

Developing Reading Fluency for 5 Graders with Repeated Reading Method: A Case Study at Nha Trang Primary School – Thai Nguyen- Viet Nam

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ABSTRACT: *The primary focus of the research was to investigate the effectiveness of repeated method on 5 graders' reading fluency at NhaTrang Primary school. The study was carried out among 16 students and in order to collect data, a test was employed. The findings of the research show that repeated reading method was effective in helping students improve their reading fluency in general. Especially, it facilitated students in reading rate and reading accuracy. It is also recommended that teachers should plan sufficient support such as providing a glossary for each passage or pre-teach the new difficult vocabulary for students because new words can be a big problem that may cause difficulty in reading and significantly demotivate students in oral reading.*

Index terms: *repeated reading, reading fluency*

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

Reading fluency has gained a lot of coverage in recent years as a significant step towards good reading. Students who fail to read or struggle with reading have a hard time decoding words. The reading process can be more complex, resulting in more time spending on decoding and reading with little time for understanding. "When readers become more automatic at decoding their reading becomes faster and they tend to chunk text into phrases as they read" (Stevens, 2006, p. 38). An productive reader can efficiently translate (decode) the words on the written page and make meaning or importance (understanding) of what is read. In reading, these readers are said to have gained fluency.

Fluency is a significant component of the success of literacy. Fluent readers use speech and correctly change their speed. Effortlessly they read. "Expressive readers interpret meaning. They do this through the use of good phrasing, appropriate voice tone, and appropriate voice volume. A fluent reader groups words together in phrases that convey meaning, are consistent with punctuation, and correspond to sentence structure" (Fox, 2008, p. 113). When they are reading, these fluent readers make associations with the letter. They understand what they are reading and communicate with previous information and appreciate the intent of reading. As they have experienced success in their reading experiences, these fluent readers love reading aloud as well as reading to others.

Repeated readings have been found to be an efficient and genuine activity in the classroom that encourages and increases reading fluency. This reading technique encourages a pupil to read a passage or paragraph a number of times while the teacher tracks the time with the number of words correctly named. The reader begins to consistently read the same text until a desired purpose or criteria is reached. Research has shown that repeated reading can not only boost reading fluency but is also effective in enhancing other aspects of reading performance. (Therrien, 2006, p. 156).

1.2. Aims of the study

This study aimed at improving 5th graders' reading fluency through repeated reading method. It is hoped that repeated reading would contribute to the improvement on student's reading fluency.

1.3. Research Questions

With the above stated aims, the study focuses on finding the answer for the following questions:

1. What is the initial level of the 5th graders' reading fluency at NhaTrang Primary School in Academic Year 2020-2021?
2. To what extent does repeated reading method have effect on students' reading fluency in terms of reading rate and reading accuracy?

II. A REVIEW OF LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of Reading Fluency

The combination of three key components such as speed, accuracy, and prosody makes up the reading fluency. Let's take a look at each of these (By Linda Balsiger, M.s., CCC-SLP):

Speed – the readers who are fluent can read very fast, at a rate of pace acceptable to their age or grade level (usually measured in words every 60 seconds or wpm). When reading aloud, they physically search 3+ words forward, and maintain smooth line-to-line visual monitoring.

Accuracy – in term of the accuracy, readers may have ability to understand automatically the implications of terms and can even sound out foreign words. Nevertheless, fluent readers can make frequent errors by not recognizing words, missing words, replacing words that are identical, and struggling with new words.

Prosody – in term of prosody, readers often apply prosody for example stress, timing and pitch when reading aloud to communicate meaning. Normally, readers use less language and read every single word instead of using chunks or sentences. They do not success in using pauses or intonation to "mark" punctuation (e.g. periods, commas, and question marks).

Fluency is an important factor, implying that you are a good reader and the National Reading Panel (2001) supports this view. Fluent readers demonstrate the ability to easily understand words and recognize what is being read by them. Besides, they are also willing to look over the writing with changes in length, pace, pacing and all the complexities embedded in "prosody" or proper phrasing and language articulates this.

