Effects of Readers Theatre on Students' Oral Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension

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ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์	ผลการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละครต่อความคล่องและความเข้าใจในการอ่าน
ผู้เขียน	นางสาวสุกัญญา เตียวสกุล
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บทคัดย่อ

การสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละครเป็นรูปแบบการสอนที่มีลักษณะเป็นละคร ประ-กอบไปด้วยกิจกรรมที่ผู้เรียนเขียนบทละครจากเรื่องที่อ่าน และอ่านบทละครโดยใช้น้ำเสียง สีหน้า และท่าทางในการถ่ายทอดความรู้สึกของตัวละคร การวิจัยนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อศึกษาผลของการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละครต่อความคล่องและความเข้าใจในการอ่าน รวมถึงทัศนคติต่อการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละคร ของนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 1 วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ จำนวน 32 คน ของมหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏสงขลา

นักศึกษาได้รับการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านละคร เป็นเวลา 8 สัปดาห์ เครื่องมือที่ใช้เก็บข้อมูลการวิจัยได้แก่ แบบทดสอบความสามารถด้านการอ่านคล่อง แบบทดสอบความเข้าใจในการอ่าน กิจกรรมการอ่านบทละคร แบบสอบถามทัศนคติ และการสัมภาษณ์แบบมีโครงสร้าง

ผลการวิจัยสรุปได้ดังนี้

1. การใช้กลวิธีการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละคร สามารถพัฒนาความคล่องในการอ่าน อันได้แก่ น้ำเสียงในการอ่าน จังหวะจะโคนในการอ่าน ความลื่นไหลและความเร็วในการอ่านของนักศึกษาให้ดีขึ้น ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าคะแนนความคล่องในการอ่านของนักศึกษาสูงขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติหลังการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละคร

2. การใช้กลวิธีการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละคร สามารถพัฒนาความเข้าใจในการอ่านของนักศึกษา ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า คะแนนความเข้าใจในการอ่านของนักศึกษา เพิ่มขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ หลังการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละคร

3. การอ่านคล่องและความเข้าใจในการอ่าน มีความสัมพันธ์ในระดับปานกลาง อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ

4. นักศึกษามีทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละคร และนักศึกษารายงานว่าได้รับประโยชน์อื่น ๆ ได้แก่ ทักษะการเขียนดีขึ้น ได้เรียนรู้คำศัพท์มากขึ้น มีความมั่นใจและความสนใจในการเรียนมากขึ้น

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ABSTRACT

Readers Theatre is a form of theatre or drama involving students' writing a script from the text they read and reading the script using their voices, facial expressions and gestures to portray characters' emotion. This study investigated its effects on oral reading fluency and reading comprehension of 32 first year English major students at Songkhla Rajabhat University. The study also investigated their attitudes towards Readers Theatre.

The students participated in eight-week Readers Theatre activities. Five types of research instruments were employed to collect data: an oral reading fluency test, an English reading comprehension test, Readers Theatre activities, a questionnaire and a structured interview.

The findings were as follows:

1. Readers Theatre improved the students' oral reading fluency: expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness and pace. The results show that the students' post-test scores increased significantly after being trained with Readers Theatre.

2. Readers Theatre improved the students' reading comprehension. The results show that the students' post-test scores increased significantly after being trained with Readers Theatre.

3. There was a moderate significantly relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension.

4. The students had positive attitudes towards the use of Readers Theatre. They also reported the following advantages of the use of Readers Theatre: their improved writing ability, increased vocabulary and increased confidence and motivation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter presents the rationale and purposes of the study. The research questions, scope and limitations of the study, and definition of terms are subsequently presented.

1. 1 Rationale of the study

Since English has become the language of international communication, reading is the most common channel through which people from both native speaking countries and non-native speaking countries can be exposed to English (Crystal, 2003). Nowadays, English is not only used extensively on the Internet, but it is also used in a large number of printed media (e.g. newspapers, features, articles, catalogues, etc.). To get up-to-date information from these materials, reading ability is required. For this reason, English reading ability is necessary for people to deal with the information for whatever purpose they have. Because of its importance, English reading skills have been taught at all levels in Thailand, starting from kindergarten up to university.

Reading ability plays an important role in language learning. According to Nuttall (1996), in order to develop one's ability in a language, the best way is to go and live among its speakers and the next best way is to read extensively in the target language.

Among the four skills, reading is considered the most important and useful by most EFL learners. The main practical reason for a student to study English in a non-speaking environment is to learn to read and comprehend texts (Mungsiri, 2002). Eskey (1975, cited in Chiramanee, 1992) agrees that reading ability is often all that is needed by EFL learners. This is particularly true in Thailand where students learn English as a foreign language. Thai learners are exposed to English through

reading more than through any other mode. However, many studies conducted in Thailand have shown that Thai students' level of reading ability is surprisingly low (Wisaijorn, 2003).

EFL learners do not only suffer from low reading comprehension ability. Some have problems with oral fluency. Most reading teachers have observed students' jerky, stop-and-go reading. This lack of fluency is one of the many reading problems that hinders the acquisition of essential reading skills including comprehension (Allington, 2004). Students who are less orally fluent may have difficulty understanding when they read. In other words, oral reading fluency and comprehension have a close relationship with each other (National Reading Panel, 2000, cited in Willcutt, 2004).

Although most reading researchers agree that oral reading fluency is a key to recognizing words and reading comprehension, researchers' definitions of oral reading fluency differ greatly. Harris and Hodges (1995) define it as the "freedom from word identification problems"(p.85). For Zutell and Rasinski (1991, cited in Clark 2006) oral reading fluency is effortless or automatic reading in which readers group words into meaningful phrases while using the correct pitch and intonation. For some researchers, the definition of oral reading fluency has been expanded to word recognition including the comprehension process (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001). However, three elements seem to be accepted in most variations of the definition: accuracy in decoding, automaticity in word recognition, and the appropriate use of prosodic features including stress, pitch, and juncture (Grimshaw, 2004).

There are many strategies suggested to encourage the development of students' oral language ability. One of the strategies suggested by many researchers (e.g. Boucher & Leong, 2002; Samuels, 2002; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Grimshaw, 2004) to promote oral reading fluency is the use of Readers Theatre (RT).

Readers Theatre, a dramatic approach to literature, is the creative oral reading of any type of literature that contains 'theater', be it a play or otherwise

(White, 1993). Students create the drama through their voices as they read their lines instead of acting and using props.

The use of Readers Theatre in various educational settings is not a new idea and it has been recently used as a teaching technique in language classrooms. Scraper (2006) asserts that Readers Theatre can improve students' ability in many fields of language skills: promoting listening, speaking, reading, writing skills, increasing vocabulary, motivating reluctant readers, calling attention to word meanings, and allowing for practice in public speaking. Readers Theatre helps students realize that reading is a natural part of life. Students engaging in oral reading have greater confidence, fluency, expression and correct phrasing (Kozub, 2000). Lui (2000) also agrees that Readers Theatre is a wonderful activity where students are engaged in negotiating the meaning of a text, exchange their interpretations of the text and generate their responses to the text through multi-phrased dramatic classroom activities. Bafile (2005) maintains that Readers Theatre blends students' desire to perform with their need for oral reading practice. In addition, it offers an entertaining and engaging means of improving fluency and enhancing comprehension.

One effective technique in Readers Theatre is "Repeated Reading" which consists of rereading a short meaningful passage several times until a desired level of fluency is achieved (Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2000). Many researchers (Kozub, 2000; Takaguki, 2002; Shepard, 2005) suggest using Repeated Reading to develop oral reading fluency because the concept is simple. When students can read fluently with speed and accuracy, or with automatic decoding of text, the readers' attention can focus more on extracting meaning from the passage (Takaguki, 2002).

In spite of the above mentioned advantages of using Readers Theatre, there have been no studies on the effects of Readers Theater in Thailand. The present study was therefore conducted to investigate the effects of using Readers Theater in the Thai context to see if the technique can enhance Thai learners' oral reading fluency and their reading comprehension.

1.2 Purposes of the study and research questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Readers Theatre on oral reading fluency and ultimately reading comprehension. The study addresses the following research questions:

1) Does Readers Theatre help the students improve their oral reading fluency?
2) Does Readers Theatre help the students improve their reading comprehension?
3) What is the relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension?
4) What are the students' attitudes towards Readers Theatre?

1.3 Significance of the study

Readers Theatre may be beneficial and valuable for both students and teachers of English. Students may be equipped with a new and interesting technique to develop their reading ability which they may apply when reading required academic texts in university. For teachers, the results of this study may serve to underline the importance of employing Readers Theatre as a teaching technique in their reading classes.

1.4 Scope and limitation of the study

1. In this study, the students were trained with Readers Theatre by using narrative texts but expository texts were used to assess their reading comprehension. This is because the students are exposed to expository texts more often than to any other text types. It was anticipated that the students would be able to apply their

enhanced reading ability after Readers Theatre activities to read academic texts which are often required of university students.

2. This study was conducted with a specific group of the first year students of Songkhla Rajabhat University. The outcomes may not represent all Thai students at the same educational level at other universities throughout Thailand.

1.5 Definition of terms

Two key terms used in this study are defined below:

1. **Readers Theatre** is a form of theatre or drama. It mostly focuses on reading. In Readers Theatre, students read literary works, most often without costumes or sets. They use their voices, facial expressions and gestures to convey the emotion and situations of the various characters while reading printed scripts, thus freeing them from memorizing printed words. Two terms associated with Readers Theatre namely Repeated Reading and reading log are defined as follows.

1.1 **Repeated Reading** is a form of fluency instruction, in which students read the same passage over and over again. This can encourage and motivate students who are less confident in their reading.

1.2 **Reading log** is composed of guided questions for the students to record their conclusion about their personal understanding of their own reading behaviors before they write a script.

2. **Oral reading fluency** refers to the ability to read aloud quickly and automatically with proper accuracy, speed, expression, and the use of pitch, stress and intonation (Clark, 2006). Based on Samuels (2002), in this study, oral reading fluency covers four aspects as follows.

2.1 Expression and volume refers to the ability to read naturally with good expression and enthusiasm throughout the texts to match his/her interpretation of the passage.

2.2 Phrasing refers to the ability to read with generally well phrased, mostly in clause and sentence units with adequate attention to expression.

2.3 Smoothness refers to the ability to read with some breaks. Readers can resolve word and structure difficulties quickly through their self-correction.

2.4 Pace refers to the ability to read consistently conversationally.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED RESEARCH

This study was on the effects of Readers Theatre on students' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. Therefore, in order to consider the development of both oral reading fluency and reading comprehension as students engage in Readers Theater, this review will cover seven areas: reading, reading comprehension, reading process, reading fluency, oral reading instruction, Readers Theatre and Readers Theatre research.

2.1 What is reading?

Reading has been defined differently by reading specialists. A simple definition of reading is that it is a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written. Reading aloud without understanding does not count as reading (Williams, 1994). According to Eskey (2002), reading is a process of acquiring information from a written or printed text and relating it to what one already knows to construct a meaning from the text as a whole. He also states that one reason for reading is to understand what a written text means and to extract as much required information as possible. For Nuttall (1996), reading involves decoding and identifying. Good readers are able to identify words very rapidly. Reading also involves articulating and pronouncing. In a great many classrooms, the reading lesson is used as an opportunity to teach pronunciation, practice fluent and expressive speaking, and so on. For early readers, reading aloud is important. They have to discover how writing is associated with the spoken words they already use. In addition, reading involves understanding and responding. Reading enables readers to learn to recognize words, to spell and to activate imagination. Reading requires the comprehension of meaning on the part of the reader. Readers build up meaning by working through a text, converting letters into words, words into phrases, phrases into

sentences. The brain then decodes the text form into the meaning of the visual information needed.

2.2 Reading comprehension

According to Singhal (1999), reading comprehension refers to the ability to access the meaning of the texts. For Snow (2000, p.11), reading comprehension refers to "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language". Reading comprehension is the end goal of reading. If children cannot decode words, their comprehension will be impaired (Pressley, 2002). Thus, word recognition is one skill that distinguishes good readers from poor readers. Good readers can identify words automatically and rapidly if they are familiar with words that allow them to use context to make their understanding. In contrast, poor readers use context clues for the purpose of identifying individual words, not for deriving meaning from the text (Stanovich, 1986).

Many researchers state that the ability to understand and know the meaning of a reading text comes from using clues from the text and their background knowledge to make sense of the text (Almasi, 2003). It also involves prediction, the process of looking ahead of a clause or a sentence to the immediately succeeding clauses in its paragraph for what is presupposed to be the appropriate development of the topic (Winter, 1982, cited in Tadros, 1985). Pressley (2002) supports this idea by saying that students understand the text and can interpret it if they have achieved comprehension. According to Stanovich (1986), the ability to comprehend comes through the use of different cognitive resources. These abilities can distinguish a poor reader from a good one.

Accordingly, students need the ability to recognize words and syntactic patterns as well as higher level skills such as making predictions and guessing from context. Teachers of reading need to understand the nature of reading comprehension in order to enable their students to comprehend texts and to teach reading more

efficiently. The more teachers know about the processes and issues involved in reading comprehension, the better they can prepare good reading lessons for their classes (Rubin, 1993).

2.3 Reading process

Eskey (2002) suggests that models of the reading process can be categorized into three types: the bottom-up model, the top-down model, and the interactive model.

2.3.1 Bottom-up model

According to Eskey (2002), the bottom-up model of reading is defined as a reading process which mainly employs the information presented earlier in the data (i.e words, sentences, etc). This is the reason the approach is called "text-based" or data-driven processing. In other words, this processing is started by the incoming data within the text (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, cited in Silberstein, 1994). Nuttall (1996) views the bottom-up model of reading as a passive perspective process used when readers build up a meaning from the smallest textual unit at the bottom: recognizing letters and words, working out sentence structure to the larger unit at the top which can be compared to "a scientist with a magnifying glass examining the ecology of a tiny part of the landscape" (p.16). In bottom-up processing, the reader first reads the message contained in the text, and then decodes it. Perfetti (1984) suggests that in the theory of bottom-up processing, reading is considered the process of translating written elements into the reader's comprehension.

