行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

合作複述學習對英語閱讀理解及態度之研究
研究成果報告(精簡版)

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中 華 民 國 100 年 10 月 30 日

Achieving Reading Mastery through Collaborative Retelling

INTRODUCTION

Reading plays a significant role in language learning and nevertheless in people's academic, social and literary success. It helps people not only gain access to more language input but obtain various aspects of information through the English medium. Ediger (2002) affirms that reading is recognized as a valuable source of language input, particularly for students in a learning environment in which English speakers are generally not available to provide sufficient language exposure. While reading, students can reread and reconsider what has been learned in its original form, thereby increasing the possibilities of language input. It is pointed out that the introduction of reading to young learners can speed up their English understanding and speaking ability as well as expand their memory capacity in language learning (Dlugosz, 2002; Grabe & Stoller, 2001). All things considered, reading ability is essential to EFL learners' language learning, as the target language knowledge and information are mostly acquired from the written language.

Effective reading is considered as an interactive process in which the readers efficaciously bring their background knowledge into reading. A great deal of research revealed compelling evidence that there are several critical elements associated with positive outcomes in improving students' reading abilities. In order to expand reading comprehension, the following tactics are suggested for instructors to implement comprehension-based instruction in the classroom: (a) making instruction explicit (b) implementing facilitators to facilitate learning (c) using interactive groups (d) providing chances for interactive dialogues (e) ensuring that the building blocks of reading based on an interactive processing perspective (Grugeon & Gardner, 2000).

To improve reading comprehension of Taiwanese young learners in need of more opportunities of learning English, the proposed Collaborative Story Retelling (CSR) of current study subsumes the elements of effective reading instruction mentioned above to help students achieve reading comprehension proficiency. Effective readers are actively independent readers. The provision of retelling opportunities with cooperative learning can ensure sufficient attention directed to the comprehension task is therefore vital for the EFL learners' reading development of in Taiwan. With CSR, learners work as a group to retell what they read from the text, resulting in the increase of students' autonomy and opportunities in learning.

With the aim to investigate the effects of the Collaborative Story Retelling instruction on students' reading comprehension, three research questions concerning the efficacy and the impact of CSR on reading comprehension, and the influences of stories on group reading activities are addressed:

1. How does the CSR instruction impact on students' reading comprehension?

2. To what extent does the performance of the experimental group differ on reading comprehension?
3. What are the students' attitudes toward the CSR instruction?

Drawing on cooperative learning and retelling instructional strategies, the current study suggests Collaborative Story Retelling as a method for teaching reading comprehension in the English classroom. With retelling as the prompter used in the phase of during reading, it aims to address three issues that arise in reading instruction: (a) how to adequately involve students in text-related English language learning; (b) how to teach text comprehension strategies to facilitate students' comprehension; and (c) how to provide opportunities for students to interact effectively with peers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading is an interactive process that requires readers using their existing knowledge to interpret text and construct a new meaning. For EFL learners with little English background knowledge, the teaching of strategies helps them develop the English reading schema and grasp the important ideas during reading. In the reading comprehension process, if readers select a process for a specific purpose, they are using reading strategies. Namely, the mental activities that readers use purposefully to construct meaning from a text are generally referred to as reading strategies, and are sometimes called reading skills (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Irwin, 1991). Teaching reading strategy has been widely proved as an effective way to facilitate reading comprehension (Pressley et al., 1989; Reid & Lienemann, 2006). Oxford (1993) asserted that the effective strategy instruction should be integrated into regular English teaching activities over a long period of time rather than taught as a short, separated intervention. It indicated that strategy teaching takes time and effort but with great benefits in reading outcome. Likewise, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) advocated that explicit and clear strategy instruction exerted influence over the learner's reading comprehension.

Pressley et al. (1989) proposed that there were three major reading strategies mostly used in reading instruction.

- **Summarization strategy**: When summarizing, students focus on the gist and ignore the trivial details. The simplest form of summarization involves constructing one single sentence that captures the meanings of paragraphs. The use of summarization requires students to have an overall recall about the reading text, reinforcing their memories and facilitating their reading comprehension.

