

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This action research seeks to explore the impact of shared reading on the fluency of 12 struggling English as a second language (ESL) readers in grade 3 (Year 3) in *Sekolah Kebangsaan St. John*, an urban primary school in Kuala Lumpur. This study was conducted in September, 2013. In that year, the school population numbered 357 of which 279 are Malays, 57 are Indians, 12 are Chinese, and 9 are categorised as others. *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malay) is the first language (L1) of 78.2 % of the pupils and is the medium of instruction in the school. English is their second language (L2), and is taught as a classroom subject. This researcher has noticed that struggling ESL readers in the lower primary levels (Grades 1-3) remain struggling when they enter upper primary level (Grades 4-6). They could neither read aloud fluently with appropriate speed, accuracy, and prosody, nor could they read silently with comprehension. It is her belief that shared reading with big books can improve their oral reading fluency. This researcher is keen to find out if the majority of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers in her school enjoy this mode of learning to read, and what their expectations are in the reading classroom. Once their expectations are met, the selected reading intervention program can be fine tuned for success. As they are going to enter upper primary level the following year, which requires more reading of informational texts independently, it is imperative that reading intervention instruction be given especially to the struggling grade 3 ESL readers. There is urgency to turn them into successful academic readers who can read speedily, accurately and silently on their own.

In summary, this study on the impact of shared reading with big books on the fluency of struggling grade 3 ESL readers is carried out with the belief that achieving oral reading

fluency first will instil the confidence to read independently with comprehension in their later years.

1.2 Background of the Research

Prior to 1973, English was a major medium of instruction in Malaysian schools. Then, with the passing of the National Language Act (1967) and the Constitutional Amendment Act (1971), English was reduced to a class subject. In 2003, in line with the national policy named Vision 2020 (to achieve developed status by 2020), English regained importance when it was used as the medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics. However, in 2012, it was once again reduced in importance when *Bahasa Melayu* was reintroduced as the medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics. Today, English is taught as a compulsory L2 subject in all Malaysian schools.

In 2011, the Malaysian teaching curriculum underwent massive changes, when school-based assessment gained prominence over standardized public examinations. The KSSR curriculum (*Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah*) replaced the KBSR curriculum (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah*). Primary education is now divided into two stages: Stage One (Years 1,2 and 3) and Stage Two (Years 4,5 and 6) .The Standard –Based English Language Curriculum for Malaysian National Primary Schools (SK) is organized into 5 modules as shown below.

Module One	:	Listening and Speaking
Module Two	:	Reading
Module Three	:	Writing
Module Four	:	Language Arts
Module Five	:	Grammar

In Stage One (Years 1, 2 and 3), the emphasis is on the development of the basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In Year 1 and Year 2, the first 4 modules are taught. Then from Year 3 onwards, the L2 Grammar module is introduced. In Stage Two (Years 4, 5 and 6), all the 5 modules are taught. In the old syllabus, the Communicational English Language Syllabus, the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) are taught integratively with three language contents (the sound system, grammar and vocabulary) whereas the new syllabus follows a modular approach where the modules are to be taught separately and sequentially, beginning from Module One. This does not exclude the integration of skills but the main focus is to teach the specific language skills as described in the content and learning standards in each module. Phonemic awareness and phonics are introduced in the Year 1 and Year 2 reading modules (*Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah Bahasa Inggeris SK Year 3, 2012*).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

To date, an officially sanctioned intervention program for struggling ESL readers in Stage One has yet to be introduced in Malaysian primary schools. This researcher is of the view that shared reading instruction in the remedial reading classroom can help struggling ESL readers to catch up in reading proficiency. The literacy needs of the struggling grade 3

readers have to be addressed so that their entry into Stage 2 will be smooth and free of demotivation due to illiteracy.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

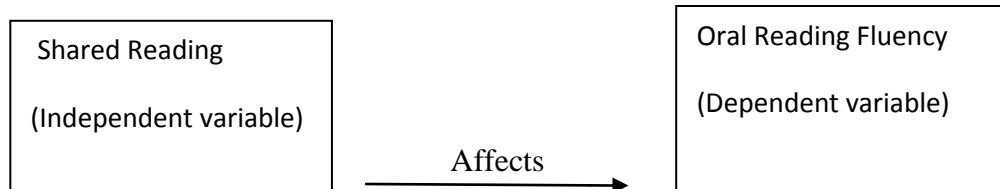


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

This researcher has come up with a conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1.1 above. This framework shows that shared reading (independent variable) will impact the oral reading fluency of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers. This conceptual framework was conceived as there is consensus among researchers that oral reading fluency can be developed by reading programs such as repeated reading, neurological impress, paired reading, shared reading and assisted reading (National Reading Panel, 2000:3-1). This researcher chose shared reading from the list as it was supported by the three theories that frame this research (Theory of Literacy Development, Automaticity Theory of Reading, and Theory of Social Constructivism).

1.5 Purpose of the Research

The aim of this research is to explore the impact of intensive shared reading instruction on the fluency of struggling grade 3 ESL readers in *Sekolah Kebangsaan St. John(2)*, a Malay-medium primary school in urban Kuala Lumpur.

The research objectives are:

- i) To find out if an intensive program of shared reading instruction improves the oral reading fluency of struggling ESL readers.
- ii) To find out if the subjects enjoy reading big books in shared reading with their teacher and friends.
- iii) To find out the expectations of the subjects in the reading classroom.

The research questions (RQs) are:

RQ1: Does shared reading improve the oral reading fluency of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers?

RQ2: Do the majority of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers enjoy shared reading with big books with their teacher and friends?

RQ3: What are the expectations of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers in the reading classroom?

1.6 Significance of the Research

This study on shared reading with struggling emergent readers significantly benefits several parties. Firstly, the in-house English language panel of teachers and this researcher get to discuss and share the benefits of the findings. This will improve pedagogical knowledge in teaching literacy particularly, reading. Secondly, and most importantly, the selected subjects will be motivated to want to learn to read fast as they are given support in a non-threatening environment to learn reading. Thirdly, the school and education authorities may study any recommendations of the study pertaining to the efficacy of shared reading with big books on young struggling readers. They may introduce some reading intervention

programs specifically for this group of pupils. To date, this researcher has not known of any reading programs for these struggling readers except for extra coaching from their own teachers in the language classrooms. They may lag behind if teachers do not have enough time to coach them during classroom time. Lastly, as the hands-on researcher, this researcher gets to verify her beliefs on how reading intervention should be conducted in the reading classroom.

1.7 Limitations of the Research

This study has a few limitations that are out of this researcher's jurisdiction to control.

Firstly, conducive teaching and learning environment is lacking as the school compound is shared by two schools, one in the morning session, and the other in the afternoon session. As the participants are in the afternoon session, they feel hot and tired easily. Some of the pupils that took part in the pre-test audio-recording sessions return to naughtily disturb by knocking on the closed door. Secondly, the chosen research setting in the library had to be changed later to a cramped meeting room as contractors moved in to renovate the library. Thirdly, due to time-table constraints, the research was conducted in a short period of one week. These extraneous variables are likely to affect some of the data collected.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Below are stated the definitions of selected terms used in this research.

i) Shared reading

According to Parkes (2000:1-3) shared reading is a collaborative learning activity where a teacher models effective reading skills and strategies and engages the learners in their use. Here, enlarged texts (print and illustrations) on nursery rhymes, chants, poems, stories,

songs and informational texts were read and reread in unison, aimed at giving the learners a pleasurable reading experience in a supportive way. The late Holdaway (1979) introduced the use of big books in shared reading to help emergent readers to read aloud fluently with the reading teacher as the model of a good reader. His Theory of Literacy Development viewed learning to read as a natural developmental phenomenon as children observed their parents reading and reading to them, and emulated these reading behaviors. He listed 4 processes of shared reading. First, children observed reading demonstration by their parents reading to them at bedtime. Second, they participated to read with the support of their parents. Third, they practise reading on their own. Lastly, they performed by reading aloud to others. Grant (2001:4) explained their version of shared reading instructional strategy. First, the teacher selects an appropriate text which is just above the level of the learners. Usually, a poem or a story from a big book is used for younger children, and pages projected onto a screen for older children .Next, the layout of the text is introduced, drawing attention to the illustrations, key words and characters. Then, the teacher reads to the class, and encourages the class to join in as she or he rereads .The teacher asks questions and engages the learners in active participation in dissecting the text. In this research, where research methodology is concerned, this researcher has followed closely the views and guidelines set by the researchers mentioned above when carrying out shared reading lessons so that there is a basis for discussion and comparison of findings.