However, some weaknesses of the bottom-up model have been found and the model has been criticized by several reading researchers. Wallace (1992), for example, debates that the bottom-up model pays too much attention to the specific graphphonic and syntactic features of texts. In addition, Stanovich (1980), Smith (1982), and Kitsch (1983) (all cited in Chiramanee, 1992) argue that the bottom-up

model is insufficient because it fails to take many significant findings in reading literature into consideration. Moreover, researchers in this field find that the model does not reflect reading in either the first and second language. For example, Nunan (1996, p.256) argues that "we don't process print in a serial, linear, step by step way. Nor do we process print as a visual tape-recorder".

2.3.2 Top-down model

Carrell (1998) and Brown (1994) consider the top-down model as an active process of reading. In this model, reading is seen as directed by the brain, which in turn makes predictions about the meaning of the text based on what is already known. In other words, this approach relies on active participation by the reader in the reading process through prediction and information processing and bringing a whole prior experience or background knowledge into the arena of making decisions about what something means. Nuttall (1996) compares this approach to an eagle's eye view of the landscape. Additionally, Samuels and Kamil (1988) state that the top-down model starts with hypotheses and predictions and attempts to verify them by working down to the printed stimuli.

Goodman (1967, cited in Qui-mei, 2007) states that in the top-down model of the reading process, readers bring a great deal of knowledge, expectation, assumption, and questions to the text and they continue to read as long as the text confirms their expectation.

Goodman (1969) view reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game". Readers construct meaning from written texts by using clues from three levels of language, the graphic input syntax and the syntactic and semantic systems of the language, to predict what information the text is going to contain (Goodman 1975, cited in Keenardputta, 1999). However, Goodman views that his psycholinguistic model of reading does not relate to EFL readers. Later. Coady (1979, cited in Keenardputta, 1999) applied Goodman's model to reading English as a second and foreign language. He proposed that, to comprehend any text, the reader

has to have three areas of knowledge: conceptual ability, process strategies, and background knowledge. In his model, a conceptual ability is general intellectual ability. Process strategies involve diverse sub-elements of reading ability comprising knowledge of the phonological, syntactic and semantic system. Background knowledge refers to knowledge of the world.

Interestingly, according to Carrell (1998) the introduction of the top-down model has had such a deep impact on ESL/ EFL reading that there has been a tendency to suggest that it should take the place of the bottom-up approach, rather than functioning as its complement.

However, Carrell and Eisterhold (1983, cited in Keenardputta, 1999) argue that Coady's model has failed to provide enough focus on the role of background knowledge because Coady comments little about its role. Consequently, the role of background knowledge is now further explored.

The model of reading that emphasizes this knowledge is known as the schema-theoretical model, based on schema-theory. This theory views the importance of the acquisition of knowledge from and the interpretation of a text through the activation of schemata "networks of information which are stored in the brain which act as filters for incoming information" (Alderson, 2000). He further proposes that readers activate what they consider to be relevant existing schemata and map incoming information onto them. Reading is successful when a link is established between existing schemata and incoming information from the text.

Eskey (1986, 1988, cited in Chiramanee, 1992) points out that the major disadvantage of the top-down model of reading is the tendency to emphasize higher-level skills at the expense of lower level ones. These include placing greater value on cognitive skills such as the prediction of meaning by means of context clues and background knowledge and disregarding the importance of lower level skills such as the rapid and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms.

2.3.3 Interactive model

Because of the weaknesses of the two models mentioned above, a new model of the integrative reading has been proposed, the interactive model. The interactive model has been viewed differently by reading researchers. Eskey (2002), for example, defines the model as the process of combining the information acquired from the text with the knowledge supplied by the brain. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983, cited in Keenardputta, 1999), for example, regard reading as an interactive process because the interaction takes place between the reader and the text itself. Widdowson (1979, cited in Grabe, 1988) also views reading as an interactive process because both textual information and the reader's prior knowledge are needed for the information processing.

Under the interactive model, bottom-up processing evidently calls for "a sophisticated knowledge of the language itself" because the reader has to infer meanings and decides what to either retain or throw away while moving through the processing of information. At the same time, the top-down processing occurs when the reader's background knowledge is activated to make predictions or interpret the data within the text for global comprehension (Silberstein, 1994, cited in Brown, 1994, p. 284).

According to Stanovich (1980), during reading the focus shifts continually from one mode to another, a top-down approach being adopted to predict the probable meaning, then the mode shifting to a bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer said.

In essence, interactive model to reading seems to strike a balance among the various sub-processes of reading (Carrell, 1998). In his model, reading consists of a congruent processes, both top-down and bottom-up, that simultaneously provide knowledge at various levels.

2.4 Reading Fluency

Good readers read quickly, effortlessly, and automatically. When they read aloud, they read with tone and expression, inserting appropriate pauses, and emphasizing appropriate words (Pepper, 2005). Oral reading fluency is important for effective reading. When readers struggle with oral reading fluency, comprehension and motivation to read can be negatively affected (Hasbrouck, Ihnot, & Rogers, 1999). Besides, Pepper (2005) states that fluency does affect comprehension. That is, if students are struggling to decode words, it will interrupt their thought process. Because of its adverse effects on reading comprehension, oral fluency deserves extensive attention from reading teachers. Unfortunately, it is one area of reading that is too often ignored in the classroom (Lipson & Lang, 1991, cited in Rasinski, 2000).

In the past a general definition of reading fluency was the ability to read quickly and automatically (Harris & Hodges, 1995). However, today the definition has been broadened beyond mere word calling or simply stating the words in a text, to include comprehension as an essential part of fluency (Nathan and Stanovich, 1991).

The National Reading Panel of America (2000) defines fluency as the ability to read automatically with proper accuracy, speed, and expression, thus freeing the reader's cognitive abilities in order that the meaning of the text can be derived. If readers are low in fluency, they may have difficulty understanding the meaning of what they read.

In order to achieve speed and accuracy, readers must have well-developed word recognition skills. Fluent readers do not have to spend much time decoding words because they can recognize them automatically. Disfluent readers do not have this automaticity and struggle to decode texts. This makes comprehension more difficult for the disfluent readers (LeBerge & Samuels, 1974, cited in Ree, 2005). Likewise, Nathan and Stanovich (1991) and Kuhn and Stahl (2003) state that

fluency is the ability to rapidly recognize words while speaking with correct prosody, thus directing the attention toward cognitive processing. Zutell and Rasinski (1991) define fluency as proficient oral reading that includes reading that is effortless or automatic, correct phrasing, and the use of pitch, stress, and intonation. Fluent readers read with expression so that oral reading sounds like spoken language. They read with a combination of accuracy, automaticity, and prosody, while deriving meaning (Kuhn, 2004). They are able to group words into meaningful phrases, use punctuation, pauses, and emphasis to understand the meaning of the text. Disfluent readers, on the other hand, often read word by word or in chunks of one or two word phrases, and struggle with expression. They cannot transfer the prosodic elements of the language into written text. Their oral reading does not sound like spoken language (Reutzel, 1996 and Stanovich, 1986, cited in Tyler and Chard, 2000).

How does fluency relate to comprehension? LeBerge and Samuels (1974, cited in Ree, 2005) suggest that both decoding and comprehension take place in the short-term memory. If a reader needs to spend time analyzing and sounding out a word, little capacity is left for comprehending the word or thought expressed in the sentence or passage. When a reader automatically recognizes a word, little capacity is consumed and the short-term memory is left free to comprehend the word, sentence, and overall meaning of the text. The resulting expressive oral reading that incorporates the prosody of the language reflects comprehension as well because the reader would not be able to incorporate prosody without comprehension (Kuhn, 2004).

The National Institute for Literacy of America (2001, p.22) emphasizes the importance of fluency as a "bridge between word recognition and comprehension". When students become fluent readers, they do not have to concentrate on decoding words. They are free to make connections between texts and their own schema. For this reason, the National Institute for Literacy of America concludes that it is important for teachers to provide students with oral reading experiences as they read connected text. Researchers have maintained various theories about the relationship between fluency and comprehension. Several state that fluency

is the result of comprehension (Wilkinson & Mason, 1991, cited in Mundy, 2007). Allington (1983, cited in Mundy, 2007) maintain that an increase in oral fluency leads to better comprehension. Understanding of the text, in turn, promotes automaticity while reading (Tyler & Chard, 2000). It can be seen that there is a strong correlation between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. That is, each aspect of oral reading fluency has a clear connection to text comprehension (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005).

2.5 Oral fluency instruction

Although reading comprehension is the overall desired outcome of reading, the development of oral reading fluency should also be attended to (Rasinski, 2000). There may be different causes for disfluent reading, but these obstacles can be addressed through engaging learners or readers in authentic instructional methods and activities that are integrated into the regular reading curriculum.

Researchers suggest that one approach to teaching reading is Repeated Reading which involves having students read passages orally with guidance and feedback. Repeated Reading is a research-based strategy that increases students' fluency in oral reading. It is a technique in which students are given a specific text to read and reread several times to improve their accuracy, speed, and expression (Tyler and Chard, 2000). According to Samuels (1997), Repeated Reading is a technique involving rereading a short meaningful passage several times until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached. Repeating reading enhances understanding and leads to shared insights. The more students hear or read a story, the better they comprehend it and the more they love it (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).

Samuels (1997) has developed an instructional procedure to help students increase their fluency and accuracy through rereading. First, the students choose a textbook or trade book and read a passage from the book aloud while the teacher records the reading time and any miscues. Second, the students practice rereading the passage orally or silently several times. Then, the students reread the

passage while the teacher again records the reading time and notes any miscues. Finally, the students compare their reading time and accuracy between the first and last readings. Then the students prepare a graph to show their growth between the first and the last readings. The graph provides evidence of the students' growth in oral reading fluency.

The Repeated Reading technique has been extensively studied in first language reading and is deemed a "deceptively simple but extraordinarily powerful" method in developing readers' fluency skills (Dowhower, 1987, p.156). Rereading a passage has been found to increase a student's oral reading and accuracy (Carver and Hoffman, 1891, cited in Taguchi and Gorsuch, 2002). This, in turn, leads to better comprehension of the passage (Samuels, 2002).

According to Dowhower (1987) and Carver and Hoffman (1891, cited in Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2002) the practice effects of re-reading a passage for first language readers are carried over to a new unpracticed passage with regard to reading rate, accuracy and comprehension. Repeated Reading enables first language readers to read in larger and more meaningful phrases (Dowhower, 1987).

Taguchi and Gorsuch (2002) suggest that there seem to be no differences between first and foreign language reading. For them, the foreign language readers are most likely to go through the same cognitive processes that characterize reading English as a first language. Therefore, if too many of an foreign language readers' attention resources are spent on decoding words in print, their comprehension will be disrupted. This is especially true of EFL readers whose native language is typically written with a different orthography (Dowhower, 1987).

According to Rasinski and Hoffman (2003), foreign language readers' less developed fluency skills may also cause them to read more slowly than first language readers. This slow reading constitutes a major problem for foreign language readers because if they cannot read fairly quickly, they are unlikely to read much or with enjoyment. If they cannot enjoy reading, it seems unlikely they will acquire reading skills. In addition, if learners cannot read faster, it is unlikely that they can read better because of short-term memory overload (National Reading Panel, 2000).

In foreign language contexts, developing students' reading fluency has become a significant and important issue for pedagogy (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Some foreign language researchers have suggested that Repeated Reading might work as a means of developing word recognition skills and comprehension in foreign language readers continuing to develop reading fluency. For example, Wolf and Katzir-Cohen, (2001) state that Repeated Reading might be equally effective for foreign language readers who are slower and less accurate in decoding than first language readers. Anderson (2000) includes Repeated Reading among the several methods he proposes to develop foreign language readers' oral reading fluency.

In repeated reading, foreign language readers repeatedly read specified passages from easy texts in order to increase their sight recognition of words and phrases (Mundy, 2007). Repeated Reading can be an effective method to help foreign language readers build their reading fluency and to help them better comprehend texts (Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2002). However, there have been few studies on Repeated Reading in foreign language contexts and fewer on how Repeated Reading affects reading rate and comprehension of foreign language readers (Takaguki, 2002).

Although many researchers agree with the success of repeated reading there is a suggestion that students may not be motivated to learn from Repeated Reading. Students who are not competitive may have little interest in trying to achieve a better time on their reading over the course of several repetitions. Moreover, some students may become bored with reading the same text over and over again (Tyler and Chard, 2000). As a result, Readers Theatre has been introduced as a type of repeated reading that can engage and motivate students to participate (Millin & Rinehart, 1999). Readers Theater is the presentation of a short drama or interpretive reading that has been selected and rehearsed without the pressure of memorizing lines or the trouble of props (Tyler & Chard, 2000). Rinehart (1999, cited in Clark, 2006, p. 75) supports this by saying, "Readers Theater is an interpretive activity in which children practice and perform for others a scripted reading".

One strategy used in building fluency through Readers Theater is Paired Reading, a variation of Repeated Reading. Paired Reading is a reading activity

where a learner and a skilled reader read a text together. The learner takes over reading in sections where s/he feels confident (Iwahori, 2006).

Topping (1987, cited in Osborn & Lehr, 2003, p. 10) also cites Paired Reading as a variation of assisted reading. In this procedure, a partner reads with a friend who is having difficulty. Paired Reading sessions begin with the fluent readers read a chosen passage to their partners. Next, both of them read the passage several times together. In some procedures, the student uses a signal when he or she wants to take over the reading and read alone.

Although few studies have assessed the effects of Paired Reading, those that have shown an increase in students' oral reading fluency. Limbrick, McNaughton, and Cameron (1985, cited in Mundy, 2007) found that students participating in Paired Reading for six to ten weeks enhanced their reading performance by the end of the sixth week. Topping (1989, cited in Osborn and Lehr, 2003) also found that students in his study made at least a three-month gain for each month of Paired Reading when this strategy was used for 10–15 minutes per day for a duration of four months.

In summary, studies indicate Paired Reading to be an effective teaching technique for developing reading performance. Specifically, it seems to help readers develop their oral reading fluency.

