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The Effect Of Partner Reading On Students' Critical Reading In Descriptive Text

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji perubahan skor membaca kritis teks deskriptif setelah penerapan strategi partner reading pada 30 siswa kelas X SMA Islam Yabadi. Penelitian menggunakan rancangan satu kelompok pretest–posttest dengan tes membaca pilihan ganda sebanyak 40 soal. Berdasarkan 30 pasangan skor individu yang tercantum dalam skripsi, rerata pretest adalah 43,40 dan rerata posttest 73,83, dengan kenaikan 30,43 poin. Skripsi melaporkan hasil uji t berpasangan yang signifikan, tetapi ringkasan uji tersebut tidak konsisten dengan skor individu. Karena tidak ada kelompok kontrol, peningkatan skor tidak dapat diatribusikan secara pasti hanya kepada strategi pembelajaran. Temuan mendukung penggunaan partner reading sebagai kegiatan yang menjanjikan untuk latihan membaca, dengan kebutuhan verifikasi statistik dan penelitian terkontrol lebih lanjut.
Kata kunci: partner reading; membaca kritis; teks deskriptif; pembelajaran kooperatif; EFL

Abstract

This study examined changes in descriptive-text critical-reading scores following partner reading among 30 tenth-grade students at SMA Islam Yabadi. The source thesis used a one-group pretest–posttest design and a 40-item multiple-choice reading test. Recalculation from its 30 paired individual scores yielded a pretest mean of 43.40 and a posttest mean of 73.83, an increase of 30.43 points. Although the thesis reported a statistically significant paired t-test, its inferential summary is inconsistent with the listed individual scores. The observed improvement is encouraging but cannot establish an isolated causal effect of partner reading

without a comparison group. The study suggests the practical promise of supported peer reading and identifies the need for transparent measurement and controlled replication.
Keywords: partner reading; critical reading; descriptive text; peer-assisted learning; EFL

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is central to English as a foreign language (EFL) learning because students must connect printed words with background knowledge, construct coherent meanings, and assess what a text communicates. Reading is not simply the accurate pronunciation of words: skilled readers also monitor understanding, infer relationships, and evaluate the relevance of information (Grabe, 2009; Woolley, 2011). In school contexts, these processes can be particularly demanding when vocabulary knowledge and opportunities to practice English outside class are limited.

Critical reading adds an evaluative dimension to comprehension. Learners need to identify a text's central ideas, differentiate factual claims from opinions, recognize authorial purpose, and draw defensible inferences. Pirozzi (2000) emphasizes interpretation and evaluation as core features of critical reading, while Brookhart (2010) cautions that an assessment of higher-order thinking must require reasoning rather than merely difficult recall. Accordingly, test performance should be interpreted in light of the cognitive demands of the items, not their multiple-choice format alone.

Descriptive texts provide a useful context for reading instruction because students encounter concrete descriptions of people, locations, and objects. Yet apparently familiar topics may still require careful attention to referents, lexical meaning, supporting details, and implicit relationships. Grabe and Stoller (2013) argue that readers draw on multiple strategic processes, while Duke and Pearson (2002) describe comprehension instruction as combining explicit modeling, guided practice, and independent application. These perspectives motivate classroom routines that make comprehension visible through discussion.

One such routine is partner reading, in which students alternate reading and listening roles, offer corrective feedback, and check understanding together. Peer-assisted procedures create additional opportunities for oral rehearsal and immediate response, rather than leaving every learner to process a text in isolation (Fuchs et al., 1997; Topping, 2005). Repeated reading and supported fluency practice may free attention for meaning construction, although gains in fluency do not automatically demonstrate gains in critical evaluation (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; National Reading Panel, 2000).

Peer work may also change the social organization of reading lessons. Cooperative-learning research emphasizes positive interdependence, individual accountability, and meaningful interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In an Indonesian EFL context, Firman, Haerazi, and Dehghani (2021) documented secondary students' difficulties with English reading and phonemic awareness. Their study concerns a different intervention and outcome, but it reinforces the need for targeted support rather than assuming that exposure to a text alone ensures comprehension.

Other research involving scholars associated with Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika provides broader instructional context. Haerazi and Irawan (2019) investigated structured, genre-based instruction in writing, and Haerazi and Irawan (2020) developed an intercultural language-learning model. Haerazi, Irawan, Suadiyatno, and Hidayatullah (2020) also examined instructional models and learner creativity. These studies are not direct evidence of partner reading effectiveness; instead, they demonstrate the importance of explicitly structured classroom activities and outcome-specific evaluation in EFL education.

The thesis reported that tenth-grade students at SMA Islam Yabadi had difficulty with reading tasks and often experienced conventional teacher-led instruction. To address this local problem, the researcher introduced partner reading and compared students' reading-test scores before and after the instructional period. The present article asks how the documented scores changed and what conclusions

are warranted by the one-group design. It distinguishes the thesis's original statistical claims from values that can be reproduced using the student-level data.

METHOD

Research design and setting. The source study adopted a quantitative, one-group pretest–posttest design at SMA Islam Yabadi during the 2023/2024 academic year. Although the thesis sometimes labels its method descriptive quantitative, its implementation involved measurement before and after an instructional treatment. No parallel untreated or alternative-treatment class was documented. Consequently, the design supports analysis of within-group change, but not strong causal attribution (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

Population and participants. The thesis identified a population of 220 tenth-grade students across seven classes and a sample of 30 students described as randomly selected. It did not document the randomization procedure or sampling frame in enough detail to independently verify random selection. The same 30 learners completed both assessments.

