

Improving Students' Reading Rate and Comprehension by using Timed Repeated Readings

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Abstract

This study was carried out in a classroom action research design. It explored whether timed repeated readings could improve reading rate and comprehension. It examined the reading rate and comprehension at which the students of the Language Center achieved through timed repeated readings and also explained the factors that influence the changes of their reading rate and comprehension. Overall, the results showed that reading rate and comprehension could be improved by using timed repeated readings and some factors that affected the improvements were identified.

Key words: timed repeated readings, reading rate, reading comprehension

Introduction

English is a compulsory subject for all students in State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. The students who are not majoring in English must take English course in the university's Language Center. In the Language Center, English is taught as a foreign language and the purpose of teaching English is helping them to be able to communicate in English. Besides, they are taught to pass the paper-based version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). It is because each of them must have a TOEFL certificate as a requirement for graduation; the minimum score for graduation is 350. Thus, it is important for them to study English in order to have TOEFL certificate as one of the requirements to graduate from the university.

To fulfill the requirement, the students' language skills (writing, speaking, listening, and reading) are developed in the Language Center. Among these four skills, reading is regarded as the most vital and necessary for the students. It is because, in the paper version of TOEFL, they are asked to answer 50 questions of reading comprehension test. They are provided with limited time, which is 55 minutes, to answer all the reading comprehension questions. For that reason, it is important for the students to be able to read English texts quickly and to comprehend and remember the materials fully in order to answer the questions correctly.

However, many students in the researchers' class cannot read quickly and comprehend the text fully. The results of the recent tests on reading comprehension showed that generally only four students (or 12% of the students) who could answer 90% of the questions correctly. Most of them (60%) only could answer not more than half of the questions correctly. Also, most of them did not answer the questions because of the limited time. These results revealed that most of them needed to improve their reading rate and comprehension.

The present study was carried out to improve the students' reading rate and comprehension as the identified problems. In carrying out this study, it was attempted without annoying the ongoing teaching and learning process. Thus, the actions taken were regarded as the effective way to solve the identified problems. Research studies show that timed repeated readings has positive effect to improve reading rate and leads to improved comprehension (Day, 2004; Roundy & Roundy, 2009; Chang, 2010; Vostal 2011). Thus, it is assumed that the students benefit from opportunities to learn timed repeated readings during the study to increase their reading rate and comprehension so that they can function successfully academically. For that reason, the study examined the reading rate and comprehension at which the students achieved through timed repeated readings and also explained the factors that influence the changes of their reading rate and comprehension.

Research questions

From the above, it can be seen that there was a need to improve the students' reading rate and comprehension to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent can timed repeated readings improve the students' reading rate and comprehension?
2. What are the factors that influence the changes of the students' reading rate and comprehension through timed repeated readings?

Review of the Related Theories

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of the most important components of any language and it is an essential tool for lifelong learning. The goal of reading is comprehension. Therefore, many experts give definition to reading comprehension. Snow (2002:11) defines it as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Besides, Mikulecky and Jeffries (2007:74), point out that reading comprehension means making sense of what readers read and connecting the ideas in the text to what they already know. In addition, Duffy (2009:14) simply defines reading comprehension as the essence of reading because if we do not understand the message, we are not reading.

From the experts' definitions, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the main purpose of reading activity. The activity requires the readers to interact and involve with written language. These requirements are done in order to create meaning or understand the message an author is saying. Further, the readers also need to remember what they have read. Therefore, students of Language Center must be able to interact with text to create meaning so that they can answer correctly the reading comprehension questions in TOEFL.

To be able to interact with text to create meaning, the students need to develop reading comprehension skills. To develop the skills, teachers need to teach the students variety of reading comprehension strategies. It means many kinds of reading strategies should be taught to the students. Related to that many TOEFL preparation books contain the strategies that can be taught to help the students improve their reading comprehension. Sharpe (2005), for example, proposes some reading strategies that useful when answering

TOEFL for the reading section are previewing, reading for main ideas, using contexts for vocabulary, scanning for details, making inferences, and locating references. Thus, reading strategies are needed to be developed in order to improve reading comprehension.

In conclusion, reading comprehension is the goal of reading as well as the goal of teaching reading. Students need to develop reading skills in order to be able to read with good comprehension. To do that they need to practice a lot to use reading strategies since the strategies play important role in developing their reading skills in order to improve reading comprehension.