2.6 Readers Theatre

2.6.1 What is Readers Theatre?

Readers Theatre is an instructional strategy that combines repeated oral reading with writing, performance, and creative skills (Millin & Rinehart, 1999, cited in Rees, 2005). Students use their voice, volume, expression and the language itself to communicate the meaning of a particular text (Kieff, 2002). Memorized lines, costumes or sets are not required. Instead, students interpretatively read the

script and bring the characters and story to life through voice, inflection, and pace (Stoyer, 1982, cited in Leong, 2003).

Readers Theatre has been defined in several ways. According to White (1993), it refers to a creative oral reading of literature that contains 'theatre', be it a play or otherwise. Students create the drama through their voices as they read their lines instead of acting and using props. Stoyer (1982, cited in Leong, 2003) defines Readers Theatre as a specific reading interpretative activity while Shanklin and Rhodes (1989, cited in Berlinger, 2000) define Readers Theatre as a technique that involves turning a story into a script for reading aloud. Leong (2003) defines Readers Theatre as an example of a story dramatization in which readers write drama scripts to portray characters from a text they have read. Routman (1991, p. 68, cited in Mundy, 2007) views Readers Theatre as creating a script from a narrative text and performing it for an audience.

Although different researchers have offered different definitions of Readers Theatre, in general, some basic characteristics of Readers Theatre can be identified as follows:

- No full costume is involved, and no full stage sets are required as performers use voices, gestures and facial expressions to project the mood.
- No full memorization is required as readers read from a physical script.
- Effort is made to develop a close relationship between the performer and the audience.

In Readers Theatre, students read play scripts aloud. Students choose roles and rehearse reading the script. During rehearsals, students practice reading a particular character's line in the script and interpret the story without using much action; instead they use their voices, gestures, and facial expressions. Then students give a performance of the script for the classmates. The steps for Readers Theatre are: (1) Selecting a script: students or teachers select a script and then read and discuss it.

(2) Rehearsing the production**:** students decide how to interpret the character they are reading. (3) Staging the production**:** Readers Theatre can be presented on a stage or in a corner of the classroom. The student do not have to memorize lines. They can read the lines from the text which helps improve their fluency (Tomskins, 1997).

Readers Theater can be incorporated into fluency instruction in various ways. Rinehart (2001) outlines some specific guidelines. On day one, the teacher selects what to read. On day two, the teacher and students read and reread the text and discuss the story. On day three, parts are either assigned by the teacher or chosen by the students. On day four, the students prepare, practice, and rehearse. On day five, the students perform in front of a class or group. At the close of the week, the teacher assesses what was accomplished and how the students felt about it through discussion. Rasinski (2003) also suggests an outline for using Readers Theatre: introducing the concept of Readers Theatre (or reviewing it if students have previously participated in such an activity); choosing the text for the students to read and motivating them to write a script for performance; rehearsing the script in groups, individually, with teacher support, and at home and finally performing the script for other classmates, other students, parents, etc

2.6.2 Benefits of Readers Theatre

As a teaching tool, Readers Theatre has important pedagogical contributions to make to language learning. Jordan and Harrell (2000, p.74, cited in Leong, 2003) observe that Readers Theatre is an effective approach for providing authentic reading practice especially in teaching reading fluency (rate, accuracy, phrasing, pitch, stress and expressiveness) as well as comprehension. They suggest that "involving students with enjoyable and exciting active reading procedures provides the key to fluency and higher levels of comprehension gain, through a natural process of Repeated Reading and interactive transactions with language".

Allington (2004) explains that getting students to write a script in Readers Theatre will enhance language learning, as scripts provide a rich source of

comprehensible output in language that is natural and spoken. This is in contrast to the mechanical approach of many course books where language is broken down into sentences or smaller units. Berlinger (2000) also states that writing scripted dialogues helps improve English expression because they permit students to actively acquire the vocabulary, idioms, grammar and syntax of English speech. As they involve all aspects of language, scripts that are rehearsed in class can offer students a dynamic encounter that comes closest to real communication. Since the writing of scripts involves all aspects of language, Readers Theatre will enable EFL learners to acquire language in a real communicative context and allow for creativity in language learning (Leong, 2003).

Moreover, Corcoran and Davis (2005) suggest that the implementation of Readers Theatre programs has a positive impact not only on the reading levels of the students, but also on the students' confidence and attitudes towards the technique itself. Worthy and Prater (2002) maintain that the goal of Readers Theater is to give students motivation to read and reread their scripts, not only to improve oral reading fluency but also to promote reading comprehension. Readers Theater gives the reader an authentic reason to engage in reading. Millin and Rinehart (1999) claims that children are engaged in this form of reading because they begin to identify themselves as successful readers as they complete their parts of the script. Through success, students' attitudes towards reading improve and students become more motivated to continue reading.

Readers Theater also gives students an opportunity to read and become better readers (Millin & Rinehart, 1999). Through he use of Readers Theater, students are engaged in a large amount of reading daily as they practice their scripts again and again. Many researchers believe that reading progress, overall, comes through the amount of reading that readers have accomplished (Rasinski, 2000; Stanovich, 1986). The more practice students have in reading, the better word recognition they will acquire (Millin & Rhinehart, 1999).

For Tierney and Readence (2000), Readers Theatre is appropriate for students of all ages and abilities. It is a student-centered activity that is adaptable to

any classroom situation. Dixon, Davis and Politano (1996, cited in Rees, 2005) suggest that teachers ask themselves the following questions when deciding whether they will employ Readers Theatre in their reading classes:

- Will using this activity give the students an opportunity to use several learning processes?
- What part of the curriculum will Readers Theatre address?
- Will Readers Theatre be a valuable and relevant learning experience for the students?
- Will using Readers Theatre enable the students to construct new knowledge and improve their skills?

Dixon (1996, cited in Rees, 2005) asserts that Readers Theatre is a simple, effective, and risk-free way to get students reading. Worthy and Prater (2002) concur that because there is no memorization involved in Readers Theatre, students can concentrate on oral reading. Through performance they will experience success, thus increasing their self-esteem. Schneider and Jackson (2000) maintain that drama is a powerful tool for instruction and learning because it supports literacy while encouraging students' imaginations. It further enhances students' experiences with literacy elements such as theme, plot, conflict, characterizations, and tone.

2.6.3 Readers Theater Research

There are some studies on Readers Theatre. Wolf (1993, cited in Talbot, 2007), for example, studied the implementation of a Readers Theater curriculum in a special education class of third and fourth graders in Copley, Ohio. Her conclusion was children formally labeled at risk became expert in interpretation, direction, set design and costume. They negotiated the critical analysis of text among peers. They used vocal tone and physical gesture to display their interpretations.

Millin and Rinehart (1999) studied the effects of participation in Readers Theatre on oral reading ability and motivation of second-grade Title I reading students. The experimental group met with their Title I teachers and engaged in Readers Theatre instead of their routine lessons. The researchers then tested and compared the experimental group with the control group, measuring the effects of Readers Theatre on oral reading acceptability, words per minutes (rate), oral reading comprehension, and attitudes towards reading. The results indicated that involvement in Readers Theatre enhanced oral reading word recognition, comprehension, and also boosted confidence and motivation towards reading. Participating students knew the vocabulary and used more expression. The classroom teachers felt that the students who had previously read word-by-word read more fluently.

Kozub (2000) studied the effect of Readers Theatre on oral language fluency of two third grade girls, of middle and lower academic achievement, including one English language learner and one third grade boy of middle academic achievement. The students focused on one Readers Theatre script and performance each week for over the course of three weeks; 45-50 minutes were allowed for this study each day. The most significant finding of the study was that all three students made fluency gains. They all developed their oral fluency in terms of expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, pace, juncture, intonation and stress.

Clark (2006) examined the effect of Readers Theatre on fluency development of three different first year students of Wayne State University in America for eight weeks. They were chosen based on two scores, their words correct per minute (WCPM) score and their Multidimensional Fluency Scale score (MFS). Over the course of eight-week intervention, Readers Theatre was used for fluency instruction and practice. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used as the researcher observed the students during the literacy block of the day; interviewed the three participants three times; one-on-one, gathered self-report sheets that the students filled out weekly; and recorded their WCPM and MFS scores weekly. The result revealed that all of them developed various aspects of fluency: expression and

volume, and pace. Motivation and confidence were also found to increase through the use of Readers Theatre. However, only one student improved his phrasing whereas all of them dropped their smoothness during week five. A possible reason for this decline was that they were given more difficult texts to read.

In another study, Mundy (2007) explored the effects of Readers Theatre on fluency, comprehension, and confidence of twenty-four third grade students in a Western North Carolina public country school for six weeks. Fluency and comprehension pre-tests were administered prior to the implementation of Readers Theatre; the same tests were administered upon completion of the six week program to measure the students' growth. Questionnaires were used to measured students' attitudes towards reading. Results indicated that the students benefited from Readers Theatre as shown by an improvement in their level of fluency, comprehension, and confidence.

Based on the studies reviewed above, most of them investigated the effects of Readers Theatre on learners' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. It should be pointed out that, few of the previous studies have investigated the students' motivation and attitudes towards Readers Theatre. Since oral reading fluency and reading comprehension play important roles in reading success, it is important to also investigate the effects of Readers Theatre on students' attitudes and motivation.

Moreover, whereas the idea of using Readers Theatre have been widely adopted in many ESL and EFL classrooms (Lui, 2000), in Thailand where English has also been taught as a foreign language, to the researcher's knowledge, there seem to be no studies on Readers Theatre. Since many researchers confirm that Readers Theatre is an effective and beneficial technique to improve students' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, it is worth trying Readers Theatre with Thai students to see whether this new teaching technique is viable in the Thai context as well as whether the technique is well received by Thai students.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology employed in this study. It begins with the research subjects. Then the research instruments are explained. The pilot study is also described. Finally, the procedures adopted in data collection and data analysis are presented.

3.1 Population of the study

There were 32 first year English major students at Songkhla Rajabhat University. These students enrolled in the Language Learning through Drama course, in the first semester of 2008. Hence, all of them were chosen for this study. The present research procedure was incorporated into the Language Learning through Drama course because the process of Readers Theatre fitted in with the purpose of the course. The classes conducted by a native speaker and the researcher met for three periods a week.

3.2 Research instruments

Five instruments were used to collect data in this study: an English reading comprehension test, an oral reading fluency test, a series of Readers Theatre activities, a questionnaire, and a structured interview.

3.2.1 English reading comprehension test

In order to measure the subjects' English reading comprehension ability, an English reading comprehension test was used as a pre-test and a post-test. The test consisted of two expository passages at an appropriate level of language and content familiarity and a total of 20 items. Fifty minutes were allocated for the

students to complete the test. (See Appendix A). The details of test construction and the piloting of the test are as follows.

3.2.1.1. Test construction

In constructing the English comprehension test, two expository passages of between 300 and 500 words each were chosen. Expository texts were chosen because the students are exposed to expository texts more often and they have to read more expository texts in their academic setting more than any other text types. Heaton (1988, p.118) suggests that in testing reading comprehension "the reading passages should be similar to the type of reading material which students must be confronted with in their life." The subjects in this study were university freshmen and the syllabus requires them to read expository passages.

The two expository passages chosen for the test were "Igloo" and "Billion Dollar Barbie." The questions were developed by the researcher in the form of multiple-choice questions.

3.2.1.2 Piloting of the test

After the test construction, the pilot study was conducted with thirty freshmen from another university on 23rd June, 2008. This group of students was chosen because their learning background, learning context, and English proficiency level were comparable to those of the subjects in the main study. The main purpose of the pilot test was to assess the reliability of the test. It also helped the researcher improve the test.

After the pilot test, the scores of the students were established and analyzed to determine how well they performed on the test. All the items in the test were then statistically analyzed for their reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The reliability of the test was .822, which means that the test was highly

reliable. The test scores were also analyzed for the mean score and the standard deviation.

The difficulty index and discrimination index of each item were calculated. Items with a difficulty index between 0.20 and 0.80 and a discrimination index ≥ 0.20 were retained in the experimental comprehension test (Heaton, 1988; Alderson, Clapham and Wall, 1955).

3.2.2 Oral reading fluency test

To measure the subjects' oral reading fluency, a 401-word long extract from Spargo (1989) was used before and after the use of Readers Theatre activities. The students were asked to read the text orally and individually. Their oral reading was recorded. The extract was new to the subjects. The content and the language of the text as judged by the subjects' English class teachers were appropriate to the subjects' interests and language proficiency (See Appendix B).

3.2.3 Readers Theatre activities

The seven-week study was conducted in the form of a series of Readers Theatre activities. During the first week of the study, there was an orientation. The students practiced Readers Theatre activities to familiarize themselves with the process involved. During the remaining six weeks, the students were exposed to Readers Theatre activities. The following sections describe the weekly schedule of Readers Theatre activities and the materials used in the activities.

3.2.3.1 The weekly schedule

a. Friday's class

Each Friday afternoon, the students were given a story to read and a reading log worksheet to complete as their homework to prepare themselves for the following Monday's lesson.

b. Day 1 Monday (2 hours)

The students worked in groups of five or six, depending on the number of characters in the script, to discuss the story. The researcher worked as an assistant to encourage the students to share ideas about the story, characters, etc. After that they were asked to create a script based on the story. The students could add more characters or create a new situation to make their script fun and interesting. Then, they practiced the script by focusing on word pronunciation and meaning. Next, the students were assigned to read a script with their peers as a working in pairs activity. While the students were reading the script, the researcher offered assistance in correcting word pronunciation, reading with feeling and emotion, and reading at an appropriate rate and volume.

c. Day 2 Tuesday

The students continued the working in pairs activity in their own time by themselves outside of class.

d. Day 3 Wednesday (2 hours)

The students orally read and recorded their script reading individually onto a cassette tape in a language laboratory under the supervision of the researcher. Then they continued working in the same group, each group member reading an assigned role or roles.

e. Day 4 Thursday

The students continued practicing script reading in the same group by themselves outside of class.

f. Day 5 Friday (3 hours)

The students performed for their class. Each student (reader) could read more than one part, especially if there were several smaller parts. After performing, the students received feedback from the researcher. Then, each student was given a new story to read and a reading log to complete at home. They met on the following Monday to follow similar activities to those they had just completed during the previous week. The same procedure was followed for 6 weeks.

