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The Effect of Syrian Secondary School Students' Reading Habits on Their Vocabulary Learning Motivations

Yakup Alan¹

¹ Kilis 7 Aralık University, Kilis, Turkey. ORCID: 0000-0002-9888-1357

Correspondence: Yakup Alan, Faculty of Education, Kilis 7 Aralık University, Kilis, Turkey.
E-mail: alanyakup@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal the effect of the reading habits of Syrian students studying at secondary schools on their vocabulary learning motivation. The mixed research model was used in the study. The universe of the study consists of Syrian secondary school students studying in Kilis. The sample consists of 164 Syrian secondary school students studying at Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Imam Hatip Secondary School. Research data were collected using the "Book Reading Habit Attitude Scale" and "Word Learning Motivation Scale." In addition, a semi-structured interview form was used to identify students' ways of learning vocabulary. In the analysis of quantitative data, SPSS was used and independent groups t-test, ANOVA and Pearson correlation analysis were used. Content analysis was used in the analysis of qualitative data. As a result, appeared that Syrian secondary school students had a moderate reading habit, gender did not have an effect on their attitudes towards reading habits and their motivation to learn vocabulary, but grade level was effective in both their attitudes towards book reading habits and their motivation to learn vocabulary. In addition, it was found that students mostly used audio-visual tools and reading materials while learning vocabulary.

Keywords: Syrian Student, Reading Habit, Motivation, Vocabulary Learning Motivation

1. Introduction

One of the prominent elements in the education and training process is the learner motivation. Motivation, which is defined as the desire or need (Seifert, 1991; Dilts, 1998), which activates, sustains and directs the individual at the point of achieving a goal; is very important in language learning as in all learning processes (Gardner, 2001a; 2001b). Considering that learning is an intentional process, it is possible to say that there is a important relation between motivation with learning (Niederhauser, 1997).

Motivation has various sources. These are internal motivation and external motivation. If the factors that cause the occurrence of behavior are outside of the individual and originate from the environment, it is external motivation, and if the factors that cause the behavior originate from the individual and the needs of the individual, it is internal motivation (Wu, 2003). The main difference that separates internal and external

motivations is related to the situations that cause the behavior. In internal motivation, the control is in the individual, while in the external motivation the control is in the environment (Yazıcı, 2009, p.37).

There are many theories that analyze motivation and explain and support the internal and external aspects of motivation. These generally emerged from fields such as sociology, psychology, and learning psychology (Çiftınar, 2011, p.176).

Behaviorists argue that motivation is an external process. According to them, the individual is constantly under the influence of external stimuli. For this reason, behaviorists claim to be motivated by external stimuli. It is possible to do this by getting students to have positive experiences and giving reinforcements. According to another theory, social learning, one of the main sources of motivation is the individual's expectations for the future. Apart from that, there are three basic elements that affect motivation. It is possible to list them as the value of the purpose, the expectation of the individual and the emotional response of the individual. According to the humanistic approach, the needs of the individual must be satisfied in order to be motivated (Ergür, 2002, p.38; Yazıcı, 2009, p.37).

Based on the theories above or as a result of their independent studies, scientists determined that there are various elements that affect motivation. According to Pintrich and De Groot (1990), these are the individual's expectation of reaching the aim, the worth of the aim and the individual's emotional approach to work; and these are, according to Chambers (1994), internal causes, instrumental causes and integrative causes.

Oxford and Shearin (1994) also stated that there are various factors that affect motivation. These can be listed as follows (Cited in Çiftınar, 2011, p.175):

- Attitudes (feelings towards environment and goal)
- Self-belief (individual's curiosity, expectations)
- Goals (relationship of goals with learning purpose)
- Participation (actively participating in the learning process)
- Support (support from the environment)
- Personal Variables (Ability, interest, age, gender and previous knowledge etc.)

When theories' approach to motivation, factors affecting motivation and sources of motivation are analyzed, it is revealed that motivation has a very major part in education. As in all fields of education, motivation is central in foreign language education along with language learning ability (Acat & Demiral, 2002, p. 314). Therefore, the effect of affective characteristics of students is a matter of concern (Erdem & Gözüküçük, 2013). Because it is observed that students who learn foreign languages and have high motivation have a high interest in learning. (Husain, 2014, p.10).