- **Story grammar strategy**: Narrative stories follow a general structure: a beginning that includes information about the time, the place, and the central characters, an initiating event that sets a goal or problem for the central characters, an ending that the goal is attained or the problem is solved. The use of story grammar strategy helps readers grasp the important elements of the reading text.

- **Question-answering strategy**: The question-answering strategy is a frequently used instructional method to have students answer questions based on the text and to increase their learning from that passage. Inquiries help facilitate the reading comprehension because they lead to reprocess the relevant information in the passage after reading the text.

In the present study, the CRS instruction includes the use of the above-mentioned three strategies to assist learners in participating group discussions. In the during reading phase of the present study, students in groups received worksheets asking them to answer questions related to the important elements of the story (question-answering strategy), and to retell the story following the important elements of the story (story grammar strategy and summarization strategy) in the post-reading phase. Among these strategies, the story retelling strategy formed the framework of the study, and story grammar strategy aids students in their retelling.

Teaching story grammar to children of various ages helps them recognize the elements of narrative text and use these elements to improve their comprehension of the story (Rumelhart, 1975). Carnine and Kinder (1985) utilized four story grammar questions in the teaching of reading comprehension for fifth and sixth graders. The intervention led to a significant improvement in scores on comprehension tests. Amer (1992) also investigated the effects of story grammar instruction on sixth graders. The findings revealed that the direct teaching story grammar helped students develop a mental representation of the story, assisting students in focusing on main ideas and removing unnecessary details.

The benefits of story retelling and how story retelling is related to reading comprehension are also greatly acknowledged in the literature. Shaw (2005) pointed out that in retelling, learners become active readers they are as they monitor themselves selecting what is important in their reading text. Furthermore, instead of answering teacher-led questions, while retelling, students need to solve their own questions in the process by integrating and personalizing the text read. In the retelling process, students are asked to act as controllers of their retelling, monitoring their own learning and their comprehension process.

Cooperative learning (henceforth CL) has been extensively researched and evaluated regarding its effect in classroom settings. CL is termed as an interactive model that students work together in small heterogeneous groups on a clearly defined task, involving the participation of individuals within the group. CL activities are designed to maximize students' interaction and facilitate students' contributions to each other's learning. It has been shown that cooperative learning can improve students' academic achievement, self-confidence, learning attitude, and relationship among peers (Cohen, 1986; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995). With the aim to promote reading comprehension for young learners in Taiwan, the implementation of Collaborative Story Retelling provides an alternative in carrying out student-centered teaching to benefit students to achieve shared goals.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The participants in the study included elementary 6th graders from classes of one public elementary school in central Taiwan. They were ideal subjects for this study for the following two reasons. First, according to the school policy, they were regarded as academically equal as they were randomly distributed into English classes. Second, students from English classes shared general English learning background, identical formal English schooling with few English reading experiences. To affirm the homogeneity of the two classes in English competence, the English proficiency test modified from a commercial English proficiency test, *STYLE2 (Saxoncourt Tests for Young Learners of English, level 2)* was administered to all two classes before the study began. Results of independent-sampled t-test in Table 1 confirmed that the two classes were homogeneous in terms of their overall English proficiency.

Table 1. Independent-sample T-test for the Pre-English Proficiency Test

Group	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Experimental Group	27.83	8.34		
(N=32)			.071	.943
Control Group	27.50	7.45		
(N=30)				

Note. Maximum score=38,   * $p<.05$

Instruments

The instruments administered to the participants of the current study consisted of the questionnaires of participants' English learning background, the English proficiency test, the English reading comprehension pretest and English reading comprehension immediate posttests, and questionnaires of students' attitudes toward CSR instruction.

Materials and Instructional Procedures

The experiment, which lasted for sixteen weeks, was conducted on a weekly basis. Stories chosen for the study were *Cornelius*, *Moving Day*, *Touch the Moon, Mr. Lion and His Friends,* and *the Shy Dragon and the White Knight.* They were stories with clear story lines and lucid sequencing of events with vivid pictures. These stories were chosen on the basis of students' age and language levels confirmed by a six grade English teacher in service. In addition, the five stories were with clear story grammar elements, including time, place, main characters, problem, and resolution by the guidelines according to Wright (1995).