Instrument and intervention. Students completed a 40-item multiple-choice reading test based on descriptive passages, including places, public figures, and familiar topics. The intervention involved paired reading, alternating reader/listener roles, correcting words, and checking comprehension. The thesis dates the pretest to 8 May 2024, reports treatment sessions on 9, 10, 11, and 26 May, and dates the posttest to 27 May 2024. It states that the same test was administered at both occasions. Item-level evidence establishing critical-reading validity, reliability coefficients, and evidence of scoring-blindness were not available in the source.

Analysis. Thirty pairs of scores were transcribed from the thesis's Table 4.1 and summarized using means, standard deviations, and paired differences. The source reports Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests and a paired-samples t-test. Its original inferential summary is presented with a clear caveat because it does not agree with the listed student-level data. Recalculated statistics are explicitly identified and are not presented as original SPSS output. Because the same students

were measured twice, the distribution of paired differences, rather than separate raw-score distributions, is the relevant normality assumption for the paired t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive changes. The 30 student-level score pairs show a clear upward shift after partner reading. All 30 posttest scores exceed their respective pretest scores. The recalculated pretest mean is 43.40, matching the thesis's descriptive-statistics table but not the 53.40 figure stated in its abstract. The posttest mean is 73.83, yielding a mean gain of 30.43 points. This is an observed within-group change, not a comparison with an untreated group.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics recalculated from thesis Table 4.1

Measure	N	Mean	SD
Pretest	30	43.40	11.47
Posttest	30	73.83	8.33
Paired gain	30	30.43	15.69

Note. Statistics are recalculated from the 30 individual score pairs reproduced in the source thesis, rather than copied from inconsistent narrative summaries.

Inferential reporting. The thesis's paired-samples table reports a mean pretest-minus-posttest difference of −22.000, $t(29) = -9.568$, and a two-tailed significance value printed as .000. These entries are inconsistent with the 30 listed pairs. Direct calculation from those pairs gives a mean posttest-minus-pretest gain of 30.43, an SD of 15.69, and a paired t statistic of 10.62 ($df = 29$). The disagreement should be resolved against the original scoring sheets and analysis files before formal submission; the recalculated test is a reproducibility check, not a substitute for an audit of test validity. The thesis also includes a homogeneity table referring to control and experimental groups even though its documented design uses one group; this table is not an appropriate prerequisite for a paired comparison.

Interpretation of reading performance. Partner reading gave learners a reason to read aloud, attend to a partner's reading, correct errors, and discuss meaning.

Such activities plausibly support word recognition, comprehension monitoring, and engagement. Fuchs et al. (1997) and Topping (2005) describe how structured peer-assisted learning can increase practice opportunities, while Kuhn and Stahl (2003) discuss the relationship between fluency and comprehension. However, the study did not directly measure feedback quality, interaction frequency, or changes in distinct critical-reading subskills; those mechanisms remain possible explanations rather than observed outcomes.

Critical reading and assessment. The distinction between reading comprehension and critical reading matters for interpreting these results. The thesis identifies inference, fact–opinion distinction, purpose, and tone as relevant critical-reading dimensions, drawing on Pirozzi (2000). Brookhart (2010) explains that multiple-choice items can assess reasoning only when their content requires genuine analysis. Without an item blueprint and item-level outcomes, higher posttest scores demonstrate improvement on the administered reading test, but do not establish equal improvement across all critical-reading dimensions.

Connection with Indonesian EFL research. Firman et al. (2021) highlighted reading difficulties in secondary-school EFL contexts. Their findings provide a relevant rationale for scaffolding comprehension, although their focus was phonemic awareness rather than partner reading. Haerazi and Irawan (2019, 2020) and Haerazi et al. (2020) examined instructional structure in writing-focused contexts; these publications offer methodological parallels concerning explicit support and carefully defined outcomes, not direct replication evidence. Sandiarsa S. and Suhaili (2019) compared interactive approaches in speaking classes; while not a reading study, it offers a local example of evaluating participation-focused pedagogy. Research on collaborative learning likewise suggests potential benefits from interaction and accountability, provided activities are implemented consistently (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Limitations. The absence of a comparison group leaves the results vulnerable to practice effects from reusing the same test, maturation, concurrent instruction, and other history effects (Shadish et al., 2002). The study also involves only 30

students from one school, and the source does not provide sufficient evidence of test validity, item difficulty, reliability, or independent scoring. Inconsistent dates and statistical summaries in the thesis require documentary checking. For these reasons, the evidence supports an improvement in the measured group over time, but the size of the effect attributable specifically to partner reading is uncertain.

Pedagogical implications. Teachers may use paired oral reading, role rotation, corrective feedback, and comprehension questions as practical supports for descriptive-text lessons. To target critical reading more explicitly, partners could be asked to justify inferences, identify evidence for claims, distinguish facts from opinions, and explain authorial purpose. Future evaluations should employ an independent or equivalent posttest, a validated critical-reading blueprint, and a comparison group to distinguish instructional effects from repeated testing.

CONCLUSION

The 30 tenth-grade students at SMA Islam Yabadi obtained higher descriptive-text reading scores after a period of partner-reading instruction. The individual score table yields a mean increase from 43.40 to 73.83. The study provides encouraging classroom evidence of improvement, but the one-group design and inconsistencies in the thesis's statistical reporting limit causal interpretation. Partner reading merits further evaluation using a transparent, controlled design and explicit measures of critical-reading skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

English teachers may integrate structured partner reading with explicit questions about inference, evidence, fact versus opinion, and authorial purpose. Researchers should preserve complete scoring data, report reliability and validity evidence, analyze paired differences appropriately, and include a comparison group and independent test forms. School administrators may support teacher preparation for peer feedback and monitor implementation consistency.

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