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ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH SHARED READING STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension remains a challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly when understanding narrative texts. This study investigated the effectiveness of the Shared Reading Strategy in improving eighth-grade students' reading comprehension at SMP Saraswati Tolai. A quasi-experimental study using a nonequivalent control group design involved 62 students selected through purposive sampling, with 30 in the experimental group and 32 in the control group. The experimental group received instruction using the Shared Reading Strategy, while the control group received conventional instruction. Data were collected through validated pre-test and post-test reading comprehension assessments and analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality and homogeneity tests, an independent-samples *t*-test, and Cohen's *d*. The results showed that the experimental group's mean score increased from 27.33 (*SD* = 7.90) to 74.67 (*SD* = 12.08), compared with an increase from 22.50 (*SD* = 5.47) to 42.22 (*SD* = 12.16) in the control group. The independent-samples *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference between groups, $t(60) = 10.53$, $p < .001$, with a mean difference of 32.45 points. Cohen's $d = 2.68$ indicated a very large effect. These findings suggest that the Shared Reading Strategy can substantially improve EFL students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. Integrating teacher modeling, collaborative reading, guided questioning, and classroom discussion may support active engagement and deeper comprehension in junior high school EFL classrooms.

Keywords: EFL Instruction, Increasing Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Shared Reading Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is widely recognized as one of the most essential language skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it serves as the primary source of linguistic input and academic knowledge. Through reading, learners acquire vocabulary, grammatical structures, cultural understanding, and subject-specific information that support the development of overall language proficiency. Among the four language skills, reading plays a particularly important role in enabling students to access written information independently and develop lifelong learning habits. Therefore, improving students' reading ability has become one of the primary goals of English language teaching in many EFL contexts.

Reading comprehension is considered the ultimate goal of the reading process because successful reading involves more than recognizing words or decoding sentences

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(Aldossary, 2024; Wilson et al., 2024). It requires readers to actively construct meaning by integrating textual information with their prior knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, cognitive strategies, and critical thinking skills. This perspective is supported by (Wilson et al., 2024) who argues that successful reading comprehension requires readers to integrate linguistic knowledge, inference-making skills, and comprehension monitoring throughout the reading process. (Grabe & Stoller, 2019) explain that reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process involving continuous interaction between the reader, the text, and the reading context. This finding is consistent with (Lee et al., 2021), who emphasizes that effective literacy instruction should encourage students to interpret texts critically through collaborative classroom interaction. Similarly, (Duke & Cartwright, 2021) argue that effective reading comprehension requires readers to identify explicit information, draw inferences, evaluate ideas critically, and monitor their understanding throughout the reading process. Consequently, reading instruction should provide students with opportunities to engage actively in constructing meaning rather than merely answering comprehension questions after reading.

Despite the recognized importance of reading comprehension, many Indonesian students continue to experience difficulties in reading English texts. The results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2022 indicate that Indonesian students' reading literacy remains below the average performance of OECD countries. Similarly, (Pressley et al., 2023) emphasize that reading literacy is strongly influenced by students' ability to construct meaning from texts through continuous reading practice and appropriate instructional support. Many students encounter challenges in interpreting implicit information, evaluating arguments, and integrating ideas across texts. These findings suggest that improving students' higher-order reading comprehension remains an important challenge for English language education in Indonesia. Such conditions highlight the need for instructional approaches that encourage students to become active readers capable of constructing meaning collaboratively.

At the junior high school level, reading narrative texts represents one of the fundamental competencies expected by the Merdeka Curriculum. Narrative texts introduce students to various stories, legends, folktales, and fables while simultaneously developing their language skills, imagination, and moral understanding. However, previous studies have reported that many Indonesian EFL students experience considerable difficulty in comprehending narrative texts. (Khoirunnisa & Widodo, 2019) found that students frequently struggle to identify main ideas, determine implied meanings, recognize text structures, and interpret relationships between story events. Likewise, (Allehyani, 2025) reported that students often have difficulty answering inferential and evaluative comprehension questions because they rely primarily on literal understanding of the text.

