efficacy* (p < .05), *reading involvement* (p < .01), and *reading for grades* (p < .01). The mean rose for *reading efficacy* whereas *reading involvement* and *reading for grades* evidenced drop of mean values. However, analysis by proficiency groups provided a more detailed view of the differences. As seen in Table 3, *reading involvement* dropped for both the skilled and less skilled learners (p < .01) with indications of large effect sizes (0.66 – .90). For the less skilled learners only, *reading efficacy* increased (p < .05) and *reading for grades* dropped (p < .01). However, effect sizes for *reading efficacy* (0.27) and *reading for grades* (0.37) indicated changes to be small.

TABLE 3

Difference of RM for the Skilled and Less Skilled Learners

		Pre-Reading Instruction		Post-Reading Instruction		t	*Sig.*	Cohen's D
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Skilled Learners (*N* = 48)	Reading Efficacy	3.12	0.92	3.21	0.78	-1.247	.219	0.18
	Importance of L2 Reading	3.98	0.56	3.85	0.48	1.688	.098	0.24
	Reading Involvement	3.44	0.74	2.87	0.68	6.222	.000**	0.90
	Extrinsic Utility Value of L2 Reading	3.74	0.74	3.74	0.64	-.059	.953	0.01
	Reading Curiosity	3.61	0.88	3.70	0.78	-.843	.404	0.12
	Reading for Grades	3.57	0.57	3.44	0.88	.831	.410	0.12
Less Skilled Learners (*N* = 70)	Reading Efficacy	2.65	0.67	2.78	0.68	-2.237	.029*	0.27
	Importance of L2 Reading	3.64	0.62	3.58	0.65	1.030	.307	0.12
	Reading Involvement	3.05	0.72	2.57	0.59	5.556	.000**	0.66
	Extrinsic Utility Value of L2 Reading	3.45	0.62	3.43	0.79	.218	.828	0.03
	Reading Curiosity	3.32	0.90	3.39	0.92	-.609	.544	0.07
	Reading for Grades	3.57	0.52	3.21	0.76	3.101	.003**	0.37

Note. *p < .05, **p <.01

As a whole, the results indicated that the learners' endorsement for *importance of L2 reading* was strong throughout the semester since it seemed that the learners were aware about the positive consequence of excelling on L2 reading and improving their TOEIC scores. The results are different from how Takase (2007) found his high school students to be influenced by intrinsic motivation for L2 reading. The difference in results can be attributed to how the students in the current study are university students, who are more interested in achieving L2 reading to broaden their views and become a more knowledgeable person. The university learners seemed to know, to a large extent, that English is a way to broaden their views of the world and a pathway to increasing chances for future success. It may not be surprising to find that *importance of L2 reading* is a relatively stronger type of motivation for the type of learners since English has been the subject of test-taking and an indicator of academic success during most of the learners'

lives.

The drop in mean for *reading involvement* that transpired for both proficiency groups indicated that the reading course had not necessarily helped the learners form positive sentiments towards reading in English. This may have been due to a contextual factor where the L2 learners had to read academic texts pre-selected by the university program. Another speculation that can be made is that the content of the texts may have not been as illuminating as the learners had predicted at the beginning of the semester. However, this is an area to be validated in future research. For the skilled learners, the situation may have been exacerbated by their need to focus on TOEIC. The results are in line with how Bamford and Day (1998) first explained that the formulation of RM will critically depend on four factors, that is, reading materials, ability, attitudes, and classroom environment. Their claim is that appropriate reading materials and attitudes play a more crucial role in motivating students than reading ability and classroom situations. The results also provide a reason for how reading programs that give more freedom to students to choose their own reading materials via voluntary or extensive reading programs may need to be introduced. Through the process, learners will be able to choose what they are interested in reading according to their own preferences, and develop language skills at their own speed (Hitosugi & Day, 2004).

A noteworthy finding, however, is that *reading efficacy* that had scored the lowest in the pre-RI stage for the 'less skilled learners' in effect improved after the learners had taken the course ($p < .05$). This was the first reading course of the kind in which the freshmen learners could be free from the pressures of the college entrance exam (i.e., Korean CSAT) and this factor may have contributed to their elevated sense of success towards L2 reading. The course would have helped the L2 students to move away from a studial decoding habit of words that is often associated with the reading process of test-taking. However, the results need to be interpreted with caution since the difference of *reading efficacy* between pre-RI and post-RI was only a decimal difference.

Another positive outcome of the course is that the 'less skilled learners' in particular also became less cognizant of the pressures they would feel towards being assessed on their L2 reading performance. This was demonstrated in the significant difference in *reading for grades* ($p < .01$) between pre-RI and post-RI, which however, was not the case for the skilled learners ($p = .410$). As discovered from the less skilled learners, this was due to how the learners' goal for studying English had not been restricted to obtaining a passing grade for the course but also in achieving other long-term goals, such as to become an exchange student, to study abroad, and to improve their speaking skills. Nevertheless, *reading for grades* that was above mid-point (3.00) throughout the course suggests that the semester-long reading instruction and the learners' experience thereof had been insufficient to extensively transform their motivational profile.