To learn a foreign language and communicate with people, it is necessary to know enough words and be able to use those words. Word learning is one of the purposes of foreign language acquisition studies. The richness of the vocabulary that students have enables them to understand what they read, to convey their thoughts and thus to express themselves easily (Karatay, 2007). Students who can express themselves easily also achieve success by establishing an effective communication in school life (Kurudayıoğlu, 2005). It is very important for students to choose and use the right words in order to express themselves and achieve success both in their education and social life (Çevik et al., 2018, p. 797). Therefore, one of the important activities that can be done with students who learn Turkish is vocabulary teaching. However, in order for vocabulary teaching to be efficient, students' motivation to learn vocabulary must be high.

According to Tseng and Schmitt (2008), motivation is of great importance in the success of students while learning vocabulary. For this reason, knowing the motivation of students towards vocabulary learning will enable the review and redesign of vocabulary teaching studies (Genç Ersoy & Belet Boyacı, 2018, p. 259). One of the element that influences students' motivation to learn words is reading books.

Reading books enables individuals to improve themselves and thus to use language effectively (Kurudayıoğlu & Çelik, 2013). However, the success of students in reading skill is related to their knowledge of the language and the presence of words in the language. The success of the students who learn Turkish and who study in Turkish schools both in their academic life and being able to use the language effectively is related to their success in reading skills. Success in this skill is closely related to the breadth of Turkish vocabulary. According to Özbay (2007), the more vocabulary foreign students have, the more their reading comprehension skills can improve. Reading skill is the most important factor in the development of vocabulary (Stahl, 1998).

1.1 Related Literature

When the literature is analyzed, it is seen that there are many studies on reading habits or vocabulary learning. Accordingly, there are studies that analyze students' attitudes towards reading habits or their views on reading habits (Alan, 2020; Arı & Okur, 2013; Balcı & Melanlıoğlu, 2016; Balcı, 2009; Biçer & Alan, 2017; Can, Deniz & Çeçen 2016; İşeri, 2010; Karatay, 2010; Maden & Dincel, 2017; Okur, Yardım & Yücelşen, 2020; Özer & Doğan, 2013; Uzun, Bozkurt & Erdoğan, 2011). There are also studies on students' motivation to learn vocabulary, word learning strategies and methods, and materials used in vocabulary teaching (Baş, 2010; Cesur, 2005; Çıplak, 2005; Çiftçi, 1991; Eyüp & Demirel Yıldırım, 2019; Güzel, 2006; İnce, 2007; İpekçi, 2005; Karadağ & Kurudayıoğlu, 2010; Maden, 2020; Özbay, Büyükkiz & Uyar, 2011; Uçgun, 2006; Yıldız & Okur, 2010). However, when studies on students' reading habits and vocabulary learning are analyzed, it is seen that these are mostly conducted with students whose native language is Turkish. It was seen that research with foreign students was conducted with university-age students. There is no study aimed at revealing neither the reading habits nor the motivation for word learning of foreign students at the secondary school level. For this reason, it is thought that the study will contribute to the literature in terms of revealing both the attitudes of Syrian secondary school students towards reading habits and their attitudes towards vocabulary learning motivation.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between the reading habits attitude and motivation to learn vocabulary of Syrian students studying at secondary schools. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is there a significant difference between Syrian students' gender and grade levels and their attitudes towards reading habits?
2. Is there a significant difference between Syrian students' gender and grade levels and their motivation to learn vocabulary?
3. Is there a relationship between Syrian students' attitudes towards reading habits and their motivation to learn vocabulary?
4. What are the views of Syrian secondary school students on ways of learning vocabulary?

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The mixed research method was used in this study, which was conducted to determine the motivation to learn words of Syrian students. In this method, the data of qualitative and quantitative research are combined and presented in a holistic way (Creswell, 2013, p.14). In the study, qualitative data and quantitative data were used together.

2.2 Participant

The universe of research comprises Syrian students studying in Kilis. The sample is composed of 164 Syrian students studying at Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Imam Hatip Secondary School. The appropriate sampling method was chosen for the ease of implementation while selecting the sample. According to Merriam (2013), this method can

be chosen by considering factors such as time, money, place and location. Information about the students in the research group is given in Table 1:

Table 1: Information about the students in the research group

		<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Boy	76	46.34
	Girl	88	53.65
	Total	164	100
Grade Level	5	47	28.65
	6	35	21.34
	7	43	26.21
	8	39	23.78
	Total	164	100

2.3 Data Collection

The Word Learning Motivation Scale improved by Genç Ersoy and Belet Boyacı (2018) was used in the study to determine Syrian secondary school students' motivation to learn vocabulary. This scale was prepared in a triple Likert type with 24 items after validity and reliability analysis were done by the researchers. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as .85 (Genç Ersoy & Belet Boyacı, 2018). In this study, it was determined as .82 by the researcher.