3.2.3.2 Materials

There were three sets of materials used in the Readers Theatre activities: a series of short stories, a reading log and a reading rate graph.

a. Short stories

Six narrative stories used in Sheperd's (2002) study were used in this study as practice materials in each of the 6 weeks of the main study. The level of the 6 texts ranged from easy to difficult based on scores of 5.6 to 7.3 on the Flesch-Kincaid Grade scale with a mean score of 6.6 (See Appendix C).

b. Reading log

A reading log adapted from Carlisle (2000) was used weekly to allow the students to record their conclusions about their personal understanding of their own reading behaviors before they wrote their own scripts. The reading log is a tool for encouraging students to enter and explore their world (Carlisle, 2000) and through the use of this technique the students' comprehension could be assessed. It included guided questions about the story they read and their thoughts and feelings. All the students were asked to complete this report sheet in Thai after finishing reading each of the six short stories as homework (See Appendix D).

c. Reading rate graph

This instrument was used to record the students' oral reading performance when the students worked in pairs. Their correct words were checked for pronunciation and graphed by their partner. The graph was able to motivate the students to reread a script again and again. The scale on the x-axis represented the anticipated number of times a text was read. The y-axis represented the criterion number of words per minute. This information was vital in determining the improvement of the students' oral reading fluency (See Appendix E).

3.2.4 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used at the end of the study to investigate the subjects' attitudes towards the use of Readers Theatre activities. The English version of the questionnaire was adapted from Boucher and Leong (2002). The questionnaire was translated into Thai to be used as an instrument in this study to ensure that the intended meaning could be conveyed to the subjects (See Appendix F).

The questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions concerning Readers Theatre activities done in class. The students were asked to express their opinions, feelings or beliefs according to the rating scale from 5 "strongly agree" to 1 "strongly disagree".

3.2.5 Structured interview

An interview was conducted with the students at the end of the study. It was conducted with ten randomly selected students in order to obtain more in-depth information, such as their opinions about the technique and their level of confidence when they spoke English. The interview was conducted in Thai by the researcher and was recorded. The time spent on the interview was 10 minutes for each student (See Appendix G).

3.3 Data collection

The study was run from June to September, 2008. It was conducted in the Learning Language through Drama class which occupied three periods a week. Special classes were also organized: two classes on Monday and one on Wednesday.

The data were collected in the first week of the procedure and the last week after the use of Readers Theatre activities. In the first week, two activities were conducted by way of a pre test. Firstly, the students took the Reading Comprehension Test. The test was timed at 50 minutes. Secondly, the students took a Reading Rate

Fluency Test by reading a text orally and their reading was recorded. The purpose of these procedures was to establish the subjects' reading comprehension proficiency and oral reading fluency. At the end of the last week of the procedure the students took the same reading comprehension test and recorded their reading fluency by way of a post test using the same reading passage used in the pre-test. Thereafter, the questionnaire was distributed once the students had finished the oral reading fluency test.

The entire procedure of study is summarized in the table below.

Table 3.1: Procedure of the study

Steps			Time used (hrs.)	Days	Students' activities
Pre-test			2		1. Taking a reading comprehension test 2. Taking an oral reading fluency test
Readers Theatre Activity	Phase 1: Introduction		1		1. Having an orientation
			2		2. Practicing Readers Theatre activities
	Phase 2: Exposure to Readers Theatre Activities (6 weeks)		-	**Friday's class in the afternoon**	1. Receiving a story to read and a reading log to complete at home
			2	**Monday**	1. Discussing the story in groups 2. Writing a script in group 3. Practicing word pronunciation in group 4. Reading a script in pairs
			-	**Tuesday**	1. Working in pairs (continued)
			2	**Wednesday**	1. Recording a script reading individually 2. Working in groups to assign roles
			-	**Thursday**	1. Practicing a script reading in groups
			3	**Friday**	1. Performing for their class 2. Receiving a new story for the coming week
Post-test			4		1. Taking the reading comprehension test 2. Taking the oral reading fluency test 3. Completing the questionnaire 4. Attending a structured interview

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Oral reading fluency test

The reading fluency data were analyzed in terms of fluency (expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace) by two English native-speaker teachers at Songkhla Rajabhat University, using the Multidimensional Fluency Scale. This assessment consists of a 4-point Likert scale that rates four specific aspects of fluency: expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace (See Appendix H).

3.4.2 Reading comprehension test

The students' scores from the pre-test and post-test were compared and the means and standard deviations were calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences / Personal Computer program (SPSS/PC). Then the means scores from the pre- and post tests were compared by a paired sample t-test so as to determine whether they were significantly different or not.

3.4.3 Relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to find out whether there was any relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension.

3.4.4 Students' attitudes towards Readers Theatre

The students' responses to the questionnaire were analyzed to establish their attitudes towards Readers Theatre using frequency and percentages, means and standard deviations. The range of the mean scores were interpreted for the levels of agreement as follows.

4.21 – 5.00   Strongly agree

3.41 – 4.20   Agree

2.61 – 3.40   Neutral

1.81 – 2.60   Disagree

0.00 – 1.80   Strongly disagree

Finally, the data from a reading logs and interviews were categorized in terms of the subjects' emotions, feelings and perceptions, script performance, oral fluency and comprehension.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study, covering the effects of Readers Theatre on oral reading fluency, the effects of Readers Theatre on reading comprehension, the relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension and the students' attitudes towards Readers Theatre. The discussion of the findings is also presented.

4.1 Findings of the study

4.1.1 Effect of Readers Theatre on oral reading fluency

In order to answer the first research question, whether Readers Theatre helps the students improve their oral reading fluency, the overall mean scores of the pre- and post-oral reading fluency test were compared using paired sample t-test. Then, the mean scores of the four aspects of fluency – expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace were analyzed.

Table 4.1 presents a comparison of the scores from the students' overall scores on the pre- and post-test oral reading fluency test.

Table 4.1: Overall oral reading fluency scores before and after the use
of Readers Theatre

Tests Total = 16	Mean	Std. Deviation	Difference	df	T
Pre-test	9.50	2.423			
Post-test	12.38	1.385	2.875	31	10.286*

* p < 0.05

The students did significantly better in the post-test than in the pre-test. There was an improvement of mean scores from 9.50 to 12.38 in the post-test (t = 10.286, p < 0.05). This implies that Readers Theatre did enhance their oral reading fluency since after being trained, the students' oral reading fluency improved significantly.

A further analysis into the improvement of each aspect of oral reading fluency was conducted and the results of the two native speaker teachers' rating of the students' expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace are presented in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

Table 4.2: Mean scores of aspects of oral reading fluency before and after the use of Readers Theatre

Aspects of oral reading fluency	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	df	T
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
1.Expression and volume	2.19	.859	3.03	.538	.84	31	7.602*
2. Phrasing	1.88	.751	2.88	.609	1.00	31	11.136*
3. Smoothness	2.59	.756	3.50	.622	.91	31	7.440*
4. Pace	2.41	.712	3.03	.695	.63	31	5.358*

* p < 0.05

Table 4.2 shows that the mean scores of the students' expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness and pace in the pre- and post-tests were significantly different at the 0.05 level. It is clear that the students' oral reading fluency in all aspects increased after training. The results suggest that the aspect that improved the most was phrasing (D = 1.00) whereas pace improved the least (D = .63).

The data presented in Table 4.3 below show the percentages of the students'
Multidimensional Fluency Scales (MFS) scores in all aspects.

Table 4.3: Students' multidimensional fluency scales scores before and after the use
of Readers Theatre

Multidimensional Fluency Scale (MFS)		Aspects of oral reading fluency			
		Expression and Volume	Phrasing	Smoothness	Pace
1 Poor	Percentages of student pre-test	21.87%	34.37%	9.37%	9.37%
	Percentages of student post-test	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Difference of student percentages	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
2 Fair	Percentages of student pre-test	43.75%	43.75%	28.12%	43.75%
	Percentages of student post-test	1.25%	25.00%	6.25%	21.87%
	Difference of student percentages	**31.25%**	**18.75%**	**21.87%**	**21.87%**
3 Good	Percentages of student pre-test	28.12%	21.87%	56.25%	6.25%
	Percentages of student post-test	71.90%	62.50%	37.50%	56.25%
	Difference of student percentages	**43.75%**	**40.62%**	**18.75%**	**50.00%**
4 Excellent	Percentages of student pre-test	6.25%	0.00%	6.25%	3.12%
	Percentages of student post-test	15.60%	12.50%	56.25%	21.87%
	Difference of student percentages	**0.93%**	**12.50%**	**50.00%**	**18.75%**

Table 4.4: Summary of the students' shifts in level in each aspect

Pre-test (N = 32)			Post-test (N = 32)			
Aspect		Level	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
Expression and volume	1	7 (21.87%)		4 (57.14%)	3 (42.86%)	-
	2	14 (43.75%)		-	13 (92.86%)	1 (7.14%)
	3	9 (28.12%)		-	7 (77.77%)	2 (22.22%)
	4	2 (6.25%)		2 (100%)*	-	-
Phrasing	1	11 (34.37%)		8 (72.73%)	3 (27.27%)	-
	2	14 (43.75%)		-	13 (92.85%)	1 (7.15%)
	3	7 (21.87%)		-	4 (57.14%)	3 (42.85%)
	4	0 (0.00%)		-	-	-
Smoothness	1	3 (9.37%)		1 (33.33%)	2 (66.66%)	-
	2	9 (28.12%)		-	7 (77.77%)	2 (22.22%)
	3	18 (56.25%)		1 (5.55%)*	2 (11.11%)	15(83.33%)
	4	2 (6.25%)		-	1 (50.00%)	1 (50.00%)
Pace	1	3 (9.37%)		3 (100%)	-	-
	2	14 (43.75%)		4 (28.57%)	8 (57.14%)	2 (14.28%)
	3	14 (43.75%)		-	9 (64.28%)	5 (35.71%)
	4	1 (3.12%)		-	1 (100%)	-

* students with a drop in their levels

As shown in Table 4.3, all the students showed improvements in all aspects of their oral reading fluency. Details of the improvement in each aspect are also given in Table 4.4. The following sections discuss the finding about the improvement in each of the following aspects of the students' oral reading fluency.

4.1.1.1 Expression and volume

Table 4.3 shows that in the pre-test, the largest proportion of the students were rated at level 2 while the smallest were at level 4. There were 21.87% of the students whose *expression and volume* scores were at level 1, 43.75% were rated at level 2, 28.12% were recorded at level 3 and 6.25% of the students were at level 4. After the training, all the students (100%) who got level 1 developed their *expression and volume* to higher levels; 31.25% improved to level 2; 43.75% improved to level 3 and 0.93% of the students increased to level 4. To be specific, Table 4.4 further shows that among all the students rated level 1 in the pre-test, 57.14% and 42.85% shifted to level 2 and 3 in the post-test. As shown in Table 4.3, it is apparent that the majority of students (71.9%) were at level 3 in the post- test while none of the students were rated at level 1.

The students' improvement in this aspect is confirmed by the native speaker teachers and the researcher who commented before the use of Readers Theatre that most of the students read with an emotionless, monotone voice. Some read a word by saying it louder and softer. Some tried to change the pitch of their voices even though it did not sound natural.

After a few weeks of Readers Theatre, an improvement in the performance of most students was noticed. With increasing confidence, the students tried to choose a different voice that would portray the character which they were playing. The students were able to read more freely and with a natural voice. Although far from perfect, they were able to read with greater *expression and volume* and to use appropriate words. Hence, their monotone voices had become

conversational and natural. That is, the students concentrated on elements of voice carrying meaning, for example, they raised their voice at the end of a sentence if it ended with a question mark and raised pitch to suggest excitement.

4.1.1.2 Phrasing

As *expression and volume* increased, so did *phrasing*. As shown in Table 4.3, in the pre-test, 34.37% of the students were rated at level 1, most of the students (43.75%) were rated at level 2, about one-fourth (21.87%) were scored at level 3 and none were at level 4. However, the majority of the students (62.5%) developed to level 3 in the post-test. The 18.75% of the students who had been rated at level 2 improved their skills to higher levels and the percentages of students at level 3 increased from 21.87% to 62.50%, whereas the percentages of those rated at level 4 increased by12.50%.

A closer look at the data in Table 4.4 reveals the improvements in levels achieved by the students and it can be observed that 72.73% of the students formerly rated at level 1 in the pre-test shifted to level 2 in the post-test and 27.27% shifted to level 3. Moreover, 92.85% of the students formerly rated at level 2 in the pre-test shifted to level 3. More than a third of the students (42.85%) rated at level 3 developed to level 4.

After the training, one thing clearly observed was the effect of punctuation. The punctuation helped the students develop their two-and three-word phrases into longer phrases.

4.1.1.3 Smoothness

Table 4.3 shows that in the pre-test, 9.37% of the students were rated at level 1, 28.12% at level 2, and more than half of the students (56.25%) were at level 3 with a few students (6.25%) at level 4. After the training, it is notable that all of the

students at level 1 improved to a higher level as did the 28.12% at level 2 in the pre-test who developed their *smoothness* to level 3 and level 4. In fact, Table 4.4 indicates that more than three quarters (77.77%) of the students rated at level 2 developed to level 3 with 22.22% of them shifting to level 4. Overall, half of the students (50%) improved from lower levels in the pre test to level 4 after the training.

Table 4.3 also reveals that when compared to other aspects of oral reading fluency, most students got the highest scores under the *smoothness* category with 56.25% of the students achieving level 4 in the post test.

4.1.1.4 Pace

As is apparent from Table 4.3, in the pre-test the majority of the students were rated at level 2 and 3. 9.37% of students were rated at level 1, 43.75% at level 2 while 43.75% and 3.12% were at level 3 and level 4 respectively. After the training, all students in level 1 and 21. 87% in level 2 improved their pace to higher levels. More specifically, the number of students in level 3 increased by 12.50% whereas the number of the students scoring at level 4 increased by 18.75%. As is apparent from table 4 only 21.87% of the subjects were rated at level 2 in the post-test.

The data presented in Table 4.4 delineates these findings. All (100%) of the students rated at level 1 in the pre-test shifted to level 2, whereas 57.14% of the students rated at level 2 increased to level 3 and 14.28% of them developed to level 4. More than a third of the students (35.71%) rated at level 3 in the pre-test shifted to level 4.

