

The effectiveness of English literature reading in improving reading skills and reading comprehension



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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to explore the ways in which reading English literature enhances the reading skills of Chinese college students in the language. A questionnaire was used to carry out the study with 36 students. The pilot population of this study is first-year to fourth-year students at Liaoning University. The study puts emphasis on the effectiveness of English literature reading in improving reading skills and reading comprehension. Sixty students participated in the study by means of an experiment. In the experiment class, the teacher uses reading skills to teach English literature, however, in the control class, the teacher uses a traditional literature teaching method. SPSS version 29.0 was offered to test whether the experimental students' literature reading grades have risen with reading skills. SPSS is a software package used for statistical analysis in social science research and other fields. A wide range of abilities for data management, data analysis and data documentation are available with IBM's SPSS programme. Researchers and analysts use SPSS to perform various statistical analyses such as descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and multivariate analyses. The study indicates that teaching English literature reading skills enhances college students' reading comprehension proficiency and grades.

Contribution/ Originality: This study innovatively integrated a structured English literature reading program into language education examining its impact on reading skills and reading comprehension. Unlike previous research, this paper combined quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted benefits of literature addressing gaps in current literature-focused language pedagogy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Students can get context-based vocabulary knowledge through English literature which helps in the development of the reading and communication skills necessary for them to eventually comprehend and respond to larger works. On the other hand, literature inspires the development of higher-order thinking techniques. Students can form relationships and cultivate deeper critical analysis skills by learning vocabulary in context. Students also learn words used by a variety of means even if they always match their literal meanings.

Background of the study: Reading is a fundamental skill with far-reaching implications for academic success and lifelong learning. Proficiency in reading not only impacts an individual's academic performance but also plays a crucial role in their ability to navigate and succeed in today's information-rich world. This study focuses on exploring the potential benefits of using English literature as a tool for enhancing reading skills and

comprehension. Context of the study: English literature is a rich and diverse field encompassing a wide range of texts from classic novels to contemporary literature. It is often used as a means to engage students in reading but the specific impact of reading English literature on reading skills and comprehension has received limited empirical attention. It is important to comprehend how reading English literature may affect one's reading ability in this context for several reasons: a) educational relevance. English literature is a core component of many school curricula worldwide and this study can provide insights into the educational benefits of literature-based learning. b) Literature as a tool. Literature is a unique medium for promoting critical thinking, empathy, cultural awareness and vocabulary expansion. It's crucial to explore whether these benefits extend to improving fundamental reading skills. c) Literature's complexity. English literature often presents more complex sentence structures, vocabulary and themes compared to standard reading materials. Investigating its impact on reading skills can shed light on the adaptability of individuals to various reading challenges. D) Literary analysis skills. Reading English literature often involves analyzing symbolism, themes and character development which may positively impact reading comprehension. Significance of the study: The study's significance lies in its potential to inform educational practices and contribute to a broader understanding of how reading materials influence reading skills and comprehension. Here are some of the key implications and benefits: a) Pedagogical insights. Teachers can use the findings to adapt their teaching methods, incorporating more English literature into the curriculum to enhance students' reading abilities. B) Enhanced reading proficiency. If the study demonstrates a positive relationship between reading English literature and reading skills, it could encourage individuals of all ages to engage with literature as a means to boost their reading capabilities. C) Cultural appreciation. A deeper understanding of the advantages of reading literature may encourage readers to interact with a wider range of people, situations and viewpoints which may increase their empathy and admiration for other cultures. d) Reading interventions. The study could potentially inform reading intervention programs suggesting that exposure to English literature could be a valuable component for those struggling with reading difficulties. e) Academic success. Improved reading skills and comprehension can lead to better academic performance across various subjects as reading is a fundamental skill required in most areas of study. f) Life-long learning. Enhancing reading skills and comprehension through literature may foster a love for reading, promoting life-long learning and intellectual growth.

In a nutshell, the study on the effectiveness of English literature reading in improving reading skills and comprehension is significant as it has the potential to influence education, learning and personal development. It can help shape teaching practices, encourage individuals to engage with diverse texts and ultimately enhance reading proficiency and understanding by providing comprehensive insights into the impact of literature on reading. Reading English literature can help students learn a lot of vocabulary and improve their reading skills because English literature is rich and vivid. In addition, the language of English literature is so authentic that students can use it in their daily lives. It can help students achieve a higher level of English. The following research questions are proposed:

1. Whether literature skills improve reading proficiency at Liaoning University in China?
2. Whether students' vocabulary increases after applying reading skills?
3. Whether English literature reading skills are a feasible method for students at Liaoning College in China.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature, particularly English literature has been a longstanding tool in language and reading instruction. It is often used to enhance reading skills and comprehension due to its rich and diverse narrative content, vocabulary, and linguistic structures. Researchers like [Anderson and Fielding \(1988\)](#) have pointed out that exposure to literature can significantly contribute to language development and reading proficiency.