2. Assessing Reading Comprehension

The term of reading comprehension in this study was referred to reading comprehension when reading texts in TOEFL test. To assess or evaluate the students' reading comprehension, the paper TOEFL tests have common type of questions. According to Enright & Schedl (2000:5), the evaluation is focused on the following main purposes of reading:

- a. Reading to find information
- b. Reading for basic comprehension
- c. Reading to learn

In line to that theory, Educational Testing Service (2005:6) explains that reading to find information involves effectively scanning text for key facts and important information. Besides, it also involves increasing reading fluency and rate. Then, reading for basic comprehension requires the reader to understand the general topic or main idea, major points, important facts and details, vocabulary in context, and pronoun references. In addition, it also requires the reader to make inferences about what is implied in a passage. Next, reading to learn depends on the ability to recognize the organization and purpose of a passage, understand relationship between ideas, organize information into a summary to recall major points and important details, and infer how ideas throughout the passage connect.

Based on the explanations of Educational Testing Services above, Sharpe (2005:223) reviews common type of questions that frequently appear on the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL test. To answer the questions, the test-takers should develop these strategies: previewing, reading for main ideas, using contexts for vocabulary, scanning for details, making inferences, identifying exceptions, locating references, referring to the passage, and reading faster. Then, Sharpe (2005:224-230) explains why the test-takers require the strategies. Previewing is intended to easier the readers understand a general idea or what the passage is about. By reading for main ideas, readers identify the point of view of the author – that is, what the writer's thesis is. Then, using context for vocabulary help readers make a general prediction about meaning. By scanning, readers can find a place in the reading passage where the answer to a question is found. Making inferences helps readers to make a logical conclusion based on evidence in a reading passage. Identifying exceptions helps readers when they are asked to select from four possible answers the one that is not mentioned in the reading. By locating references, readers can find the antecedent of a pronoun. Next, by referring to the passage, readers can find certain information in the passage, and identify it by line number or paragraph. Finally, reading faster helps readers to answers all reading comprehension questions in a limited time.

Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that the type of questions to evaluate reading comprehension on the reading section of the paper TOEFL test are intended to measure the following students' reading abilities:

- a. Students are able to determine the general idea of what a reading passage is about.
- b. Students are able to identify the point of view of the author – that is, what the writer's thesis is.
- c. Students are able to make a general prediction about meaning of words from context.
- d. Students are able to identify the supporting details.
- e. Students are able to make inference.
- f. Students are able to identify the exceptions.
- g. Students are able to locate the reference word or phrase in the passage.

In conclusion, the seven abilities above were used as indicators to evaluate the students' reading comprehension in this study.

3. Improving Reading Rate and Comprehension

Reading rate and comprehension are two areas that commonly mentioned as requiring improvement (Buzan, 2004:21). Accordingly, improving both reading rate and comprehension can be challenging. It is because improving the students' reading rate is not just about reading words faster than they read before. It is about improving their ability to read at a speed that appropriate for the materials they are reading. It means the students are not merely increase their reading speed but also they can retain more information in order to comprehend what they have read. Therefore, improving reading rate should be an indispensable part of improving reading comprehension when answering the reading section in the TOEFL test.

Before improving something, knowing the starting point is needed. Thus, the teachers who want to improve their students' reading rate and comprehension are required to determine how fast the students read and how well they comprehend what they have read. In other words, the teachers have to help the students to calculate their present reading rate in order to judge accurately the progress they make throughout the process of improvement. Consequently, their comprehension level will also be tested.

In relation to finding out the starting point, Buzan (2004:29) creates a range of reading rates and comprehensions as in the following table.

Table 1. The Range for Refining the Goals

	Reader	Rate (WPM)	Comprehension
1	Poor	10-100	30 – 50%
2	Average	200-240	50 – 70%
3	Functionally literate	400	70 – 80%
4	Top 1 in 100	800-1000	80+%
5	Top 1 in 1000	1000+	80+%

By using the table above, the students will find out where they stand and refine their goals of improvement. Also, for the teachers, the table is useful to determine the starting point of how fast the students read as well how well the students comprehend what they have read.

Measuring reading comprehension to determine how well the students comprehend what they have read has been reviewed, thus, to measure a student's reading rate in terms of words per minute (wpm) also needs to be reviewed. The following is the procedure of measuring reading rate in words per minute (Konstant, 2003; Buzan, 2004; Sutz&Weverka, 2009).