The two groups received the same instructional procedure during the experiment, including pre-story activity, during-story activity, and post-story activity. However, the lesson

designs of the three phases for the two groups differed in the during phase of reading instruction as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2.   Procedures of Reading Instructions in the Two Groups

Group	Pre-reading	During-reading	After-reading
Experimental Group	**Prior knowledge activation**	**Storytelling and retelling**	**Reflection activity & vocab review**
Control Group	**Prior knowledge activation**	**Storytelling**	**Reflection activity & vocab review**

In the experiment, students, divided into six smaller heterogeneous groups, sat in groups throughout the instruction phase. They learned stories under the proposed CSR instruction, discussing in groups and employing a package of reading skills. Every student in the small group was assigned a specific role, such as a leader, an observer, a discipline leader or a recorder. The purpose of role assignment was to involve all students in discussion, having them responsible for their own learning. Students' roles would rotate in the instruction of different stories. The teacher's role was both a monitor and a facilitator, walking around the classroom and solving their problems. In the pre-reading process, students were required to figure out the story elements such as major characters, time, location and the main event. After background knowledge activation, vocabulary along with the picture aids was taught in context before the story instruction. In the during-reading process, the story was told by the teacher with the aids of posters or power point files. Questions were raised to elicit answers to have students make predictions of what would happen next. After the teacher's storytelling, students in groups were asked to finish two retelling worksheets to arrange story pictures in a logical sequence. In the retelling worksheet, students needed to answer questions in relation to the story elements, such as "who", "when", "where", "what", and "how" questions. In the post-reading process, students were then asked to reflect on their own feelings toward the story by writing comments or drawing on the worksheet.

Different from the experimental group, students in the control group were not divided into smaller groups and they sat in rows. The story instruction was teacher-centered in that the teacher led the whole discussion and students followed the instruction. Except for the during-reading activity, the teaching procedures for the control group were the same as the one of experimental group. That is, students of the control group were not asked to retell the whole story in the process.

Data Analysis

The collected data in this study were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The participants' scores of the placement tests, English reading comprehension pretest and posttest, immediate posttests, and the story reading comprehension posttest were analyzed quantitatively by using the *Statistical Package for the Social Science,* (SPSS). The students' responses and their attitudes toward CSR learning were evaluated qualitatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of English Reading Comprehension Pretest

In order to ascertain the homogeneity of the two groups, the vocabulary pretests were first administered before the intervention. With the results revealing no significant difference among their performances (i.e. 36.0 and 35.8), shown in Table 3, the two classes were randomly assigned as the experimental and the control groups.

Table 3.   Independent Samples T-test for English Reading Comprehension Pretest

Group	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Experimental Group (N=32)	37.0	7.54		
Control Group (N=30)	36.8	7.32	.134	.894

Note. Maximum score=50,   * $p<.05$.

Results of the Story Reading Comprehension Immediate Posttests

To probe the effectiveness of the CSR instruction on reading comprehension, five immediate story comprehension posttests were administered right after the story instruction. The tests were designed so as to find out if reading comprehension of each story differed between the two groups. As shown in Table 4, the performance of the experimental group was significantly better than the control group on the five immediate story comprehension tests.

Table 4.   T-test of the Immediate Story Reading Comprehension Posttests

Test	Group/	*Mean*	*SD*	*Sig.*	*t*

	Group	Mean	SD	Sig.	t-value
1	Experiment /32	26.36	2.65	0.00	3.359*
	Control /30	18.32	4.90		
2	Experimental/32	17.80	3.12	0.02	2.331*
	Control /30	14.31	4.69		
3	Experimental/32	16.51	3.12	0.00	5.600*
	Control /30	11.23	5.56		
4	Experimental/32	17.68	3.26	0.03	1.764*
	Control /30	14.05	6.35		
5	Experimental/32	18	3.26	0.01	2.457*
	Control /30	14.32	4.89		

Note. Maximum score=20, $* p<.05$.

The results revealed that the retelling strategy used in the CSR instruction exerted significant influence over students' reading comprehension, resulting in the strong performance of the experimental group.

Results of the Story Reading Comprehension Posttest

In addition to the five immediate story comprehension tests administrated right after the instruction for each story, a story reading comprehension posttest from a new story was given to students of the experimental and control groups. The purpose was to further ascertain if students in the experimental group had significantly better performance in recognizing the story elements and main ideas of the new story.

