

The Effects of Tests on Students' Attitudes and Motivation towards Extensive Reading

Jessica Sargent & Mastoor Al-Kaboody

Northern Arizona University

Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to examine the effects of five types of tests on students' attitudes and motivation towards extensive reading (ER). Participants consisted of 14 students enrolled at an Intensive English Program at a North American university. Five types of tests were used after each ER activity. After the students completed each test, a survey designed to measure their attitudes and motivation towards ER was given to them. Repeated measure ANOVA was used to analyze students' responses to the surveys. The findings of the study showed no significant differences between students' attitude and motivation towards the different five types of tests. The study concluded that the different types of tests did not affect students' attitude and motivation towards ER. The findings of this study can help inform the types of assessment to be used to evaluate ER.

Keywords: types of tests, extensive reading, attitudes, motivation

Background

A great bulk of literature has been reviewed on extensive reading (ER). Several of the research findings have reported on the positive effects of ER on reading comprehension, reading rate, vocabulary, writing, and general L2 proficiency (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Iwahori, 2008). ER can build reading motivation (Mason & Krashan, 1997), increased participation (Yang, 2001), and positive attitudes towards reading (Yamashita, 2004). Other studies have maintained that ER has positive effects on students' attitudes and motivation (Grabe, 2009). However, in contrast to the wealth of research on ER's effects on learners' attitudes and motivation, there is a surprising lack of methodical investigation into the ways in which ER might best be assessed. Thus, this study relates to previous studies as far as students attitudes and motivation towards ER with the exception that this study attempts to find out how the type of assessment used may effect students' attitudes and motivation toward ER.

Several researchers in the field of L2 reading argue that teachers' evaluation of extensive reading can influence students' L2 reading attitudes and motivation. Waring (1997) claims that testing implies to students that the purpose of ER is to prepare for a test. Krashan (2004) argues that students should read due to their desire to read and that there should be no book reports and no reflections at the end of the chapter. Further, Day and Bamford (1998) state that comprehension questions may hinder students' progress towards becoming independent, self-motivated readers. Many other researchers follow Krashan and maintain that there should be no assessment of extensive reading. Taking these research findings into account, this study attempts to delve more specifically into how five types of tests might possibly effect students' attitudes and motivation towards ER.

While a number of studies have examined the relationship between ER and affective gains, almost none have investigated the effects of the different types of ER assessment on students' attitudes and motivation. The current study fills this gap by investigating the effects of five types of evaluations tests on students' attitudes and motivation towards ER.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following two research questions:

- Do the five types of tests effect students' attitudes towards extensive reading?
- Do the five types of tests effect students' motivation towards extensive reading?

Methods

To answer the research questions, an intact class of level 5 students taking the Reading and Vocabulary class were selected to participate in this study. The students were given five different ER quizzes in a five-week period. After each ER activity, the participants were given a 10—item survey to complete. The survey had five items for attitude and 5 items for motivation. Students were asked to rate their responses to the statements in the survey on a scale from one to four, with one being least agree and 4 as mostly agree with the statement in each item. Thus, each student could get 40 point in each survey. After the participants completed all surveys, their responses were coded and then analyzed using SPSS program.

Results

Attitude

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Attitude Scores

Test	N	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Rate your book	14	11.29	3.31	11.11	14.17
2-minute-5-question quiz	14	12.21	2.94	11.24	13.76
Journal writing	14	11.79	1.97	10.90	14.25
Speaking activity	14	11.64	3.41	11.56	14.87
MReader	14	13.07	3.08	12.39	15.19

Repeated measures ANOVA was used to compare the effect of test on attitude. The test of Sphericity failed to reject the null hypothesis ($F_{OBS} = 1.49$, $P < .05$), so Greenhouse-Geisser F-value was used. The critical value of F ($F_{CRTL} = 6.26$) exceeded the observed value of F ($F_{OBS} = 1.49$). Thus, the results were not statistically significant, and the null hypothesis was failed to be rejected for the first research question.

Motivation

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Motivation Scores

Test	N	M	SD	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Rate your book	14	12.64	2.65	10.52	13.91
2-minute-5-question quiz	14	12.50	2.18	9.37	13.20
Journal writing	14	12.57	2.90	10.65	12.92
Speaking activity	14	13.21	2.86	9.67	13.61
MReader	14	13.79	2.42	11.30	14.85

The second research question also used a within-group design. Thus, repeated measure ANOVA was also used as the statistical procedure for this research question. The data showed that the Sphericity assumption was violated because the variance of the differences were not equal. Hence, the Greenhouse-Geisser was used as the statistical procedure for this research question. The results also showed that observed value of F was less than the critical value or the probability level (.05). Therefore, the investigators failed to reject the null hypothesis for the second research question ($F_{OBS} = 1.805$, $P < .05$).

Relevance to PIE

This research study is relevant to PIE and second language learning for many reasons. First, the five types of quizzes under investigation are commonly used in the PIE. Thus, having a knowledge that these kinds of quizzes have no effect on students' attitudes and motivation is helpful for PIE teachers who are using or want to use these quizzes. Second, the five kinds of tests can be used as external motivation for students to make sure that they did their assigned ER activity. The findings stated that these short tests did not affect students' attitude and motivation towards ER. Third, the descriptive statistics showed that students have more preference for the MReader quiz. This suggests that PIE teachers can use this test in their classrooms because more students preferred this quiz more than the others.

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