- a. Count the total number of words in the passage.
- b. Ask a student to read the passage (read for good comprehension) and set a timer.
- c. Convert the time it took to read the passage to seconds.
- d. Convert the number of seconds to a decimal by dividing the number of seconds by 60. This is the total reading time.
- e. Finally, divide the number of words read by the total reading time in decimal form.

To conclude, improving the students' reading rate and comprehension at the same time is challenging. Before the teachers can improve something, they need to know their students starting point. In finding out the starting point two assessments are required. Each of them is used to determine how fast the students read and how well they comprehend what they have read.

4. Timed Repeated Readings

Most of the students typically read in a piece-by-piece, word-by-word manner and are slower and less accurate than fluent readers in decoding. With such inadequate reading patterns, they typically fall behind their peers who are fluent readers and do not find enjoyment in reading. Moreover, because their reading is laborious, their understanding of text is hampered. Timed repeated reading is considered as the solution for them (non-fluent readers). It is in line with Lems, Miller and Soro (2010:158) who state that, in fact, English language learners in a timed repeated readings study cited repetition as one of the factors contributing to their reading fluency and comprehension progress.

The timed repeated readings is regarded as a method for enhancing reading rate and comprehension. According to Schumm (1999:23), the method of timed repeated readings was developed to help non-fluent readers improve fluency and, ultimately, reading comprehension. In addition, McNamara (2007:180) writes that research studies show that timed repeated reading method has increased words read correctly per minute (WCPM), decreased word recognition errors, and improved comprehension. Thus, it can be concluded that timed repeated readings can be applied to improve both reading rate and comprehension.

Many teachers and researchers have implemented timed repeated readings and have indicated that it is feasible for classroom use. Walpole and McKenna (2007:76), for example, explain that there are three steps in preparing to implement timed repeated readings: find passages, decide how to calculate and chart progress, and create a rotation so that the teacher can time at least one student each day as others practice their passage. Thus, timed repeated reading is easy to be implemented.

Timed repeated readings can be incorporated in whole-class, in small-groups (in pairs), and individually. In whole-class instructional routines, Hudson (2006:6-7) conducts timed repeated reading using the following procedure:

- a. Teacher selects a passage that s/he will enjoy reading to her/his students again and again.
- b. The teacher asks one of the students to read the passage aloud in one minute. The other students read silently while listening to their classmate reading.
- c. The teacher times the student for one minute and record errors on his/her copy of the passage.
- d. The teacher reviews the student's performance on the task, correcting errors and practicing the correct pronunciation of words. Then, the students are encouraged for the progress they have made and set a goal for the next attempt.
- e. The teacher asks the students to read the passage a second time and encourages the students to reach their goal.
- f. The teacher provides a reward any time students meet their goals. Students who do not are supported for their effort and new goals are set for the next timed repeated reading activities.

Besides, Carrasquillo et al. (2004:92) use the following procedure as whole-class activity.

- a. Teacher chooses materials for oral reading that are not too difficult for the students to read.
- b. The teacher gives the students the opportunity to read the text orally before reading it silently under timed conditions.
- c. The teacher asks the student to read the passage silently for a minute (the teacher signaled the beginning and end of the minute for the whole class).
- d. The teacher repeats this procedure three to four times.

Furthermore, Maakafi (in Bamford and Day, 2004:186-187) designs another procedure of using timed repeated readings as whole-class instruction. Firstly, she gives the learners a time goal when reading. Then, her procedure is as below:

- a. Teacher explains to the students that they will read the same material three times for a minute each time. Then, the teacher tells them to read at comfortable speed, not too fast but not too slowly.
- b. When every student is ready, the teacher tells them to begin reading.
- c. At the end of one minute, the teacher tells them to stop reading and to write a small 1 in pencil over the last word that they read.
- d. The teacher then instructs the students to go back to beginning of the passage that they just read and read it again.
- e. At the end of a minute, the teacher tells the students to stop reading and to write a small 2 over the last word that they read. The teacher repeats this procedure a third time, asking students to write a small 3 over the last word.

Many teachers who have use timed repeated reading in their classroom share the benefits of this activity. Day (in Bamford and Day, 2004:187) as another teacher who has used a version of the Maakafi's timed repeated readings activity writes: "This is a terrific activity for building students confidence in their ability to increase their reading speed while continuing to comprehend what they read".