English literature reading is selected from a variety of sources and common types of literature include original English masterpieces, graded readers, English short stories and literary discourse in textbooks. [Zhang \(2010\)](#) proposes a reading model of English literature that emphasizes students' reading experience and creates a

cooperative classroom reading atmosphere based on Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory. He (2011) believes that integrating English literature into university English teaching can have the effects of "use-based" and "knowledge-based" and that teachers can select literary materials according to the idea of thematic teaching and carry out reader-centred heuristic teaching. This is why teachers can inspire students to read by following a thematic approach to the selection of literary materials using a reader-centered approach and by giving them continuous feedback through different types of formative assessments. According to Lin and Yang (2014), using "appreciation" as the focal point of English literature reading can facilitate students' understanding of the aesthetic appeal and the humanistic implications of English literary works. Chen (2016) proposes a new model of English literature teaching called "CREAM" (Comprehension, Response, Enrichment, Activity and Multiplicity) with the learner as the center and the characteristics of English literature reading courses. Through three rounds of action research, He (2017) investigated four classroom teaching modes for teaching English literature reading: task presentation class, comprehensive analysis class, literacy practice class and film performance class. He also suggested the usefulness of the "literature circle" reading model. Jiang (2019) explores a teaching model with "reading, guidance and writing evaluation" as its central component and examines the process of connecting reading and writing in the teaching of simple to read English literary masterpieces. Cao (2021) finds that the introduction of the "literature circle" reading model in reading teaching has a positive impact on students' English learning in many aspects, including vocabulary, interest and motivation, reading habits, thinking quality and self-efficacy.

A number of studies have explored the impact of reading literature on reading skills and comprehension. For example, Smith and Johnson (2011) examined the effects of reading classic literature on college students' reading comprehension skills and noted significant improvements. Therefore, the importance of literature in the teaching of English is undeniable. Linda (1988) proposes a four-step model for teaching any literature in which the teacher's role is to facilitate students' responsibility for reading, communicating and ultimately making discoveries in the process of reading through a structured teaching process. Christiane (2016) uses social media platforms such as Twitter for discussion and learning of foreign language literature. For example, Suzanne (2018) suggests that literature reading can help develop students' global perspective. Carmen (2018) found that reading children's literature from multiple perspectives can help develop students' empathy skills. Researchers have also proposed different approaches and models for teaching English literature based on practice and research. Rick (2019) found that students deepen their understanding of fictional texts, increase their interest in reading and communicate with their peers based on the text through video filming. Amira (2019) discussed what English teachers do when teaching English and the dilemmas faced in teaching English through English literature such as the conflict of teachers' beliefs, the pressure of the test-taking environment, and the conflict between syllabus requirements and the actual teaching situation. Although the literature now in discussion indicates a favourable relationship between reading literature and enhanced reading comprehension and skills, additional study is necessary. Many previous studies have focused on specific age groups or limited genres of literature. There is a dearth of comprehensive research that examines the effectiveness of college students' English literature across various age groups.

2.1. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To find out whether reading English literature improves students' reading ability.
2. To find out whether the habit of reading English literature raises students' reading skills.
3. To find out how much time students spend reading English literature.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

3.1. Subjects of the Study

The respondents to the study are 36 students currently studying at Liaoning University in China. They are from the faculties of English, Finance, History, Law, Marketing, Political Science and Public Administration.

3.2. Sampling

Participants were selected through random sampling. The respondents of the study were students who were available and willing to participate in the study.

3.3. Instrument

The data was collected using a questionnaire. The research questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale and was closed-ended. The data collected focused on whether the participants' reading skills improved. The data also centered on whether the participants' vocabulary was raised.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Figure 1 indicates that the majority of students regularly read English literature based on the data collected. 21 participants (59%) indicated that they read English literature on a normal basis while 9 participants (24%) indicated that they read it on a very regular basis. In addition, 6 learners (17%) read English literature occasionally. It is clear from the chart that the students try to read English literature as often as possible.

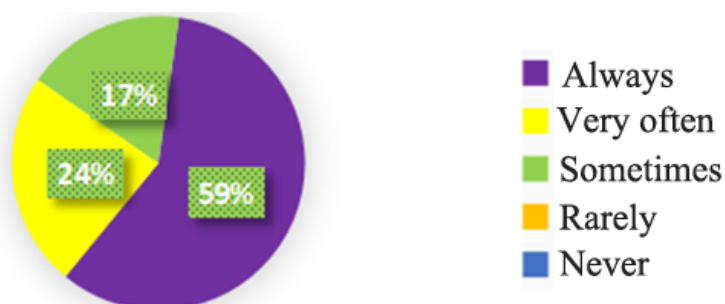


Figure 1. Frequency of reading English literature.

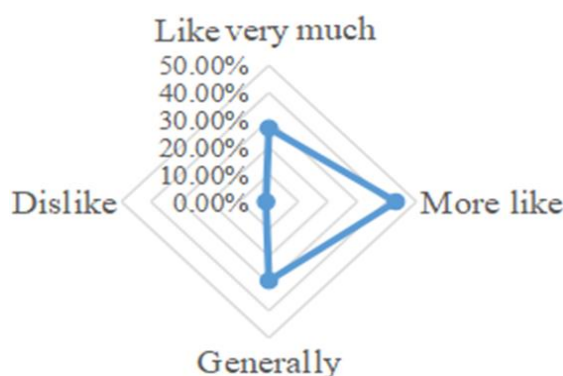


Figure 2. Level for English literature.

The student questionnaires investigated the students' preference for English literature. Figure 2 illustrates that 27% of the students who participated in the study indicated they enjoyed reading English literature very much and 43% indicated they liked English literature even more. 29% of the students like the literature to an average extent.

