

# Effects of Reader Theater on EFL Learners' Oral Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of Reader Theater on English oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. The research was conducted with sixty-one 5th-grade students chosen from an elementary school in central Taiwan. The participants were selected by a convenient sampling method from two classes. One class was categorized as the experimental group receiving instruction with a Reader Theater method and the other the control group being taught with a Teacher-directed method. For data analysis, students in each group were further divided into English high-proficient and low-proficient students. The instruction lasted for twelve weeks, once a week. Before the experiment, a pretest was conducted. During the experimental period, those participants took a quiz after each lesson, 4 quizzes in total. In addition, all participants of the two groups are requested to finish the quiz of story map and multiple choices after each teaching. After the experiment, a posttest was conducted and a questionnaire was filled out. The pretest, 4 quizzes and posttest all included one-minute recording of reading a story and 10 multiple-choice questions of reading comprehension. The effects of Reader Theater and Teacher-directed method are compared by two-way MANCOVA with data from the pretest and the posttest. Trend diagrams and t-tests are presented to explore students' performance in the four quizzes over the experimental period. Students' answers to the questionnaire are investigated with Chi-square test and the Goodness of Fit test. The results of data analysis are summarized as follows: (1) There is significant difference in the test of oral reading rate between the RT group and the TD group, but there is no significant difference in the progress of oral reading rate between English high-proficient and low-proficient students. (2) There is significant difference in the test of oral reading fluency between the RT group and the TD group, but there is no significant difference in the progress of oral reading fluency between English high-proficient and low-proficient students. (3) There is no significant difference in the test of reading comprehension between the RT group and the TD group, but there is significant difference in the progress of reading comprehension between English high-proficient and low-proficient students. (4) RT students' interest in English learning is not enhanced by the RT method, but their negative feeling toward English becomes more moderate. Students' response toward the effects of RT on oral reading fluency is positive. More students in the RT group than those in the TD group agreed that their reading comprehension was enhanced with teachers' instruction. Students in the RT group also held positive perception toward cooperative learning under RT setting. Some pedagogical implications are provided: (1) teachers can involve the RT method in the contents of the textbook. (2) RT method may create a cooperative learning environment. (3) RT method can be applied in the other subject teaching. (4) RT method offers teachers an alternative for creative teaching and meanwhile provides students an imaginative probability for active learning.

Keywords : Reader Theater, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, cooperative learning

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