

Use of Motivation for Improving ESL Learners Reading Comprehension Skills in Punjab

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Abstract: This study was designed to find out the use of motivation in improving ESL learners' reading comprehension skills in the District Attock, Punjab. A cross-sectional survey was used for collecting data from 300 secondary level students (comprising 120 males and 180 females) selected randomly. A self-developed questionnaire based on five-point Likert scale was designed for the data collection. Three experts validated the said questionnaire. The reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. As the alpha value was 0.765, the instrument was considered reliable. The data were collected personally by the researchers. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Frequency, percentage and mean scores were used to analyse the results. This study leads to the finding that the students were using various motivational techniques to improve their reading comprehension skills. It is concluded that developing motivation is crucial for enhancing reading comprehension skills among ESL learners in Punjab. The study recommends that the teachers may utilize games and fun activities in the classroom for improving reading techniques of ESL students.

Key Words: Motivation, Reading Comprehension Skills, Motivational Strategies, Punjab, English Language Acquisition, Students

Introduction

In Punjab, just like in many other places, motivation plays a huge role in how people learn languages. When students feel inspired, it really boosts their reading skills and overall language growth. But there are some challenges at play here. For one, there are not always enough skilled teachers around. Plus, students often do not get enough exposure to English materials, and let us not forget those pesky cultural barriers that can make things even trickier. Reading comprehension is super important for ESL students. It is not just about picking up a new language; it is also tied to their academic success and broader cognitive development. So, motivation is not just a nice-to-have—it is essential for navigating all these hurdles and really thriving in language learning (Ali, 2023).

ESL students in Punjab often struggle to find the motivation to improve their reading skills. Let us be honest—English can feel like a really tough language to tackle. Plus, sometimes the reading materials available just do not resonate with them. They might come across stuff that feels totally irrelevant or even boring, which does not help at all. And then there's the whole language barrier thing. It can really get in the way of these students understanding and teaching English effectively. It is like, if you can't connect with the language, how can you learn it? Now, on top of that, many schools and colleges in Punjab are short on resources and funding for English classes. This lack of support can leave ESL students hanging, without the help they really need to get by. Considering Punjab's historical context, it is no surprise that students learning English as a second language face extra hurdle. They might struggle with the local language too or find that social resources just do not align with their English skills (Ehsan & Sultana, 2020).

When it comes to helping Punjabi ESL, students enhance their reading comprehension, it is really all about tailoring those methods to fit their individual needs and learning styles. If we want to tackle the issues they face and really boost

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their language skills, we have got to dive deep into how motivation plays a role in developing their reading abilities. Understanding what drives them can open up so many opportunities for better learning outcomes. Plus, these insights can shape the way we create presentation skills and tools that truly resonate with Punjabi ESL students. By keeping their unique motivations and needs in mind, we can make a real difference in their educational journey (Malik et al., [2025](#)).

Motivation plays a huge role when it comes to boosting reading comprehension and picking up a new language. It is crucial to grasp how motivation influences the reading skills of Punjabi students learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Now, in Punjab, where English is often introduced as a second language, various factors can really sway a student's motivation. Students perceive the importance of English and its impact on their intellectual journeys, their personal feelings about learning a language, and their past experiences all come into play. Plus, let's not forget the classroom vibe, the materials being used, and the teaching methods. All these elements can shape how motivated students feel.

From above, the researchers believe that motivation has an impact on ESL students' comprehension and interaction with reading. In addition to finding important content and passing exams, motivated students may invest their energy in reading. On the other hand, unmotivated students will have trouble engaging in reading, making it difficult for them to understand and use the language. In terms of development, directing research and creativity has become the basis for the study of different methods and methods of persuasion. The use of interactive methods, the use of original and cultural materials, the use of technology, and supporting student autonomy are examples of this. These developments are designed to create a collaborative learning environment that supports and ultimately improves Second Language students' reading comprehension.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of motivation on ESL students' reading comprehension is an important area of research because it has behavioral and instructional mediating mechanisms to promote security in the speech and knowledge of non-native English speakers. This study looks at how motivation plays a role in English as a second language (ESL) students' growth in reading comprehension. For language learners, reading comprehension is crucial because it helps them comprehend and analyze written materials efficiently. However, a variety of issues, including language proficiency, social skills, lack of exposure to various circumstances, and comprehension of information, frequently make it difficult for ESL students to improve their reading comprehension skills. A deeper knowledge of these motivations is still required, even though more extensive research on the many forms of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and how they affect ESL students' capacity to enhance their reading comprehension skills is still needed. Hence, the researchers conducted this study to find out the use of motivation in improving ESL learners' reading comprehension skills in the District Attock, Punjab.

Research Objective

The objective of the study was to find out the use of motivation in improving ESL learners' reading comprehension skills in the District Attock, Punjab.

