การใช้การอ่านประกอบการแสดงบนเวที โดยการใช้เทพนิยายเพื่อส่งเสริมการอ่านคล่อง
ของนักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 5
IMPLEMENTING READER'S THEATER USING FAIRY TALES
TO PROMOTE READING FLUENCY OF 5TH GRADERS

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาผลของการสอนภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้การอ่านประกอบการแสดงบนเวที โดยการใช้เทพนิยาย เพื่อส่งเสริมทักษะการอ่านคล่องของนักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 5 และ 2) เพื่อศึกษาความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนที่มีต่อวิธีการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้การอ่านประกอบการแสดงบนเวที โดยเฉพาะการใช้เทพนิยาย กลุ่มตัวอย่างในการวิจัย คือ นักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 5 ภาคเรียนที่ 1 ปีการศึกษา 2567 จากโรงเรียน บ้านมาบกราด อำเภอครบุรี จังหวัดนครราชสีมา จำนวน 24 คน โดยใช้วิธีการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบกลุ่ม เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ได้แก่ แผนการสอนด้วยวิธีการอ่านประกอบการแสดงบนเวที จำนวน 4 แผน รวม 12 ชั่วโมง แบบทดสอบการอ่านคล่องภาษาอังกฤษ และแบบสอบถามเพื่อสำรวจความคิดเห็นของนักเรียน มีต่อวิธีการเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้การอ่านประกอบการแสดงบนเวที โดยเฉพาะการใช้เทพนิยาย สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และสถิติทีแบบไม่อิสระ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ผลสัมฤทธิ์การอ่านคล่องหลังเรียนสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 โดยมีคะแนนเฉลี่ยสำหรับคำที่อ่านถูกต้องต่อนาที(WCPM) เพิ่มขึ้นเป็น 61.16 ในการทดสอบหลังเรียน นอกจากนี้ คะแนนเฉลี่ยสำหรับท่วงทำนองและลีลาในการอ่าน ก็เพิ่มขึ้นเป็น 9.75 ซึ่งบ่งบอกถึงการพัฒนาความสามารถในการแสดงออกถึงความราบรื่นในการอ่านคล่อง อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และผู้เรียนมีความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนส่วนใหญ่มีแนวโน้มเป็นบวก โดยมีคะแนนเฉลี่ยอยู่ที่ 4.75 ซึ่งสะท้อนถึงความสนุกสนานและความเชื่อมั่นในประสิทธิภาพของการอ่านประกอบการแสดงบนเวที โดยการใช้เทพนิยาย เพื่อพัฒนาทักษะการอ่านคล่อง แสดงให้เห็นว่า การเรียนภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้การอ่านประกอบการแสดงบนเวที โดยการใช้เทพนิยาย นี้ช่วยเสริมสร้างการอ่านคล่อง และส่งผลดีต่อทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการเรียนอ่านของนักเรียนได้

คำสำคัญ: การอ่านประกอบการแสดงบนเวที, การอ่านคล่อง, เทพนิยาย, จำนวนคำที่อ่านถูกต้องต่อนาที

Abstract

The purposes of this research were: 1) to examine the effects of teaching English through Reader's Theater using fairy tales to promote the reading fluency of 5th-grade students, and 2) to study 5th graders' opinions on learning English through Reader's Theater using fairy tales. The sample consisted of 24 5th-grade students from Banmabkrad School, Khonburi District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, during the first semester of the 2024 academic year. They were selected using the cluster sampling method. The research instruments included four lesson plans based on the Reader's Theater approach using fairy tales, totalling 12 hours of instruction, a reading fluency assessment, and a questionnaire. The statistical analyses employed were mean, standard deviation, and a paired samples t-test.

