



# Increasing Students' Reading Skills

## Using Reading Box in Junior High School

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### Abstract

Reading skills are important for personal and academic success, and they provide numerous benefits, including increased knowledge, improved communication skills, enhanced imagination and creativity, reduced stress and depression, academic success, critical thinking skills, and a lifelong love of learning. This study aims to determine whether or not the reading box media effectively improve the student's reading skills at SMPIT Al-Hafizh Palopo. This study applied the pre-experimental method. The population in this study consists of twelve students, and the sample was chosen using the total sampling technique, with the total number being 12 students. The writer collected the data through pre-test and post-test. SPSS 20 edition was used to perform statistical analysis on the data. The writer revealed that the post-test average score was higher than the pre-test average score (78.16 > 32.16). Besides, the t-count value was higher than the t-table value. The result of the student's scores on the post-test became more elevated than the pre-test representing the treatment's effectiveness in helping the learners improve their reading skills. Therefore, it could be concluded that using the reading box significantly improves the student's reading skills, especially in narrative text.

**Keywords:** *reading skills, narrative text, reading box.*

### Introduction

Reading is an important skill that provides numerous benefits for both children and adults. It can improve cognitive skills, expand knowledge, boost imagination, enhance communication skills, reduce stress, promote empathy, encourage lifelong learning, improve academic performance, develop language skills, and strengthen brain activity. Anderson defined reading as making meaning from written texts.

Therefore, it needs the harmony of many related sources of information (Anderson et al., 1985). Reading is a process carried out and used by readers to get the message to be conveyed by the author through the medium of words or written language. Therefore, reading skills are very important based on the sequence as one aspect of language skills. It is because, in the reading process, the reader can gain an understanding of the content conveyed in the reading material (Tarigan, 1979).

Many factors cause students to have difficulty reading, including not understanding the material at the beginning of learning; lack of support and direction from parents at home; the maturity factor of the students themselves inadequate; inadequate reading sources; and inappropriate use of media (Martini, 2019).

Learning media are one component of learning that has an important role in education because they can improve cognitive skills, expand knowledge, boost imagination, enhance communication skills, reduce stress, promote empathy, encourage lifelong learning, improve academic performance, develop language skills, and improve reading comprehension. Media use should be a part that must receive attention in every learning activity. Therefore, teachers need to learn how to effectively determine learning media to achieve learning objectives in the teaching and learning process. Selecting the right learning media to optimize the teaching and learning process to achieve learning objectives is necessary. The selection of this learning media must pay attention to the condition of students, and local environmental and social needs so that the media used can be effective, targeted, and follow students' abilities.

Heinrich said that the media is a means of communication channels. The media acts as an intermediary, namely the intermediary of the message source with the message's recipient (a receiver). Therefore, the media can be considered learning media if its statements aim to achieve learning objectives. The press always consists of two important elements, namely elements of equipment or hardware (hardware) and aspects of the message it carries (message/software). The media should be seen, heard, or read so that it can stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, concerns, and interests (Sadiman et al., 2009). The selection of the right learning media can not only stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, concerns, and interests but can also improve student learning processes and outcomes on an ongoing basis.

One learning media that can be used in text-based English learning is the reading box media. Reading box developed by Dr. Jörg Knobloch (Learnfoerderung, 2019), Val Harwood, and Ruth Parker (2010); the development of reading boxes is being understood and used in a growing number of schools, in all types of schools, at home and abroad, as a method to promote reading and teaching of action and production-oriented literature. Children are enthusiastic because reading is given real action. That's how motivation is created. A reading box is a learning media consisting of a box containing a set of text, a list of questions, and an answer key. The teacher usually holds answers. The positive values of the media reading box include attracting students' attention to foster learning motivation, teaching methods will be more varied, and students will do more learning activities in groups.