As mentioned before, timed repeated readings can also be incorporated in small-group instructional routines. In small-group instructional routines, students can be grouped in

pairs to read to each other. This pairing can be either informal or formal. The pairing can be with same-age or cross-age peers. Koskinen and Blum (as cited in Schumm, 1999:25) discussed a procedure for informal timed repeated readings in pairs as follows:

- a. With the informal pairing, each student selects his or her own passage to read to a partner.
- b. The first reader reads the self-selected passage three times.
- c. After the second and third reading, the first reader tells the partner how his or her reading improved and notes this improvement in a reading log.
- d. The listener provides support with new words as needed.
- e. Then the students switch roles and repeat the process.

Generally, Class-Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT) is known as the formal timed repeated readings. According to Fuchs and Fuchs (1993:4) CWPT is a more formal, structured way to provide students with paired practice during timed repeated readings activities. CWPT differs from the informal procedure just described in that teachers appoint pairs (usually one more proficient reader with one less proficient reader), select reading material (at the lower reader's independent level), and allow the readers to read the same material to each other.

The following is the procedure for formal timed repeated readings as suggested by Fuchs and Fuchs (1993:5).

- a. The more proficient reader goes first, reading aloud to the partner for 5 minutes.
- b. The less proficient reader reads next, reading the same passage as the first reader.
- c. During CWPT sessions, which last approximately 30 minutes, students complete the timed repeated reading routine and also engage in correction, summarization, and prediction exercises.
- d. Students work with a carefully developed "script" that helps them to follow the sequence of activities and to provide feedback in sensitive and productive ways.
- e. As students work through the script they can earn points as a pair.

Regarding the use of timed repeated readings in small group, Fuchs and Fuchs (1993:5) state that intensive instruction is necessary to prepare students, but once the procedures are understood, they become automatic. Therefore, the teachers need to make sure that all students have understood the procedures of timed repeated readings in order to make successful teaching that is the students can do the procedures automatically.

Moreover, timed repeated readings is not only can be conducted in whole class and in pairs (or small-groups). It also can be taught for individually. Of course, individual practice with timed repeated readings can be facilitated by engaging the help of classroom volunteers and parents. Fuchs and Fuchs (1993:7) suggest teachers to plan for regular monitoring of individual students' repeated readings by having "students of the day". They explain then, the teacher might have three "Monday" children who read to him or her during a center time. Other children are assigned on other days of the week. This rotation provides a systematic way to plan for monitoring of student repeated readings.

Based on the teaching procedure reviews above, it can be concluded that the method of timed repeated readings can be conducted in a variety of ways. It is in line with Hudson (2006:5) who writes that timed repeated readings can be adapted in a variety of ways to meet students' needs, differentiate instruction, and keep motivation up. Moreover, Snow

(2002:102) writes that sometimes the timed repeated readings practice is done independently; sometimes the students are assisted by a teacher who provides corrective feedback; and sometimes it is done with peers. In addition, Browning (2003) indicates that timed repeated readings involves reading strategies via the teacher's instruction. It means that teachers can design the procedure for conducting timed repeated readings creatively regarding the purpose of teaching, for example by involving the reading strategies instructions in the procedure of timed repeated readings. Thus, teachers can adapt, change, modify, and adjust all of timed repeated readings procedures to fit their classroom.

To sum up, all of the above activities were adapted, changed, modified, and adjusted to fit the researcher's own classroom, his style of teaching, and his students. Therefore, the researcher pointed out the procedures of timed repeated readings for this study as follows:

- a. Teacher explains to the students that they will read the same material three times for a minute each time.
 - a. As preparation, tell the students to read at comfortable speed, not too fast but not too slowly.
 - b. When everyone is ready, tell the students to begin reading.
 - c. At the end of one minute, tell them to stop reading and write a small 1 in pencil over the last word that they read.
- b. The teacher instructs the students to go back to the beginning of the passage that they just read and read it again. At the end of a minute, the teacher tells the students to stop reading and write a small 2 over the last word they read.
- c. The teacher repeats this procedure for the third time, then asking students to write a small 3 over the last word.
- d. The teacher introduces some reading strategies for answering reading comprehension questions on TOEFL test.
- e. The teacher repeats activity a, b, and c. And ask students to apply the introduced reading strategies during the activities (activity a, b, and c).
- f. The teacher discusses the students' difficulties (if any) during the implementation of timed repeated readings.
- g. The teacher assesses students' reading comprehension on the passage they have read.

