

## Enhancing Reading Comprehension through Speed Reading: A Study of Eighth-Grade Students in an Indonesian EFL Classroom

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the impact of the Speed-Reading method on the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMPN 8 Makassar. Utilizing a quantitative pre-experimental design, the research involved a one-group pretest-posttest approach, engaging 34 students. The intervention consisted of structured speed-reading sessions supplemented with visual aids, aimed at enhancing students' reading speed and comprehension. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests and analysed using SPSS to determine the effectiveness of the Speed-Reading method. The findings reveal a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension scores post-intervention. The mean pre-test score of 59.29 increased to 83.5 in the post-test, with statistical analysis confirming the significance of this improvement ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results align with previous studies, highlighting the Speed-Reading method's efficacy in fostering a more engaging and cooperative learning environment. The method not only boosts reading speed but also enhances comprehension, making it a valuable addition to EFL instructional strategies. The study concludes that the Speed-Reading method is an effective pedagogical tool for improving reading comprehension in EFL contexts. Its implementation can lead to substantial gains in students' reading abilities, suggesting its broader applicability across various educational settings. Future research should explore the long-term benefits and potential adaptations of Speed-Reading techniques to further validate and expand upon these findings.*

**Keywords:** reading comprehension, Junior high school, and speed reading.

### INTRODUCTION

As a foreign language in Indonesia, English plays a crucial role in various aspects of life, especially in education. Mastery of a language requires four essential skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Among these, reading skills are fundamental for obtaining specific kinds of information, including those related to science and technology. Consequently, reading becomes a basic requirement for students in education.

According to Dalman (2013: 17), reading is a cognitive process aimed at extracting various pieces of information from written texts. Reading is an activity that involves thinking

to understand the content of the text. It is not merely the act of recognizing letters to form words, groups of words, sentences, and paragraphs, but rather an activity of interpreting symbols and signs to derive meaning, enabling the reader to comprehend the message conveyed by the writer.

Learning is the process of changing behavior through interaction between individuals and their environment (Abduh et al., 2022). Students are central to the learning process, which occurs as they acquire knowledge from their surroundings. Employing effective learning methods can make students more active participants in the teaching and learning process because these methods play a crucial role in facilitating the achievement of educational objectives.

There are various cooperative learning methods, each implemented in different ways. One such method is Speed Reading. Speed Reading is a technique designed to enable quick reading while maintaining comprehension. According to Muhammad Noer (Ana, 2013: 15), basic techniques for speed reading include: (a) quickly recognizing words, (b) reading groups of words, and (c) practicing rhythmic eye movements.

Previous research has highlighted the effectiveness of the Speed Reading method. For instance, Lailatul Qomariah and Rahmat Efendi (2020) in their study, "The Effectiveness of Speed Reading as a Technique in Teaching Reading Comprehension to Tenth Grade Students at MA. Sultan Cendana Madura," found that teaching English reading using speed reading techniques is more effective and engaging. This method not only improves students' reading comprehension but also encourages active and cooperative learning as students work together to solve problems, thereby enhancing their reading abilities.

Similarly, Farida Wahyul (2012) in her study, "The Effectiveness of Using Speed Reading Techniques to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension Ability in the Seventh Grade at MTs N Kebumen 1," observed that students had moderate to low reading speeds. The study indicated that students benefited significantly from speed reading techniques, which helped them improve their reading fluency and comprehension.

Despite these findings, challenges remain, particularly among eighth-grade students at SMPN 8 Makassar, who struggle with reading fluency. Common issues include a reliance on the syllable method, difficulty in combining sentences, improper use of punctuation, and a general hesitation in reading. These challenges underline the need for further quantitative research to explore the impact of speed reading on reading comprehension among these students.

## **Teaching Reading in the Indonesian EFL Classroom**

Teaching reading in an Indonesian EFL classroom involves various methods tailored to improve students' reading skills and comprehension. The following subtopics outline effective strategies for fostering reading abilities among EFL students.