The results of this research indicated that the mean reading fluency scores on the post-test were statistically higher than those on the pre-test at the .05 level, with the mean words correct per minute (WCPM) increasing to 61.16 in the post-test. Additionally, the mean scores for reading prosody rose to 9.75, reflecting a significant improvement in students' reading fluency at the .05 level. Most participants expressed positive opinions toward this method, with an average score of 4.75, indicating enjoyment and confidence in the effectiveness of using Reader's Theater with fairy tales to promote reading fluency. This study suggests that teaching through Reader's Theater using fairy tales is an effective strategy for enhancing reading fluency while positively influencing students' attitudes toward reading.

Keywords: Reader's Theater, Reading fluency, Fairy tales, Word Correct Per Minute (WCPM)

Introduction

Reader's Theater effectively promoted reading fluency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly at the primary education level. The study explored how integrating Reader's Theater with fairy tales could address key fluency components such as decoding accuracy, automaticity, and prosody (Rasinski, 2004). Previous research highlighted common fluency deficits in EFL learners, including vocabulary gaps, comprehension difficulties, and low engagement (Khan et al., 2020; Mahmood, 2022). Reader's Theater, a pedagogical strategy, involved students performing scripted stories without props or costumes, emphasizing reading accuracy, speed, and expression (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Hsu et al., 2023). Kim et al. (2014) conceptualize reading fluency as a bridge between decoding and comprehension, highlighting its essential role in reading development. Reader's Theater provided repeated practice, group

collaboration, and performance-based learning, supporting the internalization of reading skills, particularly for students struggling with alphabetic blending and vocabulary recognition (Maipoka & Soontornwipast, 2021).

Incorporating fairy tales into Reader's Theater enriched the experience by offering engaging narratives with relatable characters and moral lessons (Collie & Slater, 1991; Sayer et al., 2018). Familiar stories like fairy tales helped maintain student engagement and fostered emotional connections to the material, making learning more enjoyable.

Research objectives

1. To examine the effect of Reader's Theater using fairy tales on reading fluency of 5th graders.

2. To study 5th graders' opinion towards learning English via Reader's Theater using fairy tales.

Conceptual framework

| Learning English via Reader's Theater using fairy tale | —— | (1) Students' reading fluency (2) Students' opinion towards learning English via Reader's Theater instruction using fairy tale. |
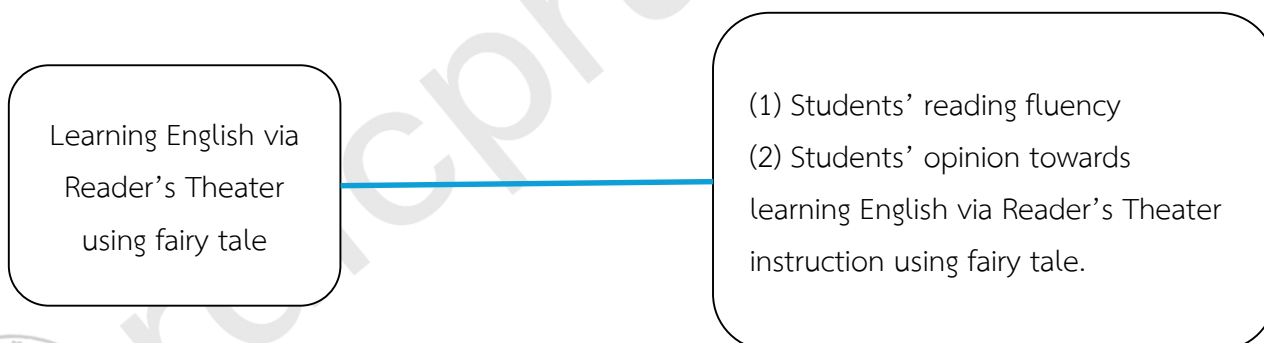
This study investigated the impact of Reader's Theater on reading fluency among 5th grade students. Reader's Theater was a pedagogical approach that enhanced reading fluency through the performance of scripted stories, without the use of props or costumes. This research employed a pre-experimental design featuring a group pretest and post-test to evaluate the effectiveness of using fairy tales in Reader's Theater as an instructional strategy. The independent variable in this study was the implementation of Reader's Theater with fairy tales, while the dependent variable was the students' reading fluency skills. By assessing reading fluency before and after the intervention, this study aimed to provide insights into the efficacy of performance-based reading instruction in improving fluency skills in elementary education.

