

The Effectiveness of Repeated Reading Technique in Increasing EFL Students' Reading Comprehension on Narrative Texts

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Abstract

Reading ability is an important basic skill in the English language learning process. Reading not only helps students expand their vocabulary but also increases their understanding of language structures. However, many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students still experience difficulties in effectively comprehending the content of reading passages, which impacts the development of their overall language skills. This research aimed to increase reading comprehension of narrative text by looking at the effectiveness of the Repeated Reading technique. The design used was quasi-experimental, involving sixty students of SMA Hasanuddin Wajak. The sample was divided into two groups: the experimental group, which received Repeated Reading treatment, and the control group, which did not receive Repeated Reading treatment. The instrument used in this study was a multiple-choice instrument. The data that had been obtained was analysed quantitatively using an independent sample t-test. The results stated a significant difference between students who received treatment and students who did not receive treatment. The value of ($P = .000 < .05$) shows that the use of the Repeated Reading method in the learning process of narrative text increases students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension; Repeated Reading; Narrative Texts

INTRODUCTION

As one of the four language skills, reading is a critical initial step in learning EFL (English as a Foreign Language). According to the English reading index released by EF Education First in 2024, Indonesia ranked the 80th among 116 countries, achieving an average score of 477 and categorizing it within the 'poor' group. Ibrahim et al. (2024) identified that this situation resulted from a combination of internal and external factors. Internal issues encompass challenges in comprehending complex sentences, ineffective reading strategies, and a lack of focus. External issues include the home context, which frequently lacks parental support, and the school environment, which fails to give adequate access to appropriate reading resources.

Reading is an important ability in language acquisition, particularly for those learning EFL. It is the initial step toward expanding vocabulary, understanding grammar, and evaluating written materials (Mustafa, 2018). Moreover, Pandey (2023) disclosed that reading is essential in the EFL learning environment since it allows students to develop their vocabulary, acquire sentence patterns, and absorb information contained inside documents. Reading is a collaborative, conversational, and engaging activity that promotes analytical thinking and understanding.

Several writers (Butterfuss et al., 2020; Catts, 2021; Ye et al., 2022) documented their ideas that reading also involves representations such as sights, gestures, and sounds, which help to understand a context. Comprehension in the reading process will involve cognitive processes of various brain activities and mental functions. This process will depend on the student's prior knowledge, vocabulary acquisition, coding, and language comprehension. Meanwhile, Setiorini et al. (2022) underscored their statement that effective teaching of reading comprehension requires addressing students' characteristics, selecting appropriate tactics, and providing

relevant information. Unfamiliar terminology and complicated sentence patterns frequently provide challenges, thus training must focus on building students' confidence, providing them time to explore, and encouraging comprehension.

The present research follows the Automatic Theory developed by LaBerge & Samuels (1974) which accentuate that through repeated exposure to the same orthographic pattern, readers' cognitive attention can shift from decoding and encoding words to understanding meaning. Moors & DeHouwer (2006; as cited in Feruzi, 2021) also argued that the repetition process can enhance automaticity through visual and articulatory recognition. A reader is considered fluent when he can read automatically and at a comfortable speed. The development of automaticity is crucial, as enables learners to read accurately and efficiently.

LaBerge & Samuels (1974) also stipulated that repetition is a key to enhancing automaticity, as it allows learners to commit words and concepts to memory through repeated visual and articulatory practice. This is in line with new findings put forward by Roembke et al. (2021) showing that this automaticity process is closely related to reading activities and of course this process is quite stable that can be used or as a reference focus in the learning process to increase students' reading comprehension skills. Reading fluency, as a result of automaticity, as stated by Tindal et al. (2016), is an important skill considered a prerequisite for reading comprehension. They argue that the underlying factor in the reading comprehension process is fluency.