1% of the students don't like the literature. This shows that the majority of the students like to read English literature.

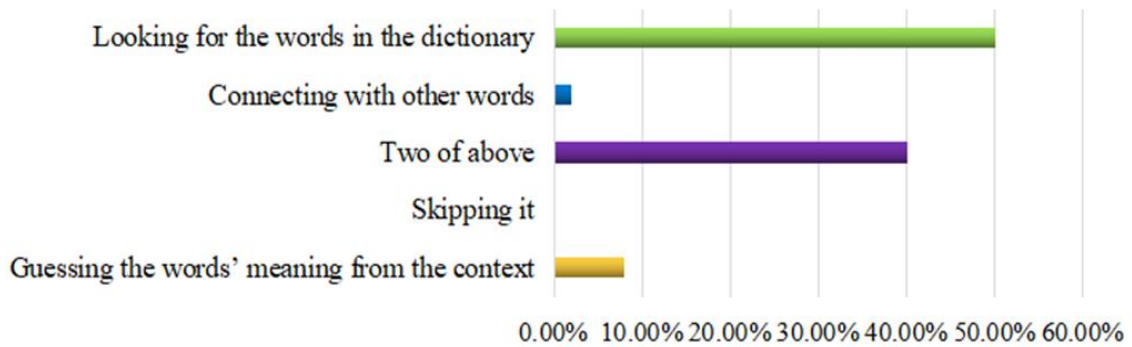


Figure 3. Skills for coping with new words.

Figure 3 presents skills for coping with new words. When participants were asked what they would do if they saw a word they did not know in the literature, 18 participants (50%) responded that they would look up the word in the dictionary while 14 participants (40%) responded that they would use the dictionary and associate other words at the same time. However, 1 participant (2%) stated that he only used one technique (associating with other words) and 3 participants (8%) guessed the meaning of words based on context. Using the dictionary and associating other words were the two main skills used by the students.

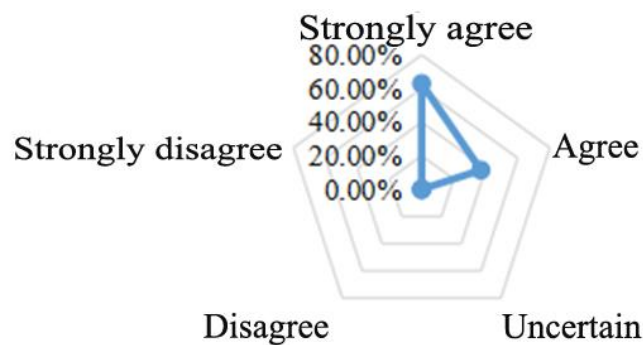


Figure 4. Increasing the vocabulary.

Figure 4 illustrates an increase in vocabulary because reading English literature helps students increase their vocabulary. When respondents were asked if their vocabulary was increasing, 17 learners (57%) strongly agreed that their vocabulary had improved through reading English literature compared with 13 learners (43%) who simply agreed that their vocabulary had improved. All participants agreed that their vocabulary was increasing slowly and no one denied this improvement.

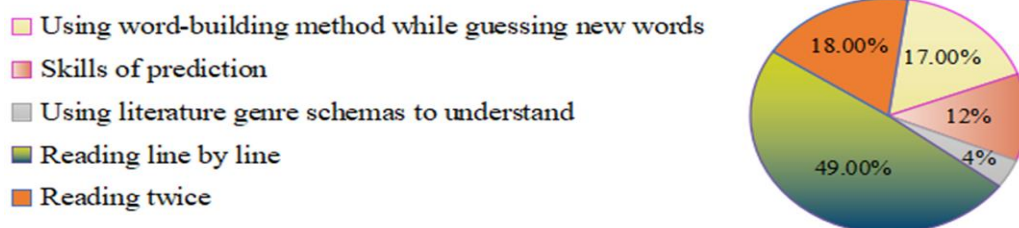


Figure 5. Acquiring the main ideas of an English literature.

Figure 5 exhibits how to acquire the main ideas of English literature. Regarding how the learners knew the primary opinion of the text, 18 learners (49%) said they knew the important opinion of the text by reading the text

line by line but 6 learners (17%) knew the principal opinion of the text by guessing the vocabulary. 7 learners (18%) knew the major opinion of the text after reading it twice. Similarly, 4 learners (12%) read literature through predictive techniques and the remaining 1 respondent (4%) said he used literary genre schema for comprehension.