Research method

The study investigated the impact of Readers' Theater on reading fluency among 24 fifth-grade students from Banmabkrad School, selected through cluster random sampling. Conducted during the first semester of the 2024 academic year, the research followed a pre-experimental, one-group pre-test and post-test design. The pre-test and post-test assessed students' reading fluency through a one-minute oral reading of a 100–120-word passage, with WCPM measuring accuracy and automaticity, and the Multidimensional Fluency Scale (MDFS) evaluating prosodic features in the post-test. Reader's Theater was implemented at Banmabkrad School through a structured, four-week intervention consisting of 12 hours of weekly sessions (Intaraprawat, 2019). The instructional approach followed the framework proposed by Young and Rasinski (2009), incorporating key stages such as text selection, modeling, discussion, role assignment, practice, feedback, and performance. Students engaged with fairy tale texts and participated in guided reading activities, including choral and echo reading, to enhance their fluency and comprehension. The intervention culminated in a final performance, providing students with an opportunity to apply their reading skills in an engaging and meaningful context. Rasinski et al. (2016) identified three key components of reading fluency: 1) accuracy in word decoding, 2) automaticity in word recognition, and 3) appropriate use of prosodic features, such as stress, pitch, and phrasing. These components were considered essential for reading comprehension and fluency. This study examined how the Readers' Theater intervention affected these components of reading fluency in fifth-grade students. The four-week intervention followed expert-validated lesson plans to implement Reader's Theater. In Week 1, students were introduced to the methodology, selected a story, and engaged in vocabulary and comprehension activities. Week 2 focused on choral and echo reading, role assignments, and prosody practice. In Week 3, students participated in buddy and repeated reading, rehearsals, and peer feedback. Week 4 involved final rehearsals, performances, and reflection. Audio recordings supported prosodic development throughout. The final sessions included the Reader's Theater performance, a post-test, and a questionnaire. Following the intervention, the study aimed to improve students' reading fluency, particularly in accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. The Readers' Theater approach, which emphasized role assignments and performance, was expected to facilitate improvements in automaticity and prosody, while also enhancing word decoding through repeated practice. According to Rasinski et al. (2016), these components are essential for achieving reading fluency and comprehension, with students expected to improve both their reading speed and expressive delivery.

Data collection involved an English reading fluency test and a questionnaire capturing students' opinions on Reader's Theater. The research instruments, comprising the lesson plans and the English reading fluency test, were rigorously evaluated to ensure their validity and reliability. Three experts, each holding at least a master's degree in English, assessed the lesson plans using an eight-item evaluation form. The lesson plans achieved an average score of 3.85 on a four-point scale, indicating a high level of quality in terms of content, clarity, and instructional alignment. Revisions were subsequently made based on expert feedback to enhance their pedagogical effectiveness. Likewise, the English reading fluency test was reviewed for content validity using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index. The test attained an IOC score of 1.00, reflecting complete alignment with the specified learning objectives. These results demonstrated that the instruments were appropriately designed and met the academic standards required for the study. The questionnaire aimed to examine 5th-grade students' perspectives on learning English through Readers' Theater using fairy tales to promote reading fluency. It consisted of two parts: a Likert-scale section measuring students' views on content, materials, activities, and motivation, and an open-ended section exploring their reflections and suggestions. This mixed-method approach provided insight into students' attitudes and engagement with the instructional method. The Multidimensional Fluency Scale (MDFS) assessed prosody across expression, phrasing, smoothness, and pacing. (Rasinski, 2004) The pre-test evaluated initial reading fluency, while the post-test assessed improvements after the intervention. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test indicated non-normal distribution for pre-test scores and normal distribution for post-test scores. Consequently, paired samples t-tests were used to analyze differences between the pre-test and post-test results. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to analyze questionnaire responses, while open-ended feedback underwent content analysis.