Methods

Participants

Thirty two students of Islamic University of Sultan SyarifKasim Riau majoring in psychology participated in this study. Seven were male and twenty-five were female. They took English course for level 2 in the Language Center. In addition, the researcher and his collaborator also participated in this study. The collaborator was the researcher's colleague.

Procedure

This study was carried out in a classroom action research design. It was a cyclical process consisting of the following phases.

1. Plan

In this phase, the problems or issues of reading rate and comprehension in the classroom were identified. Then, a plan of actions in order to bring about improvements in the

identified problems was developed. As mentioned before, the clearly identified problems in this research were the students needed to improve their reading rate and comprehension. To bring about the improvements in the identified problems, a plan of actions that implemented timed repeated readings was developed. Other important activities had been done in this phase such as designing lesson plans, organizing research schedule, creating research instruments (observation sheets, field notes, interview guides, reading rate measurements, and reading comprehension tests), and creating teaching materials (handout for the students, visual aids, etc.)

2. Action

In this phase, the plan was putted into action over an agreed period of time (nine meetings). The actions that were expected to change or improve the students' reading rate and comprehension were mixed with the process of collecting data. Therefore, the researcher and collaborator worked collaboratively in this phase.

3. Observation

This phase involved the researcher in observing systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions and opinions of those involved. It was a data collection phase where both researcher and collaborator used 'open-eyed' and 'open-minded' tools to collect information or data about what was happening.

4. Reflection

At this point, the researcher and collaborator evaluated, described, and reflected on the effects of the actions in order to make sense of what had happened and to understand the progress of solving the problems that they had explored more clearly. In this phase, the decision of doing further cycles of classroom action research was taken if the results of present cycle were not satisfied yet. Fortunately, the results of the first cycle showed the improvement on the students' reading rate and comprehension. Consequently, re-planning or conducting a new cycle was not needed.

Data Analysis

The kinds of data that analyzed in this study were qualitative and quantitative data. However, qualitative rather than quantitative data were appropriate in this study. The qualitative data from the observation checklists, field notes, and interviews were analyzed by interpretive techniques that involved these three concurrent flows activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In quantitative data analysis, descriptive statistics was used. This analysis was for describing, analyzing, and interpreting the collected quantitative data. The collected data would be accurately scored and systematically organized to facilitate data analysis. Therefore, two steps were done. First, scoring – the results of reading rate and comprehension tests were scored in the same way and with one criterion. The results of reading rate were calculated by words per minute (WPM) achievement. Then, the results of reading comprehension test were calculated by adding up all of the students' correct answers and dividing that total by the number of the test items. Second, mean – the results of scoring were calculated in order to find out the central tendency. Measures of central tendency are a convenient way of describing each indicators of reading comprehension with a single number. It was calculated by adding up all of the students' scores and dividing that total by the number of the scores.

Results and Discussion

This study was done in order to bring about improvements in the identified problems (reading rate and comprehension). As mentioned before, the starting point is really needed to be known before improving something. Thus, the starting points of the students' reading rate and comprehension were gained first. After that, the following procedure was done.

Plan

As the first phase of a cycle, several activities were done in order to plan the effort of improving the students' reading rate and comprehension. The activities were organizing research schedule, creating research instruments (observation sheets, field notes, interview guides, reading rate measurements, and reading comprehension tests), and creating teaching materials (handout for the students, visual aids, etc.)

The research schedule was organized without annoying the ongoing teaching and learning process. The lesson plans were designed for nine meetings. In the first meeting, the use of timed repeated readings was introduced. The teacher as the researcher focused on giving explanation and modeling the use of timed repeated readings and its benefits. Then, from the second to the eighth meeting, the use of timed repeated readings that involved reading strategies was explained, modeled, and practiced. The teacher explained and modeled reading strategies that the TOEFL test-takers should develop: previewing, reading for main ideas, using contexts for vocabulary, scanning for details, making inferences, identifying exceptions, locating references, and referring to the passage. Each strategy then was practiced by the students during each meeting. Therefore, the practiced strategy in meeting 2 was previewing; then, the practiced strategy in meeting 3 was reading for main ideas, and so forth. Finally, reading rate and comprehension tests were planned to be administered in the ninth meeting.