Given the issues listed above, a variety of strategies were implemented to increase students' reading comprehension. As an automated process, Repeated Reading (RR) is a strategy that has been found to increase fluency and comprehension (Babadjanova, 2022; Romig & Jetton, 2024). This strategy involves students reading the same text several times to increase reading speed and accuracy, which increases understanding and overall academic achievement (Rupley et al., 2020). Taguchi et al. (2021), stated that Repeated Reading helps children enhance their reading skills, comprehension, vocabulary, and grammatical retention, as well as their memory of language aspects.

Several previous research investigated the influence of repeated reading. For example, Al Ghafri & Al Hosni (2023) did a research in Oman and discovered a significant improvement in reading comprehension among grade four students who participated in RR. Similarly, Nasir et al. (2022) asserted that RR significantly increased the reading comprehension of grade eight children. Fiskaryanti et al. (2023) also highlighted that RR significantly increased students' reading comprehension and participation. The present research focuses on the effectiveness of Repeated Reading to increase reading comprehension at the senior high school level. Specifically, this research looks on the usefulness of the Repeated Reading technique in boosting students' capacity to grasp narrative texts and intends to provide insights into how Repeated Reading can help high school students enhance their reading comprehension.

METHOD

The present research utilized a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design to compare the experimental and control groups after taking different treatments. Following the current theories of Tiwasing et al. (2023), The method obtained findings from a large sample population and allowed the researchers to conduct experiments effectively. This made the approach more relevant to the research setting and provided a logical technique for testing the hypotheses. The procedure of the present research is stated in Figure 1.