### **1. Speed Reading**

Speed reading is a crucial technique in the EFL classroom aimed at enhancing students' reading speed and comprehension. According to Muhammad Noer (Ana, 2013: 15), speed reading involves techniques such as quickly recognizing words, reading groups of words, and practicing rhythmic eye movements. Speed reading is particularly beneficial for EFL students as it helps them process information more efficiently and keeps them engaged in the learning process.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of speed reading in improving reading comprehension. Lailatul Qomariah and Rahmat Efendi (2020) found that teaching English reading using speed reading techniques is more effective and engaging. It not only improves students' reading comprehension but also fosters active and cooperative learning, encouraging students to work together to solve problems and enhance their reading abilities.

Farida Wahyul (2012) also observed that speed reading techniques significantly improved the reading fluency and comprehension of seventh-grade students at MTs N Kebumen 1. These findings underscore the importance of incorporating speed reading into the EFL curriculum to address common challenges such as slow reading speeds and low comprehension levels.

## 2. Silent Reading

Silent reading is another effective strategy in the EFL classroom, aimed at improving students' reading comprehension, pace, vocabulary skills, and spelling. According to Stephen Krashen (1980), silent reading involves students, and ideally their teachers, reading a book of their choice for a set amount of time without interruptions. This method allows students to engage with the text at their own pace, fostering a more profound understanding of the material.

Implementing silent reading sessions in the classroom can help students develop a habit of reading for pleasure, which in turn enhances their overall language proficiency. It provides an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the language, expanding their vocabulary and improving their comprehension skills.

## 3. Reading Aloud

Reading aloud is a valuable practice in the EFL classroom that aids in developing reading skills. According to Nurtipal in Nursia (1997), reading aloud helps students improve pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary. It also provides immediate feedback, allowing teachers to correct errors and guide students towards better reading habits.

By reading aloud, students gain experience in producing the sounds of the language, which is crucial for their speaking skills. This method also boosts their confidence in using English, making them more comfortable with the language. Additionally, reading aloud sessions can be a collaborative activity, where students read to each other, fostering a sense of community and mutual learning.

## Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of teaching reading in the EFL classroom. It involves extracting and constructing meaning from texts, as defined by Anderson et al. (2007:1). Effective reading comprehension requires coordinating various processes, including word recognition, background knowledge, and fluency.

According to Nurhalima (2005: 15-18), comprehension is achieved through activities that train students to read with a purpose, such as answering questions about the text to ensure understanding. This active process involves multiple levels of comprehension: literal (surface understanding), interpretive (deep analysis), and critical (evaluative judgment).

## Challenges and Solutions

Teaching reading in the Indonesian EFL classroom presents unique challenges, such as individual differences among students in terms of intelligence, attitude, and ability (Endlang, 2007:17-18). Addressing these differences requires a flexible and adaptive approach to teaching.

Ahuja (2001 in Mohammad, 1999:27) categorizes comprehension into three levels: literal comprehension (understanding explicit information), interpretive comprehension (analyzing deeper meanings), and critical reading (evaluating information). By incorporating varied reading strategies and levels of comprehension, teachers can cater to the diverse needs of their students and enhance overall reading proficiency.

Incorporating speed reading, silent reading, and reading aloud into the EFL curriculum in Indonesia can significantly enhance students' reading skills and comprehension. These methods, supported by research and practice, provide a comprehensive approach to teaching reading, addressing the unique challenges of the Indonesian EFL classroom and fostering a more engaging and effective learning environment.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research method using a pre-experimental design. Specifically, the research utilized a one-group pretest-posttest design. In this study, only one class was used, serving as the experimental group. This group was administered a pre-test, followed by a treatment, and subsequently a post-test.

$$O1 \quad x \quad O2$$

Where:

O1 = Pre-test

x = Treatment

O2 = Post-test

(Gay, 2006)

### Population and Sample

The population for this research comprised students from class VIII at SMPN 8 Makassar. The researcher employed cluster random sampling as the technique for selecting the sample. Cluster sampling is a probability sampling technique where the population is divided into multiple groups (clusters) for research purposes. The sample selected for this study was class VIII-8, consisting of 34 students.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a reading test. The test consisted of multiple-choice questions, with a total of 10 items. Each item in the pre-test and post-test differed but maintained the same level of difficulty to ensure consistency in assessment.