4.1.2 Effect of Readers Theatre on reading comprehension

In order to answer the second question, whether Readers Theatre helps the students improve their reading comprehension, the scores of the students in both the pre-and post-test of reading comprehension were analyzed and compared using a

paired sample t-test to establish if there was a significant difference in their reading comprehension.

Table 4.5 presents the students' mean scores in both the pre-test and post-test.

Table 4.5 : Students' reading comprehension scores before and after the use of Readers Theatre

Test (20)	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	df	T
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Reading Comprehension	9.00	2.032	10.84	2.592	1.844	31	3.533*

$* p < 0.05$

Table 4.5 shows that the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test were significantly different at the 0.05 level. The students' post-test scores increased significantly after being trained with Readers Theatre showing that the students' reading comprehension improved significantly. Their mean score in the pre-test was 9.00 while that in the post-test it was 10.84. Based on the result of the t-test this difference was significant ($t = 3.533$, $p < 0.05$). It is therefore evident that the use of Readers Theatre enhanced the students' ability to comprehend texts.

4.1.3 Relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension

To answer the third research question on the relationship between the students' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, the scores of the reading

fluency test and reading comprehension test of each student in the post-test were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients.

Table 4.6 presents a summary of the correlation coefficients for oral reading fluency and English reading comprehension

Table 4.6: Correlation between oral reading fluency and English reading comprehension scores in the post-test

Variables	Correlation	
	Oral Reading Fluency	Reading Comprehension
Oral Reading Fluency	1.000	.425*
English Reading Comprehension	.425*	1.000

$p < 0.05$

According to Table 4.6, there was a significant moderate relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension (r = .425, p < 0.05), indicating that as students' oral reading fluency increased, their reading comprehension also improved. This suggests that students with high oral reading fluency would also tend to have high reading comprehension and vice versa.

As Pepper (2005) states, fluency affects comprehension. The present study confirms this statement. That is the students' oral reading fluency' scores and their English reading comprehension' scores were related. This suggests that students who are able to read fluently are able to continue their reading through their thought process and thus comprehend the text (Rasinski, 2000). At the same time, the students' ability to comprehend the text would enable them to read it fluently.

Interestingly, although the students in this study were trained with Readers Theatre using narrative texts, the results show that when they were tested using expository texts, they were able to do better in the post-test in both their oral

reading fluency and reading comprehension. This would suggest that the students were able to apply their reading skills gained through Readers Theatre in a broader context.

America's National Institute for Literacy (2001, p.22) emphasizes the importance of fluency as "a bridge between word recognition and comprehension". When students become fluent readers, they do not have to concentrate on decoding words. They are free to make connections between text and their own schema. For this reason, it is important for teachers to provide students with oral reading experiences as they read connected text.

4.1.4 Students' attitudes towards Readers Theatre

To answer the fourth research question about the students' attitudes towards Readers Theatre, the students were asked to respond to the questionnaire about their opinions and feeling towards Readers Theatre activities. In addition, ten randomly selected students were interviewed to obtain more in-depth information.

The students' responses to the questionnaire were divided into two sections: a checklist section and an open-ended question section. The students' responses to the open-ended question section and the structured interview were coded and translated into English by the researcher.

4.1.4.1 Data obtained from the questionnaire : Checklist section

The students' responses to each item on the checklist section were analyzed for the mean scores using the SPSS/ PC program. The mean scores were interpreted for the level of agreement. The results from the thirty-two students' responses to the checklist section are shown in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: Students' attitudes towards Readers Theatre

	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of agreement
1.	The English lesson is more interesting with Readers Theatre.	4.00	.762	Agree
2.	Readers Theatre is a good way of learning spoken English.	4.03	.822	Agree
3.	Readers Theatre is an easy way of learning English.	3.00	.568	Neutral
4.	Writing the script for Readers Theatre is difficult.*	2.81	.738	Neutral
5.	I enjoy working with my friends in writing.	3.97	.861	Agree
6.	I enjoy working with my friends in performing Readers Theatre.	4.22	.706	Strongly agree
7.	I feel more confident using English through Readers Theatre	3.47	.879	Agree
8.	Readers Theatre makes a difference in the way I learn English.	3.63	.609	Agree
9.	After watching my friends perform, I want to improve my language.	4.50	.622	Strongly agree
10.	Readers Theatre has helped me improve my writing skills.	4.09	.777	Agree
11.	Readers Theatre has helped me improve my reading skills.	4.03	.782	Agree
12.	I prefer to learn English in a group than on my own.	3.44	.948	Agree
	Average	**3.80**	**.493**	**Agree**

* Negative values were adjusted

** 4.21- 5.00 = Strongly agree   1.81-2.60 = Disagree
3.41- 4.20 = Agree   1.80-0.00 = Strongly disagree
2.61- 3.40 = Neutral

Overall, the results show that the students held positive attitudes towards Readers Theatre activities because they agreed that Readers Theatre benefited their language skills (Items 1-12: $\bar{x}$: 3.80). They strongly agreed that they wanted to improve their language after watching their friends performed (Item 9: $\bar{x}$ = 4.50). The students agreed that they wrote better (Item 10 $\bar{x}$ = 4.09), and read better (Item 11: $\bar{x}$ = 4.03). They agreed that Readers Theatre was a good way of learning spoken English (Item 2: $\bar{x}$ = 4.03) and were interested in learning a language through Readers Theatre (Item 1: $\bar{x}$ = 4.00). In addition, they agreed that Readers Theatre made a difference to the way they learned English (Item 8: $\bar{x}$ = 3.63). The students felt more confident using English through Readers Theatre (Item 7: $\bar{x}$ =3.47). Moreover, they expressed their learning preferences as reflected in Items 5, 6 and 12. The students strongly agreed that they enjoyed working with their friends in performing Readers Theatre (Item 6: $\bar{x}$ = 4.22) and they agreed that they enjoyed working with friends in writing (Item 5: $\bar{x}$ = 3.97). They preferred to learn English in groups rather than on their own (Item 12: $\bar{x}$ = 3.44).

However, the students were neutral about the statements that Readers Theatre was an easy way of learning a language (Item 3: $\bar{x}$ = 3.00) and that writing a script for Readers Theatre was difficult (Item 4: $\bar{x}$ = 2.81).

The findings above show that the students held positive attitudes towards the use of Readers Theatre. They agreed that this method provided them with several benefits. Most of them were satisfied with this method and viewed it as a useful way of enhancing their English abilities (oral reading and writing), motivating them to learn the language and increasing their confidence in learning and using it.

4.1.4.2 Data obtained from the questionnaire: Open-ended question

In an attempt to find out the students' attitudes towards Readers Theatre activity, their responses to the open-ended question were also examined and are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 : Students' comments about Readers Theatre gained from the questionnaire

Students' comments	Frequency N=32
Advantages	
1. Readers Theatre was a very good activity for language learning.	32 (100%)
2. Readers Theatre was fun and exciting.	28 (87.50%)
3. Readers Theatre boosted my confidence.	26 (81.25%)
4. I enjoyed practicing oral reading with my groups.	23 (71.87%)
5. My oral reading skills improved after training.	23 (71.87%)
6. Working with friends enabled me to share my ideas.	23 (71.87%)
7. I felt like a superstar when I acted for my peers.	13 (40.62%)
8. Readers Theatre enabled me to learn more useful vocabulary.	12 (37.50%)
9. Readers Theatre enabled me to write a script faster and more easily.	12 (37.50%)
Disadvantages	
1. Readers Theatre was time-consuming.	18 (56.25%)
2. I lost my confidence when my friends outperformed me.	8 (25%)

Based on the students' responses to the open-ended section of the questionnaire, all of them reported that Readers Theatre was a good activity for language learning. For most of them (87.50%), Readers Theatre was fun and exciting. Besides, for more than two-thirds of the students (81.25%), Readers Theatre

boosted their confidence in learning English. Moreover, 71.87% of them enjoyed practicing oral reading with their groups and they reported that their oral reading fluency improved after training. They also felt that working with friends enabled them to share ideas. Many other advantages were also reported. 40.62% of the students felt like superstars when they acted out dialogues. Some (37.5%) felt that Readers Theatre helped them learn useful vocabulary and write a script faster and more easily. However, some of them (25%) revealed that they lost their confidence when their friends performed much better than they did.

4.1.4.3 Data obtained from the interview

The information from the structured interview, examined and translated into English by the researcher is presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Students' comments about Readers Theatre gained from the structured
interview

Students' comments	Frequency N=10
Advantages	
1. Writing a reading log helped me to understand the texts I read better.	10 (100%)
2. Practicing a script many times made me more confident to read for my peers and teachers.	9 (90%)
3. I was shy and nervous in reading aloud and acting out in front of class but I became more active and confident after the training.	8 (80%)
4. Repeated reading motivated me to practice my scripts again and again.	6 (60%)
5. My friends always helped me when I mispronounced words and they taught me how to pronounce the words.	5 (50%)
Disadvantages	
1. Writing a script was very slow when we had different ideas in our group discussion.	3 (30%)
2. Readers Theatre was time-consuming. I had to work long hours.	2 (20%)

The data obtained from the interview with the ten randomly selected students confirmed the data obtained from the questionnaire reported above. More than two-thirds (80%) of the students admitted that before the use of Readers Theatre, they were shy and nervous in reading aloud and acting out in front of their peers but they became active and confident after the training. More than half of the students (60%) said that the repeated reading method in Readers Theatre motivated them to read texts repeatedly. Half of the students (50%) revealed that their friends

always helped correct them when they mispronounced words. This made them (90%) more confident to read for their peers and teachers. Moreover, all the students commented that writing a reading log helped them better understand the texts they read. However, some (30%) felt that they wrote a script very slowly because there were different ideas arising in group discussions. Besides, 20% of them stated that Readers Theatre was time-consuming.

Based on the data outlined above, it can be seen that the advantages of using Readers Theatre outnumbered the disadvantages. Hence, Readers Theatre seems to be a very good teaching technique for teachers since it not only improved the students' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, but also boosted their confidence in using language through discussion, acting and reading aloud.

4.2 Discussion of the results

4.2.1 Effect of Readers Theatre on oral reading fluency

One of the most interesting findings of the study is that the students' oral reading fluency significantly increased after Readers Theatre training. This indicates that the use of Readers Theatre benefits oral reading fluency. Based on the class teacher's and researcher's observation and also the data gained from the analysis of the subjects' oral reading fluency scores in the pre-test before the training, most students orally read fast without focusing on meanings. They just scanned the words as quickly as they could until finishing their task, while some students started reading very slowly to make sure they pronounced each word correctly. Some slowed down when they read difficult or unfamiliar words and then speeded up for familiar phrases or sentences. Throughout the Readers Theatre training, these problems gradually disappeared. Most students started to read the scripts conversationally and naturally through practicing with peers and in groups.

The results seem to agree with the study of Kozub (2000) whose findings suggested that Readers Theatre developed students' oral fluency in terms of expression and volume, smoothness, phrasing, pace, juncture, intonation and stress. This finding is also in accordance with previously discussed finding of Clark (2006), who studied the effects of Readers Theatre on fluency development. One of his findings was that the students developed various aspects of fluency: expression and volume, and pace through the use of Readers Theater.

4.2.2   Effect of Readers Theatre on reading comprehension

The result of this study indicates that the students' English reading comprehension significantly increased through the use of Readers Theatre. Noticeably, although the students' had been trained by using narrative texts, they were able to apply the reading skills gained through participating in Readers Theatre, to the reading of expository texts used in the post-test.

The increased reading comprehension scores in the post-test which can only be explained by the activities they had experienced in Readers Theatre. Readers Theatre consists of Repeated Reading which is the technique of rereading a short meaningful passage several times until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached. Repeated reading enhances understanding and leads to shared insights. The more students hear or read a story, the better they comprehend it and the more they love it (Harvery & Goudvis, 2000). In Readers Theatre activities, students first attempt to read and decode or translate print into sound. This process includes the use of phonics, context clues, sight words, and structural analysis. Next, the combination of sounds and printed letters become words and then word groups and then sentences. For most readers, these first steps in decoding are automatic, as is the next step: focusing on the meaning within and between words, sentences, and paragraphs. Reading also requires decoding and making meaning from graphic elements of the text as well as connecting these visuals with the printed letters and words. These actions are the basics of the comprehension process. For an individual to be a

successful reader, however, these actions must be combined with oral reading fluency (Ambruster, Lehr, and Osborn, 2001).

Another factor involved in Readers Theatre which might account for better reading comprehension is the keeping of a reading log, an activity in which students summarized the whole picture of the texts they read. All the students were asked to complete a reading log before creating a script. The students could not write their scripts if they did not understand the texts. This activity also helped students to see reading as a continuous, meaningful process of building larger semantic units rather than just focusing on words (Amer, 1997). Therefore, this technique may help students apply their Readers Theatre skills to any texts they read. Thus, it is not surprising that the students in this study improved their comprehension of expository texts despite only being trained with narrative texts.

In brief, the findings of the present study seem to confirm that the students who are trained in Readers Theatre are able to comprehend texts better because they are able to apply the reading strategies gained from Readers Theatre to the reading of texts from other genres.

4.2.3 Relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension

The findings of this study show that there was a significant relationship between oral reading fluency and English reading comprehension as measured by the post-test scores. When the subjects' oral reading fluency improved, their reading comprehension skills also increased. In the same way, when students' reading comprehension improved, their oral reading fluency also increased. This might suggest that the higher the subjects' oral reading fluency, the better they could comprehend the texts or vice versa. One factor which could help explain this positive relationship is that oral fluency skills make the process of decoding more automatic and help students comprehend more easily (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). At the same

time, the students' increased reading comprehension abilities may also have contributed to their oral reading fluency. It can be then said that the increased oral reading fluency and the increased of reading comprehension ability create a reciprocal relationship which could facilitate the development of the students' language skills.

The results of the present study are consistent with the studies conducted by Samuels (2002), Griffith and Rasinski (2004), Pikulski and Chard (2005) and Willcutt (2004) all of which reveal that oral reading fluency is an important component in the process of achieving reading comprehension. Rasinski (2003) suggests that Readers Theater can increase students' performance in both fluency and comprehension. The National Reading Panel (2000) also identifies fluency as a key ingredient to successful reading instruction due to its effect on students' reading efficiency and comprehension. Previous research also supports the fact that a lack of oral reading fluency is related to reading comprehension problems (Stanovich, 1991).

