

## An Analysis of Students' Motivation in Reading Digital English Textbook at Saiburi Islam Wittaya School in Southern Thailand

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### ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to identify students' motivation to read English textbooks. In addition, the study also investigated why they had lower motivation in reading English. To explore the research objectives, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants. The participants in this study were four female students from different grade levels. Data collection was carried out through observation and interviews. The findings showed that there were three factors that influenced students' motivation in reading English digital textbooks. These factors included internal (intrinsic) factors—students were not interested and became easily fatigued when reading digital books; external (controlled motivation) factors—students began reading only when instructed by the teacher or accompanied by peers; and amotivation—students preferred using printed textbooks over digital formats. These three factors significantly influenced students' motivation in engaging with digital English textbooks. In conclusion, students demonstrated low levels of motivation when interacting with digital English textbooks, both during formal learning activities and in informal settings during their free time.

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### INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the subjects which is examined in final examination in English study. As we know that “the more we read, the more we know” Vos in Dryden, G. et al (1999). Through this statement, we realize how important reading in increasing our mind and perspective. Thai students do not only have lackluster reading comprehension skills resulting from ineffective teaching processes but also lack motivation to read digital English text book. This is mainly



due to the fact that the teaching process used in class does not encourage students to read. As a result, students may become disinterested, find it difficult to understand the text in English, and stop reading altogether. Some of students have 'certain qualities' that others do not have. It can be assumed that main contribute on this is their perception on motivation and attitude towards learning English or reading in English. Conversely, many researchers are of the opinion that skills and motivation go hand in hand. The more effectively the teaching process is applied, the more intrinsic motivation and sophisticated literacy skills the students gain (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).

Nowadays, it is very easy for students and teachers to access various digital books online. This way is also one of the conveniences when learning. However, there are still many students who lack the motivation to realize that. They still feel lazy to learn let alone read English lessons even through digital textbooks. For some students in Thailand, learning English is not very important because they have no desire to pursue higher studies outside of their country. According to Chon Maitree in Cho & Teo, (2014), considering Thai students, the participants in this study, National Reading Statistics informed Thai students read only eight lines per year.

From the data, Thai students in Pattani province, southern part of Thailand have lack motivation in reading English. Students feel bored while reading which affects their reading motivation. Students in Thailand are motivated to read, but sometimes there are some of them who are reluctant to read. From some observations made by researchers, students sometimes do not concentrate on reading. When their teachers ask them to open digital books on their mobile phones or tablets and read, some of the students do not pay attention, do not immediately do the work, and some immediately open the digital books given by their teachers. The area of this study is particular in Pattani province, southern part of Thailand.

Therefore, the Thai English teachers need to provide various teaching methods in order to make students interested in learning English reading comprehension. The purpose of this research was to know the students' motivation in reading digital English textbook. The reason why this research was conducted to find out what the aspect which influences students' motivation in English reading and the reason behind it. So the researcher will conduct a study with the title "An Analysis of Students' Motivation in Reading Digital English Textbook at Saiburi Islam Wittaya School in Southern Thailand"

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Reading is defined as the act of taking in the sense or meaning of written symbols, typically through sight or touch. It is a fundamental skill that enables individuals to access information, enjoy literature, and communicate effectively. Reading is a skill about understanding written text. Reading is often defined in

simple statements much like the following: “Reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print” (Urquhart & Weir, 1998: 22), or, “Comprehension occurs when the reader extracts and integrates various information from the text and combines it with what is already known” (Koda, 2005: 4). Reading is important because it can help students to increase their fluency in other skills such as speaking, listening and writing. But they have difficulty in reading because they cannot understand what they read, and comprehension is an important stage to understand everything. According to Sharon (2007), Understanding or understanding the communication between writers and readers is the main purpose of reading. If students cannot understand what they read, the purpose of reading is not fulfilled.