The research instruments were also prepared regarding the schedule. The instruments that were used for gaining qualitative data were observation sheets, field notes, and interview guides. Then, the instruments that were used for gaining quantitative data were reading rate and reading comprehension tests. To measure the reading rate and comprehension, each student was timed when reading a passage silently and then, it was followed by answering the comprehension questions of the passage. In addition, the teaching materials such as handout for introducing the technique of timed repeated readings, reading materials for practicing the technique were also prepared before the plan was putted into action.

Action & Observation

In the class, the planned actions were applied. In each meeting, the researcher did the actions based on what had been planned. It was showed by the results of observations (including field notes). The results revealed that the processes of teaching and learning by using timed repeated readings were done well.

The observations were done while doing the actions in each meeting. The collaborator helped the researcher in observing the actions. The collaborator used observation sheets for observing the teacher's and students' activities regarding the implementation of timed repeated readings. Besides, field note sheets were used to record important information that was not mentioned in the observation sheets. The followings were the results of observation during the use of timed repeated readings in eight meetings. The following table presents the

teacher's activities based on the results of observation sheets in the implementation of timed repeated readings.

Table 2. The Observed Activities in the Use of Timed Repeated Readings

No.	Teacher's Activities
1.	Explaining to the students that they will read the same material three times for a minute each time. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> As preparation, tell the students to read at comfortable speed, not too fast but not too slowly. When everyone is ready, tell the students to begin reading. At the end of one minute, tell them to stop reading and write a small 1 in pencil over the last word that they read.
2.	Instructing the students to go back to the beginning of the passage that they just read and read it again. At the end of a minute, the teacher tells the students to stop reading and write a small 2 over the last word they read.
3.	Repeating the procedure for the third time, and then asking students to write a small 3 over the last word.
4.	Introducing reading strategies for answering reading comprehension questions on TOEFL test.
5.	Repeating activity 1, 2, and 3. And asking the students to apply the introduced reading strategies during the activities (activity 1, 2, and 3).
6.	Discussing the students' difficulties (if any) during the implementation of timed repeated readings.
7.	Assessing the students' reading rate and comprehension on the passage they have read.

Table 2 shows that the teacher implemented the timed repeated readings (TRR) properly. In the first meeting, the teacher only implemented activity 1, 2, and 3 since it was the introduction to the timed repeated readings. Then, from the second to the eighth meeting, the teacher implemented activity 1 to 6. Finally, in the last meeting, the teacher only implemented activity 7.

In addition, the collaborator used field notes, instead of observation sheets in the phase of observation. The followings were the collaborator's notes (from the field notes) regarding the actions.

"In the first meeting, the TRR does not involve reading strategies via the teacher's instruction."

"In the second meeting, the TRR involves this reading strategy: previewing."

"In the third meeting, the TRR involves this reading strategy: reading for main ideas."

"In the fourth meeting, the TRR involves this reading strategy: using contexts for vocabulary."

"In the fifth meeting, the TRR involves this reading strategy: scanning for details."

"In the sixth meeting, the TRR involves this reading strategy: making inferences."

"In the seventh meeting, the TRR involves this reading strategy: identifying exceptions."

"In the eighth meeting, the TRR involves these reading strategies: locating references and referring to the passage."

"None of the students expresses difficulties in practicing the timed repeated reading and the strategies."

“In class discussion sections, most of the students argued that the strategies are useful when comprehending the text”.

“In the last meeting, all students do the tests individually.”

In conclusion, the results of field notes show that the teacher did not find any big difficulties in implementing the timed repeated readings. The reading strategies in timed repeated reading were easy to comprehend and use by the students. There were eight strategies that were developed in this study, namely previewing, reading for main ideas, using contexts for vocabulary, scanning for details, making inferences, identifying exceptions, locating references, and referring to the passage.

Reflection

The results obtained from the cycle showed that teaching timed repeated readings to the students did improve their reading rate and comprehension. The reading rate and comprehension scores obtained by the students in their starting point tests all showed compared to their tests results at the end of the cycle. It was found that all of the students recorded improvements in both their reading rate and comprehension scores.