4.2.4   Students'attitudes towards Readers Theatre

One of the findings of this study indicates that the use of Readers Theatre had a positive effect on the students' attitudes. Most students stated that Readers Theatre not only enhanced their oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, but it also motivated them to learn the language actively. Their confidence increased through the use of Readers Theatre. These results may come from the active classroom atmosphere which increased their involvement in the reading process. Additionally, opportunities to practice Readers Theatre in class may prompt the subjects to be aware of the potential of their prior knowledge which is crucial to successful oral reading fluency and reading comprehension.

In Readers Theatre activities, the students practiced and performed in front of peers. Practice is an essential means for one to become proficient at any skill (Worthy & Prater, 2002). Because of the manner in which repeated reading is

presented in Readers Theater, students are motivated to work harder to build up meaning. Repeated reading allows students to read and reread texts. In essence, it provides a lot of practice with one text so that the students can become more fluent readers and allows them to develop expressive reading and automaticity. The students in this present study experimented with different character voices as they practiced their scripts. This practice may have given them confidence to perform in front of peers. Performing in front of peers may have given the students the motivation to continue to practice reading and rereading their scripts. This, in turn, increased their oral reading fluency. This study concurs with the findings of Worthy and Prater (2002) who state that students' motivation and confidence increase through the use of Readers Theatres due to its authentic reason to engage in repeated reading.

The fact that the subjects in the present study held positive attitudes towards Readers Theatre was consistent with previous researches conducted by Samuels (2002), Pikulski and Chard (2005), Caluris (2004) and Willcutt (2004). Their studies reveal a significant increase in students' motivation to read when participating in Readers Theatre. Students once viewed as poor readers were seen in a positive light by peers after participating in Readers Theatre. Caluris (2007), p.154) asserts that "Readers Theater serves as a great motivational tool that teachers should utilize to give reluctant students greater self confidence in their reading and ultimately improve their reading attitudes, habits and performance levels".

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the research findings. Implications for teaching are suggested as well as recommendations made for further studies.

5.1 Summary of the findings

This study aimed to investigate whether Readers Theatre helped students improve their oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, whether a relationship existed between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension, as well as establishing the students' attitudes towards Readers Theatre.

A set of research instruments was employed to answer each research question: a reading fluency rate test to assess the students' oral reading fluency, an English reading comprehension test to assess the students' reading comprehension, a questionnaire, and a structured interview to determine students' attitudes toward Readers Theatre.

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows.

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questionnaire, and a structured interview to determine students' attitudes toward Readers Theatre.

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows.

1. The study reveals that the students' overall oral reading fluency significantly improved. A detailed analysis shows that specific aspects of the students' oral reading fluency significantly improved as well. In the pre-test, the largest proportion of the students were rated at level 1 and 2 in each aspect. However, in the post-test, the majority of the students were rated at level 3 and 4, with *smoothness* being most improved, following by *expression and volume* and *pace*. *Phrasing* was the least improved. That is, 100% of the students rated at level 1 in all aspects in the pre-test increased to higher levels. To be specific, 57.14% of the students rated at level 1 in *expression and volume* in the pre-test shifted to level 2 and 42.85% of them increased to level 4. Besides, more than half (72.73%) of the students rated at level 1 in *phrasing* in the pre-tests developed to level 2 and 27.27% of the students increased to level 3. In the same way, 33.33% of the students rated at level 1 in *smoothness* in the pre-test shifted to level 2 and level 3 (66.66%). Moreover, 100% of the students rated at level 1 in *pace* in the pre-test improved to level 2. In addition, the information from the questionnaire and the structured interview confirmed the improvement in their oral reading fluency. Most of the students (71.87%) reported that their oral reading skills improved after training.

2. The students' English reading comprehension scores measured by the English comprehension test increased after the training. Although the students were trained by using narrative texts, they were able to read expository texts better in the post-test. This seems to suggest that the students are able to transfer or apply their language knowledge gained during Readers Theatre activities to read other text types. Furthermore, the data gained from the structured interview reveals that all of the students interviewed said that writing a reading log helped them to understand the

texts they read better. In brief, the use of Readers Theatre seems to be effective in helping them read texts significantly better.

3. There was a moderate significant correlation between the students' oral reading fluency and their English reading comprehension. This suggests the students whose oral reading fluency was high also possessed high reading comprehension or vice versa.

4. The students' responses to the questionnaire and in the structured interview show that they were satisfied with the use of Readers Theatre and generally held positive attitudes towards the technique. Three major advantages of Readers Theatre were also reported. For one thing, three quarters of the students not only believed that the technique had enabled them to improve their reading skills, but they also felt that it had allowed them to improve their writing skills. This might be because one activity used in this process, writing a reading log, helped them comprehend the texts before they created their scripts. Thereafter, the students had the opportunity to write their own scripts based on the texts they read. For another thing, through the use of Readers Theatre, 37.5% of the students reported that their vocabulary increased. Readers Theatre creates a meaningful context in which students may learn new vocabulary and word usage because they need to write scripts to perform for the class. To write well-organized scripts, it is necessary for students to know more vocabulary. Finally, the students' perceived confidence and motivation also increased through the use of Readers Theatre. The majority of the students (81.25%) confirmed that Readers Theatre boosted their confidence and motivation to learn and use language. 80% of the students said that at first they were shy and nervous when reading aloud and acting out for their peers and teachers but became more active and confident after the training. However, some students pointed out a few disadvantages through the use of Readers Theatre, for example, they said that writing a script was very slow when they had different ideas in their group discussion and it was time-consuming.

To conclude, Readers Theatre improved students' oral reading fluency, English reading comprehension, confidence and motivation. It also provided many

other advantages for the students. However, according to the students' comments, Readers Theatre also had one disadvantage, i.e. it was time-consuming. Nonetheless,

it should be pointed out that the advantages of Readers Theatre as perceived by the students outnumbered its disadvantages.

5.2 Implications of the study

This research study has focused on the effects of Readers Theatre on students' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. The findings of the study suggest that Readers Theatre can be a useful technique for teaching reading skills to Thai students. There follow some suggestions to allow. It is to be used effectively and successfully in reading classes. To begin with, it is very important to choose appropriate texts based on the students' interests and language level to make reading classes fun and more successful. Moreover, the texts used should be able to be turned into drama, otherwise the activities may fail. Besides, students should be informed that the aim of using Readers Theatre in their reading classes is not for drama but for language improvement and to create confidence in using language. Finally, teachers should themselves have good pronunciation or suitable audio aids should be available.

5.3 Recommendations for further studies

Based on the results of this study, some recommendations for further studies are offered as follows:

1. This study was conducted with a small group of students who enrolled in the Language Learning through Drama course. These students may be interested in drama so they had no difficulty in learning a language through Readers Theatre. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct a study with non-English major students to see if Readers Theatre works with them.

2. This study investigated the use of Readers Theatre in Thai context in improving students' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. It would be interesting to investigate whether Readers Theatre would also benefit other language

skills such as writing, listening and speaking since elsewhere research has shown that the technique has also improved learners' writing, listening and speaking ability.

3. This study tried Readers Theatre with narrative texts, but in a Thai context, expository texts are more common in schools and universities. Hence, it would be a good idea to try Readers Theatre with expository texts to see whether Readers Theatre is equally successful in enhancing students' reading skills. If the results of using Readers Theatre with expository texts are positive, this might indicate that Readers Theatre is a viable technique of teaching regardless of the text type used.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION TEST

ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION TEST(20 MARKS)

PASSAGE A

Spending the winter in an igloo isn't as uncomfortable as you might think.

Every five-year-old knows what igloos look like from the outside, but what are they like inside? And what would it be like to live in one? Imagine yourself inside a hollow dome made of snow and ice, with more ice underneath you. Would it be too cold to sit down comfortably? Would you be able to stand up, or would you have to crawl around on your hands and knees? And how would you keep warm? Could you light a fire? Wouldn't the fire fill the igloo with smoke and start melting the walls? The more you think about life in an igloo, the more problems there seem to be.

In fact, life in an igloo isn't nearly as uncomfortable as you might think. Let's imagine going into a traditional igloo out of a snowstorm in the middle of an Arctic winter.

1._____

The first thing you notice after crawling down through the entrance tunnel is that the igloo is bigger than it looks from the outside. The floor in the centre of the igloo is quite a bit below ground level, and there's plenty of **_room_** to stand up without banging our head.

2._____

It's also quite warm inside. **_This_** is partly because the snow blocks that the igloo is made from provide very good instruction, and partly because of a stone lamp burning seal oil – the only form of heating in the igloo. So although it's -30 C outside, it's a fairly comfortable +10 C inside – warm enough to take your wet clothes off and hang them up to dry.

Naturally, the heat melts a thin layer of snow wall, but to prevent drips (and to provide even more insulation) there are animal skins hanging across the ceiling and down the walls. It isn't smoky inside, either – a small hole in the ceiling acts as a chimney, and allows the smoke from the lamp to escape.

LIGHT

Above the entrance tunnel, there's a thin sheet of ice set into the wall, which acts as a kind of window. You can't see much through it, but during the few hours of daylight it lets quite a lot of light in. The rest of the time, you can see by the light of the lamp (which is also used for cooking).

3._____

Around the walls of the igloo is a wide platform (which is at the same level as the ground outside), where you sit or lie down. You don't have to sit directly on the snow – the platform is covered with dry grass and animal bones, then with animal skins, and finally with animal furs, and there are more animal furs to use as blankets. So the platform is a comfortable place to stretch out – and warm, too, as it is near the top of the dome where the warmest air is trapped.

4._____

In many ways, an igloo is the **_ideal_** place to spend a really cold winter. When the weather gets warmer in spring, of course, you no longer need it – which is just as well because that's the time that igloos start to melt.

> **Part A:** The following headings are removed from the passage. Put them back to the right paragraphs. Write only letters A, B, C, D, E, or F in the space. (Items 1-4)

A: Heat

B: The Eskimos

C: A place to sit

D: A room to move

E: Building an igloo

F: A temporary home

> **Part B:** Choose the best answer for questions 5-11.

5. **Which of the following is the best title for Passage A?**

a) A home in the Arctic   c) How to build a snow house

b) Inside the snow house   d) How to survive in the Arctic

6. **Which of the following statements about the igloo _is not_ true?**

a) Its floor in the centre is below ground level.

b) It is a temporary home for an Arctic winter.

c) You can dry your wet clothes inside the igloo.

d) Light gets inside the igloo through its chimney.

7. **What does not provide insulations for igloos?**

a) animal skins   c) seal oil stone lamp

b) snow blocks   d) a small hole in the ceiling

8. **Why can people stand up without banging their heads inside the igloo?**

a) They crawl inside the igloo.

b) There is a small hole on the ceiling.

c) The animal skins are hung on the ceiling.

d) The floor centre is lower than the ground level.

9. In the first line of item 4, the word "_ideal_" is closest in meaning to which of the following?

    a) bad   c) perfect

    b) unreal   d) romantic

10. In the third line of item 1, the word "_room_" is closest in meaning to which of the following?

    a) wall   c) space

    b) hole   d) chimney

11. The word "this" in the first line of item 2 most likely refers to which of the following?

    a) warmth   c) coldness

    b) an igloo   d) the Arctic winter

PASSAGE B

(1)   Children may like to kill monsters from outer space for a while, but they always come back to their dolls. Dolls are universal – when boys pick up Action Man or GI Joe, they are immediately transported to the Marines. When girls pick up a Barbie, they run their hands through their hair and dream about being independent.

(2)   Mattel, the manufacturers of Barbie, couldn't be happier, because the doll is the most successful toy in the history. Barbie turned forty in 1999, but she has not grown old. She still has the same legs and amazing **_figure_** (if Barbie was a real person, she would be seven feet tall and her legs would be five feet long). You might think that Barbie would be out of date by now, but she isn't. A Barbie is sold every two seconds, and since her arrival at the New York Toy Fair in 1959, sales have reached over one billion.

(3)   Barbie (real name Barbara Millicent Robert) was the idea of Ruth Handler, the wife of one of the founders of Mattel. She saw her daughter playing with paper dolls and wanted to give her something more realistic. 'When my daughter played with dolls, she liked to imagine that she was sixteen or seventeen. So I thought, why don't we make the doll look more like a young woman?'

(4)   Keeping Barbie popular requires a great deal of time and effort. Consultant Ian Ritchie has worked with toy makers and has identified a number of important lessons from the toy business. 'Getting toys to market as fast as possible is extremely important; it makes the difference between success and failure. There is also the question of timing. In the doll market **_this_** has to be exactly right – you have to make sure that the latest fashions or accessories are in the shops at the right moment.'

(5)   Barbie has timed her changes well, and she is never the same for long. She has more than 100 new costumes every year and follows each new fashion with **_enthusiasm_**. Barbie does more than just have fun – she is a working woman. Mattel is proud of multi-career approach which has made her a role model to millions of young girls. Over the years Barbie has been an astronaut, a surgeon, a business executive, an airline pilot and even a Presidential candidate. All in all, Barbie has had seventy-five different careers, making her the most highly qualified woman in the world, and creating a $1.9 billion industry at the same time.

> **Questions 12-20 are for <u>Passage B</u>.**

12. What is the author's main purpose of writing this article?

     a) to support the cleverness of Mattle company

     b) to inform about Barbie business and its success

     c) to point out the danger of materials used in producing dolls

     d) to persuade parents to allow their children to play with Barbie

13. In the third line of paragraph (5), the word "_enthusiasm_" could be best replaced by which of the following?

     a) wit   c) interest

     b) beauty   d) wellness

14. How old is Barbie this year?

     a) 44 years old   c) 47years old

     b) 46years old   d) 49 years old

15. In the third line of paragraph 2, the word "figure" is closest in meaning to which of the following?

a) clothing

b) jewelry

c) design

d) shape

16. Which of the following is the best title for the passage?

a) The Birth of Barbie

b) Billion Dollar Barbie

b) The Marketing of Barbie

d) Children's Most Favorite Toy

17. The word "*this*" in the fifth line of paragraph (4) most likely refers to which of the following?

a) timing

b) market

c) failure

d) success

18. Which of the following statement about Barbie is *NOT* true?

a) Barbie was first made by paper.

b) Barbie is the most successful toy business.

c) Barbie makes girls dream of independence.

d) Barbie is a role model of many young girl in the world.