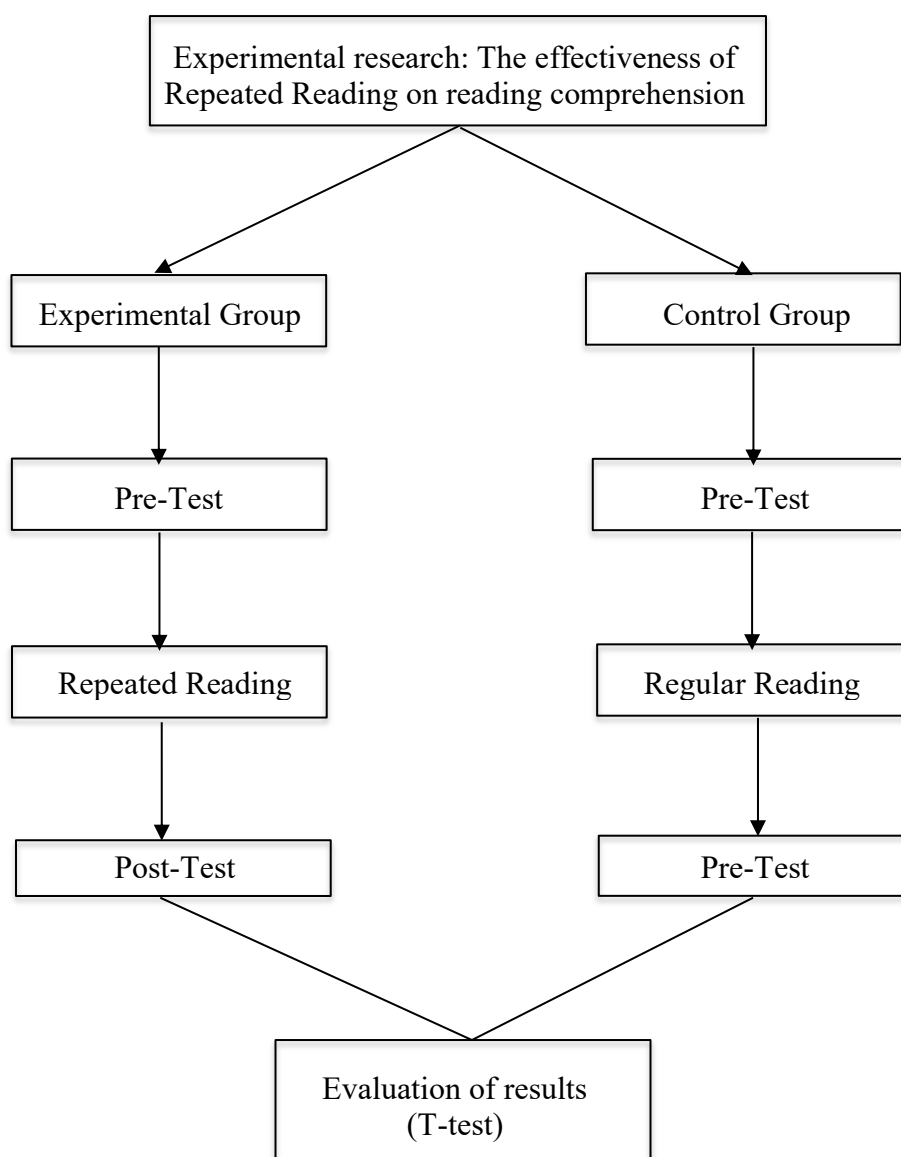


Figure 1. Procedure of the Present Research

The present research took place at Hasanuddin High School in Wajak, Malang Regency, East Java with two different groups: the experimental and control groups. These two groups received distinct treatments: the experimental group received repeated reading (RR) instruction for five meetings. In the first meeting, students received a lesson on the concept and structure of narrative texts, followed by a short narrative text consisting of two paragraphs as an initial exercise to measure their basic skills. In the subsequent meetings, students continued to use the same narrative text, with three additional paragraphs added at each meeting to gradually increase the level of difficulty. Furthermore, during the reading process, students were encouraged to re-read the text twice, followed by sharing their reading comprehension results with their seatmates. This process continued until the fifth meeting, aiming to gradually and systematically strengthen students' reading skills and comprehension of narrative texts. Regarding the control group, in each meeting, the students were given a different narrative text. In the reading process, the students were only given once to read, which was followed by the

presentation of the reading content to their peers.. Both of the groups were given pre- and post-tests with multiple-choice questions of narrative texts. The pre-test and post-test scores of each group will be compared through statistical analysis to determine whether a significant difference exists. The population in this study consisted of eleventh-grade students at Hasanuddin Wajak High School who were enrolled in English classes. Two classes, Class A and Class B, each comprising 30 students, were selected purposively from existing intact classes. A lottery was used to assign one class to the experimental group and the other to the control group. This selection was based on several considerations: (1) both classes were taught by the same teacher using the same teaching method; and (2) the study was conducted on pre-existing class groups, making reorganization impractical, as it would have disrupted the existing schedule and class structure.

This research tested the following hypotheses. The null hypothesis (H_0) states that there is no significant difference between the RR-treated group and the untreated group. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) states that there is a significant difference between the two groups. An independent t-test was applied to determine whether there existed a significant difference of the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental and control groups. It was chosen since it could compare two independent groups. SPSS software was utilized to analyze the data and to ensure that the outcomes were accurate and dependable. The result of the present research was expected to provide a greater understanding of the treatment's effects on the changes occurring in both groups, as well as help endorse reading comprehension of narrative texts to build more effective learning methods in schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

As part of the adjustment analysis, the means and standard deviations of each group were calculated by accounting for between-group differences using a statistical approach. Table 1 presents a summary of the descriptive statistical analysis results.

Table 1. The results of Mean and standard deviation of each class

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experiment	30	83.297	8.3932	1.5324
Control	30	72.187	8.2354	1.5036

Table 1 shows that the average score of the control group is 72.187, while the average score of the experimental group is 83.297. This indicates that the control group's mean is lower than that of the experimental group. To further examine whether this difference is statistically significant, additional analysis is presented in the Table below..

Table 2. The outcome of the statistical comparison between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group

Assesment Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2- tailed)	α	N
Pre-test	67.853	6.9222	.000	.05	30
Post-test	83.297	8.3932			30

Table 2 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is .000, indicating that it is less than .05. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the experimental group.

Table 3. The statistical comparison of pre-test and post-test scores within the control group using a t-test.