(ii) Fluency

The term “fluency” in this researcher’s study refers to oral reading fluency. Oral reading fluency has been defined in several ways by different reading researchers.

Fountas and Pinell (1999), refer to fluency as “the way readers put words together in phrases, the expression and intonation they use, and the speed and ease with which they read.” In the National Reading Panel (2000) report, fluency is defined as “reading text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression” (p.3-1). Hasbrouk and Tindal (1992) defined oral reading fluency as “the combination of accuracy and rate, expressed as the number of words correct per minute” (cited in Schumm, 2006:198). Moskal and Blachowicz (2006:2-6) defined fluent oral reading as “words read aloud effortlessly, accurately, and in an expressive manner.” They gave the 3 basic elements of oral reading fluency as: rate, accuracy, and prosody. They defined these 3 elements as follows:

Rate: A words-correct-per-minute (wcpm) reading rate refers to the number of words read correctly in 1 minute in a given text. They noted that several factors can affect reading rates e.g. level of text difficulty, reader’s grade level, text genre, and reader’s familiarity with the subject matter.

Accuracy: This refers to words read correctly in a text .They noted that accuracy in reading depends on the size of a reader’s storage of high frequency and sight words and his ability to decode words quickly and correctly. However, if a reader self-corrects several times, accuracy here will not ensure fluent reading.

Prosody: Prosodic reading means reading expressively, with appropriate phrasing, pausing, and intonation.

In this research, pre-tests and post-tests for fluency involved the assessment of these 3 elements, and calculation for oral reading fluency is based on the number of words correct per minute as developed by Hasbrouck and Tindal (1992).

(iii) Struggling reader

A reader with reading aloud disabilities, he fails to read with appropriate speed, accuracy and expression.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, this researcher will review literature on the similarities and differences in L1 and L2 reading research settings, three reading theories linked to shared reading, research on shared reading, two reading approaches currently used, and reading fluency assessments currently used.

2.2 Overview of Reading Research in L1 and L2 Settings

Literature reviewed on reading research in L1 and L2 settings pointed to the fact that it is well developed and comprehensive in L1 settings but rather limited in L2 settings. Grabe and Stoller (2013:61) listed several important aspects of L1 reading that have been researched. They include the roles of fluency, vocabulary, morphological knowledge, metalinguistic awareness, motivation on reading development, and the impact of specific instructional practices and curricula on reading development, and the importance of reading strategies and discourse awareness in reading proficiency. And, in L2 settings, they highlighted the importance of vocabulary development at word level, the role of vocabulary and motivation in reading, the benefits of fluency, extensive reading, and reading strategy instruction in reading development. Hence, the topics are similar in L1 and L2 reading research. Other similarities include research methodology and data analyses. The differences highlighted by them are linguistic and processing differences, individual and experiential differences, socio-cultural and institutional differences between L1 and L2 reading development.

Awareness of these similarities and differences in L1 and L2 reading settings had guided this researcher to improve the reliability and validity of her research instrumentation.

2.3 Theories that Frame the Research

Tracey and Morrow (2006) give a very detailed history of the development of theories and models related to literacy development and applicable to reading research and instruction. They listed early theories from 400 B.C.-1899 (Mental Discipline Theory, Associationism, Unfoldment Theory, Structuralism); Behaviourism (1900-1950s); Constructivism (1920s-Present); Theories of Literacy Development (1930s-Present): Social Learning Perspectives (1960s-Present); Information/Cognitive Processing Perspectives from (1950s-1980s), (1980s) and (1989-Present). They are of the view that an effective teacher will apply these theories in classroom practice as no single theory or model will adequately cover reading instruction be it its process, development or reading disability. However they also cited Brumbaugh and Lawrence (1985) and Thomas (1996) who are of the view that researchers will base their research framework on a theory “that is most relevant to the problems and aims at hand,” (p.22) as “data can assume quite different meanings when different theories are used for organizing the facts” (p.11). Therefore, after careful consideration, this researcher has selected Holdaway’s Theory of Literacy Development as the main theory to frame this research. This theory, will uphold adequately the framework of this research on shared reading and its impact on the fluency of struggling ESL readers.

The late Holdaway (1930-2004) viewed learning to read as a natural developmental phenomenon as children observe their parents reading and reading to them, then emulate the reading behaviors themselves. Finally, they learn to read by themselves. He posited that

emergent readers continue acquiring oral reading skills in school by initially listening to fluent readings by the reading teacher. They then practise reading in unison, with their peers and teacher's support. Then, they are encouraged to practise reading by themselves. Finally, they read aloud to others. Holdaway recommended a favourable reading environment in the classroom, with big books and active peer participation and the teacher as the model of fluent reading.

Holdaway (1979) introduced the use of big books and shared reading techniques to help emergent readers to read aloud with fluency. They look upon their reading teacher as their model of a good reader. The lesson plans in this research follow his four processes. First, this researcher modelled fluent reading. Next, the participants read with this researcher's support. Then they practise reading at home. Lastly, they came to class to read aloud to their friends.

The second theory linked to shared reading and its impact on oral reading fluency is LaBerge and Samuels' Automaticity Theory of Reading. They noted that repeated readings of a text lead to automaticity in decoding, increases the rate of reading, and it frees the cognitive resources to achieve reading comprehension. In this shared reading research, this researcher provided repeated readings of the selected text "The Gingerbread Man". This will likely lead to increased fluency as it leads to increased word recognition. Samuels (1979), as cited in Farstrup and Samuels (2002:176-179), developed repeated reading to enhance oral reading fluency. He conducted repeated reading with mentally retarded students who repeatedly read short selections (50-100 words) of easy stories until a rate of 85 words per minute was reached. He found that with each rereading of the selected text,

accuracy, rate and reading expression improved. He also noted that there were good transfer effects as reading rate and accuracy improved when another text was introduced. This researcher was of the opinion that shared reading, which also included repeated readings, would be able to improve the fluency of the struggling ESL readers.

The third theory is Vygotsky's theory of Social Constructivism and his concept of the zone of proximal development, which is the difference in what a child can achieve on his or her own and what can be achieved with help or scaffolding. Vygotsky (1978) posited that a learner can have the potential to be more successful in problem solving with the guidance of a capable adult or in collaboration with more capable peers. In this research, this researcher provided support to the struggling reader by being a model of reading fluency and had invited a few more above average readers to join the shared reading lessons in order to lead and help the struggling readers. This researcher also subscribed to his concept that social interaction plays an important role in cognitive development. Learning to read in a social context, with peers and teacher, in a happy environment helps the struggling readers to develop cognitively.

2.4 Shared Reading

Shared reading with big books (about 38 cm by 46 cm) with colourful illustrations and big print which can be seen by all the pupils seated facing it and with teacher using a pointer to point at the words and pictures and reading aloud to the pupils, was developed by Don Holdaway in 1979. Its impact on early literacy development has been supported by researchers (Marie Clay 1966, 1979, 1991; Fisher, 1991; Weaver, 1988; Button, Johnson, & Furgerson; Pinnell & McCarrier, 1994, as cited in Button & Johnson, 1997). For example, it

can be used to teach beginning readers in preschool and first grade pupils concepts about print conventions in a book , its title, the illustrations, words and their relationship with oral reading, meaning of words, and direction of reading sentences from left to right and eye movements when reading. Mohana Nambiar (1993), an English professor at a Malaysian university, too highlighted the positive impact of shared reading with big books in early reading instruction in the ESL classroom. She noted that majority of the L2 learners come from homes which are not rich in 'English' print and thus they have seldom experienced the benefits of shared reading. She is of the view that this kind of exposure will help the L2 learners to develop their fluency in the target language, and use it confidently. She suggested that different types of reading can be carried out during a shared reading lesson, for example, echo reading, choral reading or assisted reading.

These repeated readings will help the pupils to recognize words in context. Many extended activities can be carried out after a shared reading lesson to teach the other language skills and language contents e.g. arranging given pictures to show the correct sequence of the story read, given photocopied illustrations from the text and asked to talk about it and make sentences with selected words. This type of activities promotes critical thinking skills and collaborative learning. This researcher choose to select shared reading as the focus of this research to help struggling readers to improve their fluency because this reading technique is so versatile, and many fun language activities can be carried out as extended activities. Hence, the struggling readers will be motivated to learn to read in the second language and enjoy learning it (Nambiar, 1993).