19. What is *NOT* the reason for the success of Barbie business?

a) the arrival at the New York Toy Fair

b) launching the product at the right time

c) getting the product to market fast enough

d) the multi-career approach of Mattel company

20. Why did the author say that Barbie is the most highly qualified woman in the world?

a) Barbie is sold every two seconds.

b) Barbie has got 75 different careers.

c) Barbie creates a 1.9 billion industry.

d) Barbie has more than 100 costumes every year.

APPENDIX B

ORAL READING FLUENCY TEST (ENGLISH)

Oral Reading Fluency Test

Directions

1. **Before you read, please** write <u>your name, number, time and date</u> at the top of the test. Then **introduce yourself** (your name and number).

2. Please start at the first line. (Extracted…)

3. If you come to a word that you do not know, you may skip it and go to the next word.

4. Read the story aloud. Speeding through the passage results in making errors.

5. Students <u>are not allowed</u> to record until I tell you to begin.

6. When a minute pass, please mark / after the last word you read.

7. When 2.5 minutes pass, please circle the last word you read if you do not finish.

Example:

The Visitor	2
Tap, tap, tap. I was reading a book.	10
But I kept hearing this noise at the	18
window. Tap, tap. I began reading	24
again. Clunk, scrape, tap. I looked	30
out of the window. It was dark out.	38
I couldn't see anything. I looked	44
back at my book. It was hard to find	53
my place. I found it/ and began to	61
read. I heard the noise again.	67

Thank you for your cooperation.

Name…………………………Student Code……………Date…../…../…..Time……..

(Extracted from Spargo, 1989)

Do you plan to visit Italy someday? If so, it's a good idea to know about the country and its people. Italy has two very different areas. The business centers and large cities of the North hum with noise. The South, on the other hand, enjoys the sleepy charm of the country. People of the North like the bustle of city life.

They enjoy all the things a city has to offer. Those from the South like a slower pace. They like their rural surroundings. One thing all Italians have in common is their zest for life. The climate of Italy is like that of California. It is sunny and warm all year in the South. Except in the mountains, summers are warm all over the country. Winter brings snow, sleet, cold rain, and fog to the North. Central Italy is mild in winter. Many Italians are happiest when in groups. Wherever they gather, you are likely to hear fine singing and happy laughter.

A building boom is going on in the cities of Italy. Steel and glass skyscrapers tower over ancient ruins. Italy throbs with life and color. Talk on the street corners is lively. The background music coming from open windows could be classical or the latest hit tune. Donkeys and street peddlers sometimes add to the color and noise.

The city streets are busy. Here you will see well-dressed people. These people are going to work in new office buildings. The street traffic includes different kinds of cars. You can even spot some motor scooters and bicycles. Italians also like food. They are good cooks. Each city and region has its own specialties. Bologna, for instance, is known for its sausages. Olive oil, garlic, and tomatoes are used more freely in cooking in the South than in the North. Some Northerners use butter instead of olive oil. You will see rice on their plates instead of pasta.

An Italian dinner begins with appetizers and ends many courses later with a fine dessert. In the course of a dinner, you can sample some of Italy's fine cheeses. There are many to choose from. There are also many fine wines, and they are reasonably priced.

You may never visit Italy. Still, it's nice to read about its lively and colorful personality. Maybe someday you will be lucky enough to see part of this wonderful land.

Total Reading Time _____

APPENDIX B

ORAL READING FLUENCY TEST (THAI)

แบบทดสอบความคล่องในการอ่าน

คำชี้แจง

1. กรุณา<u>เขียนชื่อ รหัสนักศึกษา วันที่ และเวลาที่สอบ</u> บนหัวกระดาษของแบบทดสอบ พร้อม ทั้ง<u>บอกชื่อและรหัสนักศึกษา</u>ก่อนเริ่มการอ่านบทความให้ชัดเจน
2. นักศึกษาต้องเริ่มอ่านตั้งแต่บรรทัดแรก (Extracted from…)
3. หากนักศึกษาเจอคำที่นักศึกษาไม่ทราบหรือไม่แน่ใจว่าอ่านอย่างไร นักศึกษาสามารถข้าม คำเหล่านั้นไปได้
4. นักศึกษาควรอ่านในระดับความเร็วและความดังที่พอเหมาะเพื่อให้เกิดความผิดพลาดน้อย ที่สุด
5. นักศึกษาจะ<u>ไม่ได้รับอนุญาต</u>ให้เริ่มอัดเสียงของตนเองได้จนกว่าผู้วิจัยพูดว่า "Begin"
6. เมื่อเวลาผ่านไป 1 นาที ให้นักศึกษาทำเครื่องหมาย / ด้านหลังคำสุดท้ายของคำนั้น ๆ
7. เมื่อเวลาผ่านไป 2.5 นาที แต่นักเรียนยังอ่านไม่จบให้นักเรียน วงกลมคำสุดท้ายของคำที่ อ่าน

ตัวอย่าง

The Visitor	2
Tap, tap, tap. I was reading a book.	10
But I kept hearing this noise at the	18
window. Tap, tap. I began reading	24
again. Clunk, scrape, tap. I looked	30
out of the window. It was dark out.	38
I couldn't see anything. I looked	44
back at my book. It was hard to find	53
my place. I found it/ and began to	61
read. I heard the noise again.	67

ขอบคุณที่ให้ความร่วมมือ

Name…………………………Student Code ……………Date…../…../…..Time…….

(Extracted from Spargo, 1989)

Do you plan to visit Italy someday? If so, it's a good idea to know about the country and its people. Italy has two very different areas. The business centers and large cities of the North hum with noise. The South, on the other hand, enjoys the sleepy charm of the country. People of the North like the bustle of city life.

They enjoy all the things a city has to offer. Those from the South like a slower pace. They like their rural surroundings. One thing all Italians have in common is their zest for life. The climate of Italy is like that of California. It is sunny and warm all year in the South. Except in the mountains, summers are warm all over the country. Winter brings snow, sleet, cold rain, and fog to the North. Central Italy is mild in winter. Many Italians are happiest when in groups. Wherever they gather, you are likely to hear fine singing and happy laughter.

A building boom is going on in the cities of Italy. Steel and glass skyscrapers tower over ancient ruins. Italy throbs with life and color. Talk on the street corners is lively. The background music coming from open windows could be classical or the latest hit tune. Donkeys and street peddlers sometimes add to the color and noise.

The city streets are busy. Here you will see well-dressed people. These people are going to work in new office buildings. The street traffic includes different kinds of cars. You can even spot some motor scooters and bicycles. Italians also like food. They are good cooks. Each city and region has its own specialties. Bologna, for instance, is known for its sausages. Olive oil, garlic, and tomatoes are used more freely in cooking in the South than in the North. Some Northerners use butter instead of olive oil. You will see rice on their plates instead of pasta.

An Italian dinner begins with appetizers and ends many courses later with a fine dessert. In the course of a dinner, you can sample some of Italy's fine cheeses. There are many to choose from. There are also many fine wines, and they are reasonably priced.

You may never visit Italy. Still, it's nice to read about its lively and colorful personality. Maybe someday you will be lucky enough to see part of this wonderful land.

Total Reading Time _____

APPENDIX C

SHORT STORIES

MASTER MAN • By Aaron Shepard

When Shettu got home, she told Shadusa what had happened.

"Master Man?" yelled Shadusa. "He can't call himself that! *I'm* Master Man. I'll have to teach that fellow a lesson."

"Oh, husband, don't!" pleaded Shettu. "If the baby is so strong, think what the father must be like. You'll get yourself killed."

But Shadusa said, "We'll see about that!"

The next morning, Shadusa set out early and walked till he came to the well. He threw in the bucket—*splash*—then he pulled on the rope. But though he tugged and he heaved, he could not lift the bucket.

Just then the woman with the baby walked up.

"Wait a minute," said Shadusa. "What do you think you're doing?"

"I'm getting water, of course," answered the woman.

"Well, you can't," said Shadusa. "The bucket won't come up."

The woman set down the baby, who quickly pulled up the bucket and filled his mother's calabash.

"Wah!" yelled Shadusa. "How did he do that?"

"It's easy," said the woman, "when your father is Master Man."

Shadusa gulped and thought about going home. But instead he thrust out his chest and said, "I want to meet this fellow, so I can show him who's the *real* Master Man."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that," said the woman. "He devours men like you! But suit yourself."

So Shadusa followed the woman back to her compound. Inside the fenced yard was a gigantic fireplace, and beside it was a pile of huge bones.

"What's all this?" asked Shadusa.

"Well, you see," said the woman, "our hut is so small that my husband must come out here to eat his elephants."

Just then they heard a great ROAR, so loud that Shadusa had to cover his ears. Then the ground began to shake, until Shadusa could hardly stand.

"What's that?" he shouted.

"That's Master Man."

"Oh, no!" wailed Shadusa. "You weren't fooling. I've got to get out of here!"

THE PRINCESS MOUSE • By Aaron Shepard

Mikko walked through the forest for hours without seeing a soul. But at last he came to a cottage deep in the woods.

"I knew I'd find a sweetheart!" said Mikko. But when he went inside, he saw no one.

"All this way for nothing," he said sadly.

"Maybe not!" came a tiny voice.

Mikko looked around, but the only living thing in sight was a little mouse on a table. Standing on its hind legs, it gazed at him with large, bright eyes.

"Did you say something?" he asked it.

"Of course I did! Now, why don't you tell me your name and what you came for?"

Mikko had never talked with a mouse, but he felt it only polite to reply.

"My name is Mikko, and I've come looking for a sweetheart."

The mouse squealed in delight. "Why, Mikko, I'll gladly be your sweetheart!"

"But you're only a mouse," said Mikko.

"That may be true," she said, "but I can still love you faithfully. Besides, even a mouse can be special! Come feel my fur."

With one finger, Mikko stroked the mouse's back. "Why, it feels like velvet! Just like the gown of a princess!"

"That's right, Mikko." And as he petted her, she sang to him prettily.

"Mikko's sweetheart will I be.

What a fine young man he is!

Gown of velvet I do wear,

Like a princess fine and rare."

Mikko looked into those large, bright eyes and thought she really was quite nice, for a mouse. And since he'd found no one else anyway, he said, "All right, little mouse, you can be my sweetheart."

"Oh, Mikko!" she said happily. "I promise you won't be sorry."

Mikko wasn't so sure, but he just stroked her fur and smiled.

THE BAKER'S DOZEN • By Aaron Shepard

In the Dutch colonial town later known as Albany, New York, there lived a baker, Van Amsterdam, who was as honest as he could be. Each morning, he checked and balanced his scales, and he took great care to give his customers exactly what they paid for—not more and not less.

Van Amsterdam's shop was always busy, because people trusted him, and because he was a good baker as well. And never was the shop busier than in the days before December 6, when the Dutch celebrate Saint Nicholas Day.

At that time of year, people flocked to the baker's shop to buy his fine Saint Nicholas cookies. Made of gingerbread, iced in red and white, they looked just like Saint Nicholas as the Dutch know him—tall and thin, with a high, red bishop's cap, and a long, red bishop's cloak.

One Saint Nicholas Day morning, the baker was just ready for business, when the door of his shop flew open. In walked an old woman, wrapped in a long black shawl.

"I have come for a dozen of your Saint Nicholas cookies."

Taking a tray, Van Amsterdam counted out twelve cookies. He started to wrap them, but the woman reached out and stopped him.

"I asked for a dozen. You have given me only twelve."

"Madam," said the baker, "everyone knows that a dozen *is* twelve."

"But I say a dozen is thirteen," said the woman. "Give me one more."

Van Amsterdam was not a man to bear foolishness. "Madam, my customers get exactly what they pay for—not more and not less."

"Then you may keep the cookies," the woman said. She turned to go, but stopped at the door.

"Van Amsterdam! However honest you may be, your heart is small and your fist is tight. *Fall again, mount again, learn how to count again!*"

Then she was gone.

From that day, everything went wrong in Van Amsterdam's bakery. His bread rose too high or not at all. His pies were sour or too sweet. His cakes crumbled or were chewy. His cookies were burnt or doughy. Before long, most of his customers were going to other bakers.

"That old woman has bewitched me," said the baker to himself. "Is this how my honesty is rewarded?

THE SEA KING'S DAUGHTER • By Aaron Shepard

"Is there another such city as Novgorod in all the world?" Sadko would say.

"Is there any better place to be?" Yet sometimes Sadko was lonely too. The maidens who danced gaily to his music would often smile at him—but they were rich and he was poor, and not one of them would think of being his.

One lonely evening, Sadko walked sadly beyond the city walls and down along the broad River Volkhov. He came to his favorite spot on the bank and set his twelve-string *gusli* on his lap. Gentle waves brushed the shore, and moonlight shimmered on the water.

"My lovely River Volkhov," he said with a sigh. "Rich man, poor man—it's all the same to you. If only you were a woman! I'd marry you and live with you here in the city I love." Sadko plucked a sad tune, then a peaceful one, then a merry one. The tinkling notes of his gusli floated over the Volkhov. All at once the river grew rough, and strong waves began to slap the bank.

"Heaven help me!" cried Sadko as a large shape rose from the water. Before him stood a huge man, with a pearl-encrusted crown atop a flowing mane of seaweed.

"Musician," said the man, "behold the King of the Sea. To this river I have come to visit one of my daughters, the Princess Volkhova. Your sweet music reached us on the river bottom, where it pleased us greatly."

"Thank you, Your Majesty," stammered Sadko.

"Soon I will return to my own palace," said the King. "I wish you to play there at a feast."

"Gladly," said Sadko. "But where is it? And how do I get there?"

"Why, under the sea, of course! I'm sure you'll find your way. But meanwhile, you need not wait for your reward."

Something large jumped from the river and flopped at Sadko's feet. A fish with golden scales! As Sadko watched in amazement, it stiffened and turned to solid gold.

"Your Majesty, you are too generous!"

"Say no more about it!" said the King. "Music is worth far more than gold. If the world were fair, you'd have your fill of riches!" And with a splash, he sank in the river and was gone.