Table 5.   T-test for the Story Reading Comprehension Posttest

Group	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Experimental Group (N=32) **Control Group (N=30)**	13.75	2.58	2.827*	0.015

Note. Maximum score=20,$* p<.05$.

All in all, tables 4 and 5 showed that the experimental group had significantly superior performance of reading comprehension in the taught stories and also the new story.

Results of Questionnaires

With the aim to explore the opinions of students of the experimental group toward CSR learning, the questionnaire was distributed to students after the experiment. Three aspects of the students' opinions were probed: the students' likes or dislikes of the CRS learning strategy plus their reasons, the advantages of CSR learning strategy, and in what way had they progressed.

Table 6.   Students' opinions of CRS Learning Strategy and the Reasons

Item	Options	No.	%
1. Which way do you prefer to learn English?	(1) CSR learning	28	87.5
	(2) Teacher-directed teaching	4	12.5
2. Why do you prefer CSR learning?	(1) I like to cooperate with my classmates.	18	64.28
	(2) The content of story becomes easier.	11	39.28
	(3) Learning English becomes interesting.	19	67.85
	(4) I feel less pressure.	18	64.28
	(5) I have more opportunities to speak.	9	32.14
	(6) Others_____.	0	0
3. Why do you not prefer CSR learning?	(1) I am not used to this method.	1	25
	(2) The content of story becomes harder.	3	75
	(3) The classroom becomes noisier.	0	0
	(4) My classmates and I become easily distracted.	3	75
	(5) It is a waste of time to discuss with classmates.	1	25
	(6) Others_____.	0	

0

4.	What advantages do you find in CRS learning?	(1) The relationship between my classmates and I gets better while cooperating.	25	89.28
		(2) The content of story becomes easier.	14	50
		(3) Learning English becomes interesting.	21	75
		(4) I feel less pressure.	12	42.85
		(5) I have more opportunities to speak.	1	3.57
		(6) Others_____.	0	0
5.	What do you learn in English after CSR learning?	(1) I learn more new words.	26	92.85
		(2) My oral ability progresses.	15	53.57
		(3) My listening ability improves.	17	60.71
		(4) My reading ability improves.	13	46.42
		(5) My writing ability improves.	8	28.57
		(6) Others_____.	0	0

The results of Table 6 revealed that the majority of students in the experimental group had a preference for CSR over the traditional teacher-directed teaching method. 28 out of 32

students preferred CSR learning and each student chose more than one answer to state their reasons. For those students who disliked CSR learning expressed that the content of the story became harder as they felt more distracted (75%). Given that learning a new story through group discussion with retelling was new for most students of the class, this might contribute to why the content of story became harder for them. However, most of the students agreed that the relationship among their classmates were improving during CSR learning (89.28%), and some even thought that learning English became more interesting for them (75%). Almost every student held the opinion that they learned more words after CSR learning (92.85%). More than half of the students thought that their listening ability had progressed (60.71%). To conclude, most of the students responded to CSR learning positively. They appreciated the classroom atmosphere and their English leaning was motivated by this new method. At the same time, their vocabulary was enlarged and listening ability was improved, both of which fostered their reading ability conducive to better English comprehension.

CONCLUSION

The current study aims to investigate the effectiveness of CSR instruction on reading comprehension. Based on the findings, some conclusions can be drawn to shed light on pedagogical implications for reading instruction in the English classroom.

First, owing to the limited time allotted to English curriculum of the primary schools in Taiwan, cooperative learning creates more opportunities for learners. Second, in the heterogeneous classroom of elementary schools in Taiwan, it is difficult for teachers to provide fair learning opportunities to each student. The smaller heterogeneous CSR learning groups in the classroom serves to balance the learning opportunities. Third, strategies can be taught to children and have positive effects on learning outcome. Namely, strategy teaching can instructive for elementary school learners as long as it is taught in the appropriate fashion.

The findings of the current study reveal that the CSR instruction is effective in expanding students' reading comprehension. As employing CSR allows students to call on each other's guidance to solve problems, they develop their interpersonal skills by exchanging ideas with their group members. In addition, the results also show that the heightened emotional state from collaboration facilitates the short term information intake to the increase of meaning retention. That is to say, collaborative task evokes learning to occur, releasing learners responsible for their own learning and ultimately cooperative for achieving greater reading success.

