

Discovering External Motivation in EFL Students Toward Word Target and Reading Pleasure Using Xreading Application

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ABSTRACT

This study explores foreign language students' external motivation in extensive reading related to word targets and reading enjoyment. This research aims to find out how word targets become assessments that can motivate foreign language students to enjoy reading. Extensive reading is not related to assessments that require foreign language students to be motivated to read. This research is qualitative research. The participants in this research were students in the A-class students of the English language and literature education study program at a university in Surabaya, Indonesia. The data collected is in the form of interview data and student reading profiles recorded in the Xreading application. Xreading is an application that students use as a learning management system in their extensive reading process. Xreading can also provide a place for foreign language students to determine what they want to read according to their pleasure. The results of this research found that students used target words as their external motivation to enjoy reading. The findings in this research also suggest ongoing monitoring by lecturers so that foreign language students continue to be motivated and enjoy reading so that their reading progress continues to increase.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"I will get bored if I read many numbers of words in a book. Especially if there is no picture inside the book. But, if it is an assessment of word target, I will read as many words as possible according to the specified target" Ami-Class Literature A (pseudonym) stated during the interview about the word targets. The most interesting part of Ami's statements was her assumption that she would have to push and encourage herself in order to reach the word target. Ami's characteristic is commonly found in Indonesian students where students are interested and motivated in reading if the reading tasks bring rewards (public acknowledgement / recognition or grades) or help them outperform others (competition) (Pirih, 2019). Thus, despite being an internally motivated reader, as seen in her

enthusiasm and her belief that she was more interested in reading in English, the word count target served as her external reading motivation.

The word-target as a learning assessment, in fact, does not seem to align with the ten principles of extensive reading proposed by (Day & Bamford, 2002) emphasizing reading for pleasure, freedom of reading choice and reading as its own reward. However, the implementation of extensive reading needs to consider the context where it is used (Ro, 2018; Walker, 2020). As a result, giving reading credit as the primary component of a student's grade becomes crucial from an external perspective, especially in Asia where reading in foreign languages is difficult and voluntary reading is given less importance than other tasks (Lake, 2014; Milliner & Cote, 2014; Mori, 2015; Ramonda, 2020)

In order to understand motivation, learning, and self-regulation, this study employs the social-cognitive view, which examines students' experiences from this point of view (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2019). They also stated, motivation is the action of initiating and maintaining a goal that combines behavioral processes, personal processes, and environmental processes. Target words in foreign language reading are a form of goal that functions to help students determine an action (Paradita et al., 2023). Thus, word targets can be said to be one of the external motivations of foreign language students in helping them read independently and purposefully (Akbari, 2019).

Students who can determine and choose reading according to their own level of ability (Yamashita, 2008) will read faster and feel happier (Ro, 2018). Therefore, indirectly this is a form of external motivation that encourages EFL students to continue reading and complete their reading assignments (Indrayadi, 2021). EFL students usually find it difficult to read and understand the target language due to the limited vocabulary they know (Stoller, 2015). Therefore, many EFL students experience a decrease in their reading motivation and need encouragement (Mori, 2015) by setting word targets (Mikami, 2020; Robb, 2018).

The ability to read and understand L2 texts fluently can be improved by reading as many texts as possible (Waring & Mclean, 2015) by determining word targets based on the number of words. (Paradita et al., 2023) target 50,000 words within 2 semesters. (Walker, 2020) targets 570,000 within 4 months. (Mclean & Poulshock, 2018) targets 300,000 words per semester to help students become proficient in reading. In contrast to (Waring & Mclean, 2015; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020) targeting students to read weekly for a short period, so that students' ability to read more quickly increases and is achieved (Ekasari, 2021; Hidayah & Trisusana, 2021). Next, students will feel happier and more motivated to continue reading after the word targets is achieved (Mikami, 2020)

Recent research conducted by (Paradita et al., 2023) found that students having regular goals towards their word targets and regular teacher monitoring can motivate students to maintain their reading enjoyment and progress. In his research, researchers used the Xreading application as a student support learning management system to help students choose tests that suit their preferences and linguistic capacity. In line, (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023) found that students were motivated to read after 2 months of receiving extensive reading assignments, they even reported that extensive reading assignments helped increase students' happiness levels while reducing negative emotions related to fatigue, worry, and difficulty reading.