How *reading for grades* did not drop for the 'skilled learners' can be explained by the fact that the materials they were using, that is the TOEIC practice materials, would have raised tensions about the need to do well in the class. In the same vein, comments need to be made regarding the *reading efficacy* of the 'skilled learners.' *Reading efficacy* did not increase for the skilled learners, probably due to the explicit aim of the reading class, that is, to study for TOEIC. The learners did not seem to have gained a sense of self-belief in their competence to successfully accomplish L2 reading. The learners, although the more skilled of the two groups, would need opportunities to experience mastery of L2 reading through more pleasurable reading materials so that "reading is caught, not taught" (Nuttall, 1996, p. 229). Although practitioners in the EFL context may be skeptical towards the idea of conducting extensive reading, due to reasons such as administrative constraints (time limits and curricular goals), lack of budget to purchase graded readers, and teachers' reluctance towards implementing new methodologies, extensive reading develops a positive attitude toward reading so often missed in second language reading classrooms. While there are established practical guidelines for conducting extensive reading (Day, 2002), a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available so that learners can choose what they want to read. Also, reading material that is not difficult is needed such that at least 98% of the words are known by the learners for unassisted understanding (Hu & Nation, 2000).

4.3. L2 Learners' Reading Motivation Subscales as Predictors of Reading Proficiency

Before submitting the RM subscales for a regression analysis, reading scores obtained for pre-RI and post-RI were submitted for analysis to seek if the learners had improved their reading ability over the semester. Significant differences were found between pre-RI and post-RI reading scores for both the skilled (pre-RI: Mean = 214.79, *SD* = 90.42; post-RI: Mean = 282.29, SD = 90.37; t = -8.233, *df* = 46, $p < .001$) and less skilled learners (pre-RI: Mean = 20.96, *SD* = 5.78; post-RI: Mean = 24.96, SD = 6.24; t = -8.467, *df* = 69, $p < .001$). The results suggested that reading instruction had contributed to improving the learners' reading ability.

To examine the contribution of RM to reading proficiency, linear multiple regression was conducted respectively for pre-RI and post-RI stages. For each stage, reading scores collected respectively at the pre-RI and post-RI stages were entered as the dependent variables. Since the learners were from the cohort of two different proficiency groups, the analysis was conducted separately for the skilled and less skilled learners.

Regarding pre-RI, a significant regression equation was found for the skilled learners ($F(6, 46) = 4.707$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .414$), but not for the less skilled learners ($F(6, 69) = .839$,

p = .545, R^2 = .074). The pre-RI model for the skilled learners indicated that RM can approximately account for 41% of the variance in L2 reading ability. For post-RI, a significant regression model again appeared only for the skilled learners (F(6, 47) = 3.281, p < .05, R^2 = .324), but not for the less skilled learners (F(6, 69) = 2.094, p = .066, R^2 = .166). The post-RI model for the skilled learners indicated that RM can approximately account for 32% of the variance in L2 reading ability. The results of the regression analysis are presented for the skilled learners at both stages of instruction, as in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Reading Motivation Predicting Reading Comprehension for the Skilled Learners

	Pre-Reading Instruction				Post-Reading Instruction			
	B	β	t	*Sig.*	B	β	t	*Sig.*
Reading Efficacy	57.397	.579	3.431	.001*	66.969	.580	2.905	.006**
Importance of L2 Reading	-26.419	-.166	-.832	.410	-32.251	-.173	-1.077	.288
Reading Involvement	1.894	.015	.085	.933	-34.352	-.260	-1.353	.184
Extrinsic Utility Value of L2 Reading	61.034	.502	1.913	.063	10.544	.075	.400	.691
Reading Curiosity	-22.052	-.216	-1.001	.323	20.140	.173	.999	.324
Reading for Grades	46.688	.296	2.085	.044*	6.173	.060	.385	.702

Note. *p < .05, **p<.01

For the skilled learners, pre-RI β and t values indicated that *reading efficacy* had contributed to their reading proficiency (p < .01). *Reading efficacy* still remained to be significant in the post-RI stage (p < .01). According to B, while one increased level on *reading efficacy* was expected to bring an increase of 57.397 points on the reading test (Total = 495 points) in the pre-RI stage, post-RI *reading efficacy* indicated increased proficiency in reading scores (66.969).

The results of the regression analysis suggested that the reading course had contributed to elevating the skilled learners' *reading efficacy.* It seems that the learners' state of feeling confident about their ability to read in L2 had driven them to continue reading. This is in line with how individuals who are able to make positive evaluations of themselves will be able to organize their course of learning more efficiently (Bandura, 1993, 1997). Another constructive change noticed among the skilled learners is that students who had been

reading L2 to obtain grades at the beginning of the semester ($p < .05$) were no longer driven by the same type of motivation ($p = .702$). As the reading course progressed, the learners may have been able to establish a more positive stance towards L2 reading. This may be associated with the fact that English was no longer the subject that they needed to prepare for college entrance exams. However, some subscales of RM that were not significant among the skilled learners may indicate that the learners need to be exposed to larger amounts of reading over an extended period of time for robust types of RM (e.g., reading curiosity, reading involvement) to develop within them. This is an area open to further research. Our results compare to the results of Kim's (2011) study, which indicated that learners with higher intrinsic motivation and low in avoidance were more likely to be proficient L2 readers. The results of Kim's study imply for our study that teachers should encourage learners to be engaged in L2 reading activities and approach reading tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as obstacles to be avoided.