Assesment Type	Mean	SD	Sig. (2-tailed)	α	N
Pre-test	66.297	6.6251	.000	.05	30
Post-test	72.187	8.2354			30

Table 3 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is .000 < .05. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in the control group.

Table 4. The t-test analysis of the post-test of the experimental and control group.

Groups	Mean	SD	Sig. (2-tailed)	α	N
Experiment	83.297	8.3932	.000	.05	30
Control	72.187	8.2354			30

Table 4 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is .000, indicating that it is less than .05. It can be inferred that the post-test scores of the two groups were found to be significantly different. The significance of this finding indicates that the RR treatment given to the experimental group statistically increased the students' reading comprehension, as shown in the table above. The mean score of the control group was 72.187, while that of the experimental group was 83.297, indicating that the treatment of the experimental group had an effect on the reading comprehension of EFL students. Based on this statistical calculation, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Discussion

The results of this research provide empirical evidence that Repeated Reading (RR) strategy is beneficial for increasing the EFL students' ability to read and comprehend narrative texts. It was found that, the post-test scores of the experimental group increased significantly. The post-test scores of the experimental group were significantly higher compared to the control group, i.e. the experimental group ($M = 83.297$, $SD = 8.3932$), while for the control group ($M = 72.187$, $SD = 8.2354$), and the difference was statistically significant ($p = .000$, $p < .05$). These results suggest that RR facilitates the development of reading comprehension by encouraging fluency and automaticity. These results also infer that RR facilitates reading comprehension development by fostering fluency and automaticity.

The results of the present research are in line with earlier studies by Babadjanov (2022) and Romig & Jetton (2024) that continuously emphasized RR as a successful teaching method for raising reading competency. The Automaticity Theory of LaBerge and Samuels (1974), which proposed that frequent exposure to textual patterns increased cognitive efficiency by lowering the cognitive burden associated with word decoding, is supported theoretically by the present research that students are able to devote more mental energy to comprehension.

The present research's findings also align with those of Roembke et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of fluency achieved through RR as a basic precondition for reading comprehension. The application of the RR method is also proven to increase students' reading comprehension skills, due to the repetition process of reading the same text. This finding is in line with research conducted by Gorsuch, Mitani, and Taguchi (2021), which explains that when

students consistently interact with a text, it can make them understand lexical and syntactic patterns.

In this present research, some limitations need to be noted. The limited sample size (N=60) and coming from only one educational institution may reduce the possibility of generalising the findings to a wider EFL environment. Therefore, in order to increase the validity of the results, it is recommended that future studies include a larger, more diverse population. Second, because the research only looked at narrative texts, more research is required to find out if RR increased understanding of other text genres including argumentative or expository texts in a comparable way. Moreover, even though RR has been demonstrated to increase fluency and comprehension, more research may be done to examine its long-term impacts on students' reading development and textual memory.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, this research concludes that Repeated Reading (RR) technique is effective to increase EFL students' reading comprehension in narrative texts. The experimental group that got the RR therapy shows a larger increase in reading comprehension than that of the control group, with p-values <0.05 based on the statistical analyses that demonstrate significant changes between pretest and posttest scores. Through text repetition, students can automate word recognition, reducing the cognitive load involved with decoding and allowing them to focus more on understanding meaning. Additionally, this method enhances vocabulary growth and language pattern recall in narrative literature. Regular use of RR helps students create more disciplined reading habits, which in turn helps them increase their academic reading abilities. Students' favorable feedback shows that this approach increases their enthusiasm and interest in reading English texts in addition to improving their reading comprehension abilities.

Lastly, for better results future research should reconsider the small sample size (N=60) of the present research and the exclusive focus on narrative material. The effectiveness of this approach for certain students may also be influenced by individual factors including learning preferences and past reading comprehension. More further studies involving a larger population and examining the application of RR to other text kinds, such as expository or argumentative, are advised in order to obtain a more complete knowledge of the effectiveness of this strategy in EFL learning.

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