Motivating Senior High School Students on English Reading through Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy

BY

Rizal Arisman

English Language Education Study Program, Universitas Dayanu Ikhsanuddin, Indonesia

Abstract

This study explores the difference in students' motivation in learning English reading through the Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) and the regular method. There are 60 students in grade eleven at a senior high school in Baubau, Indonesia, involved as the sample of this research selected using cluster sampling, in which 30 students are determined as the control class and 30 students are arranged as the experimental class. The PALS is applied in the experimental class, and the regular method is used in the control class. The Motivation Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) is utilized as the research instrument in pretreatment and posttreatment. The result indicates that the reading motivation in the control class increased by 0.01 after the treatment, with the motivation level still low. Meanwhile, the reading motivation in the experimental class increased from moderate level in pretreatment to high level after the treatment by increasing by 1.01 points. The hypothesis testing reveals a significant difference in English reading motivation between students taught using PALS and the regular method. More specifically, the student's English reading motivation increases higher in the PALS instruction than in the conventional method.

KEYWORDS: reading, motivation, peer-assisted learning strategy

1. Introduction

Students at all educational levels—from junior high to university and technical institutes—place a premium on reading. According to what is mentioned in the regulation of the National Education Minister of Indonesia number 23/2006, the purpose of reading in the curriculum is to provide students with the ability to comprehend the meaning of written language. This includes the meaning of written language used in interpersonal and transactional contexts. The students are guided through the comprehension of a variety of texts. Additionally, it is anticipated of them that they will acquire knowledge and information from the book.

Grabe & Stoller (2002) argue that reading is the ability to derive meaning from the printed page and accurately comprehend the information. The participants in this exercise are typically expected to read the materials and comprehend what they have read. According to Guthrie et al. (2007), one of the goals of reading is to educate children on how to interpret various text genres. Students must read various materials to obtain knowledge and literary expertise. For their English classes, students are required to read materials written in English. Some students find reading an English book, article, or passage challenging and time-consuming. It has to do with a few different variables, and one of those aspects is their lack of motivation. Lack of enthusiasm to read can lead to poor reading skills or failure.

For youngsters to study with serious intent, they must have some interest or passion in the subject matter being studied. When it comes to reading, a person's motivation level will significantly impact how they feel about the activity they are now partaking in, which is reading. Reading might be considered a hobby for some people, especially if they do it as part of their routine. Reading motivation is particularly important for students to have, as these individuals are the ones who are expected to aid the learning process. Students will have a better chance of becoming independent readers if they are self-motivated in their reading, which will contribute to their ability to achieve their full academic potential.

The instructor needs a strategy that motivates students to learn, makes them pleased to study, and does not dull the lessons to boost reading motivation in the classroom. Therefore, to achieve objective learning, the instructor must be astute and select the most appropriate instructional strategy. To keep the students interested and motivated throughout the learning process, the application of the approach must also be entertaining.

Reading motivation has become such a very tough thing for the majority of students. The fact that they are so uninterested in reading contributes to their lack of drive for the activity. The kids' lack of vocabulary also contributes to their inability to comprehend the text they are reading. In addition, the approach that the teacher takes is monotonous, which results in the students having less excitement when it comes to adopting the concepts being taught. That is automatically why students have such a poor level of motivation in reading. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the researcher to identify at least one strategy that can boost the students' desire to read.

Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) are a strategy that may be utilized to boost the students' reading motivation and are one of the methods that can be applied. It is an instructional or learning support method that uses students to provide academic support to peers with difficulty, sometimes known as peer tutoring. Since PALS centers on helping students of varying proficiency levels close the achievement gap, it is widely seen as an effective strategy for making up for classroom shortfalls. Additionally, both low and high-achiever students can communicate with one another during the class without being biased into various levels, instead working together to finish the assignments as they are presented (Lisan, 2022). In addition, Hasnani & Ismail (2020) prove in their research that several aspects, including reading skills in English, desire for study, and vocabulary, have significantly improved after applying PALS. Therefore, this research applies PALS to improve reading motivation, focusing on some indicators: self-efficacy, challenge, work avoidance, curiosity, involvement, importance, recognition, grades, competition, social, and compliance.