Several factors contribute to students' low reading comprehension achievement. One important factor is limited vocabulary mastery. Students who possess insufficient vocabulary knowledge often experience difficulty understanding sentence meanings and identifying relationships between ideas in a text. (Taladngoen et al., 2020) reported that inadequate vocabulary knowledge remains one of the strongest predictors of poor reading comprehension among Indonesian EFL learners. Another contributing factor is low reading motivation. Students with limited interest in reading are generally less

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willing to engage actively with texts and tend to complete reading tasks only to fulfill classroom requirements. (Barber & Klauda, 2020) explain that reading motivation significantly influences students' cognitive engagement, persistence, and comprehension performance. Furthermore, (Majdi et al., 2025) argue that students who actively engage in discussion during reading instruction develop stronger comprehension strategies than those who learn through passive instructional approaches.

Teacher-centered instructional practices also contribute to students' reading difficulties. In many Indonesian EFL classrooms, reading instruction continues to emphasize vocabulary explanation, sentence translation, and individual comprehension exercises. Such approaches provide limited opportunities for students to discuss ideas, ask questions, make predictions, or collaborate with peers during reading activities. Likewise, (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2023) argue that students' engagement and motivation during reading activities significantly contribute to reading achievement and long-term literacy development. As a result, students often become passive recipients of information rather than active participants in constructing meaning from texts. This condition reduces opportunities for meaningful interaction that supports deeper comprehension.

Recent developments in literacy instruction emphasize the importance of student-centered learning environments that encourage learners to actively participate in reading activities. (Fisher et al., 2020) argue that collaborative learning enables students to interact with texts through discussion, questioning, and shared problem solving, thereby strengthening comprehension and critical thinking. Similarly, (Teng, 2020) demonstrated that interactive literacy instruction enhances students' metacognitive awareness because learners continuously monitor their understanding while engaging with texts. Student-centered reading instruction therefore creates opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning collaboratively and become more independent readers (Agna et al., 2024). A similar conclusion was reported by (Nation, 2022), who states that vocabulary knowledge and contextual word learning play important roles in supporting reading comprehension among EFL learners.

One instructional approach that reflects these principles is the Shared Reading Strategy. According to (Pressley et al., 2023), effective reading instruction should explicitly model comprehension strategies while encouraging students to become active and reflective readers. Shared reading is an interactive instructional approach in which teachers and students read a text together while actively discussing vocabulary, predicting story events, identifying important information, and responding to guiding questions. (Holdaway, 1979) originally introduced shared reading as a literacy practice that combines teacher modeling with active student participation. (Routman, 2003) further explains that shared reading allows teachers to provide explicit demonstrations of fluent reading while gradually transferring responsibility for comprehension to students through guided participation. Consequently, students learn not only to decode texts but also to understand and interpret meaning collaboratively.

The effectiveness of Shared Reading lies in its emphasis on interaction, collaboration, and instructional scaffolding. During shared reading activities, teachers model fluent reading, clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, encourage students to make predictions, facilitate classroom discussions, and provide immediate feedback throughout the reading process. Such instructional support is consistent with (Vygotsky,

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1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs most effectively through social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development. Through collaborative dialogue and teacher guidance, students gradually develop greater independence in comprehending increasingly complex texts.

Previous empirical studies have consistently reported positive outcomes associated with Shared Reading. (Zulianti & Hastomo, 2022) found that Shared Reading significantly improved students' reading comprehension and increased classroom participation. Similarly, (Wijayanti & Riyani, 2020) reported that students who learned through Shared Reading achieved higher reading comprehension scores than those receiving conventional instruction. More recently, (Dianita et al., 2023) demonstrated that Shared Reading enhanced both students' reading motivation and comprehension performance in Indonesian EFL classrooms. International evidence further supports these findings. (Altamimi & Ogdol, 2023) found that collaborative reading practices positively influenced students' inferential comprehension and classroom interaction. Similarly, (Elleman & Oslund, 2019) reported that collaborative reading activities contribute positively to students' comprehension by promoting active discussion and strategic processing of texts. (Momtaz & Garner, 2010) reported that collaborative reading instruction promoted deeper comprehension by encouraging students to discuss ideas and construct meaning collectively.