Finding

This study examined the effects of using Reader's Theater with fairy tales to improve the reading fluency of 5th grade students. The results indicated significant improvements in the students' reading fluency across multiple dimensions, including accuracy, automaticity, and prosody.

1) Reading Accuracy

Reading accuracy assessed through a one-minute reading fluency test was conducted using a 150-word passage from Jack and the Beanstalk.
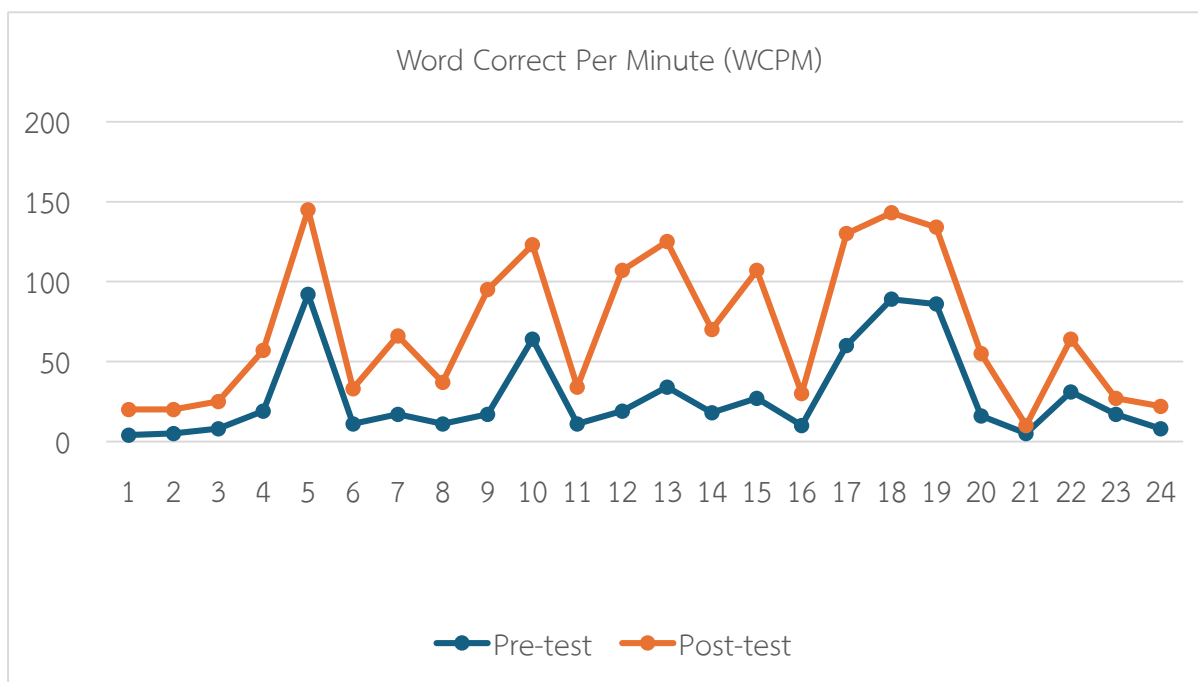
Figure 1 Progress in English reading fluency of 5th grade student's pre-test and post-test

The progress of all students, showing that all students improved their reading fluency following the intervention. The highest improvement was seen in student No. 5, who reached 145 words correct per minute (WCPM), while student No. 21 showed a minimal increase (from 5 to 10 WCPM).

  2) Reading Automaticity

    Reading automaticity was assessed by comparing pre-test and post-test results using the number of words correct per minute (WCPM) comparing with the oral reading fluency (ORF) target rate norms (Rasinski, 2004). The data from the table demonstrated a marked improvement in students' reading fluency throughout the intervention. Fall, students scored below the expected fluency level of 80–120 WCPM. By Winter, students reached the expected range of 100–140 WCPM, indicating progress. By Spring, students not only met but exceeded the expected fluency level of 110–150 WCPM, showing significant improvement. This progression highlighted the effectiveness of the Readers' Theater intervention in enhancing reading fluency.