1.1. Research Question

The problem this research answers is: Is the instruction using PALS significantly different in English reading motivation than the conventional teaching method?

From the problem above, the hypotheses formulated are:

H0: There is no significant difference in reading motivation between students taught using PALS and those taught using the regular method.

H1: There is a significant difference in reading motivation between students taught using PALS and those taught using the regular method.

1.2. Objective of the Study

The objectives to follow up problem mentioned above are:

1) To investigate the students' reading motivation under PALS and the conventional method.

2) To determine the significant difference in students' reading motivation taught under PALS and conventional method.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Reading Motivation

Several circumstances influence the students' decision to read, and reading motivation can be considered the sum of these influences. Guthrie et al. (2006) state that those pupils participate in the reading exercise designed to stimulate them to read. Marinak & Gambrell (2008), supported by Guthrie et al. (2006), argue that the most significant contribution to reading is motivation. Individuals are powerfully influenced to participate in a certain activity by a powerful force known as motivation. Because of this, children with a strong passion for reading can spend a significant amount of their time participating in reading activities. Meanwhile, pupils not interested in reading will do all they can to avoid activities that require reading.

Further, Guthrie et al. (2006) and Watkins & Coffey (2004) note that reading motivation is to understand the reasons behind an individual's choice to participate in a reading activity or not participate. It indicates that the idea of reading motivation emphasized mental preparation and willingness, in addition to referring to the ideas and perceptions of the individual, to encourage them to participate in the reading activity.

When attempting to conceptualize reading motivation, the constructs identified and developed by researchers working in the subject of motivation are considered. Many proponents of the theory of motivation think that individuals' competence and efficacy beliefs and their intrinsic and extrinsic drive contribute to a favorable disposition toward reading.

In addition above, Wigfield & Guthrie (1997) define 11 different dimensions of reading motivation to construct a Motivation Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) as follows:

1) **Self-efficacy**
   The reader's beliefs about their abilities and consistency in reading habits are referred to as efficacy. Students have the misconception that they are more capable and can be successful in reading than any other materials according to this point of view (Alfiriyanti, 2022; Watkins & Coffey, 2004)

2) **Challenge**
   It is a willingness to take on difficult reading material (Watkins & Coffey, 2004) and satisfaction from mastering or assimilating complex ideas in a text (Komiyama, 2013).

3) **Work avoidance**
   It is a desire to avoid reading activities (Watkins & Coffey, 2004). It indicates that the pupils try not to complete the assignments assigned in class. Regarding reading motivation, this factor motivates reading the most obviously and consistently. For this reason, many people who enjoy reading choose not to make it a habit of doing so (Alfiriyanti, 2022).

Page | 1041

4) Curiosity

It is related to research on reading interest and refers to the desire to read about issues of interest (Watkins & Coffey, 2004). This desire is to gain knowledge about a certain concept. It signifies that the urge to know more about a book constitutes curiosity. Curiosity is frequently the result of an individual's intrinsic urge to seek out information or to read for the sheer enjoyment of it (Alfiriyanti, 2022).

5) Involvement

It is a pleasure that is gained and felt as a result of reading specific forms of literary or informational content, such as a well-written book, an article about finding inspiration, or a website that is devoted to a fascinating subject (Watkins & Coffey, 2004; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Komiyama, 2013).

6) Importance

It is a value placed on reading (Watkins & Coffey, 2004).

7) Recognition

It is connected to the joy from physical recognition, such as approbation from a teacher or peers for one's reading accomplishments. The relationship with other people, whether a teacher or reader pals, is crucial to the recognition process. This feature represents how other people determine whether or not someone is a good reader (Alfiriyanti, 2022; Watkins & Coffey, 2004).

8) Grades

The hope of attaining high marks and gaining the esteem of one's instructor is at the heart of this motivation (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Komiyama, 2013)

9) Competition

The anxiety of exceeding other people in reading is known as reading competition. Reading competition inspires individuals to improve their reading abilities to outperform their contemporaries. An illustration of this aspect would be to compare it to having the highest reading level (Alfiriyanti, 2022).