Based on the pre-observation at SMPIT Al-Hafizh Palopo, the writer identified several issues. First, it was observed that students demonstrated a limited application of reading activities. According to feedback from the English teacher, students often heavily relied on dictation exercises provided by the teacher, resulting in a reduced inclination towards engaging in independent reading activities. Second, it was noted that the complexity of the written language used in the reading materials exceeded the students' proficiency level. Despite the teacher's guidance, students encountered challenges in reading the texts fluently, which consequently diminished their interest in comprehending the content. Third, the inadequacy of the textbook for the students was identified as a concern. The primary learning resource, the textbook, was found to lack alignment with the students' specific educational requirements. Last, there was a limitation in the available teaching materials for English instruction. Relying solely on textbooks and worksheets for students' activities during the learning process was deemed insufficient in terms of effectively enhancing the students' reading skills.

In carrying out learning, reading box media can be used as an attractive alternative learning media to create fun, not boring learning and help improve students' intensive reading skills. Furthermore, the media reading box can develop initiative and courage in expressing opinions in the learning process to increase knowledge to improve student achievement and learning outcomes.

Based on the explanation above, the writer formulated a study question as follows: "Is the use of reading box media effective in increasing students' reading skills of the eighth grade SMPIT Al-Hafizh Palopo?"

## **Method**

The writer used a pre-experimental method. This study employed the pre-test and post-test designs to assess the Reading Box impact on enhancing reading skills among eighth-grade students at SMPIT Al-Hafizh Palopo. The design involved a single group of participants, with the Pre-test ( $O_1$ ), treatment (X), and post-test phases ( $O_2$ ) being conducted sequentially. The test conducted before treatment refers to the pre-test, and the test conducted following treatment refers to the post-test.

This study was conducted from July 13th to February 27th, 2023. The study was conducted at SMPIT Al-Hafizh Palopo, situated on Merpati V Street, Perumnas, Bara Subdistrict, Palopo City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The population was a generalization area consisting of objects/subjects with specific qualities and characteristics determined by the writer to be studied and concluded (Suharsaputra, 2012). In this study, the population was eighth-grade students at SMPIT AL-Hafizh Palopo. The total number of eighth graders is 12 students.

In determining this sample, the writer used the total sampling technique suggested by Sugiyono, who stated that this was the technique when all population members are used as samples (Sugiyono, 2017). Consequently, the sample for this study consisted of 12 students enrolled in the eighth grade of SMPIT Al-Hafizh Palopo during the academic year 2022/2023.

The study instrument consisted of a pre-test and a post-test. The procedures for collecting data in this study consisted of pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The study instrument was an essay test. Before analyzing the data, the researcher collected the data and analyzed them by using procedures. First, analyzing the raw data of the pre-test. The score for each answer is described below:

Table 1. Reading Assessment

Scores	Description
4	The meaning and grammar are correct.
3	The meaning is correct, and some errors of grammar.
2	Some errors in meaning and grammar.
1	The meaning and grammar are incorrect.
0	No answer

Second, raw scores were converted to a set of a core maximum of 100 using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{The total of the students' correct answer}}{\text{The total of item}} \times 100$$

Third, the writer converted the students' score into values. Lastly, the writer classified the score of the students into the following score classification (Mustakim & Ismail, 2018):

Table 2. Score Classification

Classification	Score
Very Good	86-100
Good	76-85
Fair	66-75
Poor	56-65
Very Poor	0-55

The last, the writer used SPSS 20 to find out the percentage and students' mean scores based on the pre-test and post-test stages.

## Results

### *The result of Students' Reading Tests in the Pre-Test and Post-Test*

The writer has done the pre-test before doing the treatment. The writer implemented the reading box in the treatment and conducted a pre-test. Before administering treatments using a reading box media, the writer analyzed the pre-test results of the students, which resulted in the data presented in the table below:

Table 3. The Students' Pre-test Scores

No	Students	Pre-Test Score
1	S1	36
2	S2	28
3	S3	22
4	S4	20
5	S5	30
6	S6	30
7	S7	30
8	S8	48
9	S9	20
10	S10	30
11	S11	40
12	S12	52
Total	Mean Score	32.16

Based on Table 3 above, the writer concluded that the lowest and highest scores were from 12 students in the pre-experimental. In the pre-experimental, the lowest score on the pre-test was 20, and the highest was 52. Therefore, based on the classification, it demonstrates the outcome of the Reading skill score before implementing the treatment using the reading box with Narrative as the media; the cumulative mean score for reading skill on the pre-test for all students is 32.16, classified as a "Poor" score.