Extending their research, this research aims to find out how word targets become external motivation for students to enjoy reading and continue to improve the students' reading process. Based on reading choices, number of words, students' reading speed and in-depth interviews. It is said that the pleasure of reading is made possible through their extensive reading activities. Therefore, the research questions that want to be answered in this research are as follows:

- a. How can Xreading help students with their extensive reading practice?
- b. How do students feel pleasure which becomes a motivating force to continue reading?

2. METHODS

This research is a qualitative investigation using ethnographic research methods because it allows exploration of how education is analyzed and evaluated in relation to different multimodality combinations (Heath & Street, 2008). Ethnographic methods were used to assess students' reading skills when word targets were set and how students used the learning management system to make them enjoy reading even though their reading was targeted.

This research was conducted in the English language and literature education study program at a university in Surabaya, Indonesia. The participants in this research were students of 30 A-literature class who had taken the extensive reading class program for 4 semesters using the Xreading application as a student support learning management system. Participants were chosen as participants because students were new to using the Xreading application in the extensive reading program. The Xreading application was chosen because teachers can monitor students' teaching and learning processes, set student word targets, review the amount of vocabulary that students have read, and review how long students take to complete student word targets. Students are allowed to complete their word targets inside and outside the classroom. In the Xreading Library there are currently over 1200 graded readers from twenty ELT publishers (Wilkins, 2019). So, students can easily choose books and the number of words in the text.

Data collection was carried out after students completed their extensive reading program. The student's word targets is 100,000 words in 4 semesters. The specified number of words is used as the student's word targets that must be achieved. Then, all records of students' reading results in Xreading (number of books, number of words, student reading level, reading speed, reading time, and quiz results) were collected to obtain in-depth information regarding students' external motivation after using the Xreading application on students' extensive reading abilities. From the 2 classes observed, 10 students were obtained who would be interviewed based on the students' achievement of word targets within the time limit set by the lecturer. Interviews were used to obtain in-depth information about how Xreading helps students feel happy when reading even though they are given a word targets for the student's final achievement. Students are not given limits on how many times they have to read, what books they have to read, and where they have to read. Students are given the opportunity to choose their own reading books and are given the freedom to read in class or outside class.

This research was analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods (Miles et al., 2014). The purpose of this qualitative research was to understand participants' experiences with word targets and how these targets may influence their motivation to read L2 material (Merriam, 2009). To collect data, researchers collected: (1) students' reading notes taken from the lecturer's Xreading application. Data taken from research through Xreading notes include (number of books, number of words, student reading level, reading speed, reading time, and student quiz results) (2) class observations taken from lectures conducted online due to the pandemic, researchers The lecturer of each class is given access to monitor the lecture process via the Zoom and Xreading applications using the lecturer's account for each class. (3) Interviews taken from in-depth questions to students to explore students' opinions regarding student experiences during the extensive reading program using the Xreading application. As well as the experience of students reading extensively and being burdened with word targets as the student's final achievement. After all the data is collected, the researcher tests how the target reads. Influences reading enjoyment and how students set their word targets to match final achievement.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing data from students' reading profiles in the Xreading application, researchers found that the reading choices provided by Xreading helped and supported students to read L2. This statement is strengthened by data obtained from interviews with researchers and participants. Students will have a significant emotional drive to continue reading after being given the opportunity to choose their own reading according to their abilities. Researchers outline these findings in the

following subsections:

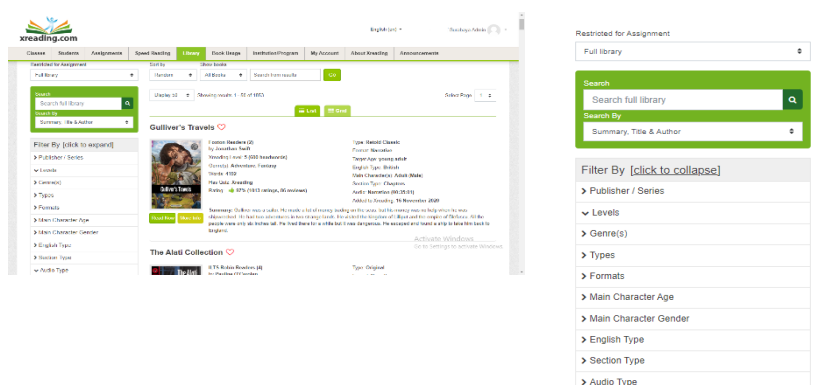
a. Freedom to Read through Xreading

Freedom to read will provide space for students to have the freedom to choose books, time, place and how students read (Table 1).