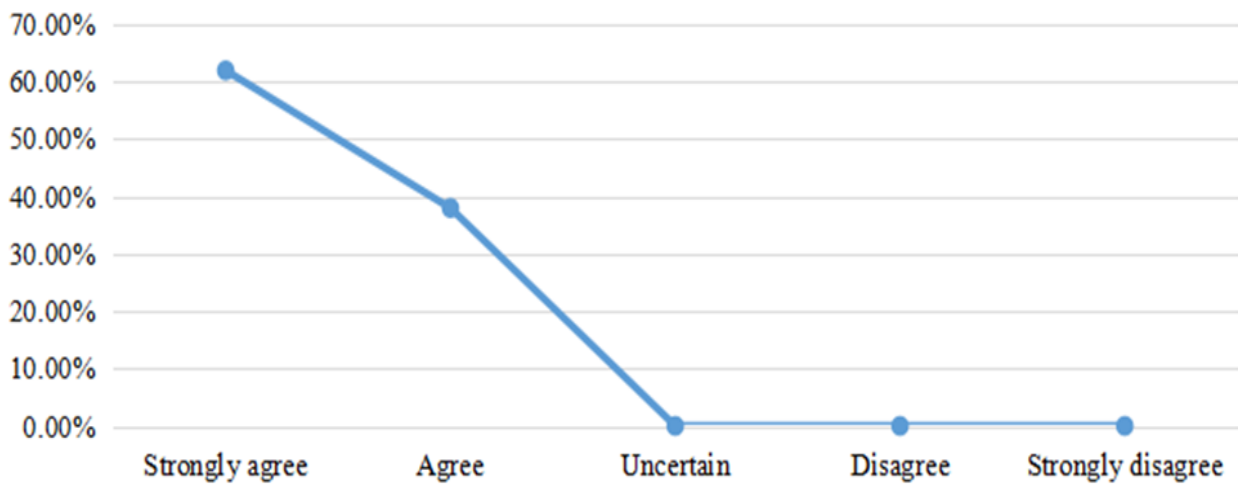


Figure 6. Improve reading skills.

Figure 6 demonstrates how to improve reading skills. It is believed that reading English literature improves students' reading skills. Respondents were asked whether their reading skills were improving or staying the same. 22 respondents (62%) strongly agreed while in contrast, 14 respondents (38%) simply agreed that their reading skills had improved. It was clear that the participants did not reject this improvement. Therefore, all participants' reading skills are improving.

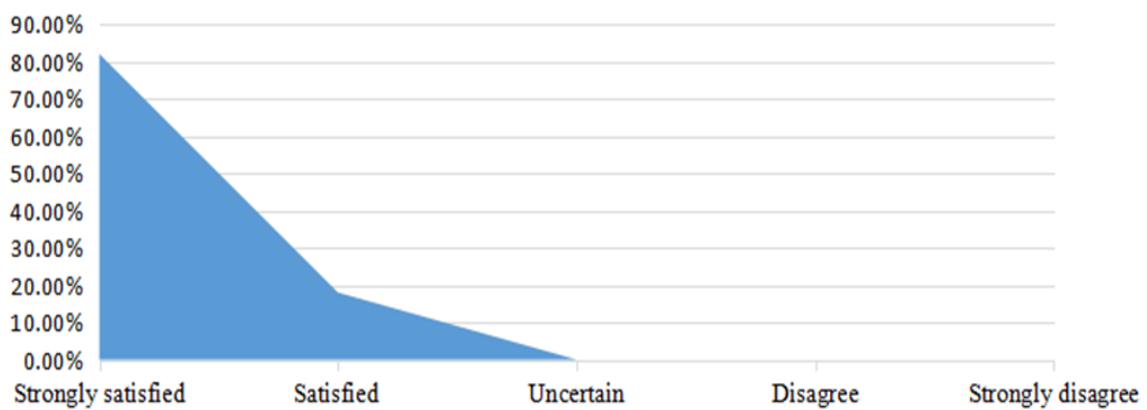


Figure 7. Upgrade reading comprehension proficiency.

Figure 7 reveals how to upgrade reading comprehension proficiency. According to the following chart, 30 participants (or 82% of the sample) are satisfied with reading English literature which can help students become more proficient readers.

6 participants (18%) think that reading English literature is beneficial to students' reading comprehension grades so they are satisfied with it.

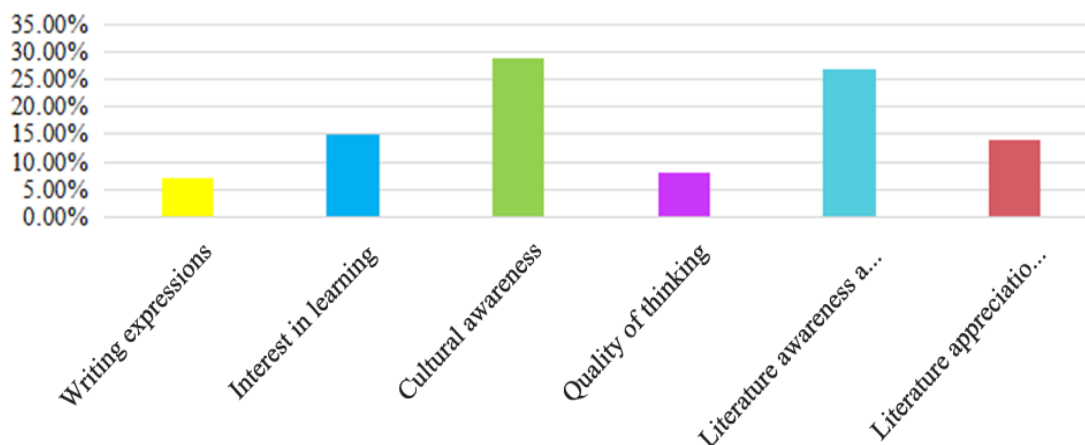


Figure 8. Perceptions of English literature reading as a specific aid to students' English learning

Figure 8 manifests perceptions of English literature reading as a specific aid to students' English reading. 7% of the participants think that reading English literature contributes to writing expressions. 15% of the participants consider that literature reading stimulates students' interest in learning English. 29% of the participants feel that literature reading develops students' cultural awareness. 8% of the participants said reading literature increases students' quality of thinking. 27% of the participants believe literature reading raises students' literature awareness and knowledge. 14% of the participants enhanced their literature appreciation and aesthetics.