Despite these encouraging findings, several important research gaps remain. First, many previous studies investigating Shared Reading have focused primarily on elementary school students, whereas relatively few studies have examined its effectiveness among junior high school EFL learners. Second, a considerable number of Indonesian studies employed classroom action research or descriptive research designs, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships between Shared Reading and reading comprehension improvement. Third, previous studies often reported overall reading comprehension scores without examining students' development across different comprehension processes. Therefore, further empirical evidence using rigorous experimental methods is needed to strengthen the evidence regarding the effectiveness of Shared Reading in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

To address these gaps, the present study employed a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of the Shared Reading Strategy in improving eighth-grade students' reading comprehension of narrative texts at SMP Saraswati Tolai. Specifically, the study compared students who received Shared Reading instruction with those who received conventional teacher-centered instruction. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the growing body of research on interactive literacy instruction and practically to provide English teachers with empirical evidence supporting the implementation of Shared Reading as an effective strategy for improving students' reading comprehension in junior high school EFL contexts.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design using a nonequivalent control group design to investigate the effectiveness of the Shared Reading Strategy in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. This design was selected because the participants were assigned to intact classes without randomization while

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allowing comparisons between the experimental and control groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Both groups completed a pre-test before the instructional intervention and a post-test after the treatment. The experimental group received reading instruction using the Shared Reading Strategy, whereas the control group was taught through conventional teacher-centered instruction. Students' reading comprehension performance before and after the intervention was then compared to determine the effectiveness of the treatment.

The design of this study is illustrated by Table 1.

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Table 1. Research design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O_1	X	O_2
Control	O_1	–	O_2

Where:

O_1 = Pre-test

O_2 = Post-test

X = Shared Reading Strategy treatment

Participants and Setting

The study was conducted at SMP Saraswati Tolai, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, during the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants consisted of 62 eighth-grade students selected through purposive sampling because the existing classes had relatively similar English proficiency and followed the same English curriculum.

Two intact classes participated in the study. Class VIII B, consisting of 30 students, served as the experimental group, while Class VIII A, consisting of 32 students, served as the control group. The experimental group received instruction through the Shared Reading Strategy, whereas the control group was taught using conventional reading instruction, including teacher explanation, individual silent reading, vocabulary translation, and comprehension exercises.

The use of intact classes reflects common practice in classroom-based educational research and preserves the natural learning environment while allowing meaningful comparisons between instructional approaches.

Instruments

The primary instrument used in this study was a reading comprehension achievement test developed according to the learning objectives of the eighth-grade English curriculum. The test measured students' comprehension of narrative texts before and after the instructional intervention.

The instrument consisted of 15 items, including 10 multiple-choice questions and 5 short-answer questions, with a maximum score of 45 points. Students' raw scores were converted into a 0–100 scale to facilitate interpretation and statistical analysis.

The test assessed three levels of reading comprehension adapted from contemporary reading comprehension frameworks.

Table 2. Indicators of reading comprehension

Reading Levels	Indicators	Item Types
Literal	Identifying explicit information, characters, setting, and sequence of events	Multiple-choice and short essay
Inferential	Drawing conclusions, interpreting implied meanings, predicting events	Multiple-choice and short essay

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Critical	Evaluating characters' actions, identifying moral values, and expressing judgments	Multiple-choice and short essay

The narrative texts used in both the pre-test and post-test were aligned with the learning objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum and reflected the reading competence expected of eighth-grade EFL students.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert judgment involving two experienced English teachers, who evaluated the relevance, clarity, language appropriateness, and alignment of each test item with the instructional objectives. Their suggestions were incorporated before the instrument was administered.