Literature Review

Learning English as a Second Language (ESL) can be tough, especially for beginners. One of the biggest hurdles is reading comprehension. In Punjab, where English is often a second or even third language, motivation plays a huge role in how well these learners can grasp reading skills. Hence, understanding how motivation affects reading comprehension in ESL students in Punjab is super important. It can really help teachers, policymakers, and program developers make better choices. So, this literature review is all about diving into the latest research on this topic. It aims to identify different factors and processes that can influence ESL learners' motivation and how that, in turn, impacts their reading skills. Reading comprehension is essential for ESL beginners because it helps them understand and make sense of the texts they encounter. Without that skill, they can really struggle to connect with the material (Farooq et al., [2012](#)).

Motivation is a crucial piece of the puzzle when it comes to enhancing reading comprehension, and just about every researcher and teacher agrees on that. Dörnyei ([2001](#)) pointed out that motivation is a pretty complex concept since it pulls from various models and theories. So, teachers can create a fun and relaxed atmosphere that helps boost their



students' reading skills. By mixing it up with different genres, they can really make the reading experience more engaging for the kids. Teachers are not just instructors; they are also role models and motivators. They should aim to set up a situation where students get to choose their own reading materials and spend more time immersed in those texts (Gambrell, [1996](#)).

Now, talking about ESL newcomers — motivation is key for them to develop strong reading comprehension skills. A study by Guthrie and Humenick ([2024](#)) found that students who were encouraged to learn English as a second language made significant strides in their reading abilities. Another study by Gulzar and Qadir ([2010](#)) looked into how different types of motivation impact these ESL learners. They discovered that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play a role in improving reading skills. Intrinsic motivation, like a genuine interest in what they are reading, seems to really foster deeper understanding and critical thinking.

In addition, we can't overlook the role of teacher motivation either. Research by Baker and Wigfield ([1999](#)) showed that enthusiastic and supportive teachers who provide meaningful feedback can make a big difference in how motivated students feel, which in turn boosts their reading comprehension. Overall, these studies highlight just how vital motivation is for helping ESL students in Punjab develop their reading skills. It's all about creating a positive environment, sparking curiosity, and supporting teachers so they can really help their students understand better.

Language Learning by Motivation

Motivation really plays a huge role in how well someone learns a language. There is this educational model by Gardner that talks about the two key components of language acquisition and motivation is at the top of the list as the biggest predictor of success in picking up a new language. Now, if we are looking at people in Punjab who might not have any background in ESL, there are tons of things that can boost their motivation. For instance, personal attitudes, cultural backgrounds, and even how they see the importance of English in education, work, and social situations. It is also crucial to grasp how these factors link up with behavioral support because that understanding is key to crafting teaching strategies that really connect with and help new ESL students in Punjab (Farooq et al., [2012](#)).

Motivation and Reading Comprehension

Motivation and reading comprehension — it is quite a complex mix, as it is a blend of language skills, thinking processes, and, of course, motivation itself. When learners feel encouraged, they are way more likely to dive into reading, tackle tough texts, and actively look for ways to boost their understanding. On the flip side, those who are not feeling it might just not want to put in the effort, which often leads to lower comprehension levels (Gambrell, [1996](#)). Ryan and Deci ([2000](#)) really shine a light on how crucial motivation is for developing reading skills. It is pretty clear that motivated students tend to engage more with reading materials, seek out meaning actively, and use effective strategies to understand what they're reading.

Ahmadi and Pourhosein ([2012](#)) also pointed out a strong link between motivation and how well ESL students grasp reading comprehension. They stressed that teachers need to keep motivational factors in mind when planning and delivering reading instruction. It makes sense, if students are motivated, they are likely to do better. A study by Safaie ([2020](#)) focuses specifically on how motivation can assist non-native English speakers in sharpening their reading skills. It turns out that a genuine interest in English literature and a desire for personal growth can really boost comprehension. Plus, researchers have noticed that when ESL students engage with culturally relevant reading materials and interactive activities, their understanding improves even more.

Critical Reading Skills and Vocabulary Size

Ahmed ([2019](#)) found that third-level ESL students lack basic comprehension skills, especially the ability to recognize the author's motivation and important ideas. There is also a positive relationship between students' reading comprehension and the amount of jargon. These findings support the importance of emphasizing comprehension and vocabulary development to improve ESL students' reading skills.