5. METHODOLOGY II EXPERIMENT

5.1. Introduction

The traditional teaching method for English reading is not efficient for EFL students. Therefore, the teacher has applied English literature reading skills to the reading comprehension in the experimental class and made a comparison with the control class using the traditional teaching method. An experiment has been conducted to confirm the outcomes of this new teaching strategy. This section mainly describes the experiment which falls into three procedures: the pre-test, the experimental treatment and the post-test. Experimental treatment is emphasized.

5.2. The Design of the Experiment

This study employs a quantitative research design to comprehensively investigate the effectiveness of English literature reading in improving reading skills and reading comprehension. The quantitative method provides a holistic understanding of the research questions and allows for a more in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under study. A standardized reading assessment tool will be used before and after the intervention to measure participants' reading skills and comprehension objectively. The assessment will be based on established reading comprehension tests and will include questions that evaluate participants' ability to extract meaning from texts. The researcher's main goal in the next section will be to introduce the experimental procedures.

5.3. The Procedure of the Experiment

The experimental procedure contained three phases. In the first phase, at the beginning of the experiment (3 January 2023), a pre-test was carried out in EC (the experimental class) and CC (the control class). During this stage, some data was collected with respect to the scores of the pre-test in two classes. The purpose of the experiment was to examine whether there were any differences between EC and CC before the experiment.

In the second stage, the experimental treatment was applied in reading class. The teachers in EC and CC used different teaching methods to teach reading comprehension during the periods. In EC, teachers mainly taught English literature reading knowledge and reading skills to students and also used traditional teaching methods

whereas in CC, teachers only used traditional teaching methods. This stage lasted two months from January 3, 2023 to April 3, 2023.

In the last stage, two classes took the post-test (on April 8, 2023). The author collected some data on student post-test scores for EC and CC to explore whether there were any striking differences between EC and CC after the experimental treatment was applied.

Therefore, the authors made some comparisons between EC that got the treatment and CC that did not have the treatment.

5.4. The Pre-Test

The author evaluated students' reading comprehension scores in English literature in classes EC and CC before the experiment to determine whether there were any notable variations between the two groups. This helped to increase the experiment's validity and reliability.

5.5. The Purpose and Significance of the Pre-test

In the beginning of the experiment, the teacher gave students a pre-test on English literature reading comprehension in thirty minutes in EC and CC that aimed to check students' English reading proficiency.

(1) In CC and EC, the data was collected from the pre-test.

(2) These data would indicate whether the students in EC and CC had a better understanding of English literature reading or not.

(3) These data would also show whether the students in EC and CC had some significant differences before they were subjected to the experiment.

Therefore, the researcher had a clear knowledge of two classes before the new treatment (CT) was conducted.

5.6. Participants

The test-takers were freshmen from Liaoning University in Liaoning Province. Furthermore, their English foundations were similar according to their grades in the entrance exam at the university in September 2022, although they were in different classes. Wang Li had taught them English. The numbers of students in CC and EC were both 30. The teacher encouraged the students to participate in three months of training in order to improve their English reading skills. After the pre-test, in class one, the number of students below 24 scores (the total grade is 40) was 26; however, in class two, the number of students below 24 scores was 22. The students in class one and class two were chosen randomly as samples. Thus, 30 students who came from class one were chosen randomly as CC while 30 students from class two were chosen as EC. The students did not know that the teacher used two different teaching methods.

5.7. Materials for the Pre-test

The materials that were extracted from the reading comprehension part of the College English Test 4 (CET-4) mock papers were used for the pre-test (written by Zhou (2018)). The author chose randomly four passages with obvious cultural context and situational context as test materials for the pre-test. These four passages consisted of twenty questions. Among these passages, the context could be found and each passage comprised the cohesion and coherence of the text.

5.8. The Stages of the Teaching Experiment

The second stage of the experiment lasted three months from January 3, 2023 to April 3, 2023. During this period, in EC reading class, the teacher not only applied English literature reading and reading skills in reading teaching but also used the traditional teaching method. In contrast, in CC's English reading class, the teacher only used the traditional teaching method.

5.9. The Subjects

The subjects were the students from class one and class two from which the students' samples in CC and EC were randomly selected.

5.10. Teaching Materials

The teaching materials used in the experiment were from steps to academic reading 4 (in context) which was written by Jean Zukowski/Faust, Suan S. Johnston and Elizabeth E. Templin and published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing. The author used the example in this book to analyze reading skills (a passage from Baudoin (1993)).

5.11. The Teaching Processes

The teaching process was carried out in twelve classes (45 minutes for each class). The teacher applied the theories of reading skills and the traditional teaching method in EC while in CC the students only received the traditional teaching method. The teaching processes in EC appeared in the following steps:

5.12. Research Hypotheses

The teacher applied the theories of reading skills and the traditional teaching method in EC which would improve the students' reading ability. Hence, the new teaching method combined with the traditional method would give rise to a better result. The new teaching method would be significantly better than the old teaching method.