Table 1 The pre- and post-test scores for 5th grade students' English reading fluency were assessed through the measure of words correct per minute (WCPM)

Student No.	Pre-test automaticity	Result	Post-test automaticity	Result
1	4	Fall	20	Fall
2	5	Fall	20	Fall
3	8	Fall	25	Fall
4	19	Fall	57	Fall
5	92	Fall	145	Spring
6	11	Fall	33	Fall
7	17	Fall	66	Fall
8	11	Fall	37	Fall
9	17	Fall	95	Fall
10	64	Fall	123	Winter
11	11	Fall	34	Fall
12	19	Fall	107	Fall
13	34	Fall	125	Winter
14	18	Fall	70	Fall
15	27	Fall	107	Fall
16	10	Fall	30	Fall
17	60	Fall	130	Winter
18	89	Fall	143	Spring
19	86	Fall	134	Winter
20	16	Fall	55	Fall
21	5	Fall	10	Fall
22	31	Fall	64	Fall
23	17	Fall	27	Fall
24	8	Fall	22	Fall
M	28.29		69.96	
SD	27.93		45.88	

The average pre-test score for automaticity was 28.29 WCPM, with a standard deviation of 27.93, while the post-test average score increased to 69.96 WCPM, with a standard deviation of 45.88. Although many students showed significant improvements, some students did not reach high levels of automaticity. This highlights the diverse responses to the intervention, suggesting that additional support may be needed for some students to further enhance automaticity.

 3) Reading prosody

  Reading prosody was assessed by having students read a passage aloud while the teacher either listened to their performance directly or reviewed a video recording of the reading. The Multidimensional Fluency Scale (MDFS) was used as a reliable tool to evaluate the students' fluency across four key features: expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Each feature was rated on a 4-point scale, allowing for a detailed analysis of the students' prosodic skills. This method provided an objective measure of their ability to read with appropriate expression, rhythm, and phrasing, reflecting both technical proficiency and interpretive fluency. (Rasinski, 2004)

Table 2 The prosodic reading pre-test and post-test scores, assessed using the Multidimensional Fluency Scale of 5th grade students' English reading fluency

Student No.	Pre-test				Total (16)	Post-test				Total (16)
	E (4)	P (4)	S (4)	P (4)		E (4)	P (4)	S (4)	P (4)	
1	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	5
2	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	2	2	7
3	2	1	1	1	5	2	1	2	2	7
4	2	1	1	2	6	2	2	3	3	10
5	3	2	3	3	11	3	4	4	4	15
6	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	2	8
7	2	2	2	2	8	3	2	3	3	11
8	2	1	1	1	5	2	2	2	2	8
9	2	2	2	2	8	2	3	3	3	11
10	3	3	3	3	12	3	3	3	3	12
11	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	2	8
12	2	2	2	2	8	3	3	3	3	12

Student No.	Pre-test				Total (16)	Post-test				Total (16)
	E (4)	P (4)	S (4)	P (4)		E (4)	P (4)	S (4)	P (4)	
13	2	2	2	2	8	3	3	4	3	13
14	2	2	2	2	8	2	2	3	3	10
15	3	2	2	2	9	2	3	2	2	9
16	1	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	2	8
17	3	3	3	3	12	3	3	4	3	13
18	3	2	3	3	11	4	4	4	3	15
19	2	3	2	3	10	3	4	4	4	15
20	2	1	2	2	7	2	2	2	3	9
21	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	4
22	2	2	2	2	8	2	2	3	2	9
23	2	2	2	1	7	2	2	2	2	8
24	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	2	2	7
M	1.92	1.67	1.75	1.79	7.13	2.29	2.33	2.63	2.50	9.75
SD	.72	.70	.74	.78	2.74	.69	.92	.92	.78	3.04