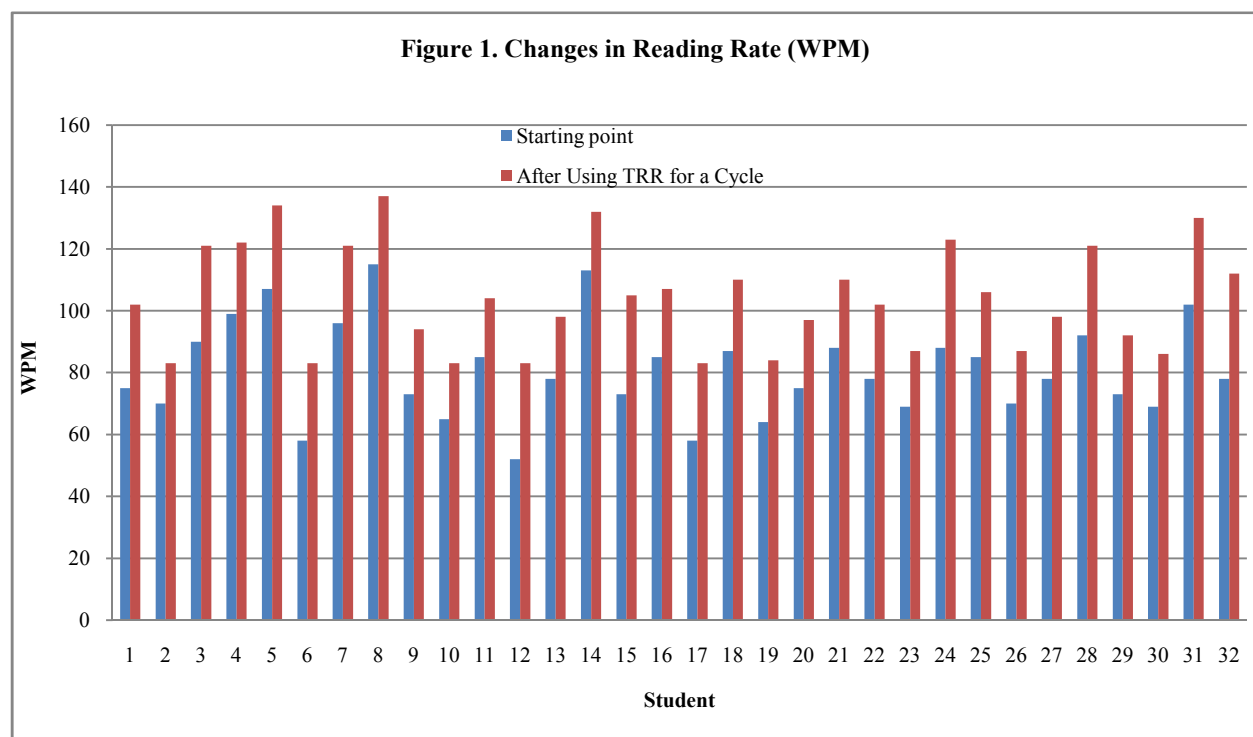


Figure 1 shows that all students made an improvement of words per minute. The results demonstrated the improvement in reading rate for all students which were influenced by the practices of using timed repeated readings that were provided during a cycle.