Table 1. Students' Reading Freedom

Students' selection	Sample data
Genre	I like some kind of book genre. I like history books and almost all the books that I have chosen are about history. So, I really consider about it.
Word count	Somehow the word count of the book became a factor for me weather read that book or not.
Writer	At Xreading there is a great selection of books by various authors. Firstly, I will look at the author before choosing the book because each author has their own style of writing.
Title of book	Sometimes I choose a book based on the interesting title because it makes me curious about the contents of the book
Level of book	I will choose a book level that suits with my English skills so that it is easy to read and understand the contents of the book

Picture 1. Xreading Features used by Students



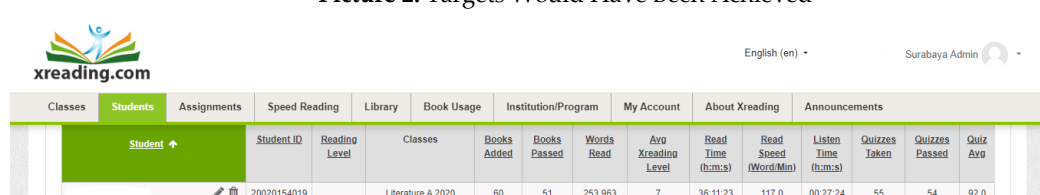
Genre, Word count, Writer, Title of book, Level of book are some of the features available in Xreading. As depicted in Table 2. Students will be presented with books equipped with various complete information regarding cover information, publisher, author, book level, genre, number of words, book rating, summary, book type, book format, English language type, and audio duration. Usually students will choose a book after looking at all available book descriptions to speed up and narrow their search for the book they want to choose. The story summaries provided in each book are often used by students to help them get a little information about the contents of the book. The story summary in each book can also help students to build their confidence in reading. This is because students will feel more prepared with the vocabulary they will encounter in the story (Suttriso, 2022). Especially for students who are still classified as low level readers or level 1 (beginner).

In addition to teachers, students can also monitor their reading achievement through notes on Xreading, whether their word targets has been achieved or there is no progress. If the word targets has

not been reached, students will continue to increase their reading amount. While the teacher will monitor the student's quiz scores that show whether the students really read and understand the book they have read. Meanwhile, for students who have reached their word targets, they will be freed to continue reading for pleasure.

Students are targeted to be able to read 100,000 words in 4 semesters. All students are given the freedom to determine the number of books they will read, what book level, genre and type of English they will choose. However, all students are not allowed to read other books if they have not completed the quiz on the previous book. From the results of interviews with several students, it was found that all students choose their own books to achieve their word targets. Ika (pseudonym), deliberately chose books above level 7 and below level 9 (intermediate), most of which consisted of 800-1,500 words. He chose books at that level because he wanted to challenge his ability in English. He wanted to know how far he had mastered the English vocabulary. Ika also said that he gets more new vocabulary if he reads at level 7-9. Ika targets herself to be able to finish 3-4 books every month. In fact, he said that if it didn't take 4 semesters, the word targets would have been achieved.

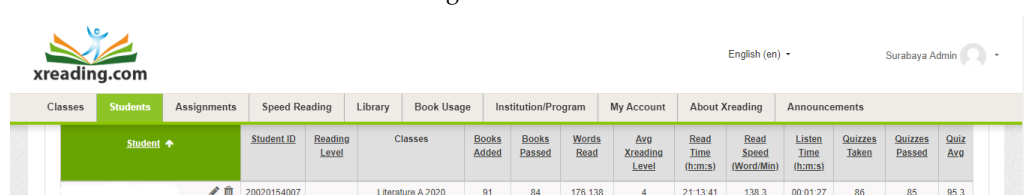
Picture 2. Targets Would Have Been Achieved



xreading.com														English (en)		Surabaya Admin	
Classes	Students	Assignments	Speed Reading	Library	Book Usage	Institution/Program	My Account	About Xreading	Announcements								
Student		Student ID	Reading Level	Classes	Books Added	Books Passed	Words Read	Avg Xreading Level	Read Time (h:m:s)	Read Speed (Word/Min)	Listen Time (h:m:s)	Quizzes Taken	Quizzes Passed	Quiz Avg			
		20020154019		Literature A 2020	60	51	253.963	7	36:11:23	117.0	00:27:24	55	54	92.0			