In order to determine the attitudes of Syrian secondary school students towards reading habits, the 30-item "Attitude Scale Regarding Reading Habits," improved by Gömleksiz (2004) and adapted to the level of secondary school students by Balcı (2009), was used. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined to be .92 (Balcı, 2009). In this study, it was determined as .90 by the researcher. Since both scales were over the specified limit (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), it was concluded that these scales were appropriate to be used in the study.

A semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher was used to collect the qualitative data of the research. During the preparation of the scale, two academicians who are experts in the field of Turkish education were consulted.

2.4 Data Analysis

The SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data. Negatively worded items in the scales were reversed. For the analysis, first of all, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to calculate the normality distribution of the data and it was observed that the data fit the normal distribution. Therefore, parametric tests were used. Then T-test, ANOVA and Pearson correlation analysis were used in the analysis of quantitative data.

Content analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis methods, was used in the data obtained from the students' opinions in the study. In content analysis, data that are similar to each other are brought together within the framework of certain concepts and themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In the study, the data obtained from the students' opinions were given in codes and direct quotations were made from the student views. Thus, the reliability of the data was ensured. In the study, in order to ensure coding reliability, an expert besides the researcher also analyzed 8 interview forms randomly selected from the sample. In order to calculate the reliability of the resulting data, the fit between the analysts was ensured. As a result of the calculation made using the Miles and Huberman (1994) formula, it was seen that the value of agreement among the analysts was .81. Since it is considered sufficient to be .70 and over (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the analysis made in the research is considered to be reliable.

3. Results

3.1 Quantitative Results

Table 2: Arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of attitude scores towards book reading habits

Dimensions	\bar{X}	ss
Love	2.75	.684
Habit	3.10	.767
Necessity	2.87	.738
Desire	3.21	.748
Benefit	3.33	.776
General	3.06	.647

Table shows the mean of the Syrian students' attitude scores towards their reading habits. Accordingly, the average of the "love" and "necessity" dimensions, which are the sub-factors of the scale of attitude towards book reading habits, is below the middle level; It is seen that the average of "habit," "desire" and "utility" dimensions is above the middle level. Based on these, it is understood that the general average is slightly above the middle level. According to these data, Syrian students' attitudes towards their reading habits are at a moderate level.

Table 3: Data obtained on the relationship between attitudes towards book reading habits and gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	ss	t	p
Boy	76	3.13	.68	1.289	.199
Girl	88	3.00	.61		

The t value ($t = 1.289$, $p > 0.05$) of the difference between the students' attitude scores towards reading habits according to the gender was not found to be significant. According to these results, the gender of the students does not have any discriminating impact on the attitudes of Syrian students towards reading habits.

Table 4: Variance analysis of students' attitudes towards reading habits according to grade variables

Grade	N	\bar{X}	SS	VK	KT	sd	KO	F	p	Difference
5	47	2.60	.346	BG	18.517	3	16.619	143.597	.000	8- 5,6,7
6	35	2.51	.300							
7	43	3.24	.375	WG	49.856	160	.116			
8	39	3.90	.324	T	68.372	163				

Syrians made by middle school students of class variables in order to determine whether the differences between attitudes towards reading habit in the one-way analysis of variance ($F = 143.597$, $P < 0.05$), a statistically significant difference was detected. As a result of the Scheffe test conducted to determine the source of this difference, the direction of the difference was found as 8th grade- 5th, 6th and 7th grade. According to these results; We can comment that Syrian students studying in the 8th grade have a more positive book reading attitude than the Syrian students studying in the 5th, 6th and 7th grades.

Table 5: Data obtained on the relationship between vocabulary learning motivation and gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	ss	t	p
Boy	76	1.79	.47	.257	.798
Girl	88	1.78	.38		

The t value ($t = .257$, $p > 0.05$) of the difference between the scores of students' motivation to learn vocabulary according to gender ($t = .257$, $p > 0.05$) was not found to be significant. This result shows that there is no

difference between students' scores of vocabularies learning motivation according to gender. According to the table, the arithmetic mean (= 1.79) of the boys' scores for vocabulary learning motivation is slightly higher than the girls (= 1.78). This did not reveal a significant difference.