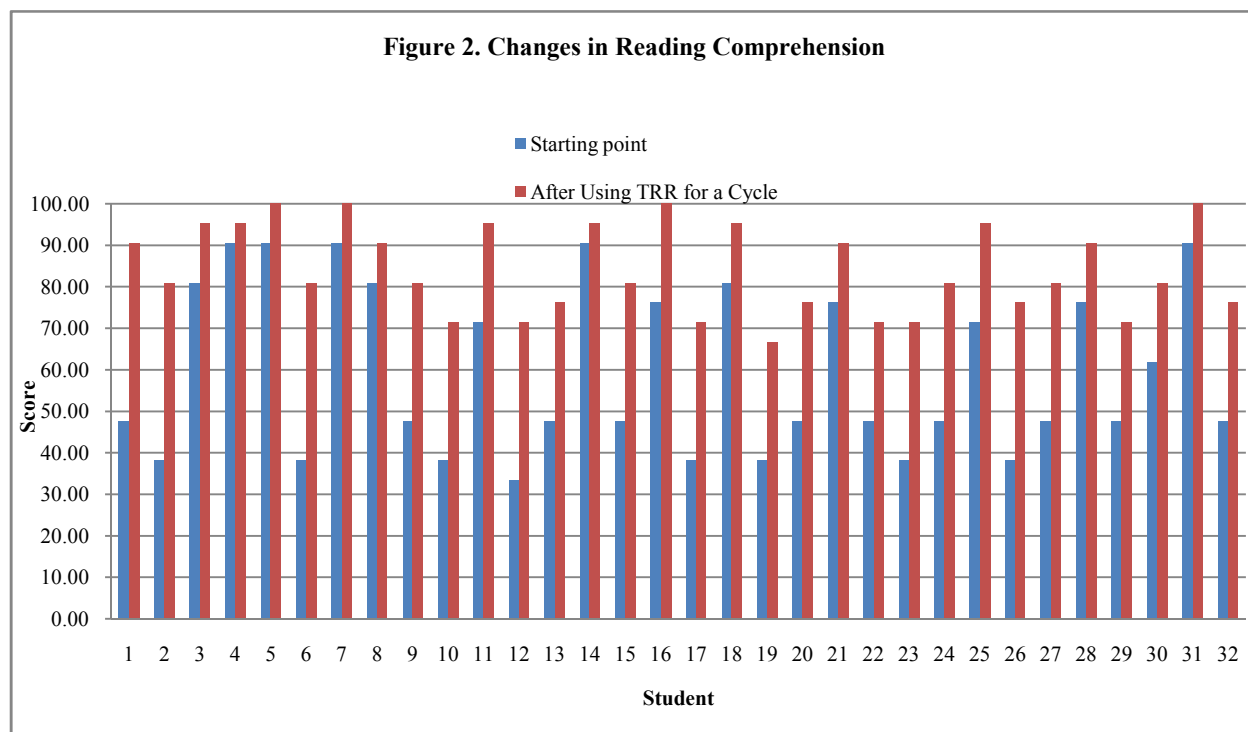


Figure 2 shows that all students also made an improvement in reading comprehension. The results demonstrated the improvement in reading comprehension for all students which were influenced by the practices of using timed repeated readings that were provided during a cycle.

The possible factors that influence the improvements in their reading rate and comprehension from the result of observation, field notes, and interview were identified as follows:

a. Providing a variety of reading materials

Supporting the students to read by helping them to find things to read during timed repeated reading played important role in improving their reading rate and comprehension. It was found that by providing the students with a variety of reading materials could develop their positive attitude toward reading; consequently, the students read more. Thus, if the students read more, they will be good readers that of course have good reading rate and comprehension too.

b. Using appropriate reading materials

Supporting reading by helping the students to find things to read was not enough. Based on the result of observations and interviews, it was found that the students preferred to read texts that were at the right level or not too difficult for them. Therefore, reading materials that are at the right level for them can encourage them to keep reading regularly then continuing to improve their reading rate and comprehension.

c. Practicing reading strategies

Students need reading skills in order to read with good comprehension. Before the students have reading skills, they should be taught reading strategies. Strategies are conscious behavior. When the students use the strategies overtime, they will automatically use the

strategies without thinking. If they use the strategies without thinking, it means that their strategies become skills. For that reason, the researcher develops students' reading strategies by teaching reading strategies to them. As the result of this research, making the students to practice reading strategies influenced their reading rate and comprehension improvement.

Thus, the use of timed repeated reading should consider these factors.

Limitation of the study

The study is limited in several ways. Firstly, the timed repeated readings in this study were implemented over a relatively short time. Therefore, it is impossible to make claims about the long-term effects of timed repeated readings on reading rate and comprehension. Secondly, there is a difficulty to match the interview schedule between the researcher and the participants. As the consequence, the researcher only could interview some students. If there were more times available to conduct interview, the researcher believed that the results of this study would be better.

Conclusion

The results of this study point to several things. Firstly, using timed repeated readings during a cycle can improve the students' reading rate and comprehension. All of the students make improvements in reading rate and comprehension which are influenced by the practices of using timed repeated readings that also involve the use of reading comprehension strategies via teacher's instruction. Secondly, the factors influencing the changes of the students' reading rate and comprehension are providing a variety of reading materials, using appropriate reading materials, practicing reading strategies. The use of timed repeated reading should consider these factors. Thus, it is recommended that the use of timed repeated readings should be continued.

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