And, as for struggling readers, Rasinski, Moman and Biggs (2008) suggest the use of direct instruction of repeated reading and practice, the teacher modeling fluent reading, singing and recitation of poetry for “performance and celebration”. They promote authentic materials and methods of supporting struggling readers rather than mechanistic methods of repeated reading of prescribed texts by publishers.

In Malaysian primary schools, shared reading was first introduced in 2003 by the Curriculum Development Center (CDC), Ministry of Education when the KBSR English language syllabus was revised, and the English Hour was introduced as the teaching technique in the classroom. The English Hour promotes literacy by focusing on the explicit teaching of reading and writing. Each lesson must begin with 15 minutes of shared reading, 15 minutes of focused word work at word and sentence level, 20 minutes of guided reading and independent work, and 10 minutes in summing up (*Kurikulum Semakan Bahasa Inggeris*, 2003).

The English Hour follows the whole language approach where the language skills and language contents (the sound system, vocabulary and grammar) were taught integratively. However, from 2011, phonemic awareness and phonics are emphasized in the current KSSR syllabus for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the syllabus now follows a modular approach, where the language skills are now taught separately and sequentially. In the former syllabus, every lesson must begin with shared reading. In the new syllabus, despite being modular in structure, shared reading is still recommended for reading instruction especially in Year 3.

2.5 Oral Reading Fluency Instruction and Assessment in English L1 and L2 Settings

The first part of the literature review discusses the current state of literacy research in L1 and L2 settings. The second part will discuss the two main approaches in English L1 fluency instruction and the various types of fluency assessment available. The last part will highlight some differences in English L1 and L2 fluency instruction and assessment.

In 2000, the National Reading Panel of the United States listed fluency as one of the five components of reading proficiency: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. From then on, much fluency research flourished in English L1 settings. Grabe (2009:386) stated that he has drawn much from L1 reading research “to support and highlight L2 reading issues, needs, and implications for instruction”, as L2 reading research is “wide open for additional studies” in reading research, even in the few areas of vocabulary learning, L1-L2 transfer, and L2 strategy use where a considerable amount of research has been carried out. In 2002, a 4-year study was carried out by August and Shanahan to synthesize and review research on the development of literacy in second language learners of English in the United States. They set up the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth. This researcher would like to highlight two of their major findings that are related to this study.

The first is that instruction that covers the 5 key components of reading as mentioned above, has clear benefits for language-minority students. The second is that most assessments are inadequate in gauging the strengths and weaknesses of the language-minority students for making placement decisions or meeting their L2 needs. For example, most measures do not predict how well they will perform over time on reading or content-area assessments in English, and the effectiveness of teacher judgement in identifying L2

students who need intensive reading instruction was found wanting. These two findings will guide me to make appropriate recommendations to stem the weaknesses in fluency instruction and assessment for struggling ESL readers.

The National Reading Panel (2000) cited two reading approaches to fluency development. The first approach “emphasized repeated oral reading or guided repeated reading which include repeated reading (Samuels, 1979), neurological impress (Heckelman, 1969), radio reading (Greene, 1979), paired reading (Topping, 1987), and a variety of similar techniques aimed at developing fluent reading habit”. The second approach focus on “all formal efforts to increase the amounts of independent or recreational reading that children engage in, including sustained silent reading programs (Hunt, 1970), the Accelerated Reader (Advantaged Learning Systems,1986), and various incentive programs (i.e., Shanahan, Wojeiehowski, & Rubik,1998)”. It was found that reading programs under the first approach enhance fluency and overall reading achievement whereas reading programs under the second approach lacked demonstrated effectiveness in reading achievement (National Reading Panel, 2000: Chapter 3-4). These findings have helped to validate my choice of shared reading as the independent variable as shared reading is basically many forms of repeated oral reading all rolled into one.

Readings are repeated when the teacher models fluent reading of the selected text, when the participants read aloud together, or when they read aloud individually when they are confident enough to do so.

In English L1 reading fluency research, there is currently no clear consensus on the definition of reading fluency. Generally, it is accepted that fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, smoothly, and with expression. And, that there are two types of fluency i.e. oral reading fluency and silent reading fluency. In this study, fluency is restricted to oral reading fluency (reading aloud) and its 3 components i.e. rate, accuracy and prosody. This researcher adapted fluency assessment instruments from English L1 published research. Fluency can be assessed formally and informally. According to Schumm (2006:195), formal fluency assessments assess what the student has learnt, and informal assessment assess how the student learns. The former are standardized tests and are norm-referenced. The latter uses the same text that a student has read to gauge his or her reading rates, accuracy and prosodic levels. Two accepted L1 formal fluency assessments are:

1. The Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (Mather, Hammill, Allen, & Roberts, 2004, as cited in Schumm, 2006:195). This is a timed test to measure increases in reading skills. Here, students are given words without boundaries and given 3 minutes to put slashes between words. This test is suitable for students between 6 and 17 years of age and can be administered individually or in a group.

2. The Gray Oral Reading Tests-4 (GORT-4; Wiederholt & Bryant, 2001, as cited in Schumm, 2006:195) measures reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension. There are two parallel forms, each consisting of 14 developmentally sequenced passages with 5 comprehension questions. It provides 5 scores: a rate score, an accuracy score, a fluency score, an Oral Reading Comprehension score, and, an Overall Reading Ability score. With internal-consistency reliabilities of .90 or higher, it is a very reliable test to measure change

in oral reading over time. It is individually administered to students between 6 and 18 years of age. As for informal assessments, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS; Good & Kaminski, 2002) and Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is used in L1 literacy assessment. DIBELS consists of 2 subtests: The Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) subtest and the Retell Fluency (RTF) measure. The ORF uses timed readings to calculate the reading rate or words correct per minute (wcpm) and the accuracy level in percentage. Omissions, insertions, mispronounced words, substituted words, repetitions, and words given to the pupils are scored as errors. Self-corrected words, disregard of punctuations and pauses taken before a word are not scored as errors (Shanker and Ekwall, 2003, as cited in Schumm, 2006).

The reading rate (wcpm) is calculated as: $\frac{\text{The total number of words read in a minute} - \text{The total number of errors}}{\text{Number of words correct per minute}}$.

Accuracy level is calculated as: $\frac{\text{The total number of correct words read in a minute}}{\text{The total number of words read in a minute}} \times 100$ percent. The data collected is then compared with researched-based oral reading fluency norms e.g. the Hasbrouck and Tindal (1999) Oral fluency norm.

The third component of oral reading fluency, prosody, can be assessed with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scale that assesses the prosodic elements of rhythm, intonation and expression. Students at Levels 3 and 4 are viewed as fluent readers and those at Levels 1 and 2 are nonfluent readers. (Refer to Appendix H).

As Grabe and Stoller note that L1 and L2 settings have differences but their methods and instruments in reading research are similar. Therefore, this researcher used the similarities in these aspects to carry out this action research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section details the population, sample, location of research, research design, research instruments, procedures of data collection, validity and reliability of instruments.

3.2 Population, Sample and Location of Research

The research was carried out in Sekolah Kebangsaan St. John (2), an urban school in Kuala Lumpur. Malay (*Bahasa Melayu*) was the main medium of instruction and English is taught as a second language. Malay is the L1 of the 56 Malay pupils and Tamil is the L1 of the 4 Indian pupils. The population of this elementary school is 357, all boys. The population of Grade 3 pupils was 61 (56 Malays and 5 Indians). 60 pupils were selected to participate in this research. One pupil was left out as he was frequently absent. They are between 8-9 years old . Sampling is purposive as audio-taped pre-tests were carried out to screen for struggling readers. 12 subjects were identified as struggling readers by 2 raters (the teacher-researcher and her research assistant). The participants read 2 unpractised texts (The Gingerbread Man and Little Red Riding Hood). Data for oral reading rate, accuracy and prosody were analysed. Those who read laboriously, without appropriate speed and accuracy, and in a monotone (without expression) were selected as struggling readers. They were reading at Level 1 and Level 2 of the NAEP Scale (Refer to Table 4.1, p.31-34).

3.3 Research Design

This was a small scale action research. It was implemented over seven days with a weekend in between and a rest day before the subjects answered a simple questionnaire. The research design was as shown below.