The reliability of the instrument was evaluated using the Kuder–Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) for the multiple-choice items and inter-rater reliability for the short-answer items. Both reliability coefficients exceeded the recommended minimum value of .70, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Table 3. Instrument reliability

Instrument	Coefficient
KR-20	0.81
Inter-rater Reliability	0.84

These results indicate that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for measuring students' reading comprehension.

Table 4. Scoring rubric for short-answer items

Score	Criteria
2	Complete, accurate, and relevant answer demonstrating full comprehension.
1	Partially correct answer demonstrating partial comprehension.
0	Incorrect, irrelevant, or no response.

The short-answer items were scored using an analytic scoring rubric. Each response was evaluated according to its accuracy, completeness, and relevance to the question. To enhance scoring consistency, two English teachers independently assessed the responses, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion before the final scores were recorded.

Research Procedures

The research was conducted over six instructional meetings, excluding the administration of the pre-test and post-test. Both groups studied the same narrative texts and learning objectives; however, the instructional approaches differed.

Initially, both groups completed a pre-test to determine their baseline reading comprehension. The experimental group then participated in Shared Reading activities, while the control group received conventional reading instruction. At the end of the intervention, both groups completed the post-test using an equivalent reading comprehension test.

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The instructional procedures implemented in the experimental group are summarized in Table 4.

Table 5. Treatment procedures

Meeting	Learning Activities
1	Introduction to narrative text and prediction activities
2	Teacher modeling and shared reading session
3	Guided discussion and vocabulary clarification
4	Choral reading and collaborative text exploration
5	Literal, inferential, and critical comprehension activities
6	Review, reinforcement, and reflection

Each Shared Reading lesson followed a structured sequence of instructional activities. The teacher first introduced the learning objectives and activated students' prior knowledge by discussing the title, pictures, or key vocabulary related to the narrative text. During the shared reading session, the teacher modeled fluent reading while students followed the text and participated in choral reading. Throughout the lesson, students were encouraged to predict story events, identify important information, clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, answer guiding questions, and discuss their interpretations collaboratively. At the end of each lesson, students completed comprehension activities focusing on literal, inferential, and critical understanding, followed by teacher feedback and reflection.

Throughout the intervention, the teacher modeled fluent reading, guided classroom discussions, encouraged students to make predictions, clarified unfamiliar vocabulary, and facilitated collaborative interpretation of narrative texts. In contrast, students in the control group primarily completed individual reading tasks followed by teacher explanation and question-and-answer sessions.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, minimum score, and maximum score, were calculated to summarize students' reading comprehension performance. Before hypothesis testing, the assumptions of parametric statistics were examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test for normality and Levene's test for homogeneity of variance. An independent samples t-test was then conducted to compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups at the 0.05 significance level. To determine the practical significance of the treatment, Cohen's d was calculated as the measure of effect size. According to Cohen (2013), effect sizes of 0.20, 0.50, and 0.80 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the principal of SMP Saraswati Tolai before the research commenced. The English teacher was informed about the research procedures and agreed to facilitate the implementation of the instructional activities. Students participated as part of their regular classroom learning, and all

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collected data were used solely for research purposes. To protect participants' privacy, students' identities were kept confidential, and all data were analyzed anonymously.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize students' reading comprehension performance before and after the instructional intervention. The analysis included the number of participants, mean scores, standard deviations, minimum scores, and maximum scores for both the experimental and control groups.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of reading comprehension scores

Group	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Experimental Pre-test	30	27.33	7.90	15.56	42.22
Experimental Post-test	30	74.67	12.08	53.33	93.33
Control Pre-test	32	22.50	5.47	13.33	35.56
Control Post-test	32	42.22	12.16	26.67	68.89

The descriptive statistics indicate that both groups improved after the instructional period. However, the experimental group demonstrated substantially greater gains than the control group. Before the treatment, both groups showed relatively low reading comprehension scores, with mean scores below 30 on the 100-point scale. Following the intervention, the experimental group's mean score increased to 74.67, whereas the control group's mean score reached only 42.22. The larger increase observed in the experimental group suggests that students benefited considerably from the Shared Reading Strategy.