The non-significant regression models for the 'less skilled learners' warrant an explanation. Although previous analysis on RM subscales of the 'less skilled learners' had indicated differences in RM between pre-RI and post-RI, particularly for *reading efficacy*, *reading involvement* and *reading for grades*, none of the subscales seemed to be contributing to reading proficiency. This may be a situation in which the less skilled learners' RM orientations are still in their developmental stages so that the transformation may have not been reflected in the post-RI tests. Another explanation for the 'less skilled learners' is that there may be a threshold level of reading proficiency that the learners have to reach for RM (e.g., *reading efficacy*) to take effect and improve reading proficiency. In the vocabulary literature, there is evidence to support that learners need to reach a *threshold* (i.e., 3,000 vocabulary level) for other academic abilities to evolve (Coady & Huckin, 1997). A similar kind of mechanism may apply for explaining RM and reading ability. That is, there may be learners who are feeling "high" about themselves towards L2 reading, but this may be operationalized only when the learners are able to reach a threshold reading level. For fluent reading, these type of learners will need ongoing assistance to work on reading skills such as by improving automatic processing for lower-level skills (vocabulary, grammar). Nonetheless, the increased level of *reading efficacy* that we evidenced for the less skilled learners during the semester is possibly an indication that the reading course for the freshman learners gave them an encouraging start to their L2 reading experience.

Further findings triangulated results for the less skilled learners. The learners in the post-RI evaluation of the course reported on how the variety of materials, such as extra reading material prepared by the researcher-teacher and the use of multimedia (e.g., video clips) had helped them to take interest in the course. To motivate students, Komiyama (2009) has pointed out how materials will have an impact on students' motivation to read. Research

also shows that students become motivated when they have some choices (of texts and tasks), read texts (print and digital) of topical interest, experience reading success, work within a supportive group of peers, and understand the purpose(s) for the reading-skills development activities that teachers incorporate into instruction (Newton *et al*., 2018). Another solution would be to provide audio-assisted repeated reading of graded readers, which can be best conducted in extensive reading programs. There is evidence to support that reading fluency and comprehension will tend to improve through repeated readings of the same text (Chang & Millett, 2013; Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008) where the presence of aural versions of a text may help learners to process text in chunks, rather than through word-for-word reading, and improve comprehension.

5. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

In EFL contexts, the most amount of time may be spent to conduct reading in comparison to the other language skills of English. However, the type of motivation that drives learners to read in L2 has not been sufficiently researched to explain why learners read or do not read. While observing that RM is a domain-specific construct, the subscales that constitute RM were examined for Korean EFL university learners. The study also treated RM as a dynamic construct by observing any changes in the learners' RM at pre-RI and post-RI stages of learning. The contribution of RM was also researched to provide implications for L2 reading pedagogy.

The findings of the present study were: First, the subscales of RM indicated that EFL university learners will tend to have motivational orientations which value the importance of L2 reading. This is due to the socio-educational context that learners are placed in which values English more for functional and vocational purposes. Second, the reading course was found to bring changes in the motivational profile of learners proving that RM is a dynamic construct. In particular, the *reading efficacy* of the 'less skilled learners' improved while the learners became less concerned about grades. Nonetheless, *reading involvement* that dropped for all learners indicated that there is need to develop the more intrinsically-oriented types of motivation (i.e., *reading involvement, reading curiosity*) for the learners' sustained reading and continued development of reading proficiency. This raises a continuing challenge for teachers in how to effectively provide sufficient support for EFL students who will find few reasons to read outside the classroom. Third, the linear regression model that was significant only for the 'skilled learners' revealed that *reading efficacy* had developed along with reading ability, pointing out that it is important for learners to be able to believe in their competence to read. The non-significant regression models for the 'less skilled learners', although evidencing relative improvement of reading

ability over the semester, indicated that there may be other variables affecting the learners' reading comprehension. For instance, learners' ability to make use of metacognitive and cognitive reading strategies (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2008) that are accessible to conscious awareness, may be the more influential factors for learners' reading comprehension to solve the lower level learners' problems.

A potential limitation, as demonstrated by the results of the study is that the researchers' interpretation of the quantitative results will need to be further corroborated by qualitative methodologies, such as by use of narrative studies or in-depth interviews with a group of target learners. Also, follow-up studies in the future need to be conducted by taking a person-oriented approach (e.g., cluster analysis) to examine the constellation of learners' motivational, strategic and linguistic variables that may be subject to change through instruction and by proficiency levels, ultimately to help L2 learners to read.

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