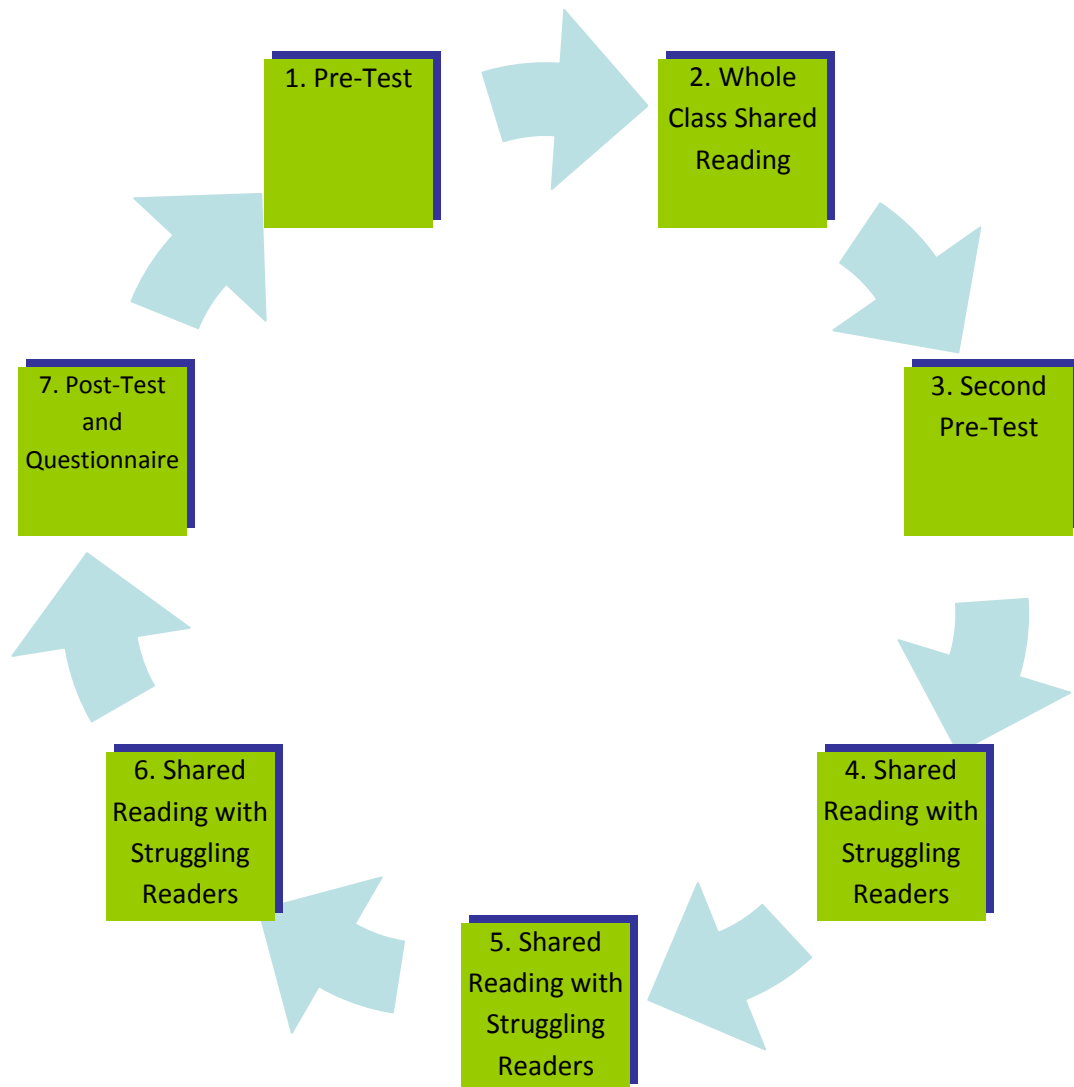


Figure 3.1: Research Design Plan

First, a pre-test (oral reading fluency) was carried out to select struggling readers. Next, the 60 participants were introduced to a shared reading lesson. Then a second pre-test was

carried out to assess the reliability of the initial pre-test. This was followed by 3 shared reading lessons with the struggling readers. In the first shared reading lesson, the teacher gave full support by being a model of fluent reading. In the second and third shared reading lessons, she slowly reduced her support to allow the struggling readers to read aloud individually. This was to encourage them to read independently. Lastly, a post-test on oral reading fluency was carried out and a questionnaire was distributed to the grade 3 pupils.

3.4 Research Instruments

Instrumentation consists of the following items:

- i. Four big books were used. Their titles are: The Gingerbread Man, Little Red Riding Hood, The Ant and the Dove and Jack and the Beanstalk (Williams, 2008). (Refer to Appendices A, B,C and D respectively).
- ii. A simple questionnaire of 5 items (Refer to Appendix E) was used to get feedback at the end of the research. Items 1,2 and 3 of the questionnaire sought to find out about the subjects' self-assessed reading abilities, their reading habits and their choice of language preference (L1 or L2) when reading. This questionnaire was adapted from Cooper and Kiger (2001). I found that their literacy attitude survey very suitable for getting feedback from young readers. This researcher first explained the items of the questionnaire in English, and then in Malay as some of the subjects could not understand the instructions in English.
- iii. Informal teacher observations
- iv. Pre-tests and Post-tests, both audio-taped for assessments of reading rate, accuracy and prosody levels (the three main components of oral reading fluency). The texts

for the pre and post reading assessments were taken from the big books which were grade-level texts.

3.5 Procedures for Data Collection

First, the title of the action research was approved by this researcher’s supervisor after the submission of the research proposal. Second, permission was sought at the Ministry of Education level and then from the state education office to conduct research at the selected school. Third, permission was sought from the school head to conduct research in his school. Fourth, consent forms (Appendix H) were given to all the Grade 3 pupils’ parents to sign. After the consent forms were returned, the research commenced. All the parents permitted their charges to participate in this action research.

Day	Activities	Attendance
1	Pre-tests	Grade 3 pupils
2	Pre-tests	Grade 3 pupils
3	Shared Reading	Whole classes (3S and 3J)
4	Shared Reading	12 struggling readers
5	Shared Reading	12 struggling readers
6	Shared Reading	12 struggling readers
7	Post-tests	12 struggling readers
	Questionnaire	45 grade 3 respondents

Figure 3.2: Procedures of Data Collection

Data collection in this research involved 7 steps as shown in Figure 3.2 above. First, voice recording (Pre-test) was carried to determine the oral reading fluency of each participant.

The three components of oral reading fluency (reading rate, accuracy and prosody) were analysed.

The purpose is to screen for struggling readers and gauge the difficulty level of the selected texts (The Gingerbread Man and Little Red Riding Hood). Second, whole group shared reading lessons were carried out with big books (The Ant and the Dove, and The Gingerbread Man). Third, the 12 selected subjects (the screened struggling readers) and 13 others (borderline cases) were given another oral reading fluency pre-test (audio-taped) to ensure reliability of the fluency data and the reliability of the selected texts which should be at grade-level difficulty. Fourth, the 12 struggling readers practised 3 shared reading lessons with 2 big books (The Gingerbread Man, and The Ant and the Dove). Fifth, post-test for oral reading fluency was carried out. All the participants that were present on the last day of the research answered a simple questionnaire.

Day 1 and Day 2:

Purposive sampling is done in the first session. This is an audio-recording session to collect the average reading rate of words correct per minute (wcpm) of 60 participants, from 2 classes, 3S and 3J. Accuracy and prosody levels were also assessed. Each participant read 2 unpractised texts, “The Gingerbread Man” and “Little Red Riding Hood” in sequence. The average reading rate was calculated for each participant. The total number of words read correctly in 1 minute from the two texts were added and divided by 2 to find the average reading rate (wcpm). The accuracy level was calculated by dividing the correct number of words read in 1 minute by the total number of words read in 1 minute, multiplied by 100 percent. Prosody was assessed by 2 raters (this researcher and her research assistant) by

listening to and assessing the audio recording of “The Gingerbread Man”. A score was given (Level 1 or Level 2 or Level 3 or Level 4) after we have discussed and mutually agreed on the derived score, with reference to the NAEP oral reading fluency scale. Participants reading at Levels 1 and 2 were identified as struggling readers. The data was tabulated as in Table 4.1. On Day 2, shared reading based on “The Gingerbread man” were introduced to the two classes of pupils (3S and 3J), video-taped separately. The purpose was to find out if they enjoy shared reading lessons.

Day 3:

On this day, another pre-test was administered. (Audio-recording of Passage 4: Jack and the Beanstalk). 25 participants are selected to take part (all the 12 selected struggling readers were included). The purpose is to verify the number of subjects to be chosen as struggling readers. The purpose was to check the borderline cases, to make sure that no other struggling reader was accidentally left out or overlooked or wrongly placed as fluent readers.