Note: E = Expression and volume   P = Phrasing

S = Smoothness   P = Pace

The study assessed the reading fluency of 5th grade students using the Multidimensional Fluency Scale, comparing pre-test and post-test scores. Initially, students demonstrated an average total score of 7.13 out of 16 in the pre-test, with the lowest individual scores in the elements of expression (E) and phrasing (P). Following the intervention, the average post-test score increased to 9.75, indicating a significant improvement in overall reading fluency. Notably, the scores for expression, phrasing, and smoothness showed marked enhancements, with students exhibiting a greater ability to convey meaning through their reading. The standard deviations suggested some variability in student performance, but the overall trend highlighted the effectiveness of the instructional approach in fostering fluency among the participants. Although the overall analysis of prosodic reading fluency indicated significant gains among the 5th grade students following the Reader's Theater intervention, substantial individual differences were also observed. However, not all students benefited equally. For instance, Student 5 showed the most

remarkable progress, with a total score increasing from 11 to 15, while Student 21 exhibited no improvement, maintaining a total score of 4. Similarly, Student 24 improved slightly from 4 to 7, whereas Student 13 showed a substantial increase from 8 to 13. These disparities in performance underscored the varied responses to the intervention, suggesting that while Reader's Theater effectively enhanced reading prosody for many students, additional differentiated support may be necessary to address the unique needs of those who progressed less significantly.

Table 3 The comparison of pre-test and post-test Scores for 5th grade students' English reading fluency in prosody

Components	Total score	Pre-test		Post-test		SD	t	p
		M	SD	M	SD			
Expression and volume	4	1.91	.71	2.29	.69	.57	3.19	.05
Phrasing	4	1.66	.70	2.33	.91	.63	5.12	<.05
Smoothness	4	1.75	.73	2.62	.92	.61	7.00	<.05
Pace	4	1.79	.77	2.50	.78	.46	7.47	<.05
Total	16	7.12	2.73	9.75	3.03	.158	8.12	<.05

*$p<.05$

As shown in Table 3, the effects of an intervention on 5th grade students' English reading fluency were examined, revealing significant improvements in various components of prosody from pre-test to post-test. The students' scores for expression and volume increased from an average of 1.91 (SD = 0.71) to 2.29 (SD = 0.69), with a t-value of 3.19 and a p-value of .05 level. Similarly, phrasing scores rose from 1.66 (SD = 0.70) to 2.33 (SD = 0.91), yielding a t-value of 5.12 and a p-value of less than .05 level. Smoothness also showed a notable enhancement, increasing from an average of 1.75 (SD = 0.73) to 2.62 (SD = 0.92), supported by a t-value of 7.00 and a p-value of less than .05 level. Pace demonstrated a comparable increase, with pre-test scores averaging 1.79 (SD = 0.77) and post-test scores averaging 2.50 (SD = 0.78), resulting in a t-value of 7.47 and a p-value of less than .05 level. Overall, the total score for reading fluency improved significantly, rising from 7.12 (SD = 2.73) in the pre-test to 9.75 (SD = 3.03), with a t-value of 8.12 and a p-value of less than .05 level. These findings

indicated that the intervention had a statistically significant positive effect on students' reading fluency.

4) Students' opinions toward Reader's Theater

Students' opinions on learning English through Reader's Theater with fairy tales were overwhelmingly positive. Survey results showed a mean score of 4.75 (out of 5), indicating that students found the lessons enjoyable and engaging. Most students strongly agreed that the lessons were interesting, well-designed, and contributed to improved reading fluency. Open-ended responses revealed that students enjoyed the interactive nature of the lessons and felt their reading skills, including fluency, spelling, and vocabulary, had improved. Many also reported that learning through fairy tales made reading more enjoyable, with some imitating character voices during performances. For example, Student 1 mentioned gaining more knowledge and feeling happier when learning English, while Student 6 enjoyed both spelling and reading fluently.

Discussion

The study demonstrated that Reader's Theater using fairy tales significantly improved students' reading fluency. Pre and post-test results showed a notable increase in words correct per minute (WCPM), indicating improvements in reading accuracy and automaticity. Additionally, readings exhibited enhanced prosody, as measured by the Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Rasinski, 2014), highlighting the effectiveness of Reader's Theater and fairy tales in promoting fluency through engaging, student-centered activities. However, factors such as cultural differences and teacher familiarity with Reader's Theater influenced the study's outcomes, highlighting the need for further exploration of Reader's Theater's feasibility in Thai primary schools.