2.2. Components of Reading Fluency

Fluency has gone from being barely considered to being a central element in the advancement of literacy in the classroom (Kuhn et al., 2012). It was evident throughout the literature that fluency is needed for good reading.

Fluency, though, is not necessarily accepting terms at a rapid pace. Reading fluently lets people to take note of the text's context when reading (Guerin & Murphy, 2015). Fluent readers can continue reading at an acceptable pace and for long stretches of time with sufficient precision and speech, and can also retain this capacity even though significant quantities of time have passed with little or no practice (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005). Fluency contributes to reader's autonomy and efficiency. It consists of three components: precision, pace, and prosody (expression).

Precision is relevant to the ability to quickly name words or rely on a mediated mechanism where readers can remember foreign words immediately (Evanchan, 2010). A secure understanding of phonemic knowledge, letter-sound understanding (alphabet and phonics), hearing words, and high-frequency words helps students become accurate learners (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005; Pikulski & Chard, 2005).

Just as precision and automaticity are closely related, so are automaticity and cost. "Reading rate comprises both word-level automaticity and the speed and fluidity with which a reader moves through connected text" (Hudson et al., p. 702). Rate implicates that how many words we can read every 60 seconds, very clearly. Therefore, reading's automaticity is concerned. The more automatic the reading becomes, the higher the rate. The rate is determined through the world's number read in a given passage and the reader's pacing. The mathematical rate equation is equal to (words separated by seconds) multiplied by 60.

Automaticity and rate are always the emphasis of fluency training, but it often includes prosody. Fluency isn't just about a quick and accurate reading. Prosody requires not only reading with speech but also using intonation, stress, tempo and adequate phrasing (Kuhn et al., 2012). Rasinski (2012) noted that prosody can totally modify the intended or inferred context to stress one single word in a sentence. It allows a reader to use higher levels of comprehension skills to assess the inferred meaning to highlight those phrases. "Prosody is the ability to read with expression and with reading that sounds like speaking (Evanchan, 2010, p. 12)". Prosody is HOW words are understood and understood and may also have a significant effect on whether learners comprehend or have read what they are hearing..

2.3. Repeated Reading

2.3.1. Definition of Repeated Reading

Repeated reading is a practice first proposed by Samuels (1997) and Dahl (1974), and has been adopted since then by reading practitioners (Kostewicz, 2012). Samuels (1997) stressed that repetitive reading is not meant to teach all beginning skills of reading, but is intended to accompany a curriculum of reading. It is not only beneficial for learners with learning problems, but it has been proven to be a useful method for all students (Samuels, 1997).

2.3.2. Strategies of Repeated Reading

As has been said, so far, in section (2.1-2.2), about the original form studied by Samuels (1979), the research allowed readers to re-read orally sequence small paragraphs before they are allowed to read them with the rate of 60 seconds, whereas, . In similar approach with Samuels, Chomsky (1976) also found out that there are currently several variants of the repeated reading process. As said by Chomsky, the RR approach can be viewed and practiced in different ways. Choral (or unison) reading, Student-adult reading, partner reading, tape-assisted reading, and the theatre of readers involve these differences in conducting repeated reading of texts orally.

2.3.3. Characteristics of Texts Used for Fluency Practice

Fluency grows as a result of rising students' chances to practice reading with high level of success. One aspect of oral reading fluency that has not been addressed within the previous researches is that the most favourable sort of texts most to develop fluency.

As stated by Invernizzi (2002), the used texts for the instruction of repetitive reading has not drawn much attention in the literature, conversely, the 77 emphasis has been based on using texts evaluated at students' level. As said by Armbruster et al (2003), the length of the used texts should depend on students' ages. Besides, Chrisman (2015) stated that investigators still looked for the texts which can help to improve reading smoothness. Many other researchers (Samuels, 1979; Invernizzi, 2002; Mc Ewan, 2002; Armbruster et al., 2003; Sousa, 2004; Shanahan, 2006) also studied on this factor and provided concrete evidence regarding the used texts. Scientists advised the lecturer to choose the material for reading to improve the fluency according to level of difficulties of texts and passage length.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This study was designed according to experimental research. According to Nunan (1992), experimental research into three primary types including pre-experimental, quasi-experimental and true experimental research designs. In this research, due to the fact that the experiment was conducted based on students' volunteering, it was impossible for the research to randomly assign subjects. Therefore, a quasi-experimental design was adopted, which is intended to describe and demonstrate the effectiveness of repeated reading method on the 5th graders' reading fluency at NhaTrang Primary School. There are several types of quasi experimental design and non-equivalent control group design is suitable for this study as the researcher used both control group and the experimental groups; however, there was no randomness of sample selection. Sixteen students from class 5A volunteer to take part in the experiment and the treatment was repeated reading which was used to help students improve their reading fluency and the dependent variable was the student's reading rate and reading accuracy performances.