5.13. Instruments

The researcher used SPSS version 29.0 to analyze the data.

5.14. Data Collection Procedures

The post-test was managed on 8 April 2023 after twelve weeks of training for EC and CC students. The post-test was designed to collect data from EC and CC so that the author could analyze and compare the data and more importantly explore whether there were any striking differences between EC and CC.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Data Analysis

6.1.1. The Comparison and Analysis of the Grades of the Pre-test in CC and EC

The SPSS independent samples t-test allows pre-test data for the treatment of CC and EC so that the researcher could know better whether the results of the pre-tests in two classes had significant differences. The following descriptive statistics in Table 1 manifests means, standard deviations (Std. deviation), pre-test scores and sample size (N) for CC and EC before treatment.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the grades of the pretest in CC and EC.

	Class	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Pre-test	CC	60	22.13	7.536
	EC	60	21.63	6.541

Table 1 clearly shows that CC students received a mean score of 22.13 on the pre-test whereas EC students received a mean score of 21.63. The difference between the two mean scores is only 0.50 points (see the column on mean difference in Table 1). However, we still cannot draw the conclusion that there is no striking difference between CC and EC in the pre-test. Hence, the researcher examined the pre-test scores of CC and EC through the independent samples test to further prove whether there is a significant difference between CC and EC.

Table 2. Independent sample test between CC and EC in the pre-test.

CC and EC	Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for equality of means				
	F	Sig.	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal variances are assumed	1.763	0.187	0.388	0.699	0.500	-2.051	3.051
Equal variances are not assumed			0.388	0.699	0.500	-2.052	3.052

According to [Table 2](#), the significance of Levine's test for equality of variances is 0.187 which is much greater than 0.05 which implies that the variances of the two categories are the same. Therefore, we need to observe the t-test result in the "equal variances are assumed" row. Since the mean score of EC is slightly lower than that of CC, the t-value is equal to the mean difference. Sig. (2-tailed) is the possibility of significance of the two-tailed T-test. In the pre-test, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.699 which is greater than the striking level of 0.01 indicating that there is no remarkable difference between the two classes in the pre-test. In addition, the 95% confidence interval for the difference contains 0 which also indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between EC and CC in the pre-test.

The results of the data analysis offer the researcher information that the differences between EC and CC were not statistically remarkable. These data also indicated there was no significant difference in English reading between the two classes. In other words, there was no striking difference in the reading skills of the students in the two classes before the treatment.

6.1.2. The Comparison and Analysis of Scores of the Post-test in CC and EC

The scores of the pre-test in CC and EC were compared and analyzed. Now let's turn to the post-test. The post-test which was mainly related to reading comprehension was carried out in CC and EC after the students in EC had gone through the twelve-week experiment while the students in CC had not been exposed to a certain treatment (English literature reading and reading skills), the teacher still used the traditional teaching method. The researchers obtained a descriptive statistics table that shows the mean, standard deviation of EC and CC scores (standard. deviation) and sample size (N) by applying the same analytical method. The EC and CC scores are as follows:

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the grades of the post-test in CC and EC.

Post-test	Class	N	Mean	Std. deviation
	CC	60	26.13	7.767
	EC	60	32.23	6.239

[Table 3](#) implies that the mean grade of EC was 32.23 which was much higher than that of CC which was 26.13. The difference between the two mean scores was 6.10 points. The difference between the two mean grades is 6.10 points. Since the mean grade of EC is significantly higher than that of CC in the post-test, consequently, there is a striking difference between CC and EC in the post-test. If we compare [Table 1](#) with [Table 3](#), we can see the mean of EC increased by 10.60 points while the mean of CC increased by only 4.00 points. The researcher used the independent samples test to explore whether there is a statistically striking difference between CC and EC.

Table 4. Independent samples test between CC and EC in the post-test.

CC and EC	Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for equality of means				
	F	Sig.	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal variances are assumed.	1.914	0.169	4.743	0.000	-6.100	-8.647	-3.553
Equal variances are not assumed.			-4.743	0.000	-6.100	-8.648	-3.552

Table 4 shows that the general reading ability of the students in EC is higher than that of CC after the treatment. The significance of Levine's test for equality of variances is 0.169 which is much greater than 0.05 indicating that the variances of the two classes are equal. Therefore, the data in the "Equal variances are assumed" row needs to be tested as a result of the T-test. Since the mean score of EC is greater than the mean score of CC, both the t-value and the mean difference are active. Sig. (2-tailed) is the possibility of significance for the two-tailed T-test. In the post-tests sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 which is less than the 0.01 level of significance indicating that there is a remarkable difference between the two classes. In addition, the 95% confidence interval for the difference consists of zero which also makes it clear that there is a statistically striking difference between EC and CC in the post-test. This might demonstrate that English literature reading and reading skills can improve students' reading comprehension proficiency.

On the basis of the results above, they imply that reading skills are helpful to enhance the students' reading abilities and also illustrate that English reading teaching combines with reading skills teaching which is more efficient than the traditional teaching mode.

6.1.3. The Comparison and Analysis of Grades of the Pre-test and Post-test in CC

In sections 3 and 4, the researcher compares and analyses the pre-test and post-test scores of CC and EC. In addition, the researcher will use the SPSS paired samples T-test to test whether there is a striking difference between the pre-test and post-test of the same class in the following two sections. Table 5 presents the data attained from the pretest and post-test of CC.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for the grades of the pre-test and post-test in CC.