Motivation is one of the most important things in the learning process. Without motivation, it is difficult to achieve the purpose of learning. If learners have it in the learning process, they will have more understanding with the materials, especially English. Motivational theorists often divide motivation into three components: expectancy, value, and affect (e.g., Pintrich, 1989). According to (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000) state that reading motivation refers to an individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading. Therefore, motivation for reading as a personal interest, values and beliefs of the subjects, methods and results of reading are individual. According to Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2000), instructional processes and contexts surround engagement processes and reading outcomes. They include learning and knowledge goals, real-world interactions, autonomy support, interesting texts, strategy instruction. There are three factors that influence students' motivation in reading English, namely internal (intrinsic) factor, external (extrinsic) factors and amotivation factor (Komiyama & McMorris Alessandra, 2017).

Digital textbook or sometimes called as interactive textbook refers to the electronic version of paper textbook which can be opened on a computer, laptop, mobile phone or a tablet (Blazer, 2013). Some interactive textbooks are just the PDF version of paper book or usually known as e-book, in form of application which is developed by platform such as Smart Bok and Skills, and digital version of paper textbook which is completed with CD-ROM to install the digital textbook application (Blazer, 2013). It includes conventional features found in traditional texts, such as end-of-chapter summaries. Additional audio or video resources may be available to help readers apply their understanding of the material.

According to Bikowski, D., & Casal, J. E. (2018), digital textbooks are eBooks used for educational purposes in academia. Digital textbooks have been available since the 1990s, but their popularity surged in the 2010s and particularly the 2020s. They can be accessed through an educational technology platform or as a static PDF and are compatible with most laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

## **METHOD**

In this study, researcher used qualitative case study. Creswell (2013) defines a case study as a thorough exploration of a limited system (such as activities, events, processes, or individuals) based on extensive data collection. According to Patton (1990), case studies prove beneficial in generating profound understanding of specific individuals, issues, or situations in a comprehensive manner. Case studies involve selecting a very restricted number of individuals as study subjects (Orum, 2015) through in-depth investigation (Sokolovsky, 1996).

This research focused on how students' motivation in reading digital English textbooks. The researcher explored the behavior's, perceptions, experiences, and feelings of the students. The researcher collected information to analyzed the research questions and the researcher used frame of references for a better understanding of the study based on the interpretation of the participants' responses to the interviews. Finally, the researcher was able to obtain detailed phenomena and enable understanding through description and explanation as a result of this study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The findings of this study describe the aspects that influence students' motivation in reading English textbooks in students with different grade levels at Saiburi Islam Wittaya school. Data were collected through observation and interviews. The first and second research questions were answered with interview data. During the interview process, the researcher collected data from 4 Saiburi Islam Wittaya (SIW) students from two different classes or levels. The interview was conducted through google meet on Sunday, September 8, 2024.

#### **1. What is students' motivation in reading digital English Textbook at Saiburi Islam Wittaya School in Southern Thailand?**

Based on the results of the interviews conducted by the researcher, the first question has been answered. The answer is that the researcher found two factors that make students less motivated to read English language textbooks. These two factors include internal factors, external factors, and amotivation factors. Internal factors here refer to factors originating from within the students themselves, such as the lack of understanding in reading difficult English language textbooks, for some students, certain difficult English lessons also fall under internal factors, and verbs and vocabulary that tend to be difficult for them to learn and use make them tend to feel lazy to study or memorize them.

Then, there are external factors that exist outside the students themselves, or the influence of the surrounding environment. Here, external factors are focused on the influence of teachers, friends, or each student's parents. For example, a lack of support from the surrounding environment can also make

them less motivated to read English lessons or learn English itself. For the amotivation factor itself, it is the factor of the media they use and the teaching techniques employed by their teachers. The media here refers to digital textbooks, which are difficult for them to access and cause eye strain due to the need to look at screens continuously. For the teaching techniques used by their teachers tend to be somewhat monotonous even though they have already used advanced technological media, which makes students less enthusiastic and quickly bored.

## **2. Why do they have that motivation in reading digital English Textbook?**

From the in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher with several students of Saiburi Islam Wittaya, many of them lack motivation in reading digital English textbooks. Although times have become more advanced and technology is widely used now, for some, it remains quite inconvenient to rely on technology in the learning process. Most of them still prefer to learn using traditional methods, such as physical textbooks that they can touch. This reason also leads them to rarely read or study using digital textbooks. In addition, intrinsic influence contributes as the most important factor for the students themselves.