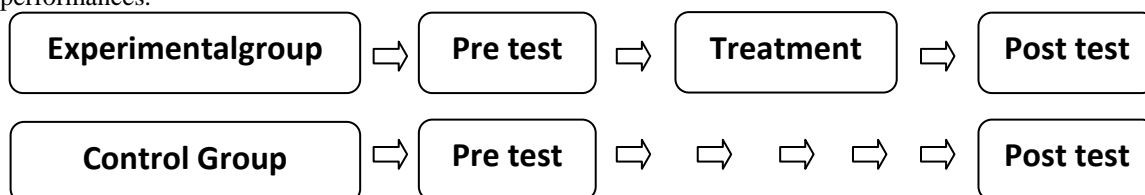


Figure 1: Non-Randomized Control Group Design

3.2. Population

The research was undertaken with the participation of 16 five graders of NhaTrang Primary School in the second term of the school year 2020-2021. They were from class 5A, the experimental group consists of 8 students and the remaining 8 students belonged to the control group.

3.3. Data collection instruments

In the study Pre-test and Post-test were used by the researchers. The former was provided to both groups before the experimental group received the treatment so that the researchers could find out the initial level of students' reading fluency, and to compare the results of the pre-test with the result of the post-test after the intervention. The latter was given to the students in both two groups after the treatment was conducted. It was administered to find out the effectiveness of using repeated reading methods on students' reading rate and reading accuracy.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Results for research question 1

A pre-test have been delivered to students in both groups to find out the initial level of students' reading fluency before the treatment. The following table gives information about students' reading speeds before the treatment was implemented.

Table 1. Students' initial reading speeds

Control group		Experimental group	
Student code	Reading speed (wpm)	Student code	Reading speed (wpm)
S1	80	S9	86
S2	78	S10	73
S3	72	S11	80
S4	77	S12	83
S5	86	S13	66
S6	65	S14	76
S7	69	S15	67
S8	74	S16	76
Average speed	75		76

According to the table, the reading rate of students in the control and experimental groups were similar. While the control group could read for approximately 75 words per minute (wpm) on average, the figure for the experimental group was 76, only one word faster than the other group. Regarding the highest and lowest figures for the two groups, surprisingly, they seemed identical. In both groups, the fastest readers' speed was 86 wpm while that of the slowest ones were 65 for the control group and 66 for the experimental group.

The following bar chart visualized students' initial reading accuracy based on the data collected.

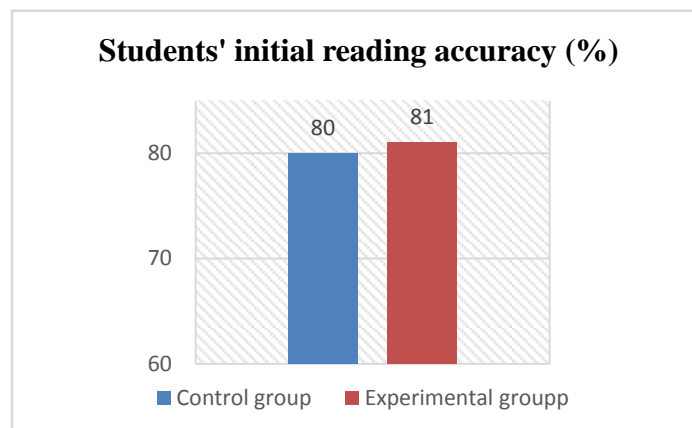


Figure 1. Students' initial reading accuracy

The data shown in the chart above revealed that students in both control and experimental groups achieved a similar rate of accuracy. While the figure for the control group was 80% of the words read correctly, a similar proportion (81%) for the other group was presented. It is clear that this was not a significant difference.