Motivational Strategies in ESL Instruction

When it comes to helping students boost their reading comprehension skills, there are quite a few effective strategies to consider. First off, creating a steady and supportive learning environment is key. We are talking about a place where students feel comfortable and engaged. It is also important to provide reading materials that are not only relevant but also interesting to them. Then there is the idea of mixing in some practical learning activities. These can really make a difference. Offering praise and encouragement goes a long way too. It is amazing how just a few words of affirmation can light a fire under a student. Plus, setting clear goals and expectations helps everyone stay on track. Incorporating material that has real-world significance can really help boost motivation. When students see how reading skills apply to their everyday lives, it just clicks. There is this study by Safaie (2020) that looked into the motivational hurdles ESL students face. The findings were pretty telling. Students who feel a sense of autonomy and confidence in their English skills tend to be more motivated. Furthermore, motivation often leads to stronger reading comprehension abilities.

Research Methodology

The research followed a quantitative research approach. It concentrated on reading comprehension mainly because reading is the important one of the four skills in English as a Second Language (ESL). The researchers selected three hundred (300) students of 9th & 10th grades from the District Attock, Punjab using simple random sampling technique. The researchers used a self-developed questionnaire about the role of motivation in improving ESL learners' reading comprehension skills in Punjab. The instrument was validated by three experts. The questionnaire was also pilot tested by collecting data from forty (40) randomly selected students from the population. Those students were not the part for final sample. The results were calculated applying frequency, percentages and mean values on each statement of the questionnaire through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Results

Table 1

Motivation Plays a Crucial Role in Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	27	15	54	129	75	3.7
Percentage		9	5	18	43	25	

Table 1 indicates that 68 % (25% SA+43% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I believe that motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing ESL learners' reading comprehension skills". Moreover, mean score = 3.7 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 2

Providing a Motivating Learning Environment

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	18	12	18	60	192	4.32
Percentage		6	4	6	20	64	

Table 2 indicates that 84% (64% SA+20% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I think that providing a motivating learning environment can considerably impact ESL learners' reading comprehension skills in Punjab". Moreover, mean score = 4.32 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 3

Culturally Relevant and Meaningful Reading Materials

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	9	18	60	81	132	4.03
Percentage		3	6	20	27	44	

Table 3 indicates that 71 % (44% SA+27% A) of students agreed with the statement, “I believe that incorporating culturally relevant and meaningful reading materials can enhance the motivation of ESL learners to improve their reading comprehension skills”. Moreover, mean score = 4.03 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 4

Use of Extrinsic Rewards and Recognition

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	0	12	60	123	105	4.07
Percentage		0	4	20	41	35	

Table 4 indicates that 76 % (35% SA+41% A) of students agreed with the statement, “I feel that extrinsic rewards and recognition can be effective in motivating ESL learners to engage in reading activities and improve their comprehension skills”. Moreover, mean score = 4.07 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 5

Use of Intrinsic Motivation

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	0	30	33	102	135	4.14
Percentage		0	10	11	34	45	

Table 5 indicates that 79 % (45% SA+34% A) of students agreed with the statement, “I believe that intrinsic motivation, such as personal interest and enjoyment in reading, is essential for ESL learners to develop their reading comprehension skills”. Moreover, mean score = 4.14 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 6

Role of Educators in Fostering Motivation for Reading

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	60	30	45	57	108	3.41
Percentage		20	10	15	19	36	

Table 6 indicates that 55 % (36% SA+19% A) of students agreed with the statement, “I think that educators play a significant role in fostering motivation for reading and enhancing ESL learners' reading comprehension skills in Punjab”. Moreover, mean score = 3.41 of students also show that they partially agreed with the statement.

Table 7

Motivation is a Key Factor in Addressing Challenges

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	45	24	51	135	45	3.37
Percentage		15	8	17	45	15	

Table 7 indicates that 60 % (15% SA+45% A) of students agreed with the statement, “I believe that ESL learners in Punjab face unique challenges in developing their reading comprehension skills, and motivation is a key factor in addressing these challenges.” Moreover, mean score = 3.37 of students also show that they partially agree with the statement.

Table 8

Practical Interventions Focused on Motivation and Reading Comprehension Skills

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	0	0	3	30	267	4.88
Percentage		0	0	1	10	89	

Table 8 indicates that 99 % (89% SA+10% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I feel that there is a need for more research and practical interventions focused on motivation and reading comprehension skills for ESL learners in Punjab.". Moreover, mean score = 4.88 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 9

Prioritizing Initiatives for Enhancing Motivation and Reading Comprehension Skills

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	21	33	75	138	33	3.43
Percentage		7	11	25	46	11	

Table 9 indicates that 57 % (11% SA+46% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I believe that policymakers should prioritize initiatives aimed at enhancing motivation and reading comprehension skills for ESL learners in Punjab's education system." Moreover, mean score = 3.43 of students also show that they partially agreed with the statement.