Previous research supported these findings, recognizing Reader's Theater as a powerful tool for improving fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and confidence (Young et al., 2019). It was also shown to boost student motivation and participation, fostering greater enthusiasm for reading (Mastrothanasis et al., 2023). Repeated reading in Reader's Theater expanded vocabulary (Rasinski, 2014).

This study employed fairy tales instead of other reading genres because their engaging plots and universal themes not only supported language development but also aided children in navigating emotional challenges, thereby fostering emotional resilience and psychological growth (Bettelheim, 1976). Fairy tales, selected for their popularity, length, and class suitability,

were central to the success of the method. They engaged students by building vocabulary, exposing them to rich language, and addressing emotional themes. (Tatar, 2002) The 5th-grade students considered five fairy tales: 1. Hansel and Gretel, 2. Goldilocks and the Three Bears, 3. Little Red Riding Hood, 4. Cinderella, and 5. Jack and the Beanstalk. Based on class consensus, Jack and the Beanstalk was selected, as it was the most familiar and engaging to the students. Although Cinderella and Little Red Riding Hood were strong contenders, they were ultimately not chosen due to lower student interest. The selected story was adapted to match the students' reading levels, ensuring its accessibility for use as the script in the intervention. The study revealed that when students were motivated by interesting texts, their engagement and participation increased, leading to significant improvements in reading skills. Students reported high satisfaction with the method, appreciating the fun, collaborative nature of Reader's Theater and the opportunity for repeated reading of compelling narratives.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of teaching English through Reader's Theater using fairy tales to enhance the reading fluency of 5th grade students at Banmabkrad School in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. A total of 24 students participated in the intervention, engaging in Reader's Theater activities designed to improve reading fluency. The results demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in students' reading fluency, with higher post-test scores compared to pre-test scores at the .05 level. Students responded positively to the approach, particularly appreciating the collaborative nature of Reader's Theater and the opportunity to engage with the material by imitating character voices.

The findings suggest that Reader's Theater, when integrated with fairy tales, not only enhances reading fluency but also fosters a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment. Additionally, the study highlights the adaptability of Reader's Theater to different reading genres and curriculum needs, making it particularly effective in EFL contexts. Beyond linguistic benefits, Reader's Theater using fairy tales also promotes moral development by engaging students with ethical themes such as virtue, personal growth, and kindness. A key consideration in implementing Reader's Theater is the careful selection of scripts that align with students' reading levels to sustain engagement and build confidence.

Based on the study findings, several instructional and research recommendations were identified. Instructionally, the integration of Reader's Theater with various genres beyond fairy tales was encouraged to align with curriculum content and the contextual needs of students.

Instruction in EFL reading fluency was recommended to be flexible and continuous to accommodate diverse student abilities. The use of fairy tales in Reader's Theater was also suggested to support moral development through engagement with ethical themes. Furthermore, the careful selection of scripts that matched students' proficiency levels was considered essential for maintaining engagement and fostering confidence. For further research, the implementation of both experimental and control groups was recommended to enhance the validity of the findings. Long-term studies were advised to evaluate the retention of reading skills over time. The development of standardized reading fluency norms specific to EFL learners was proposed to allow for more accurate and meaningful assessment. Additionally, future studies were encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of Reader's Theater among students with diverse learning needs, including those with special needs, to assess its broader applicability in various educational contexts. Although Reader's Theater had gained popularity internationally, it remained underutilized in primary English classrooms in Thailand. Therefore, it was recommended that future research consider its implementation within the Thai educational context to support curriculum development and address the needs of learners with limited English proficiency. As this study demonstrates, Reader's Theater offers a powerful tool for improving reading fluency while cultivating a positive attitude toward reading, making it a promising approach for English language instruction in diverse educational settings.

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