10) Social

This trait may be considered an innate urge to form emotional connections with others through reading. It could be an urge to figure out what the book means and then tell others about it. This feature can help the reader anticipate the reactions of those around them to the information they have gained from the text (Alfiriyanti, 2022; Baker & Wigfield, 1999).

11) Compliance

It refers to the reading to meet others' expectations (Watkins & Coffey, 2004).

2.2. *Peer-Assisted Learning Strategy*

Miranda (2009) states that PALS use whatever a teacher has. Students can comprehend the linguistic styles of their peers. One student's unique way of processing knowledge can be articulated to facilitate comprehension for everyone. Peer teaching practices improve all students' learning environments and academic outcomes when correctly applied.

The term "peer-assisted learning and teaching," or PALS, refers to a type of collaborative or community learning that has existed for a long time. PALS is "the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active help and support among status equals or matched companions" (Topping, 2005). The phrase has been applied to a variety of strategies in which students act as instructors for one another (Kirkham & Ringelstein, 2008)

According to Wiyasa (2015), each pair of pupils in PALS participates in three core activities. Here are the measures a teacher should take while implementing PALS in the classroom:

1) For 5 minutes, each partner reads aloud from a text chosen to be at the lower reader's instructional level. The more proficient reader always goes first and acts as an example for the less proficient reader. The bottom reader reads the same paragraph for another 5 minutes after the first reader finishes. This step is called tutor and tutee role-play.

2) A reading session lasts 10 minutes, after which the lower reader "retells" the paragraph to the higher reader. Questions like "What happened first?" and "What happened next?" are posed by the upper reader to the lower reader. Two minutes have passed since we began this sequential retelling.

3) The next step is a little "paragraph shrinking," done in pairs. The reader does not have to reread the paragraph in the role-play between the tutor and the tutee. Each reader is responsible for reading one paragraph aloud and summarizing what was read. Readers take turns reading aloud and summarizing the following paragraph in the text. Some examples of questions and answers that could be used for this purpose are "Who or what was the paragraph about?" and "Tell the most important thing about who or what." When playing the role of tutor, the more proficient reader always goes first to set an example for the less proficient reader.

4) The reading process then proceeds with a larger text unit and a brand-new prediction relay activity. This process consists of four stages: Predict what will happen next with a high degree of confidence, read half a page with ease, double-check your forecast easily, and sum up the most crucial information with ease. Again, the better reader goes first, and the activity lasts for five minutes per reader.

3. Methodology

3.1. *Research design*

A nonequivalent control group design from the quasi-experimental research design was carried out in this research. It meant that two groups of students got involved in this research. There was a group of experimental which was taught using PALS, and a group of control which was taught under the regular method as the teacher usually applied.

3.2. The participants

This study was conducted at the State Senior High School of 4 Baubau. Two classes of eleventh-grade students were selected as the sample using cluster sampling. Class XI MIA 3 was determined as the experimental class that got instruction under PALS, and class XI MIA 6 was the control class taught through the conventional method. Each class consisted of 30 students. Thus, the total sample was 60 students.

3.3. Research instrument

To determine the students' motivation, the instrument used was a Motivation Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) developed by Wigfield & Guthrie (1997). The 30 items of the MRQ encompassed 11 aspects observed on the students to define their reading motivation before and after the instruction was applied. Those were 3 items of self-efficacy (1,2,3), 3 items of challenge (4,5,6), 2 items of work avoidance (7,8), 3 items of curiosity (9,10,11), 2 items of involvement (12,13), 2 items of importance (14,15), 3 items of recognition (16,17,18), 3 items of grades (19,20,21), 3 items of competition (22,23,24), 3 items of social (25,26,27), and 3 items of compliance (28,29,30).

To interpret the mean score obtained from the MRQ and simultaneously reveal the students' reading motivation level, the Likert scale adapted from Kitjaroonchai & Kitjaroonchai (2012) below was utilized.