Table 6: Variance analysis of students' attitudes towards vocabulary learning motivations according to the grade variable

Grade	N	\bar{X}	SS	VK	KT	sd	KO	F	p	Difference
5	47	1.46	.293	BG	8.175	3	7.092	138.813	.000	8- 5,6,7
6	35	1.41	.236							
7	43	2.03	.188	WG	21.276	160	.051			
8	39	2.26	.146	T	29.451	163				

A statistically significant difference was found in the one-way analysis of variance ($F = 138.813$ $p < 0.05$) conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the attitudes of Syrian secondary school students towards their motivation to learn vocabulary according to the grade variable. As a result of the Scheffe test conducted to determine the source of this difference, the direction of the difference was found as 8th grade- 5th, 6th and 7th grade. These results may allow us to comment that 8th grade Syrian students have a more positive motivation to learn vocabulary than students at other grade levels.

Table 7: The relationship between Syrian secondary school students' book reading habit score and vocabulary learning motivation score

	Book Reading Habit Score	Vocabulary Learning Motivations Score
Book Reading Habit Score	r	.774**
Vocabulary Learning Motivations Score	r	.774**

** $p < 0.05$

The correlation value between Syrian secondary school students' attitude scores towards reading habit and their vocabulary learning motivation score was .774, which was significant at $p < 0.05$ significance level. This result shows that there is a positive relationship between the book reading habit score and the vocabulary learning motivation score. As a result, as the reading habit increases, the motivation to learn words increases, too.

3.2 Qualitative Results

Table 8: Ways to Learn Vocabulary

Item	Frequency
Using audio-visual tools	16
Reading book	12
Communicating	10
Using dictionary	6
Studying lesson	4
Using the internet	3
Translating	1
Doing activity	1
Associating with previous knowledge	1

In the table, the answers to the question, "Which ways do you use to learn vocabulary?" are seen. Accordingly, it is seen that students mostly benefit from audio-visual tools such as television, radio, music, and computers. According to the students, watching movies, TV series and listening to music contribute to their vocabulary learning. Some of the student views are as follows:

I watch TV series and movies to learn words (S8).

We watch TV series and listen to songs to learn words (S14).

Learning from TV series and movies is very useful and fun (S27)

The second of the ways students use the most is to learn words by reading a book. Accordingly, 12 students stated that they were reading books to learn words. Some of the answers given are as follows:

I read a book to learn words (S2).

Reading books is very useful for learning new words. But it will not be a boring book (S13).

I try to read magazines and books (S24).

Contacting people is another way to learn words. 10 students stated that they learned words when they talked to their friends, neighbors or shopkeepers. Some views are as follows:

I talk to my neighbors (S4).

I communicate and learn easily (S10).

I learn words by talking to the people around me (S11).

I chat with my Turkish friends (S13).

Students also stated that using the dictionary is a good way to learn words. 6 students learn vocabulary by using a dictionary. One opinion is that:

I sometimes use a dictionary to learn words (S8)

There are students who learn vocabulary by repeating the topics they have learned or by doing research on the topics they will learn. Some of the answers given by the students about studying, which is one of the ways of learning vocabulary, are as follows:

I usually work in quiet places and memorize the words (S23).

If there are new words, I take notes (S14).

In general, I can memorize by writing and saying aloud several times (S23).

The internet, which includes many sources such as social media and news sites, is one of the vocabulary learning tools. 3 students use the internet to learn words. Some answers are:

I use Facebook (S5).

I learn words by doing research on the internet (S19).

I learn words using Google (S22).

Translating, doing activities and associating with prior knowledge is also a way of learning vocabulary. The responses of the students who agree with these views are as follows:

I try to translate short stories and news between Turkish and my native language (S24).

I learn words by doing activities (S20).

I try to connect with another word in my mind in order not to forget the words (S7).

4. Discussion

In this study, attitudes towards reading habits and motivation to learn vocabulary of Syrian students studying in secondary schools in Turkey were sought and the relationship between these was tried to be found.