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國科會補助計畫衍生研發成果推廣資料表

國科會補助計畫	計畫名稱: 合作複述學習對英語閱讀理解及態度之研究
	計畫主持人: 莊琍玲
	計畫編號: 99-2410-H-018-031-　　　　學門領域: 英語教學應用

無研發成果推廣資料

99 年度專題研究計畫研究成果彙整表

計畫主持人：莊琍玲　　計畫編號：99-2410-H-018-031-

計畫名稱：合作複述學習對英語閱讀理解及態度之研究

成果項目			量化			單位	備註（質化說明：如數個計畫共同成果、成果列為該期刊之封面故事...等）
			實際已達成數（被接受或已發表）	預期總達成數(含實際已達成數)	本計畫實際貢獻百分比		
國內	論文著作	期刊論文	0	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	1	1	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%		
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力（本國籍）	碩士生	1	1	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		
國外	論文著作	期刊論文	0	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	1	1	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%	章/本	
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力（外國籍）	碩士生	0	0	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		

	其他成果 (無法以量化表達之成果如辦理學術活動、獲得獎項、重要國際合作、研究成果國際影響力及其他協助產業技術發展之具體效益事項等，請以文字敘述填列。)	英語故事屋活動 財 2010 「趣味兒童英語故事屋」，國立彰化師範大學進德校區英語系館英語教學觀摩教室： 軒 第一梯次：99 年 11 月 27 日（星期六）上午 10 點至 12 點 軒 第二梯次：99 年 11 月 27 日（星期六）下午 13 點至 15 點 軒 第三梯次：99 年 12 月 11 日（星期六）上午 10 點至 12 點 軒 第四梯次：99 年 12 月 11 日（星期六）下午 13 點至 15 點

	成果項目	量化	名稱或內容性質簡述
科教處計畫加填項目	測驗工具(含質性與量性)	0	
	課程/模組	0	
	電腦及網路系統或工具	0	
	教材	0	
	舉辦之活動/競賽	0	
	研討會/工作坊	0	
	電子報、網站	0	
	計畫成果推廣之參與（閱聽）人數	0	

國科會補助專題研究計畫成果報告自評表

請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況、研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）、是否適合在學術期刊發表或申請專利、主要發現或其他有關價值等，作一綜合評估。

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1. 請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況作一綜合評估
   ■達成目標
   □未達成目標（請說明，以 100 字為限）
   　　　□實驗失敗
   　　　□因故實驗中斷
   　　　□其他原因
   　說明：

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2. 研究成果在學術期刊發表或申請專利等情形：
   論文：■已發表 □未發表之文稿 □撰寫中 □無
   專利：□已獲得 □申請中 ■無
   技轉：□已技轉 □洽談中 ■無
   其他：（以 100 字為限）

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3. 請依學術成就、技術創新、社會影響等方面，評估研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）（以 500 字為限）

   The current study aims to investigate the effectiveness of CSR instruction on reading comprehension. Based on the findings, some conclusions can be drawn to shed light on pedagogical implications for reading instruction in the English classroom.

   First, owing to the limited time allotted to English curriculum of the primary schools in Taiwan, cooperative learning creates more opportunities for learners. Second, in the heterogeneous classroom of elementary schools in Taiwan, it is difficult for teachers to provide fair learning opportunities to each student. The smaller heterogeneous CSR learning groups in the classroom serves to balance the learning opportunities. Third, strategies can be taught to children and have positive effects on learning outcome. Namely, strategy teaching can instructive for elementary school learners as long as it is taught in the appropriate fashion. The findings of the current study reveal that the CSR instruction is effective in expanding students' reading comprehension. As employing CSR allows students to call on each other's guidance to solve problems, they develop their interpersonal skills by exchanging ideas with their group members. In addition, the results also show that the heightened emotional state from collaboration facilitates the short term information intake to the increase of meaning retention.

That is to say, collaborative task evokes learning to occur, releasing learners responsible for their own learning and ultimately cooperative for achieving greater reading success.