Students' Improvement

To compare learning gains more clearly, the improvement score for each group was calculated by subtracting the pre-test mean from the post-test mean.

Table 7. Mean improvement scores

Group	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Improvement
Experimental	27.33	74.67	+47.34
Control	22.50	42.22	+19.72

The improvement scores reveal a clear difference between the two groups. Students in the experimental group improved by 47.34 points, while students in the control group improved by only 19.72 points. This finding indicates that the Shared Reading Strategy contributed to considerably greater learning gains than conventional reading instruction.

Normality Test

Prior to hypothesis testing, the normality of the post-test scores was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test.

Table 8. Test of normality

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Group	W	Sig.
Experimental	0.935	0.065
Control	0.899	0.006

The Shapiro–Wilk test indicated that the post-test scores of the experimental group were normally distributed (p = .065 > .05), whereas the control group showed a significant deviation from normality (p = .006 < .05). Although the assumption of normality was not fully satisfied, the independent samples *t*-test was retained because both groups had sample sizes of approximately 30 students and equal variances, conditions under which the test is generally considered robust in educational research.

Homogeneity of Variance

Levene's test was conducted to determine whether the variances of the two groups were equal.

Table 9. Test of homogeneity of variance

Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig.
0.069	1	60	0.794

The results indicate that the variances of the two groups were homogeneous, as the significance value exceeded the .05 criterion (p = .794). Therefore, the assumption of equal variances required for the independent samples *t*-test was satisfied.

Independent samples t-test

The effectiveness of the Shared Reading Strategy was examined using an independent samples *t*-test comparing the post-test scores of the two groups.

Table 10. Independent samples t-test

t	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference
10.53	60	< .001	32.45

The independent samples *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, $t(60) = 10.53$, $p < .001$. The mean difference of 32.45 points indicates that students who were taught using the Shared Reading Strategy achieved substantially higher reading comprehension scores than those who received conventional instruction. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted, indicating that the Shared Reading Strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension of narrative texts.

Interpretasi Statistic

The statistically significant difference indicates that the probability of obtaining the observed mean difference by chance was extremely small (p < .001). Therefore, students who learned through the Shared Reading Strategy demonstrated significantly higher reading comprehension achievement than those who received conventional instruction.

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Combined with the very large effect size, these findings suggest that the instructional strategy produced both statistically and educationally meaningful improvements.

Effect Size

To determine the magnitude of the instructional effect, Cohen's d was calculated based on the experimental group's post-test results.

Table 11. Effect size

Cohen's	Interpretation
2.67	Verry Large Effect

The effect size analysis produced a Cohen's *d* value of 2.68, indicating a very large educational effect according to (Cohen, 2013) classification. This result suggests that the Shared Reading Strategy not only produced statistically significant differences but also had substantial practical significance in improving students' reading comprehension. The large effect size demonstrates that the strategy provided meaningful educational benefits beyond chance variation.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Shared Reading Strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. Students in the experimental group achieved substantially higher post-test scores than those in the control group, with mean score improvements of 47.34 and 19.72 points, respectively. The independent-samples *t*-test confirmed that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant, $t(60) = 10.53$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, the effect size analysis yielded a Cohen's *d* of 2.68, indicating a very large effect. These findings suggest that the Shared Reading Strategy can effectively enhance students' reading comprehension by providing meaningful opportunities to engage actively with narrative texts and develop deeper comprehension compared with conventional teacher-centered instruction.

Rather than simply indicating that Shared Reading is statistically effective, the present findings provide evidence that collaborative reading can substantially improve the quality of students' interaction with texts. During the implementation of the strategy, students were encouraged to predict story events, identify key information, discuss characters, and evaluate the moral values presented in narrative texts. These activities required students to become active meaning-makers instead of passive recipients of information. According to (Grabe & Stoller, 2019), reading comprehension is a constructive process in which readers integrate linguistic knowledge, background knowledge, and cognitive strategies to build meaning. The collaborative nature of Shared Reading appears to facilitate this integration more effectively than conventional reading instruction (Aldossary, 2024; Liu et al., 2024) .