CLEVER LUCY ● By Aaron Shepard

There was a time in this country when most people made their livings by farming. Some farmers did well; some barely scratched out a living.

John Carver was one of the farmers who had a hard time feeding his family. John's farm was quite small, and though he toiled in the fields everyday, his crops were always brown and scrawny.

It just so happened that John was married to Lucy, and Lucy was a mighty clever lady.

One winter day, when the wind blew very cold and the snow drifted very high, Lucy sent John to the chicken coop to fetch dinner.

"This is the last chicken we have, Lucy." said John " I don't know what we will eat tomorrow, so roast it with care".

When the chicken was cooked, Lucy set it on the table.

"What a grand chicken you have prepared!" said John.

"It looks so brown and crispy, and it smells delicious."

"It is a shame we have not even a crust of bread to go with it."

"Oh! well, we cannot dwell on what we do not have."

"Let us call in the children and eat."   But Lucy said, "Do not call the children." "I am going to take this chicken to the Baron who lives in the fine house on the hill. "

John looked at his wife, and said "I do not understand you at all, Lucy Carver." "Why do you want to give away our last morsel of food?"

Lucy thought that if she gave the chicken to the Baron, he might give her something even better in return. So she set off for the Baron's house.

When she got there, she was shown into the parlour where the Baron sat with his wife, two sons and two daughters. Lucy gave the chicken to him.

"There is nothing we like better than juicy, roasted chicken." Said Baron

Lucy picked up the knife and looked around the room. All eyes were upon her. "Let me see." said Lucy. "There are six of you altogether."

"Don't forget yourself. " said Baron.

The Baron made himself comfortable in his favorite chair as Lucy looked at the bird. The first thing she did was cut off the tail and give it to the Baron's wife. " It is your job to sit in the house and see that it is properly run." said Lucy.

Then she pulled off the two legs of the chicken and handed one to each of the Baron's sons.

"Because you fine, strong boys walk your father's fields every day, it is fitting for you to have the legs." said Lucy.

Lucy then gave a wing to each of the baron's daughters. "You lovely girls get the wings because each of you will someday marry and fly from your father's care." said Lucy.

Finally, Lucy cut off the head of the chicken as she thought that he was a head of the house.

"And since I am just a poor farmer's wife, I will be happy with the leftovers." That meant Lucy got most of the chicken!

The Baron laughed and slapped his thigh. "Bless my soul. You are a sly one, Lucy Carver!" said Baron. He enjoyed himself so much. "I want you to take this jug of nectar and this loaf of bread along with the chicken." Said Baron.

Lucy took the food back home. That night she and her family ate until they were full.

APPENDIX D

READING LOG (ENGLISH)

Reading Log Guide

Directions

While you are reading the short story write down all the things that go on in your head in a 'stream of consciousness' style. As you read, you will be making a record of images, association, feelings, thought, judgments, etc. <u>Please date each entry, and note down the time and places, as well as, the mood you are in while reading.</u> You will find that this record will contain:

Questions that you ask yourself about characters and events as you read. (answer these yourself when you can).
Memories from your own experience, provoked by the reading.
Guesses about how you think the story will develop, and why.
Reflection on striking moments and ideas in the story.
Comparisons between how you behave and how the characters in the story are behaving.
Thoughts and feelings about characters and event.
Comments on how the story is being told. For example, any words and phrases or even whole passages that make an impression on you or motifs which you notice the author keeps using.
Connections to other texts, idea, and courses.
An outline of the chapter, no longer than a paragraph.

(adapted from Carlise, 2000)

APPENDIX D

READING LOG (THAI)

บันทึกการอ่าน

<u>คำแนะนำ</u>

ขณะที่ท่านกำลังอ่านเรื่องสั้น ให้ท่านบันทึกทุกอย่างที่ท่านคิด ไม่ว่าจะเป็นจินตนาการณ์ อารมณ์ ความคิด การวิจารณ์ ฯลฯ ของตัวท่านที่มีต่อเรื่องที่อ่าน ก่อนที่ท่านจะเริ่มบันทึก ให้ท่าน เขียน วันที่ เวลา ที่ท่านเริ่มเขียน สิ่งที่ท่านต้องบันทึกประกอบด้วยข้อมูลต่าง ๆ ดังนี้

คำถาม ที่นักศึกษาถามตนเองเกี่ยวกับตัวละคร และเหตุการณ์ที่เกิดขึ้น (ตอบด้วยตัวนักศึกษาเอง)
ความทรงจำ จากประสบการณ์ที่นักศึกษานึกถึงในขณะที่อ่านเรื่องสั้น
การคาดการณ์ เกี่ยวกับเรื่องที่นักศึกษาอ่านว่าจะไปในทิศทางใด ทำไมจึงคิดเช่นนั้น
สิ่งที่สะท้อนกลับ เกี่ยวกับสิ่งที่มาสะดุดความคิดนักศึกษา ในระหว่างที่นักศึกษากำลังอ่านเรื่องสั้น
การเปรียบเทียบ ระหว่างสิ่งที่นักศึกษาแสดงและตัวละครในเรื่องแสดงออก
ความคิดและความรู้สึก เกี่ยวกับตัวละครและเหตุการณ์จากเรื่องที่อ่าน
การแสดงความคิดเห็น เกี่ยวกับสิ่งที่เรื่องสั้นนั้น ๆ ต้องการจะสื่อ ยกตัวอย่างเช่น คำ วลี หรือ ข้อความที่นักศึกษาประทับใจ ในบทประพันธ์ที่ผู้เขียนต้องการสื่อ
การเชื่อมโยง ไปยังบทความและความคิด อื่น ๆ
โครงเรื่อง ที่นักศึกษาเขียนไม่ควรมากกว่า 1 ย่อหน้า

ดัดแปลงจาก Carlise (2000)

APPENDIX E

READING RATE GRAPH

Reading Graph

WCPM

Times
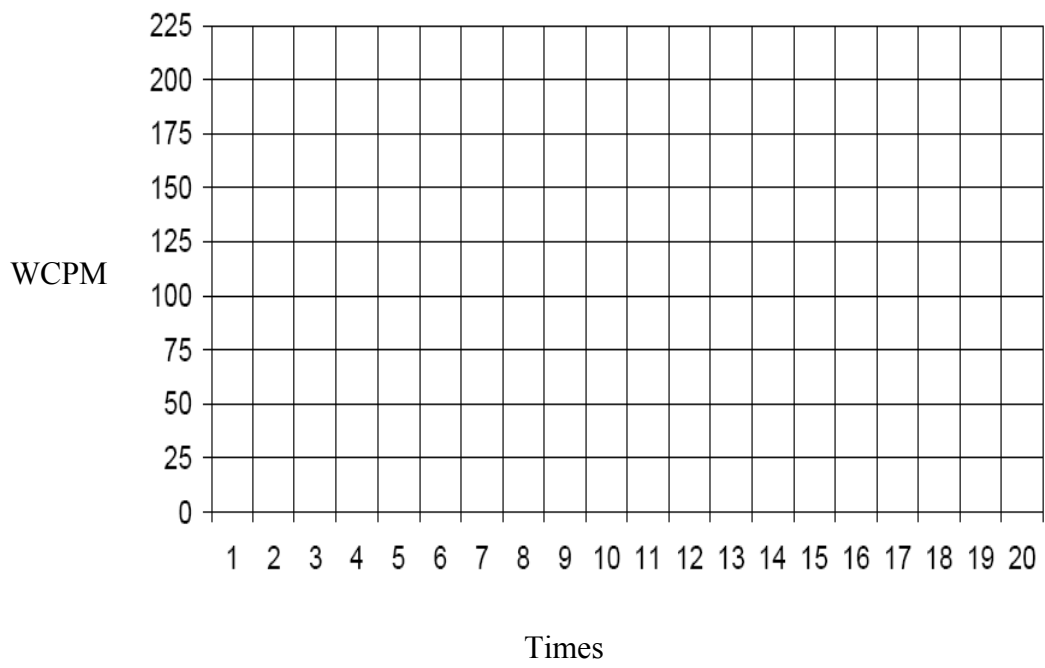
APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

QUESTIONNAIRE ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS READERS THEATRE

Objective: This questionnaire is designed to get information about students' attitudes toward Readers Theatre for the research on *"Effects of Readers Theatre on Learners' Oral Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension'* Please give all the information as best as you can. All the information will be kept confidential and would have no effect on your English grade at all.

Instructions: Please tick (√) in the columns that represent facts about you.

1 = Least   2 = Less   3 = Moderate   4 = More   5 = Most

Statements	Levels				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The English lesson is more interesting with Readers Theatre.					
2. Readers Theatre is a good way of learning spoken English.					
3. Readers Theatre is an easy way of learning English.					
4. Writing the script for Readers Theatre is difficult.					
5. I enjoy working with my friends in writing.					
6. I enjoy working with my friends in performing Readers Theatre.					
7. I feel more confident using English through Readers Theatre					
8. Readers Theatre makes a difference in the way I learn English.					
9. After watching my friends perform, I want to improve my language.					
10. Readers Theatre has helped me improve my writing skills.					
11. Readers Theatre has helped me improve my reading skills					
12. I prefer to learn English in a group than on my own.					

Comments/ suggestions on Readers Theatre

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE (THAI)

แบบสอบถามเพื่อศึกษาความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาต่อกิจกรรมการอ่านบทละคร

วัตถุประสงค์:	แบบสอบถามชุดนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อรวบรวมข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับทัศนคติต่อกิจกรรมการอ่านบทละคร เพื่องานวิจัยในหัวข้อ "การสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านบทละครต่อการพัฒนาทักษะความคล่อง และความเข้าใจในการอ่าน" กรุณาตอบแบบสอบถามตามความเป็นจริง ข้อมูลที่ได้จากแบบสอบถามจะเก็บเป็นความลับ และ ไม่มีผลต่อการเรียนวิชาภาษาอังกฤษแต่อย่างใด

คำแนะนำ กรุณาทำเครื่องหมาย (√) ในช่องที่ตรงกับนักศึกษามากที่สุด.

1 = น้อยที่สุด   2 = น้อย   3 = ปานกลาง   4 = มาก 5 = มากที่สุด

รายการ	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. การเรียนการสอนแบบการอ่านบทละครทำให้บทเรียนภาษาอังกฤษน่าสนใจมากยิ่งขึ้น					
2. การเรียนการสอนแบบการอ่านบทละครเป็นวิธีการที่ดีในการเรียนภาษาพูด					
3. การเรียนการสอนแบบการอ่านบทละครเป็นวิธีการที่ง่ายในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ					
4. การเขียนบทละครในกิจกรรม Readers Theatre ยาก					
5. ฉันสนุกกับการเขียนบทละคร และการแสดงออกร่วมกับเพื่อน ๆ ในกิจกรรม Readers Theatre					
6. ฉันรู้สึกมีความมั่นใจมากขึ้นกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในกิจกรรม Readers Theatre					
7. การเรียนการสอนแบบการอ่านบทละครทำให้ฉันรู้สึกแปลกจากวิธีการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษทั่วไป					
8. หลังจากที่ฉันได้เห็นเพื่อน ๆ พัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษแล้ว ฉันอยากจะปรับปรุงและพัฒนาความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษของตนเองด้วย					
9. ฉันไม่มั่นใจในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในกิจกรรม Readers Theatre					
10. กิจกรรมการเรียนการสอนแบบการอ่านบทละครช่วยพัฒนาทักษะการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ					
11. กิจกรรมการเรียนการสอนแบบการอ่านบทละครช่วยพัฒนาทักษะการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ					
12. ฉันชอบเรียนภาษาอังกฤษด้วยตนเองมากกว่าที่จะเรียนเป็นกลุ่มกับเพื่อน ๆ					

ข้อเสนอแนะ..

....

ขอบคุณที่ให้ความร่วมมือ

APPENDIX G

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions:

Background

1. Please introduce yourself.

Students' attitudes about Readers Theatre activities

Feedback

2. What do you think about Readers Theatre activities?

3. Do you think RT help you improve your reading skills? How?

4. Do you think RT activity enhance other skills in English? (What skill?, How?)

Self-efficacy

5. How do you rate your oral reading fluency? (Excellent, above average, average, below average, or poor)

6. Do you think you have enough ability and confidence
    - to read aloud in front of your friends and teachers?
    - to understand a text you read?
    - to speak English in front of your peers and your teachers?
    - to write a script accurately?

Use of Readers Theatre strategies

Reading logs

7. Can reading log help you
    - to comprehend a text? If yes, how?
    - to write a script more easily? If yes, how?

8. While reading a text, how do you manage your reading logs?

9. Do you think you can understand a text without reading logs? Why?

Repeated reading

10. How often do you repeat each text?

11. Does reading rate graph motivate you to repeat more?

APPENDIX H

MULTIDIMENSIONAL FLUENCY SCALE

MULTIDIMENSIONAL FLUENCY SCALE

Dimension	1	2	3	4
A. Expression and volume	Reads with little expression or enthusiasm in voice. Read words as if simply to get them out. Little sense of trying to make text sounds like natural language. Tends to read in a quiet voice.	Some expression. Begin to use voice to make text sound like natural language in some areas of the text, but not others. Focus remains largely on saying the words. Still reads in a quiet voice.	Sounds like natural language throughout the better part of the passage. Occasionally slips into expressionless reading. Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text.	Reads with good expression and enthusiasm throughout the text. Sounds like natural language. The readers is able to vary expression and volume to match his/her interpretation of the passage.
B. Phrasing	Monotonic with little sense of phrase boundaries, frequent word-by-word reading.	Frequent two- and three-word phrases giving the expression of choppy reading; improper stress and intonation that fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses.	Mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and possibly some choppiness; reasonable stress/ intonation.	Generally well phrased, mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression.
C. Smoothness	Frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and /or multiple attempts.	Several "rough spots" in text where extended pauses, hesitations, etc., are more disruptive.	Occasional breaks in smoothness caused by difficulties with specific words and/ or structures.	Generally smooth reading with some breaks, but word and structure difficulties are resolved quickly, usually through self-correction.
D. Pace (during sections of minimal disruption)	Slow and laborious.	Moderately slow	Uneven mixture of fast and slow reading.	Consistently conversational

Adapted from Samuels (2002)