Shared reading with 3J (Whole class)

The Gingerbread Man

First, she begins by asking the pupils questions about the book cover and what they see (page by page). For example: Can you tell me the title of the story? What can you see in the picture? What else do you see here? Where do you think is this place? Is the Gingerbread Man an animal? Why can he run? What is the old woman doing? What happens next? Why do you think the cow is looking at him like that? What happened to the Gingerbread Man in the end? Then she reads aloud the whole story once for the pupils to listen. She points her ruler along the words read by her.

Lastly, she asks the pupils to read after her. “Teacher reads. You will read. Are you ready?” She reads fluently and points her ruler on the words read out in appropriate chunks or phrases. This is to show the pupils that oral reading and the print is connected. She ends the lesson by saying, “Next week, children...you will read one by one, ok? That’s the lesson for today.”

Shared reading with 3S (Whole class)

The Gingerbread Man

Teacher asks questions about the pictures on the big book cover and flips through all the pages. The participants answer wh-questions pertaining to the pictures. Teacher models fluent reading and reads aloud the whole story. She points her ruler along the words read aloud by her. Teacher invites the whole class to read along with her. She points her ruler along the words read out by the class. Teacher calls 5 volunteers to read aloud. Teacher ends the session by playfully asking: Who wants to read the whole story? The class is dismissed.

Day 4, 5 and 6: Repeated readings of “The Gingerbread Man” and “The Ant and The Dove”.

The Gingerbread Man

The main purpose of this lesson is to do repeated reading as many times as possible by teacher, one-by-one, and by the whole class. This is to improve the oral reading fluency of the struggling readers. When teachable moments appear, the teacher takes the opportunity to teach the class about the conventions of print (punctuation: the comma and the exclamation mark), and she corrects seriously mispronounced words e.g. ‘kept’ and ‘came’.

Teacher greets the struggling readers “Good Afternoon”. Teacher asks P to name the animals shown on the cover of the big book. Teacher models fluent reading by chunking correctly .She points her ruler along the words read aloud by her .The subjects repeat after her. Teacher asks 4 subjects to read one-by-one. Then she rereads the same paragraph read by the 4 pupils. Teacher points to two punctuation marks, the comma, and the exclamation mark, and highlights the appropriate intonation to be used where they occur. Teacher asks 3 subjects to read. She claps and praises.

Teacher continues to model fluent reading. The subjects repeat after her. Teacher highlights the pronunciation and spelling of 2 mispronounced words, “k-e-p-t” and “c-a-m-e”. The subjects spell and say the words correctly. Teacher continues to model fluent reading .The subjects repeat after her until the end of the story. The session ends.

The main purpose of this lesson is to practise repeated reading by the pupils with an additional story. As reading should be fun and interesting, “The Ant and The Dove” was introduced. Now the teacher models fluent reading less frequently. This is to slowly remove the scaffolding and let the pupils achieve confidence to read aloud fluently and

independently. A fluent reader models the reading of the entire story and the others take turns to read individually.

The Ant and The Dove

Teacher ask E (a fluent reader, invited to lend support) to read aloud the whole big book. She gives praise. She briefly discusses the cover of the big book with the subjects. She models fluent reading and the participants repeat after her. She invites all to read aloud individually. She resumes reading aloud .She takes the opportunity to highlight the function of the exclamation mark. She ends the session by stressing the moral of the story, and retells how the dove and the ant help each other.

Day 6:

Shared reading with 3J & 3S Together (Combined Session)

The Gingerbread Man

Part 1: 15 subjects took part. There are 12 selected struggling readers. The other 3 are invited to give moral support to the class. Teacher leads by reading and the subjects repeat after teacher .Then teacher asks 6 subjects to read one-by-one. A fluent reader reads the last section of the story .Teacher gives praise. Teacher hands out the text, “The Gingerbread Man.” She asks the subjects to read aloud on their own.

Part 2: Teacher asks the subjects to repeat 8 selected underlined words in the text: **gingerbread**, **currants**, **opened** (Do not say open-ne d.), **jumped** (Do not say jump-ed.), **called** (Do not say cal-led), and **kept**, **tossed** , and **gobbled** to be pronounced correctly. The pupils repeated the list after teacher one more time. The session ends.

Day 7:

Reading Rate (WCPM), Accuracy and Prosody Assessment (Post Tests) for the struggling readers were carried out. All 45 participants who were present on that day answered a simple questionnaire (Refer to Appendix D). The questionnaire requires them to gauge their individual reading status, the number of L1 and L2 storybooks that they have read in the first nine months of the year, whether they enjoy reading big books with teacher and their friends, and what they would like teacher to do during reading lessons.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Internal validity was maximized by standardizing conditions for the video and voice recording sessions. These sessions were held in closed doors (away from noise) in the teachers' meeting room, all in the afternoon. The time allotted for shared reading sessions is about 15 to 20 minutes as recommended. Four texts (big books) of similar grade-level difficulty were used to ensure that the data collected is reliable. The audio-taped data (pre and post test oral fluency assessments) were analysed by the teacher-researcher and her research assistant who were both proficient in English. Inter-rater reliability is evident as they were both jointly responsible for listening and assessing the oral reading fluency of the subjects.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This section analysed the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the pre-test and post-test results, and findings from the questionnaire.

4.2 Pre-test Data Analysis

Table 4.1: Identification of Struggling Readers

NO.	Student's ID.	WCPM (1)	WCPM (2)	Average WCPM	Accuracy (%)	NAEP Fluency Scale	Struggling ESL Readers
1	R1 3S	104	89	96.5 = 97	98	3	NO
2	R2 3S	93	80	86.5 = 87	99	3	NO
3	R3 3S	109	99	104	94	3	NO
4	R4 3S	63	60	61.5 = 62	89	3	NO
5	R5 3S	89	84	86.5 = 87	98	3	NO
6	R6 3S	106	99	102.5 = 103	95	3	NO
7	R7 3S	92	78	85	100	3	NO
8	R8 3S	102	101	101.5 = 102	96	4	NO
9	R9 3S	115	115	115	94	4	NO
10	R10 3S	97	93	95	93	3	NO
11	R11 3S	127	120	123.5 = 124	99	4	NO

Table 4.1, continued.

NO.	Student's ID.	WCPM (1)	WCPM (2)	Average WCPM	Accuracy (%)	NAEP Fluency Scale	Struggling ESL Readers
12	R12 3S	172	162	167	100	4	NO
13	R13 3S	130	142	136	98	4	NO
14	R14 3S	74	67	70.5 = 71	96	2	YES
15	R15 3S	63	61	62	90	3	NO
16	R16 3S	116	122	119	97	4	NO
17	R17 3S	81	68	74.4 = 75	90	2	YES
18	R18 3S	99	106	102.5 = 103	94	3	NO
19	R19 3S	107	84	95.5 = 96	100	4	NO
20	R20 3S	140	143	141.5 = 142	99	4	NO
21	R21 3S	104	84	94	99	4	NO
22	R22 3S	109	120	114.5 = 114	100	4	NO
23	R23 3S	75	71	73	99	4	NO
24	R24 3S	115	106	110.5 = 111	97	4	NO
25	R25 3S	115	121	118	98	4	NO
26	R26 3S	98	101	99.5 = 100	95	4	NO
27	R27 3S	90	88	89	99	4	NO

Table 4.1, continued.

NO.	Student's ID.	WCPM (1)	WCPM (2)	Average WCPM	Accuracy (%)	NAEP Fluency Scale	Struggling ESL Readers
28	R28 3S	112	95	103.5 = 104	95	4	NO
29	R29 3S	108	108	108	93	4	NO
30	R30 3S	71	77	74	95	4	NO
31	R31 3S	117	113	115	94	4	NO
32	R1 3J	91	102	96.5 = 97	93	4	NO
33	R2 3J	124	122	123	97	3	NO
34	R3 3J	66	59	62.5 = 63	90	3	NO
35	R4 3J	51	52	51.5 = 52	89	1	YES
36	R5 3J	25	39	32	86	1	YES
37	R6 3J	88	84	86	97	3	NO
38	R7 3J	75	63	69	93	3	NO
39	R8 3J	1	0	0.5 = 1	33	1	YES
40	R9 3J	98	94	96	98	3	NO
41	R10 3J	29	34	31.5 = 32	69	1	YES
42	R11 3J	5	12	8.5 = 9	45	1	YES
43	R12 3J	9	18	13.5 = 14	69	1	YES
44	R13 3J	40	35	37.5 = 38	83	1	YES

Table 4.1, continued.