On the other hand, Ani (pseudonym), deliberately chose books above level 4 and below level 6 (elementary), most of which consisted of 301-800 words. He chose books below level 4 to make it easier to complete the word targets. Besides, books at levels 4-6 don't have many words. Level 4-6 books also have light vocabulary for beginner readers to understand. However, to complete the word targets, Ani must read more than 50 books in 4 semesters. So, in 1 month, Ani has to finish around 5-6 books.

Picture 3. Targets Would Have Been Achieved



xreading.com														English (en)		Surabaya Admin	
Classes	Students	Assignments	Speed Reading	Library	Book Usage	Institution/Program	My Account	About Xreading	Announcements								
Student		Student ID	Reading Level	Classes	Books Added	Books Passed	Words Read	Avg Xreading Level	Read Time (h:m:s)	Read Speed (Word/Min)	Listen Time (h:m:s)	Quizzes Taken	Quizzes Passed	Quiz Avg			
		20020154007		Literature A 2020	91	84	176.138	4	21:13:41	138.3	00:01:27	86	85	95.3			

Very different from Ika and Ani, Aresta (pseudonym), who is a beginner reader and is less confident in her English skills, chooses books at levels 1-4. This level consists of 51-400 words, less than the number of words targeted by Ika and Ani. Aresta only chooses books that he is sure he can read to the end. Although, the number of books he had to read was more than the number of books Ika and Ani read. The vocabulary used at levels 1-4 is lighter than the other levels. However, in his reading notes on Xreading, Aresta always gets a high score. In the interview, he said that every time he read the book he chose, he felt very happy and was confident that he could finish reading it with his English skills as seen in the quote below:

Researcher: How do you complete your word targets according to what your teacher targets?

Maya : I always choose books at a low level (1-3) so they are easy to complete. Every book I choose I definitely read until the end and that makes me very happy with my achievements and English skills.

Researcher: How many words do you think you can read in a week?

Maya : Approximately 1000 words in a week.

Picture 3. Targets Would Have Been Achieved

xreading.com															English (en)		Surabaya Admin	
Classes	Students	Assignments	Speed Reading	Library	Book Usage	Institution/Program	My Account	About Xreading	Announcements									
Student		Student ID	Reading Level	Classes	Books Added	Books Passed	Words Read	Avg Xreading Level	Read Time (h:m:s)	Read Speed (Word/Min)	Listen Time (h:m:s)	Quizzes Taken	Quizzes Passed	Quiz Avg				
		20020154013		Literature A 2020	84	70	140,128	4	26:33:49	87.9	00:15:54	73	70	93.4				

Apart from the number of words, it is the main way for students to choose reading books. Students also use several other information in Xreading to get information about the book they will choose. The book cover is the first thing students will see when choosing their reading book. A book cover usually consists of: publisher, author, book title, images that represent the contents of the book and so on. The book cover will attract attention and give students an idea of the contents of the book. An attractive cover will make students want to read the book. On the other hand, an unattractive cover will make them reluctant to read it. Book covers also help students draw their imaginations so they can envision the story line in the book they choose.

The diverse choice of books, detailed information, and easy navigation of the book selection have helped students find the books they want to read. This suggests that the word targets, along with students' skills in finding tools to sift through book collections in Xreading, enabled them to use “task-relevant and strategies” (Locke & Latham, 2002) to find interesting books. Therefore, it can be said that students will use word targets to generate reading pleasure. In line, a compelling word targets has the potential to make reading as an internalized external motivation for students (McClean & Poulshock, 2018). A form of instilling character values into teaching materials or modules so that these values are reflected in attitudes and behavior which are manifested in actions that can keep students motivated to read (Paradita et al., 2023).

b. Word targets and Reading Pleasure of Students

After all students were interviewed, researchers found that students had a positive view of the word targets. It was also found that the way students determine their reading choices can guide them to continue reading. In addition, word targets that teachers use as assignments will further motivate students to complete their reading. As targeted in this research. Where the word targets set is 100,000 words in 4 semesters. From the results of the interviews, it was found that several students stated that if they were given a reading assignment and given a word targets as the final achievement of an extensive reading program, they would adjust their own way of reading in order to achieve their word targets. As mentioned previously, for example, Ika, Ani and Aresta are strategic in reading by choosing books based on the number of words.