When the attitude scores of Syrian secondary school students towards book reading habits were analyzed, it was found that the students had a reading attitude above the intermediate level. In the analysis made in the sub-dimensions of the scale, it was below the middle level in love and necessity dimensions; in the dimensions of habit, desire and benefit, it was found that they had a reading attitude around the middle level. In the article prepared by Maden and Dincel (2017), it was concluded that foreign students have the habit of reading Turkish

books. In addition, Arı and Okur (2013), Balcı (2009), Balcı, Uyar and Büyükkiz (2012), Başaran and Ateş (2009), Can, Deniz and Çeçen (2016), İşeri (2010) also found that students' reading habits were at good level. In addition, in the article prepared by Okur, Yardım and Yücelşen (2020), it was revealed that the reading attitudes of foreign students were inversely proportional to their grade level.

As a result of the analysis conducted to determine whether the students' reading habits differed according to gender and grade variables, it was revealed that the gender variable had no effect on reading habits. However, there was a significant difference between students' grade level and reading habits. Accordingly, 8th grade Syrian gender variable had no effect on reading habits students have a more positive attitude than other students. In line with the conclusion that gender variable does not have an effect on reading habits in the study, Akyol (2005) also states that gender is not a determining factor on book reading habits. However, in the article prepared by Biçer and Durukan (2014), it is seen that there is a significant difference in favor of girls regarding the reading attitude of elementary school students. In addition, in the studies conducted by Akkaya and Özdemir (2013), Alan (2020), Balcı (2009), Başaran and Ateş (2009), Biçer and Alan (2017), Can et al. (2016), Kuzu (2013), Özbay, Balcı and Uyar (2008), Sallabaş (2008) and Yalınkılıç (2007), it was found that gender had an effect on reading habits.

Both the acquisition of four basic language skills and the success of students in these skills are closely related to the vocabulary that students have (Karatay, 2004). Therefore, students' motivation to learn vocabulary is very effective for them to be successful in their education life. According to the analysis in research, conducted to reveal the vocabulary learning motivation of Syrian secondary school students, it was found that the students' motivation to learn vocabulary was below the middle level. In addition, in the analysis made to determine the effect of gender variable on vocabulary learning motivation, it was revealed that this variable did not have an effect vocabulary learning motivation. However, Maden (2020) revealed that Turkish students had high motivation to learn vocabulary and gender had an effect on their motivation to learn vocabulary.

In the analyzes made to reveal the effect of the classroom variable on vocabulary learning motivations, results in favor of 8th grade students were obtained. These data show that Syrian secondary school students in the 8th grade have a more positive motivation to learn vocabulary than Syrian secondary school students at other grade levels. In the article prepared by Fontecha and Gallego (2012), it was concluded that students studying in lower grades have lower motivation to learn vocabulary. However, in the research conducted by Maden (2020), it was found that the grade variable had no effect on motivation.

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between Syrian secondary school students' reading habits and their motivation to learn vocabulary, and it was understood that there was a positive relationship between them. This information shows that Syrian students' reading habits and their vocabulary learning motivations act in coordination with each other.

The results obtained from the qualitative part, which is the second dimension of our study, also show that; students mostly do vocabulary learning exercises through audio-visual tools. The variety of materials to be used at the point of serving the purpose will both facilitate and make learning permanent. For this reason, ways such as using audio-visual tools that are more oriented and within life, learning vocabulary by reading, learning vocabulary through communication, participating in activities, associating with prior knowledge are preferred more. Balcı and Melanlıoğlu (2016) also revealed in their studies that foreign students used TV series and movies, read books and talk to their friends in order to learn words.

As a result of the study, it was revealed that the reading habits of the students were above the medium level, but their motivation to learn words was below the medium level. In addition, students stated that they used different ways to learn words, but they learned more efficiently through activities, audio-visual tools and attention-grabbing activities. Both the other results of the study and the students' opinions and suggestions on these issues will guide vocabulary teaching studies in terms of revealing their interests, attitudes and needs.

As a result of the research, the followings can be suggested:

The study revealed that there is a positive relationship between Syrian middle school students' reading habits and their motivation to learn words. In this respect, the importance of reading books in increasing foreign students' motivation to learn vocabulary and improving their language skills should not be forgotten. The guidance should be provided to the students and they should be encouraged to read more books. The number of audio-visual materials that will enable students to learn words more easily should be increased. Studies should also be conducted on other factors that will affect foreign students' motivation to learn vocabulary.

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