### Procedure of Data Collection

The data collection technique used in this study involved administering tests. The researcher provided both a pre-test and a post-test to the experimental class. The pre-test was administered before the learning process began, while the post-test was given after the students had completed the learning process or treatment provided by the teacher.

### Technique of Data Analysis

The data collected through the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using the following procedure:

- a. a. Scoring the students' correct answers of pre-test and post-test

$$\text{Students Score} = \frac{\text{The Number of Students Correct Answer}}{\text{Total Score}} \times 100$$

(Kemendikbud 2017)

b. Classifying the Students' Score

**Table 1. Scoring Rubric**

No	Mastery Level	Category
1	93-100	Very good
2	84-92	Good
3	75-83	Fair
4	<75	Poor

(Kemendikbud, 2017)

c. Using SPSS version 22.0, calculating scores, standard deviation of pre-test and post-test, frequency and percentage of student speed, and hypothesis testing

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**a. The Frequency and Percentage of Students' Pre-test and Post-test Scores**

**Table 2. Pre-test and Post-test Scores**

No	Classification	Range	Pretest		Post-test	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very God	93-100	0	0%	5	15%
2	God	84-92	1	3%	12	35%
3	Enouh	75-83	5	15%	11	32%
4	not enouh	<75	28	82%	6	18%
Total			34	100%	34	100%

Table 4.1 shows that before receiving treatment, in the pre-test, 0% of students scored "very good," 1 student (3%) scored "good," 5 students (15%) scored "sufficient," and 28 students (82%) scored "insufficient." After receiving treatment, in the post-test, 5 students (15%) scored "very good," 12 students (35%) scored "good," 11 students (32%) scored "sufficient," and 6 students (18%) scored "poor." This demonstrates that student achievement improved after applying the speed-reading method to the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMPN 8 Makassar.

**b. The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Students' Pre-test and Post-test**

**Table 3. Mean Score and Standard Deviation**

Test	Mean	Standard Deviation
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Pre-test	59.29	13.26
Post-test	83.5	10.51

Table 4.2 indicates that the pre-test mean score was 59.29, while the post-test mean score was 83.5. The standard deviation for the pre-test was 13.26, and for the post-test, it was 10.51. These results show that the standard deviation of the students' post-test scores was smaller than that of the pre-test scores, indicating a reduction in score variability and an improvement in reading comprehension.

### c. Hypothesis Testing

The criterion for testing the hypothesis is as follows:

1. If Sig (2-tailed) or the significance level is lower than the alpha level (Sig < 0.05), it indicates that the scores of students' reading comprehension using the Speed-Reading method differ significantly and show improvement between the pre-test and post-test.
2. If Sig (2-tailed) or the significance level is higher than the alpha level (Sig > 0.05), it indicates that the scores of students' reading comprehension using the Speed-Reading method do not differ significantly and do not show improvement between the pre-test and post-test.

### d. The Significant Differences of the Pre-test and Post-test Score

**Table 4. Significance Value**

Test	Significant Value	Significant Level
Pre-test		
Post-test	.000	0.05

Based on the criterion for hypothesis testing, the results of this research show that the mean was statistically significant at the level of Sig = .000, which is smaller than the alpha level (0.05). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, meaning that the use of the Speed-Reading method positively affects students' reading comprehension. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H0), which states that the Speed-Reading method does not affect students' reading comprehension, is rejected.