Table 1: Mean range and motivation level

Scale	Option	Level	Range
5	Strongly Agree	Very High	4.50 – 5.00
4	Agree	High	3.50 – 4.49
3	Moderate	Average	2.50 – 3.39
2	Disagree	Low	1.50 – 2.49
1	Strongly Disagree	Very Low	1.0 – 1.49

3.4. Data analysis

A quantitative analysis employed SPSS version 25 software to analyze the data. The mean scores were the first data to analyze to determine the reading motivation level. Furthermore, a prerequisite analysis involving a homogeneity and a normality test was utilized to determine whether the data were homogeneous and normally distributed. The last step was applying the Mann-Whitney U test to see whether reading motivation was significantly different between the experimental and control groups.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Pretreatment result

The researcher designated 30 students in the experimental class to be taught utilizing PALS and 30 students in the control class to be instructed through the regular method. Before the instruction was implemented, the questionnaire was distributed to the students to elaborate on their reading motivation. The result of the descriptive testing is presented in the table below:

Table 2: Result of descriptive testing in pretreatment

Group	Mean	SD
Experimental	2.76	0.49
Control	2.43	0.67

The data in Table 2 indicated that the mean score of reading motivation in the experimental class was higher than in the control class, with a 0.33 gap point. Furthermore, the result revealed that the students in the experimental class had the average motivation in English reading while in the control class, the English reading motivation was low.

Referring to the result, the homogeneity testing was operated to determine the homogeneity of the data, which led to the decision that both groups would be used as the research sample. Thus, the result of the homogeneity test using Levene statistics, the significance score obtained was 0.17. Since the score was greater than α (0.05), it was decided that the data of MRQ in the pretreatment was homogeneous. Therefore, the groups could be determined as the research sample.

4.2. Posttreatment result

The posttreatment was administered after the instruction using PALS, and regular methods were implemented. The data obtained were displayed in the following table:

Table 3: Result of descriptive testing in posttreatment

Group	Mean	SD
Experimental	3.77	0.58
Control	2.44	0.51

As displayed in Table 3, the mean score in the experimental class was far higher than in the control class, with a 1.33 gap point. Meanwhile, the mean score in the experimental class explained that the students got a high level of English reading motivation. In the control class, the students had low English reading motivation.

4.3. Normality testing

As the result of the posttest had been obtained from the questionnaire, the normality testing using the Saphiro-Wilk test was carried out to determine whether the data were normal and the kind of hypothesis testing to utilize. The significance score of the students who were taught using PALS was 0.202. The data were normally distributed since the score was greater than α (0.05). For the score of students who were taught using the regular method, the significance score was 0.003. The data were not normally distributed since it was fewer than α (0.05).

4.4. Hypothesis testing

Caused by one of the data was not normally distributed, the hypothesis testing was carried out using the Mann-Whitney U test. According to the outcome of the test, the significance score

obtained was 0.000. Ha was accepted and Ho was rejected since it was fewer than α (0.05).

The outcome of MRQ above indicated that the students' motivation in English reading in the experimental class increased after being taught using PALS. It could be seen that before the treatment was applied, the mean score was 2.76, which was categorized as an average reading motivation level. After the treatment was applied, the mean score increased to 3.77, categorized as high motivation level. Furthermore, there was an increase of 1.01 points from pretreatment to post-treatment.

In the control group, the mean score obtained in the pretreatment was 2.43, categorized as a low reading motivation level. As the treatment was implemented, the mean score was 2.44, also categorized as low motivation level. It was also an increase of 0.01 points from pretreatment to posttreatment.

In PALS, the students were divided into high- and low-achiever pairs. They work together to solve the reading problem provided by the teacher. Topping (1998) confirms that when students collaborate and learn in pairs, their motivation and attention are higher than their capacity to contribute questions and receive feedback. Their learning accomplishments are more visible to them. Furthermore, Harmer (2001) adds that when students work together, they can complete assignments without feeling the eyes of the entire class on them. They can also share their thoughts openly and safely with a partner. Because children of the same age are more capable of learning from one another than adults or strangers, Ginsburg-Block et al. (2008) argue that peer-assisted learning activities boost cognitive development and improve educational values in social interaction, leading to optimal learning.