These findings are consistent with (Holdaway, 1979) theory of Shared Reading, which proposes that reading comprehension develops most effectively when learners participate in meaningful literacy experiences with the guidance of a more proficient reader. Holdaway argued that teacher modeling enables students to observe fluent

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reading behaviors while simultaneously developing comprehension strategies through repeated interaction with authentic texts. In the present study, the teacher modeled pronunciation, intonation, expression, and reading fluency before gradually encouraging students to participate in collaborative reading activities. This gradual release of responsibility likely contributed to students' improved comprehension because learners were continuously supported while developing greater independence in interpreting narrative texts.

From a sociocultural perspective, the findings are also consistent with (Vygotsky, 1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The teacher continuously provided scaffolding by introducing key vocabulary, asking guiding questions, clarifying difficult passages, and facilitating classroom discussion. Such instructional support enabled students to accomplish reading tasks that they would have found difficult to complete independently. As students became increasingly familiar with narrative text structures and comprehension strategies, they gradually assumed greater responsibility for constructing meaning on their own.

The present findings further support the view of (Duke & Cartwright, 2021)that effective reading instruction should involve active comprehension processes such as prediction, questioning, inference making, summarizing, and evaluation rather than focusing solely on literal understanding. The Shared Reading lessons implemented in this study incorporated these comprehension strategies throughout each instructional session. Consequently, students were required not only to identify explicitly stated information but also to infer characters' intentions, predict story developments, and discuss moral messages. Such higher-order cognitive engagement likely contributed to the substantial improvement observed in the experimental group.

The findings are also consistent with (Teng, 2020), who reported that interactive literacy instruction enhances students' metacognitive awareness. During Shared Reading, students continuously monitored their understanding by comparing predictions with actual story events, discussing alternative interpretations with classmates, and asking questions whenever misunderstandings occurred. These activities encouraged students to regulate their own comprehension processes, which are essential components of successful reading in EFL contexts.

Several previous empirical studies also support the present findings. (Laraswati et al., 2018) reported that Shared Reading significantly improved students' reading comprehension and classroom participation because students became more actively involved during reading activities. Similarly, (Wijayanti & Riyani, 2020) found that students taught through Shared Reading achieved higher comprehension scores than those taught using conventional methods. More recently, (Dianita et al., 2023) demonstrated that Shared Reading positively influenced both reading comprehension and reading motivation among Indonesian EFL learners. The present study extends these findings by employing a quasi-experimental design with statistical evidence indicating a very large instructional effect.

The consistency of the present findings with international research further strengthens the evidence supporting Shared Reading. (Altamimi & Ogdol, 2023)concluded that collaborative reading activities significantly improve EFL students' comprehension because learners actively negotiate meaning through discussion and teacher guidance. Likewise, (Momtaz & Garner, 2010) emphasized that collaborative

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reading encourages students to articulate ideas, justify interpretations, and refine their understanding through interaction with peers. Similar classroom interactions were observed during the present study, where students actively exchanged ideas before reaching a shared understanding of the narrative texts.

Another important factor contributing to the effectiveness of Shared Reading is students' engagement during the instructional process. Students in the experimental group demonstrated greater enthusiasm, participated more actively in classroom discussions, and showed increased willingness to answer questions compared with students receiving conventional instruction. This finding supports (Barber & Klauda, 2020), who argued that reading engagement and motivation are strong predictors of reading achievement because motivated students invest greater cognitive effort when processing texts. The collaborative nature of Shared Reading appears to create a classroom environment that encourages participation and sustained attention throughout reading activities.

Vocabulary development may also have contributed to the improvement observed in the experimental group. Before reading each narrative text, the teacher introduced unfamiliar vocabulary and discussed its meaning in context. This instructional practice reduced students' lexical difficulties and enabled them to focus more effectively on constructing meaning from the text. (Hayati et al., 2022; Nanda & Azmy, 2020) similarly reported that limited vocabulary knowledge is one of the primary obstacles preventing Indonesian EFL students from understanding narrative texts. Therefore, integrating vocabulary instruction into Shared Reading activities may have enhanced students' overall reading comprehension.