The similarity of the test results implied that the two groups' reading abilities were the same before the repeated reading technique was employed to teaching.

4.2. Results for research question 2

Changes in reading rate

Table 2. Changes in reading rate of individual students (wpm)

Control group				Experimental group			
Student code	Before	After	Gain	Student code	Before	After	Gain
	Reading rate (wpm)	Reading rate (wpm)	Reading rate (wpm)		Reading rate (wpm)	Reading rate (wpm)	Reading rate (wpm)
S1	80	86	6	S9	86	137	51
S2	78	79	1	S10	73	127	54
S3	72	75	3	S11	80	185	104
S4	77	84	8	S12	83	107	23
S5	86	89	3	S13	66	114	48
S6	65	66	1	S14	76	124	48
S7	69	70	1	S15	67	107	40
S8	74	72	-2	S16	76	143	67

It can be easily seen that in the control group, most students got slightly higher results in the post tests. Seven of them could read from 1 to 8 words more than before in a minute while the last student even read two words more slowly. This could be minor change for almost all students of this group. However, for the experimental groups, students made recognizable improvement in their reading speeds. The one who made the least improvement could read 23 words more within a minute while another student could read 104 words more than before during the same amount of time.

Changes in reading accuracy

Table 3. Changes in reading accuracy of individual students (%)

Control group (N=8)				Experimental group (N=8)			
Student code	before (%)	after (%)	Deviation (%)	Student code	before (%)	after (%)	Deviation (%)
S1	75	75	1	S9	78	91	13
S2	81	82	2	S10	82	89	8
S3	85	86	1	S11	88	95	7
S4	87	87	0	S12	85	96	11
S5	89	89	0	S13	91	97	6
S6	66	69	4	S14	70	87	17
S7	75	76	2	S15	78	91	13
S8	82	82	-1	S16	79	89	10

Looking at the deviation columns of both groups, it is recognizable that the changes made by students of the experimental groups were more significant. While the reading accuracy of individual student in this group raised at least 6% and at most 17%, the figures for the control group were only 0% and 4%, respectively. The reading accuracy of a student of the later group even declined 1%.

4.3. Discussion for the findings

The data analysis has shown that at first, students in both control and experimental group were at the similar level of reading fluency. All of them belonged to either average or fast reader group who could read

from 60 to 99 words per minute. In terms of accuracy, two groups were also similar. However, after six week of research period, only experimental group who received special treatment under the implementation of repeated reading made significant changes in the results.

Regarding reading rate, while the figure for students of the control group showed limited difference, there was remarkable improvement in the reading speed of students in the experimental group. Although at first, all students in the later group also fell into fast and average readers, after the application of repeated reading, they all became very fast readers who could read more than 100 words per minute. Students read much more correctly within shorter amount of time.

The improvement of students' reading rate and accuracy could be explicable. Firstly, repeated reading made students more focused on the texts to be read, thus they could read it faster. Secondly, reading aloud helped students get more familiar with pronunciation of words, thus they read better next time. Besides, it helped teachers know their students' problems in reading, so that they could give appropriate advice. For students to improve. Regular practice under teachers' observation was also an attribute to the success of students in learning. This increased students' motivation, made them learn more engagingly; therefore, got better results.

V. CONCLUSION

Findings from the data collected showed repeated reading method was effective in helping students improve their reading fluency in general. Especially, it facilitated students in reading rate and reading accuracy. After the research period, students in the experimental groups found that the use of repeated reading method made their oral reading better.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that this method could be a useful method to be integrated in teaching oral reading. However, the results from research also imply that students who have difficulties decoding words may have to be trained from reading individual words or phrases first rather than a continuous text. Beside, teachers should plan sufficient support such as providing a glossary for each passage or pre-teach the new difficult vocabulary because it can cause difficulty in reading and significantly demotivated students.

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