## Discussion

This section interprets the research findings regarding the effect of the Speed-Reading method on students' reading comprehension. The study included four sessions, consisting of a pretest, treatment sessions, and a post-test. The treatment involved using several pictures printed by the researcher to aid in the learning process. Quantitative methods and SPSS were utilized to analyse the findings, revealing that the Speed-Reading method can significantly enhance students' reading comprehension.

Supporting research corroborates these findings. Qomariah (2020) found that speed reading techniques are more effective than conventional methods for teaching reading comprehension. These techniques not only improve students' reading abilities but also make learning more engaging and cooperative. Students actively participate in the classroom, work

together to solve problems, and as a result, enhance their reading skills. This active involvement creates a dynamic learning environment where students feel less intimidated and more motivated to improve their reading proficiency.

Pulnomowati (2012) discovered similar results, indicating that teaching reading using speed reading methods effectively improves the reading comprehension abilities of seventh-grade students. The technique encourages active involvement, making the learning process enjoyable and less daunting. Students learn the meanings of words and understand the text better, leading to faster reading with improved comprehension. The active engagement and enjoyment in the learning process are crucial factors in the success of the Speed-Reading method.

The comparison of pre-test and post-test scores highlights the substantial improvement in students' reading comprehension. Before the treatment, most students had poor scores, with none classified as excellent or very good. In contrast, after the treatment, there were no students classified as very poor or poor, and most were classified as good or very good. This shift in performance indicates a significant improvement in reading comprehension following the implementation of the Speed-Reading method. For instance, one student who scored 80 (good) in the pre-test improved to 100 (excellent) in the post-test. Another student who scored 50 before the treatment improved to 80 after the treatment. These examples demonstrate the effectiveness of the Speed-Reading method in enhancing students' reading comprehension.

The statistical analysis further supports these findings. The mean score of students in the pre-test was 59.29, which increased to 83.5 in the post-test. The minimum score in the pre-test was 50, while the maximum was 80. In contrast, the minimum score in the post-test was 80, and the maximum was 100. This significant increase in scores underscores the positive impact of the Speed-Reading method on students' reading comprehension. The statistical significance of the results, with a p-value of 0.00, confirms that the observed improvements are not due to chance. The null hypothesis, which stated that the Speed-Reading method would not affect students' reading comprehension, is therefore rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Overall, the use of the Speed-Reading method has been proven effective in enhancing the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMPN 8 Makassar. The significant improvement in students' scores, supported by statistical analysis and corroborated by previous research, underscores the efficacy of the Speed-Reading method in an EFL classroom setting. This method not only boosts reading skills but also fosters a more engaging and collaborative learning environment, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for students.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed the effectiveness of the Speed-Reading method in enhancing the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMPN 8 Makassar. The significant improvement in students' scores from pre-test to post-test indicates that the Speed-Reading technique is a valuable tool in the EFL classroom (Arham & Ariani, 2020). This method not only increases reading speed but also improves comprehension, making it an essential component of modern language teaching strategies.

The study's results align with previous research, demonstrating that the Speed-Reading method fosters a more engaging and cooperative learning environment. By actively involving students in the learning process, this technique enhances their ability to understand and retain information. The improvement in reading skills observed in this study suggests that

incorporating Speed Reading into the curriculum could benefit students across various educational contexts.

Statistical analysis confirmed the significance of the improvements, validating the effectiveness of the Speed-Reading method. The acceptance of the alternative hypothesis and the rejection of the null hypothesis further reinforce the positive impact of this technique on students' reading comprehension. The Speed Reading method is an effective instructional strategy that can significantly improve students' reading comprehension in an EFL setting. Educators are encouraged to adopt this method to enhance students' engagement and performance in reading. Future research should continue to explore the long-term benefits and potential applications of Speed Reading across different educational levels and contexts to further validate its efficacy and versatility.

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