In addition, the influence of the students' surrounding environment, teachers and friends also has a significant impact on their learning process. Students tend to follow and pay attention to what their friends are doing. For example, when reading a book, they prefer to read together with their friends so that they can learn many new things together. By reading with their friends, students feel more enthusiastic and can understand what they read. Likewise, if they read what is taught by their teacher, then they will understand more easily than if they read alone. However, if they read alone, it makes them feel bored and lazy faster. As a result, many of them feel less motivated to read, they also tend to abandon their reading and not finish the reading, especially when it comes to reading English textbooks.

## **Discussion**

Based on the findings, it can be seen that the researchers found three factors that influence the motivation among students to read English digital textbooks. These three factors are internal factors (intrinsic), external factors (controlled motivation), and amotivation factors. These three factors greatly affect students' motivation to read in English. Motivating students is essential to fostering a passion for learning. This is the most important factor in determining learners' ability to communicate. According to Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) and Chen (2009) researched about students' motivation in reading English. In their research, they found that intrinsic motivation is the strongest factor that contributes to students' motivation in reading English. The influence of intrinsic factors includes lack of phonics skills, low interest in reading, lack of ambition to learn and acquire new knowledge, belief that reading is important, enjoyment in

experiencing new learning methods using several digital platforms, and lack of self-confidence.

The lack of knowledge of both vocabulary and vocabulary and sentence structure hinders students' reading success. Therefore, when reading in a second or foreign language, students need both vocabulary knowledge and linguistic knowledge (Day & Bamford, 1998). The same goes for the students at Saiburi Islam Wittaya (SIW) school; they find it difficult to understand their reading materials, they are confused about using the verbs they have learned, they tend to forget some of the vocabulary they have read, and they lack self-confidence. They are afraid of being laughed at, mocked by their classmates if they try to use English according to their ability. Because of that, they rarely go back to studying English reading except at school. Students avoid reading English texts in class because they are afraid of being judged and corrected. This fear of making mistakes is one of the main reasons for their lack of motivation.

External factors (controlled motivation) can be obtained from the surrounding environment of students, teachers, and friends at school. As mentioned by the researchers in their findings, the more their friends read, the more they will read as well. They tend to be more motivated and more enthusiastic in reading and learning English. The influence of friends and teachers plays a very important role in the reading and learning interests of the students themselves. Students prefer reading with friends, parents, or teachers rather than reading alone. Reading alone sometimes makes them not understand what they are reading, so they quickly get bored and end up being lazy to continue what they are reading and learning. Important factors for the quality of the student-teacher relationship are that the student trusts and respects the teacher and that there is good communication (Mihalas, et al., 2009).

Then there is the factor of amotivation, or what can be said to be the factor present in the media used during the learning process, such as digital English textbooks. Although many have already adopted technology in the learning process, one of which is digital textbooks, many students still find it difficult to access or use digital textbooks. The ready availability of digital media represents a significant challenge to the reading habits of many people. Conversely, the variety of extension activities offered by digital resources is more appealing to students than traditional homework assignments, facilitating the integration of theoretical concepts.

Based on this research, it was also found that the average student in southern Thailand is less motivated to read English digital textbooks. Besides having difficulty understanding reading, they also struggle to comprehend the English lessons they are studying. They also feel insecure when learning English. Students feel a crisis of confidence when they realize that their partner does not recognize their abilities. This often results in them choosing silence as a response rather than raising their concerns. This finding is also consistent with other studies of motivation in Thailand (Oranpattanachai, 2013; Hengsadeeikul et al,

2014), and implies that Thai students are more motivated by practical functions of English rather than the language itself (Dörnyei, 2001).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the data that the researcher conducted interviews with 4 SIW students with different grade levels, grade 11 and 12 SIW, the researcher concluded that the factors that make students less motivated in reading digital English textbooks are because students have 3 factors namely internal motivation, external motivation, and amotivation. Then, students tend to use printed English textbooks that they can easily use and scribble, rather than digital English textbooks which they think are sometimes difficult to access. Therefore they tend to feel tired and bored quickly to read using digital textbooks. The students only read English digital textbooks when assigned by the teacher or when their friends invite them to read the book. In other words, they follow what their environment says. The students do not have their own interest in reading English digital textbooks because for them it is boring and they are lazy to learn new things in English.

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