NO.	Student's ID.	WCPM (1)	WCPM (2)	Average WCPM	Accuracy (%)	NAEP Fluency Scale	Struggling ESL Readers
45	R14 3J	100	81	90.5 = 91	100	4	NO
46	R15 3J	57	52	54.5 = 55	95	3	NO
47	R16 3J	83	68	75.5 = 76	94	3	NO
48	R17 3J	4	4	4	29	1	YES
49	R18 3J	97	82	89.5 = 90	96	3	NO
50	R19 3J	65	46	55.5 = 56	88	3	NO
51	R20 3J	86	73	79.5 = 80	98	3	NO
52	R21 3J	79	72	75.5 = 76	94	3	NO
53	R22 3J	77	87	82	94	3	NO
54	R23 3J	65	58	61.5 = 62	89	3	NO
55	R24 3J	101	93	97	98	4	NO
56	R25 3J	108	111	109.5 = 110	99	4	NO
57	R26 3J	73	71	72	94	4	NO
58	R27 3J	43	46	44.5 = 45	90	2	YES
59	R28 3J	26	21	23.5 = 24	74	1	YES
60	R29 3J	104	108	106	92	4	NO

With reference to Table 4.1, the number of struggling Grade 3 ESL readers was derived based on the Yes/No answers in the last column (Struggling ESL readers). They were selected as they read laboriously and obtained Levels 1 and 2 for prosody. There were 12 of them and their identities were as followed:

List of Students Identified as Struggling ESL Readers

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1. R14 3S | 6. R10 3J | 11. R27 3J |
| 2. R17 3S | 7. R11 3J | 12. R28 3J |
| 3. R4 3J | 8. R12 3J | |
| 4. R5 3J | 9. R13 3J | |
| 5. R8 3J | 10. R17 3J | |

4.3 Post-test Data Analysis

Table 4.2: Post Shared Reading Results

NO.	ID	WCPM (Pre)	WCPM (Post)	Difference	Accuracy (Pre) (%)	Accuracy (Post) (%)	Difference	Fluency Scale (Pre)	Fluency Scale (Post)	Difference
1	R14 3S	71	113	42	96	97	1	2	4	2 levels up
2	R17 3S	75	109	34	90	97	7	2	4	2 levels up
3	R4 3J	52	118	66	89	98	9	1	4	3 levels up
4	R5 3J	32	99	67	86	96	10	1	4	3 levels up
5	R8 3J	1	12	11	33	44	11	1	1	None (same level)
6	R10 3J	32	93	61	69	94	25	1	4	3 levels up
7	R11 3J	9	77	68	45	92	47	1	4	3 levels up
8	R12 3J	14	68	54	69	89	20	1	4	3 levels up
9	R13 3J	38	92	54	83	95	12	1	4	3 levels up
10	R17 3J	4	27	23	29	71	42	1	3	2 levels up
11	R27 3J	45	101	56	90	95	5	2	4	2 levels up
12	R28 3J	24	55	31	74	93	19	1	3	2 levels up

4.3.1 Research Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1: Does shared reading improve the fluency of the struggling Grade 3 ESL readers?

Table 4.2 above shows that all the 12 struggling ESL readers had overall improvement in reading fluency. All of them had improvement in both reading rate and in accuracy percentage. Reader (R113J) had the highest difference in reading rate, with an increase of 68 wcpm. Reader (R83J) had achieved the lowest difference in reading rate, with an increase of only 11wcpm.

In the accuracy component, all the 12 struggling ESL readers had increases in accuracy percentages, ranging from 3 to 47 percent. Reader (R113J) has the highest increment in reading accuracy (47%), while Reader (R143S) got the lowest increment (1 percent). In the prosody component, 11 out of the 12 struggling ESL readers showed increases in fluency levels when compared with according the criterion-referenced oral reading fluency adopted from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). 6 struggling readers had improved up to 3 levels (from Level 1 to Level 4), while 5 struggling readers had improved up to 2 levels. Only 1 struggling ESL reader (R83J) remained at Level 1. He was still reading primarily word by word. Hence, 11 out of 12 struggling readers had achieved improvements in all the three components of oral reading fluency. The pre and post shared reading results are presented graphically as bar charts for easy interpretation and comparison of the data. (Refer to Figures 1-3).

Therefore, the answer to Research Question 1 is: Shared reading does improve the fluency of the struggling Grade 3 ESL readers.

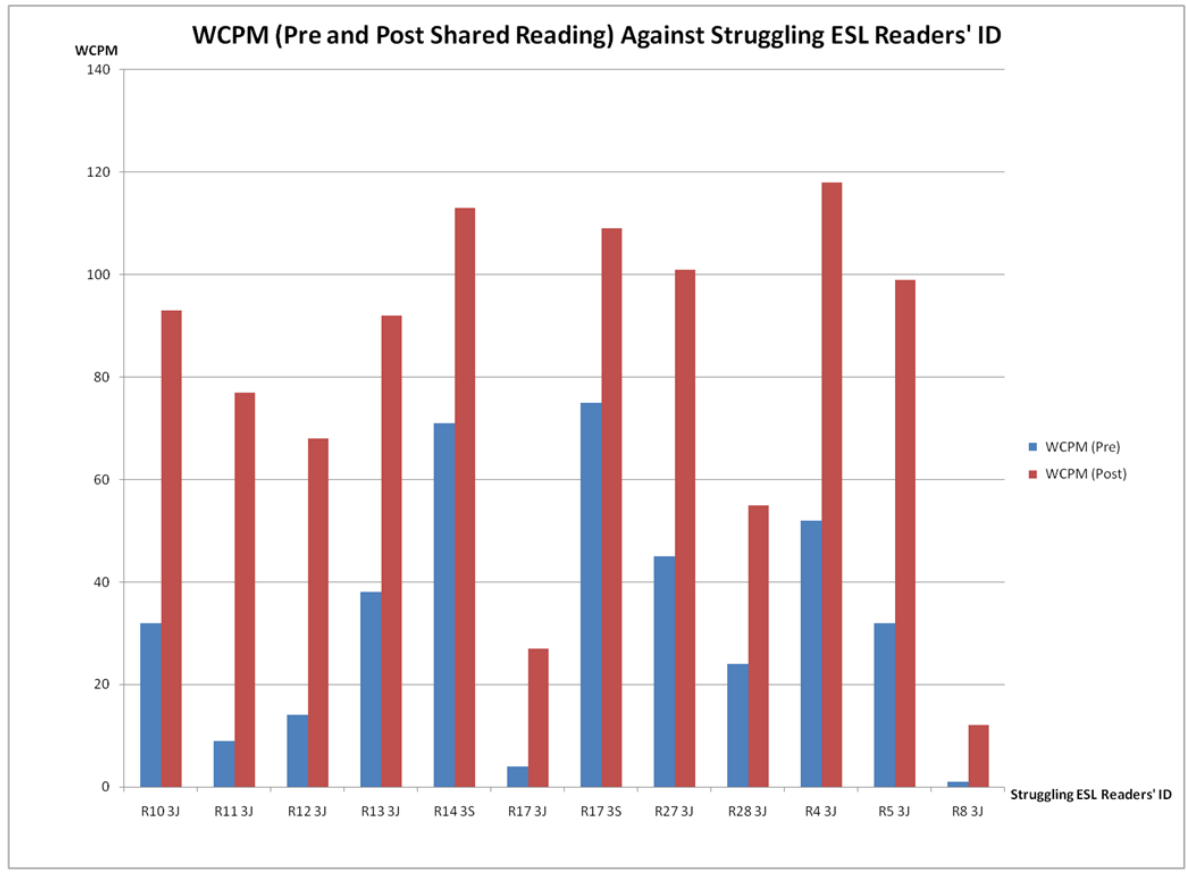


Figure 4.1: Pre and Post Shared Reading Results (WCPM)

Pre-test and post-test data of the reading rate component (wcpm) of fluency were shown as blue-coloured and red-coloured bars respectively in Figure 4.1 above. The red bar is taller than the blue bar in each of the struggling readers' reading rate data. This shows that the post-test results of the reading rate component is better than the pre-test results. With reference to Research Question 1, the reading rate component of fluency had improved after shared reading treatment was administered.