The very large effect size observed in this study suggests that the improvement cannot be explained solely by statistical significance but also reflects meaningful educational benefits. The collaborative nature of Shared Reading provides continuous opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, receive immediate feedback, and refine their comprehension through interaction with both the teacher and peers. Such learning experiences are less likely to occur in conventional teacher-centered reading instruction, where students generally work individually and have limited opportunities to discuss or justify their understanding of the text.

The pedagogical implications of the present study are noteworthy. These findings are also supported by (Alderson, 2021)**,** who emphasizes that effective reading instruction should integrate comprehension strategy instruction with authentic classroom interaction to improve students' overall reading performance. First, the findings indicate that English teachers should move beyond traditional teacher-centered reading instruction and adopt more interactive approaches that actively involve students in constructing meaning. Shared Reading provides a practical instructional framework that combines teacher modeling, collaborative discussion, guided questioning, and repeated reading, thereby creating opportunities for students to develop both comprehension skills and reading confidence (Budiman & Ganap, 2024). Second, teacher education and professional development programs should equip teachers with strategies for implementing collaborative literacy instruction effectively. Third, curriculum developers may consider integrating Shared Reading into junior high school English programs because the strategy aligns closely with the student-centered learning principles promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum. Finally, schools should encourage

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classroom environments that promote discussion, peer interaction, and active engagement during reading lessons rather than emphasizing translation and individual comprehension exercises alone.

Despite its positive findings, this study has several limitations. First, the study involved only 62 students from one junior high school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the intervention was conducted over only six instructional meetings; therefore, the long-term effects of the Shared Reading Strategy could not be examined.

Another important limitation concerns the available dataset. Although the reading comprehension instrument was designed to assess three levels of comprehension—literal, inferential, and critical—the statistical analysis was conducted using only the overall test scores because item-level scores for each comprehension level were not available in the final dataset. Consequently, separate quantitative analyses of students' performance across these three comprehension levels could not be performed. Future studies are therefore encouraged to record and analyze item-level data so that improvements in each dimension of reading comprehension can be examined more comprehensively.

In addition, future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, extend the duration of the intervention, and combine quantitative findings with qualitative evidence, such as classroom observations or student interviews, to provide a deeper understanding of how Shared Reading influences students' reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Shared Reading Strategy in improving eighth-grade students' reading comprehension of narrative texts at SMP Saraswati Tolai. The findings demonstrated that students who received Shared Reading instruction achieved significantly higher reading comprehension scores than those who received conventional teacher-centered instruction. The experimental group showed substantially greater improvement, and the independent samples t-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t(60) = 10.53$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the very large effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.68$) indicates that the Shared Reading Strategy had a strong educational impact on students' reading comprehension achievement.

These findings suggest that Shared Reading is an effective student-centered instructional strategy because it combines teacher modeling, collaborative reading, guided questioning, and classroom discussion to support students in constructing meaning from narrative texts. The strategy not only improves reading comprehension but also encourages active participation and interaction during the learning process, which are essential components of effective EFL instruction.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the participants were limited to 62 students from one junior high school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the intervention was implemented over only six instructional meetings, so the long-term effects of the strategy were not examinedThird, although the reading comprehension test was designed to measure literal, inferential, and critical comprehension, only the overall test scores were available for statistical analysis. As a

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result, this study could not examine students' achievement at each comprehension level separately. Future studies should analyze item-level data to provide more detailed evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Shared Reading Strategy across different dimensions of reading comprehension.

Based on these findings, English teachers are encouraged to incorporate Shared Reading into classroom instruction to promote more interactive and meaningful reading experiences. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples from different educational settings, implement longer intervention periods, and examine the effects of Shared Reading on specific levels of reading comprehension as well as students' reading motivation and engagement.

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