Table 10

Motivational Factors in Reading Instruction

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	0	6	30	156	108	4.22
Percentage		0	2	10	52	36	

Table 10 indicates that 88 % (36% SA+52% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I think that addressing motivational factors in reading instruction is essential for promoting the academic success of ESL learners in Punjab." Moreover, mean score = 4.22 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 11

Incorporating Technology and Multimedia Resources

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	81	45	90	63	21	2.66
Percentage		27	15	30	21	7	

Table 11 indicates that 32 % (27% SDA+15 A) of students disagreed with the statement, "I believe that incorporating technology and multimedia resources can positively impact the motivation of ESL learners to improve their reading comprehension skills." However, mean score = 2.66 of students show that they partially agreed with the statement.

Table 12

Peer collaboration and group activities

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	0	0	105	120	75	3.9
Percentage		0	0	35	40	25	

Table 12 indicates that 65 % (25% SA+40% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I think that peer collaboration and group activities can enhance the motivation of ESL learners in Punjab to engage in reading and improve their comprehension skills." Moreover, mean score = 3.9 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 13

Parental Involvement and Support

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	6	0	27	87	180	4.45
Percentage		2	0	9	29	60	

Table 13 indicates that 88 % (60% SA+29% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I believe that parental involvement and support can significantly influence the motivation of ESL learners to develop their reading comprehension skills." Moreover, mean score = 4.45 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 14

Use of Real-World Applications and Practical Reading Materials

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	0	0	15	90	195	4.6
Percentage		0	0	5	30	65	

Table 14 indicates that 95 % (65% SA+30% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I think that the use of real-world applications and practical reading materials can enhance the motivation of ESL learners in Punjab to improve their reading comprehension skills." Moreover, mean score = 4.6 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 15

Ongoing Assessment and Feedback

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	24	9	18	45	204	4.32
Percentage		8	3	6	15	68	

Table 15 indicates that 83 % (68% SA+15% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I feel that ongoing assessment and feedback can positively impact the motivation of ESL learners to continue working on their reading comprehension skills." Moreover, mean score = 4.32 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 16

Using Individualized and Differentiated Instructions

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	9	15	51	90	135	4.09
Percentage		3	5	17	30	45	

Table 16 indicates that 75 % (45% SA+30% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I believe that individualized and differentiated instruction can better address the motivational needs of ESL learners in developing their reading comprehension skills." Moreover, mean score = 3.93 and SD = 1.122 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 17

Promoting a Growth Mindset and Resilience

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	0	0	15	60	225	4.7
Percentage		0	0	5	20	75	

Table 17 indicates that 95 % (75% SA+20% A) of students agreed with the statement, "I think that promoting a growth mindset and resilience can positively impact the motivation of ESL learners to persist in improving their reading comprehension skills." Moreover, mean score = 4.7 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Table 18

Creating a Positive and Supportive Classroom Climate

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	45	21	60	150	24	3.29
Percentage		15	7	20	50	8	

Table 18 indicates that 58 % (8% SA+50% A) of students agreed with the statement, “I believe that creating a positive and supportive classroom climate can significantly impact the motivation of ESL learners to develop their reading comprehension skills in Punjab.” Moreover, mean score = 3.29 of students also show that they partially agreed with the statement.

Table 19

Supported and Encouraged by Other Teachers

Responses	N	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Mean
Frequency	300	0	0	0	30	270	4.9
Percentage		0	0	0	10	90	

Table 19 indicates that 100 % (90% SA+10% A) of students agreed with the statement, “You feel supported and encouraged by other teachers to improve your reading comprehension skills in English.” Moreover, mean score = 4.9 of students also show that they agreed with the statement.

Discussions and Conclusions

The results of the study clearly show that students believed that those who are more motivated tend to see a significant boost in their reading comprehension skills. Both intrinsic (internal drive) and extrinsic (like rewards or recognition) motivations seem to play a big part in how well students learn languages. And it is not just us saying this; it backs up what other research has found about motivation being key in developing reading skills (Ahmed, [2019](#); Dörnyei, [2001](#); Gambrell, [1996](#)).

To wrap it up, motivation is very important as it directly influences how well students develop their reading skills. The students believed that those with higher motivation levels perform better in the language learning, while those who lack motivation often find it hard to progress. So, motivation really does play a crucial role here.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the school administration really need to focus on motivating students if they want to help them boost their reading comprehension skills. This is very important for language teaching in Punjab. This research suggests that educators and policymakers may make motivation a top priority in ESL instruction because when students feel motivated, they can take charge of their own learning, engage more deeply, and feel recognized for their efforts. This could really help them become not just proficient readers but lifelong learners, which would ultimately improve language learning across Punjab.

Now, if the school administration wants motivation to make a real impact in the classroom, school administrators should really hone in on what gets their students excited. Students love all sorts of reading that is fun, interesting, and engaging—stuff that feeds their curiosity. Teachers need to tune into what their students are interested in and what they need. Also, spending more time on reading itself can make a big difference. Lastly, encouraging students to dive into digital resources like e-books and online reading apps could really spice things up.

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