CC	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Pre-test	60	22.13	7.536
Post-test	60	26.13	7.767

It is clear from Table 5 that the mean of the post-test in CC is only 26.13 which is slightly higher than that of the pre-test (22.13). However, we cannot conclude that there is no statistically remarkable difference between the grades of the pre-test and post-test in CC. Consequently, we must examine the paired samples in Table 5 in accordance with Table 6 in order to further investigate whether there is a statistically significant difference.

Table 6. Paired samples test between pre-test and post-test in CC.

CC	Paired differences				t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. deviation	95% confidence interval of the difference			
			Lower	Upper		
Pre-test Post-test	-4.000	1.766	-.456	0.044	-17.545	0.012

It is clear from Table 6's difference in means that there is no notable variation in the grades of the pre-test and post-test results in CC. The result of sig. (two-tailed) displays slightly more than 0.01. However, the 95% confidence interval for the difference consists of 0 which suggests that there is no striking difference between the two tests in CC. This also proves that students in CC have made some progress in English reading.

6.1.4. The Comparison and Analysis of Grades of the Pretest and Post-test in EC

We only examined the grades of pre-test and post-test scores in CC in the previous section. Similarly, this section will investigate whether there is a striking difference between the grades of the pretest and post-test in EC. The statistics from two EC tests are shown in the following tables for this purpose.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics for the scores of the pretest and post-test in EC.

EC	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Pre-test	60	21.63	6.541
Post-test	60	32.23	6.239

Table 7 indicates that students in the EC had a mean pre-test grade of 21.63 and a mean post-test score of 32.23. There is a difference of 9.4 points between the two means. In terms of mean difference, the mean grade of the post-test in EC is much higher than the mean grade of the pre-test. The paired sample test can better demonstrate whether there is a statistically striking difference between pretest and post-test grades in EC. Let us look at Table 8.

Table 8. Paired samples test between pre-test and post-test in EC.

EC	Paired differences			T	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. deviation	95% confidence interval of the difference			
			Lower			Upper
Pre-test Post-test	-10.600	2.663	-11.288	-9.912	-30.833	0.000

The mean difference in Table 8 makes it clear that the EC's pre-test and post-test scores differ significantly from each other. The 95% confidence interval of the difference does not contain zero which demonstrates that there is a striking difference between the two tests in EC. The sig. (two-tailed) is 0.000 which is much less than 0.01 which suggests that there is a remarkable difference between the pre-test grades and post-test grades of the EC.

The data above also verifies that the students in EC have made greater progress after being trained for three months. As a result, it is possible to conclude that teachers apply techniques in college English reading classes that help students become more proficient readers.

6.2. Discussions of the Experimental Results

The following is an overview of the findings from the previous experiments:

(1) The findings in section 2 prior to treatment did not demonstrate a significant difference between EC and CC on the pre-test. After the treatment was practiced, the grades of the post-test in EC differed obviously from those of the post-test in CC. The data demonstrated in section 6.4 stated that the difference was significant statistically. Thereby, it was well known that in EC the students did much better than those in CC in the reading test after the treatment.

(2) The comparison made for the grades of the pre-test and post-test in EC indicated that the students in EC had made noticeable progress in reading competence after the teaching experiment.

(3) The results showed that the students' reading abilities had only slightly improved which was not statistically significant when we compared the grades of the pre-test and post-test in CC.

All these data discussed above showed us quite positive evidence with regard to reading skills in college English. In other words, English reading skills were applied in college English reading which contributed a lot to improving the students' reading abilities in EC. With this in view, our conclusion had potential implications for teaching reading to EFL students.

This study's findings align with previous research that demonstrated a positive connection between English literature reading and reading skills. However, this research contributes by examining a broader range of college student groups and literature genres. It confirms that English literature can be beneficial for individuals of different ages and the choice of literature genre may also influence the outcomes.

7. CONCLUSION

College English reading is the major channel for college students to get linguistic knowledge and information. However, the main problem that needs to be resolved in reading classes is how to help students become more proficient readers in the constrained amount of time allotted for class.

The previous chapters have examined the relationships between reading skills and college English reading by means of experimental research. The results of the study indicate that reading skills in college English reading teaching can be very beneficial to improve students' reading abilities. However, this chapter primarily focuses on three areas: the study's key findings, its implications for teaching college English to readers, its limitations and potential future research areas.

7.1. Findings of the Study

The following key results can be obtained after a three-month experiment:

Firstly, reading skills offer an effective method for college English teaching in reading. It can stimulate students' reading interests, improve their reading abilities, extend their reading strategies and develop better reading habits.

Secondly, reading skills play a vital role in understanding the content and structure of a text.

Thirdly, reading skills can not only be used as a reading strategy in the teaching of college English reading but also it is a necessary supplement to the traditional teaching method.