5. Conclusion

The summary of this research implies that the instruction using PALS is better at enhancing English reading motivation than the regular teaching method. It is revealed from the difference in the mean score increase from the pretreatment to the posttreatment for the experimental and control classes. More details, the posttreatment gap in the PALS class is higher by 1.00 points than that in the regular instruction class.

In addition, the result of the hypothesis testing indicates that the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. It concludes that there is a significant difference in reading motivation between students taught using PALS and those under regular instruction. Thus, the significant difference indicates that the PALS improves students' reading motivation higher than the regular teaching method.

References

1. Alfiriyanti, N. A. (2022). *The Correlation between Students' Motivation and Reading Comprehension Achievement of Twelfth Grade Students of SMA Ma'arif NU 01 Kemranjen.* https://repository.uinsaizu.ac.id/13981/
2. Baker, L., & Wigfield, A. (1999). Dimensions of children's motivation for reading and their relations to reading activity and reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *34*(4), 452–477. https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.34.4.4
3. Ginsburg-Block, M., Rohrbeck, C., Lavigne, N., & Fantuzzo, J. W. (2008). *Peer-assisted learning: An academic strategy for enhancing motivation among diverse students.* https://doi.org/https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195326819.003.0011
4. Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2002). *Teaching and Researching Reading*. New York, Longman Person Education.
5. Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., Humenick, N. M., Perencevich, K. C., Taboada, A., & Barbosa, P. (2006). Influences of stimulating tasks on reading motivation and comprehension. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *99*(4), 232–246.
6. Harmer, J. (2001). The Practice of English Language Teaching. In *London: Pearson Education Limited*. Longman Publishing Group.
7. Hasnani, H., & Ismail, A. (2020). Enhancing students' reading ability through peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS). *Lentera Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan*, *23*(2), 260. https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2020v23n2i6.
8. Kirkham, R., & Ringelstein, D. (2008). Student peer assisted mentoring (SPAM): A conceptual framework. *E-Journal of Business Education & Scholarship of Teaching*, *2*(2), 39–49.
9. Kitjaroonchai, T., & Kitjaroonchai, N. (2012). Motivation toward English language learning of Thai students majoring in English at Asia-Pacific International University. *Journal of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies*, *7*(1), 21–40.
10. Komiyama, R. (2013). Factors underlying second language reading motivation of adult EAP students. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *25*(2), 149–169.
11. Lisan, K. H. (2022). The role of peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS) in enhancing etudents' eeading skills for second language acquisition. *Edu-Ling: Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, *5*(2), 132–137. https://www.journals.unihaz.ac.id/index.php/edu-ling/article/view/2681
12. Marinak, B. A., & Gambrell, L. B. (2008). Intrinsic motivation and rewards: What sustains young children's engagement with text? *Literacy Research and Instruction*, *47*(1), 9–26.
13. Miranda, K. (2009). *Effective Peer Teaching Technique*. http://www.ehow.edu/Home Education Teaching/Methods & Strategies/Methods Effective.htm
14. Topping, K. J. (1998). *Peer and Parent-Assisted Learning in Math, Science, and ICT*. http://www.scre.ac.uk/ spotlight/spotlight83.html
15. Topping, K. J. (2005). Trends in peer learning. *Educational Psychology*, *25*(6), 631–645.
16. Watkins, M. W., & Coffey, D. Y. (2004). Reading

motivation: multidimensional and indeterminate. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *96*(1), 110–118. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.96.1.110

17. Wigfield, A., & Guthrie, J. T. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth or their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *89*(3), 420.

18. Wiyasa, P. A. (2015). *Improving Students' English Reading Skills by Using Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies of Grade VII Students of SMP 1 Jogonalan Klaten in the Academic Year of 2013/2014*. Thesis. Yogyakarta: UNY. Pdf.