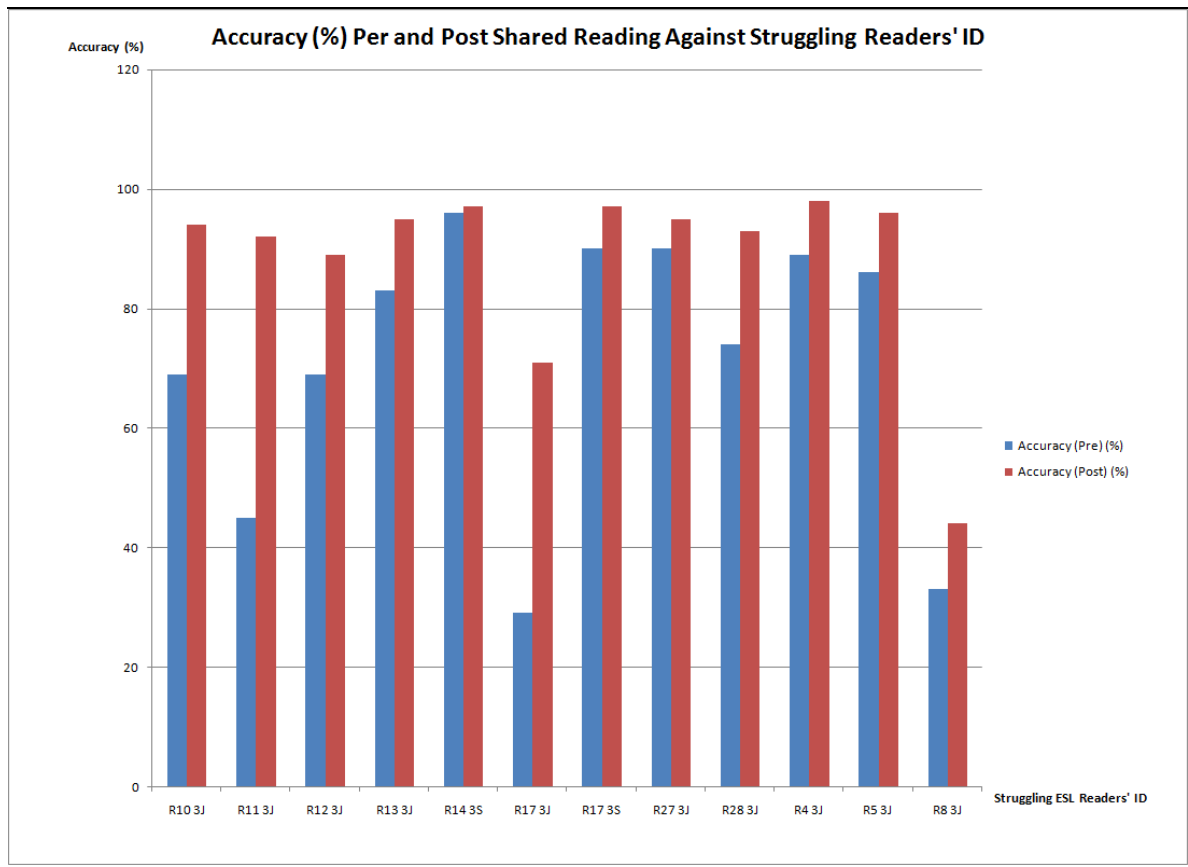


Figure 4.2: Pre and Post Shared Reading Results (Accuracy)

The reading accuracy component of fluency was analysed after shared reading lessons were administered. The pre-test data and post-test data are compared for each struggling reader. Refer to Figure 4.2 above. The Accuracy (Post) percentage is greater than the Accuracy (Pre) percentage. With reference to Research Question 1, the accuracy component of fluency had positive increments in terms of percentages after shared reading instruction was administered.

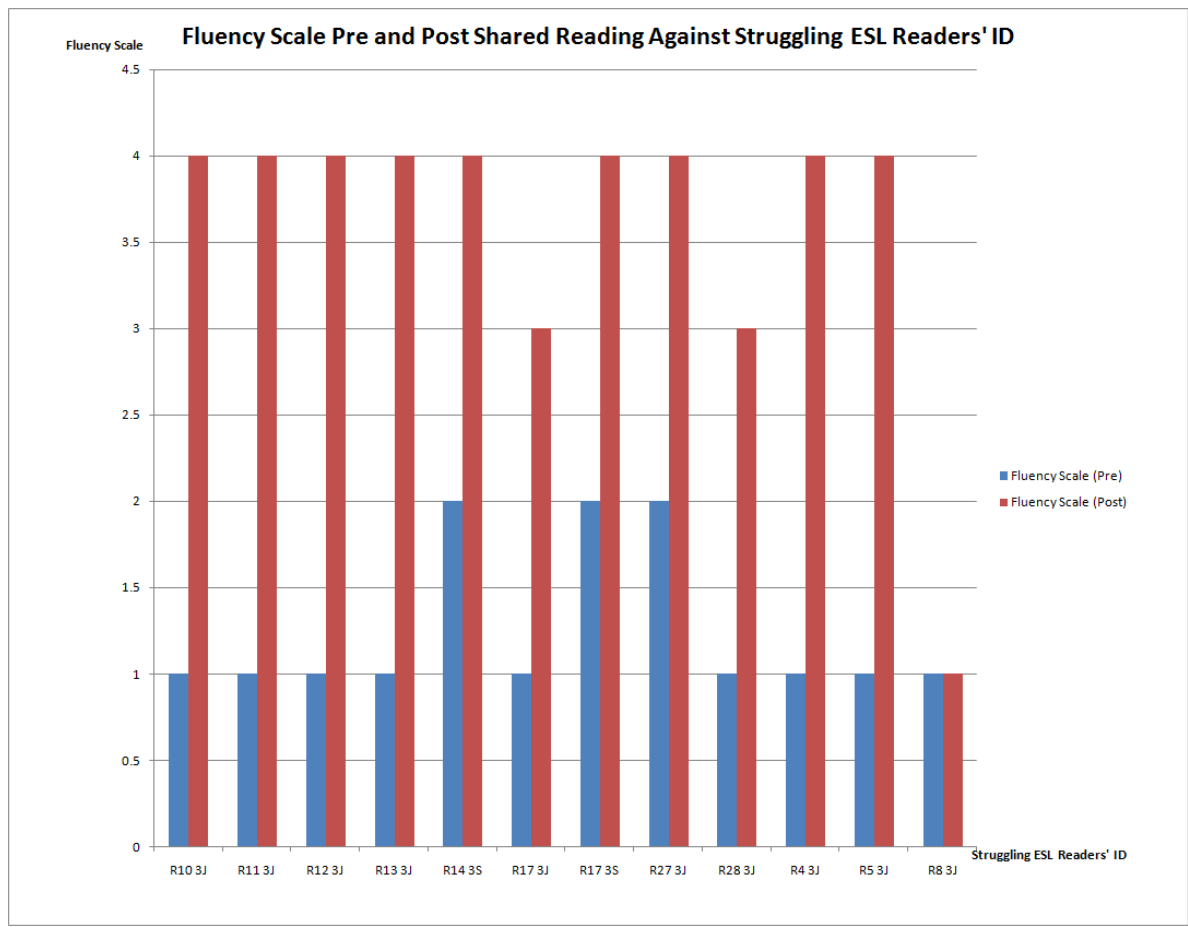


Figure 4.3: Pre and Post Shared Reading Results (Prosody)

With reference to the prosody component of fluency (refer to Figure 4.3 above), the post-test prosody level of each struggling reader is greater than the pre-test prosody level, except for Reader (R83J). They are equal in level. This indicates that R83J's prosodic level remained unchanged after shared reading instruction was administered. Overall, 11 out of the 12 struggling readers' prosodic levels increase by 2 or 3 levels. Therefore, with reference to Research Question 1, the prosody component of fluency improves by 91.7 percent after shared reading instruction was administered (11 over 12 times 100 percent = 91.7 percent accuracy increment).

In conclusion, with reference to Research Question 1, all the 3 components of fluency showed improvement after shared reading instruction was administered. Therefore, shared reading does improve the fluency of the struggling Grade 3 ESL readers.

4.3.2 Research Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2: Do the majority of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers enjoy shared reading with big books with their teacher and friends?