The findings shed light on the effectiveness of English literature reading, presenting a nuanced picture of its impact on participant groups and preferences. Key findings of the study are: positive correlation. Our quantitative analysis revealed a clear positive correlation between regular English literature reading and self-reported reading skills and comprehension. Participants who engaged more frequently with English literature consistently rated their reading proficiency higher. Tangible improvement. Objective measurement through standardized reading assessments confirmed that structured English literature reading interventions led to measurable improvements in reading skills and comprehension. Post-intervention scores were significantly higher than pre-intervention scores illustrating the efficacy of the approach. Participants experienced heightened engagement when immersed in English literature. Many reported facing unfamiliar words and phrases, leading to an expanded vocabulary. This deepened their understanding and improved their comprehension. English literature exposed participants to a diversity of cultural and historical contexts, enriching their reading experiences and bolstering comprehension. The immersive power of literature proved to be a valuable tool in fostering a deeper understanding of complex narratives.

7.2. Significance of the Findings

Firstly, cultural background knowledge is quite important for students to improve their reading comprehension in the teaching of college English. Thus, it is important for teachers to introduce related cultural background knowledge such as knowledge about the author, culturally loaded words and knowledge related to the

topic. In addition, the teacher's responsibility is to enable students to relate the sense of the reading material to the cultural elements it addresses. Students will be able to comprehend the text fully in this way.

Secondly, linguistic context is of great help in comprehending the text. Therefore, teachers instruct students to improve their reading comprehension by using it. Linguistic context helps students in a lot of aspects such as inferring the meanings of new words and the attitude of the author, predicting the content of the text, locating the main idea etc.

Third, situational context provides the reader with additional cues about the reading material. It is understood as a relatively easily recognizable physical dimension related to who the participants are and what the relationships between them are. According to Halliday (1976) context is the immediate environment in which the text actually operates. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teacher to create vivid situational contexts in the practice of teaching English reading.

Fourthly, the teachers emphasize the use of explicit lexical and grammatical cohesive devices and focus on the internal logic links within the text which is beneficial to help the students understand the text and strengthen their reading abilities. Moreover, the teachers also take topic sentences into account. A topic sentence is supported by a group of explanatory sentences that are linked closely by means of cohesion and coherence. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to help students understand and identify the functional use of topic sentences in a paragraph. The reason that these sentences help students understand the idea a paragraph conveys.

In a nutshell, context and text play great roles in English reading. English reading comprehension has to depend on contextual and textual knowledge which can be obtained by means of reading. Hence, applying the theory of context and text in English reading is an effective and practical teaching method to improve students' reading abilities. Moreover, reading ability can also be developed by training students' reading strategies for the cohesion and coherence of text. Thus, in the teaching of English reading, teachers should direct the students to achieve more knowledge about context and text in order to accumulate materials about cultural background, social customs, social relationships, etc. and recognize and use linguistic context, situational context, cohesion and coherence of text.

7.3. Implications for College English Reading Comprehension Teaching

The aforementioned results suggest that the implementation of the contextual teaching pattern in college ERT helped in the rapid enhancement of students' reading skills. Students in EC have mastered how to use the linguistic context, situational context and cultural context to analyze English reading as a result of training for three months. On the other hand, they are better able to understand the coherence and consistency of the text. Consequently, EFL teachers can get some implications for teaching from the experiment.

Firstly, teachers should help students not only to improve their consciousness of the cultural intention of vocabularies and phrases in the cultural context and to cultivate supported reading skills for evaluating and refining generalizations about the cultural context but also to aid them to form the skills to find and organize information from the cultural context. In addition, teachers should stimulate students' curiosity about cultural contexts and encourage them to use cultural contexts to analyse texts.

Secondly, language sense is affected and limited by the text. When readers decode a text, linguistic context is helpful for them. The teachers should direct students to infer the meaning of a new word by studying its linguistic context which can help them try to remove their habits of counting on dictionaries and form their technique of reasoning and pondering purposely. In addition, teachers should also make students aware of the information offered by the linguistic context to anticipate the contents of reading materials which is very important in language learning.

Thirdly, in situational contexts, characters, events and objective environments are more or less characterized by time. If readers do not take these factors into consideration, there is no way for them to understand and feel the

profound meaning of the work. Therefore, when teaching reading, it is the responsibility of the teacher to help students link the meaning of the reading materials to the relevant circumstances. Fourthly, while analyzing textual structure, teachers first analyze the whole organization of text, then the logical structure of paragraphs and finally microstructure. Microstructure is realized through cohesive devices. Therefore, the teachers place emphasis on lexical and grammatical cohesion, make coherent connections between sentences and paragraphs and instruct students to scan for multiple linked coherent items before reading the text. This method helps students gain broader insights for combining contents and information in reading.

Finally, teachers should assign students some supplementary reading work in order to practice such reading skills as predictive skills, getting the general picture, recognizing textual patterns and marks, extracting specific information, inferring opinion and attitude and deducing meaning from the context they have just learned in reading class as frequently as they can. Meanwhile, students should study a significant amount of text after class to enhance their comprehension of the cultural backgrounds of other countries, improve their reading abilities and advance their reading proficiency.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Students who wish to improve their English can read English literature regularly to improve their English. They can improve students' reading, writing and vocabulary. English teachers can also bring literature into the classroom to teach vocabulary and reading skills. In fact, English literature is considered authentic material for use in the classroom.

Reading text in a literary context not only helps develop high pondering technique, but also improves students to enjoy the literature. Reading literature does more than enable students to learn communication technique. It also helps students understand cultures and societies of foreign countries. Students develop empathy when they see the world from a different perspective.

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