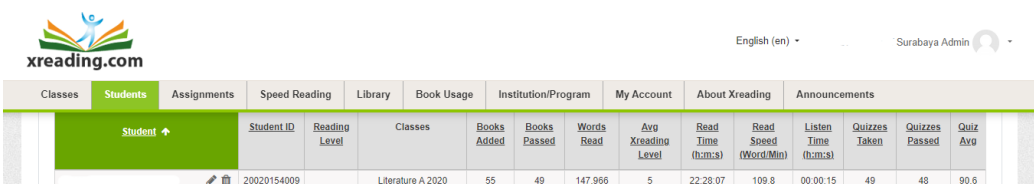
Another interesting finding from two students' experiences in using word targets and reading pleasure. Sinta (pseudonym), one of the participants whose reading log profile on Xreading shows that she was able to complete her entire word targets in less than one week. In fact, he read more than the target number of words. He said that he enjoyed reading and he read 241 books with a total of 685,301 words.

Picture 4. Targets Would Have Been Achieved

xreading.com															English (en)		Surabaya Admin	
Classes	Students	Assignments	Speed Reading	Library	Book Usage	Institution/Program	My Account	About Xreading	Announcements									
Student		Student ID	Reading Level	Classes	Books Added	Books Passed	Words Read	Avg Xreading Level	Read Time (h:m:s)	Read Speed (Word/Min)	Listen Time (h:m:s)	Quizzes Taken	Quizzes Passed	Quiz Avg				
				Literature A 2020														
				Literature A 2020														
		20020154016		Literature A 2020	256	241	685,301	7	82:56:25	137.7	04:58:39	248	242	91.8				

On the other hand, Maya (pseudonym) after completing all her word targets, she no longer continued reading. He said that if the number of words targeted by his teacher had been reached, he would stop reading through Xreading and prefer to read through printed books. Because according to him, if you read e-books on Xreading continuously it will hurt your eyes. However, if the number of targeted words is greater, students will continue to try to achieve the target.

Picture 5. Targets Would Have Been Achieved



xreading.com												
Classes		Students	Assignments	Speed Reading	Library	Book Usage	Institution/Program	My Account	About Xreading	Announcements		
Student ID	Reading Level	Classes	Books Added	Books Passed	Words Read	Avg Xreading Level	Read Time (h:m:s)	Read Speed (Word/Min)	Listen Time (h:m:s)	Quizzes Taken	Quizzes Passed	Quiz Avg
20020154009		Literature A 2020	55	49	147,966	5	22:28:07	109.8	00:00:15	49	48	90.6

Results of interviews with researchers and Maya:

Researcher: Have you achieved your word targets?

Maya : This has been achieved since last semester.

Researcher: How do you complete your word targets according to what your teacher targets?

Maya : I always choose books at a low level, because I think books at a low level will make it easier for me to finish them. I also set how many books I have to read during 1 semester.

Researcher: How many words do you think you can read in a week?

Maya : I can't determine, but the estimate is more than 5000 words

Researcher: Do you continue to read via Xreading until now, even though the extensive reading program has ended?

Maya: I no longer read books via Xreading since I finished my word targets because reading e-books takes too long, making my eyes often hurt. So, I prefer reading printed books rather than e-books

Researcher: If your teacher asked you to continue your reading via Xreading, would you be willing to do it?

Maya : I am willing if it is a task. However, if it's not mandatory I won't do it.

The interview results above show that word targets can encourage students to achieve their word targets (Locke & Latham, 2002).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that word targets can be a method to motivate students to improve their reading skills and the Xreading application which has various interesting features can support their reading pleasure. Xreading also provides a wide selection of books which makes it easier for students to choose books that are interesting and suit their enjoyment and English language skills.

Suggestions for future researchers, the researcher hopes that this research can be further developed into more specific topics in order to obtain more varied findings. This can be done by examining the audio feature in Xreading as a feature that can increase students' enjoyment of reading and also improve students' listening.

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