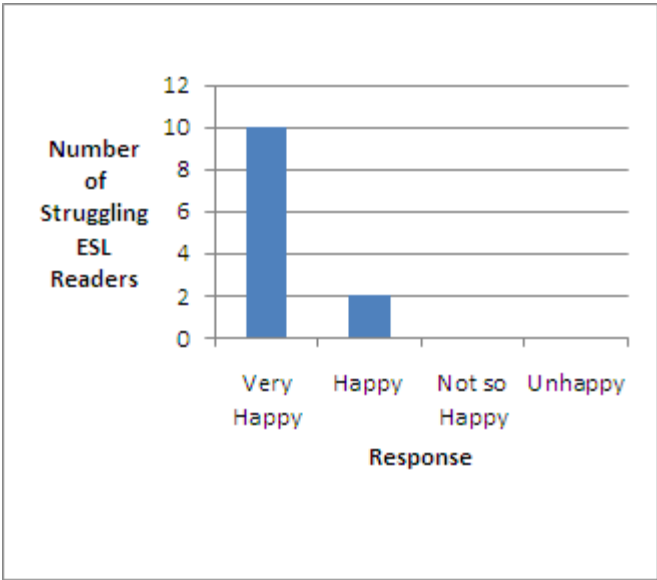


Figure 4.4: Analysis of Item 4 in the Questionnaire: I enjoy reading big books with teacher and my friends.

Item 4 of the questionnaire (Refer to Appendix E.) required the struggling readers to tick one of the four faces shown in a row (very happy, happy, not so happy, and unhappy) to indicate their response based on the item sentence: I enjoy reading big books with teacher and friends. From the results presented in Figure 4.4 above, it was found that 10 of the subjects were very happy and 2 were happy to read big books with their teacher and friends. Therefore, all 12 of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers enjoy shared reading with big books with their teacher and friends .With reference to Research Question 2, the

majority of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers enjoy shared reading with big books with their teacher and friends.

4.3.3 Findings Related to Items 1, 2 and 3 in the Questionnaire.

Items 1, 2 and 3 in the questionnaire were related to the subjects' self-assessed reading ability and their choice of reading either L1 or L2 storybooks. The findings were shown in Table 4.3 below. 6 of the subjects indicated that they read “not so well”, 3 of them indicated they are weak in reading, and 3 others indicated that they cannot read at all. 6 out of 12 subjects read more storybooks in L2 than in L1, and 1 subject read zero books in this survey. These findings were relevant to this research and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 4.3: Findings for Items 1, 2 and 3 in the Questionnaire

No.	Student's ID	Number of Bahasa Malaysia Storybooks Read (Jan – Sept)	Number of English Storybooks Read (Jan – Sept)	Reading Ability
1	R103J	10	10	Not so well
2	R113J	2	7	Weak
3	R123J	5	1	Not so well
4	R133J	9	4	Not so well
5	R143S	10	20	Not so well
6	R173J	0	1	Cannot read
7	R173S	2	1	Not so well

Table 4.3, continued.

No.	Student's ID	Number of Bahasa Malaysia Storybooks Read (Jan – Sept)	Number of English Storybooks Read (Jan – Sept)	Reading Ability
8	R273J	2	12	Weak
9	R283J	1	2	Cannot read
10	R43J	2	10	Weak
11	R53J	3	1	Not so well
12	R83J	0	0	Cannot read

4.3.4 Research Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3:

What are the expectations of the struggling grade 3 ESL readers in the reading classroom?

Analysis of Item 5 of the questionnaire showed the following responses:

R143S : I read first. Then teacher explains.

R173S : I read first. Then teacher explains.

R43J : I read aloud under teacher's supervision.

R53J : I read aloud for teacher to listen.

R83J : Read with me.

R103J : Explain the title, then I read aloud.

R113J : I want to read under teacher's supervision.

R123J : I would like to read on my own.

R133J : I would like to read on my own.

R173J : Read the words, then teacher reads, then I read.

R273J : I read aloud under teacher's supervision.

R283J : Teacher reads aloud. Then I read.

Item 5 of the questionnaire is an open question: During reading lessons, I would like teacher to: _____

Based on the above responses, 2 of them would like to read first, then teacher explains. 4 of them would like to read under teacher's supervision. 1 of them wants to read with teacher. 1 of them wants teacher to explain, then he reads. 1 of them wants teacher to read the words, then teacher reads aloud, then he reads. 1 of them wants teacher to read aloud before he reads.

With reference to Research Question 3, the findings showed that 10 out of 12 would like to be under teacher supervision when they read but 2 would prefer to read on their own.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section consists of the research summary, discussion of the research findings, its implications and recommendations for further research.

5.2 Research Summary

The purpose of this action research is to find out if shared reading improves the fluency of struggling grade 3 ESL readers, and if the majority of the participants enjoyed shared reading. Voice recording of three unpracticed texts was done and the average WCPM was taken from two of the three texts. Then shared reading sessions were conducted for the 60 participants (including the 12 selected struggling readers). Then voice recording for oral reading fluency analysis was conducted for the 12 selected struggling readers. The scores for rate (WCPM), accuracy of words read correctly (%), and prosody indicated that shared reading as a reading technique does help struggling ESL readers to improve their reading fluency. As for responses to the questionnaire, 43 out of 45 participants enjoyed reading big books with teacher and their friends. Only 2 respondents prefer otherwise. This indicates that the majority enjoys shared reading with big books. All the 12 struggling readers enjoyed shared reading.

In summary, the findings of this researcher are similar to Holdaway's findings that shared reading improves the reading proficiency of ESL readers. My findings concurred with L1 reading research and the theories of Samuels, Vygotsky and Holdaway that frame my research.

5.3 Discussion of Research Findings and Research Conclusions

As mentioned in Section 4.3.3, findings related to Items 1, 2 and 3 of the questionnaire will be discussed here. The findings are not related to the 3 main research questions but they are helpful in highlighting the individual needs and preferences of the struggling ESL readers. This action research will follow up with quick action to help the 3 readers who stated that they cannot read and the 3 weak readers. Another finding was that 6 of the struggling readers read more books in their second language. This indicated that they liked reading in English and this preference should be reinforced by providing them a good literacy environment, with fluent reading teachers as models and plenty of suitable grade-level books.

This researcher can go ahead and use shared reading to improve the fluency of the struggling grade three ESL readers in her school as its impact is positive and the feedback from the participants is positive too. This researcher will bear in mind that variety enhances reading enjoyment as three of the participants proposed having games in her reading class. Another three participants would like to read alone by themselves. This may indicate that these three participants like to read extensively and independently. So, as not to demotivate, this researcher has taken the effort to allot more reading materials to them. As 43 out of 45 respondents like this popular reading technique, this researcher will carry out more reading instruction with shared reading. This research has shown that 11 out of 12 ESL struggling readers improved their oral reading fluency after treatment.

5.4 Implications of Research Findings

This research has highlighted the important role of shared reading in improving struggling readers' fluency. A majority of the subjects stated that they would prefer to read with teacher supervision, and that they enjoyed shared reading big books with teacher and their friends. This implies that the role played by the reading teacher in providing scaffolding in the reading process is vital in improving the reading fluency of the struggling readers. Therefore, this research has highlighted the fact that Vygotsky's theory of Social Constructivism and his concepts of the zone of proximal development and cognitive development in social interactions have direct applications in assisting the struggling readers to become independent readers.

This research has also highlighted that Holdaway's Theory of Literacy Development and his four processes in reading development have positive impact in improving the reading fluency of struggling ESL readers. The systematic way in which shared reading provides modeling, reading with support, reading on one's own, and then reading independently implies that any remedial reading instruction or program which subscribe to these processes is bound to improve the fluency of struggling ESL readers.

The implications derived from this research points to the fact that any reading intervention programme to help struggling ESL readers must be lead by a teacher who is first herself fluent in reading in order to be a role model for struggling ESL readers. Findings from this research had shown that shared reading had a positive impact on the fluency of struggling ESL readers.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research in the Future

I find doing action research at workplace very useful. For example, in this research, this researcher had explored the impact of shared reading on the fluency of all grade three pupils, and paid attention to improve the reading fluency of 12 struggling readers. This researcher had become better informed, her pupils enjoyed the reading sessions, their reading fluency improved tremendously.

Firstly, teachers should carry out action research on phonemic awareness and phonics instruction to find their impact on the fluency of ESL pupils, compared the research findings with shared reading findings, and make better informed decisions on reading instruction.

Secondly, the English teachers should carry out longitudinal research on the impact of the new KSSR English syllabus on our pupils. Then, useful feedback can be shared with the policy makers to maintain a good standard of English proficiency in Malaysian schools and institutions.

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