Table 4 The Students' Post-test Score

No	Students	Post-Test Score
1	S1	80
2	S2	70
3	S3	76
4	S4	75
5	S5	78
6	S6	84
7	S7	82
8	S8	75
9	S9	67
10	S10	78
11	S11	85
12	S12	88
Total	Mean Score	78,16

A post-test was given after implementing the reading box with Narrative text in the treatment. Then the lowest score on the post-test was 67, and the highest score was 88. The findings in Table 4 demonstrate that administering a post-test to the students develops their reading skills. It is shown by the fact that the students' mean score on the post-test was 78.16 points, which is a score that is considered to be in the "Good" range. It is proof that the students have progressed as a result of the treatment that they received.

Table 5. Students' Frequency and Percentage in Pre-Test and Post-Test

No	Classification	Score	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	86-100	-	-	1	8,3%
2	Good	76-85			7	58,3%
3	Fair	66-75			4	33,3%
4	Poor	56-65	4	33,3%	-	-
5	Very Poor	0-55	8	66,6%	-	-
Total			12	100%	12	100%

Table 5 shows the data of the pre-test in the pre-experimental class. 4 students (33,3%) were classified as poor, and 8 students (66,6%) classified as very poor. While the data post-test 1 student (8,3%) classified as excellent, 7 students (58,3%) classified as good, then 4 students (33,3%) were classified as fair.

**The Paired Sample Test of Pre-Test and Post-Test**

*Table 6. The Paired Sample Statistic Test of Pre-test and Post-test*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRE-TEST	32.1667	12	10.24991	2.95889
	POSTTEST	80.5000	12	9.91326	2.86171

The results of the paired sample statistic test score are shown in the data in the above table. According to the data obtained, N equals 12, representing the total number of pupils. The pre-test standard deviation is 10.24991 points, whereas the mean score on the exam is 32.16. In addition, the post-test standard deviation is 9.91326, and the post-test mean score is 80.50.

**The Paired Sample Correlations of the Pre-Test and Post-Test**

*Table 7. The Paired Sample Correlation of Pre-Test and Post-Test*

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pretest	12	-.187	.561
	Posttest			

Table 7 displays the results of the correlation analysis between the pre-test and post-test. The correlation between the two variables is 0.187, and the degree of significance is 0.561. These results reveal a correlation between students' reading abilities before and after treatment.

**The Paired Sample Test of Pre-Test and Post-Test**

The writer discovered that in table 8, the paired sample test illustrates the value of  $t_o$  ( $t_{count}$ ) is 10, 778 with the df (degree of freedom) value 11 while the  $t_t$  ( $t_{table}$ ) for the standard of significant level 0,05 (5%) on  $df = 11$  is 2.228. It means the value of the t-count is higher than the value of the t-table.



Table 8. The Paired Sample Test of Pre-Test and Post-Test

		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pai	PRETEST –	48.333		4.48	58.20	38.462	10.7	1	
r 1	POSTTEST	33	15.53491	454	374	92	78	1	.000

The table 8 shows the significant (2-tailed) value = 0,000, which means smaller than 0,05 (the value for the standard of significant level). The weight in the table above proves that the study Ha (alternative hypothesis) is accepted, and the H0 (null hypothesis) is rejected. The result confirms that the reading box media with Narrative text effectively improve reading skill at SMPIT Al-Hafizh Palopo.

**Discussion**

In the pre-test, the students got low scores. The writer conducted several results. First, students are less able to answer questions according to the content of the reading. It is supported by A'am Rifaldi Khunaifi, who found that the students' ability to answer questions based on the material in the reading has significantly declined because some students fail to understand some questions, so writers should simplify the question's sentences. (A'am Rifaldi Khunaifi, 2019)

The second is that students do not understand the actual meaning of words. It is in line with Intan, Dian, and Satria, who observed that Students do not know the meaning of words, making it difficult to practice answering questions. ( Intan et al., 2022).

The third is that students struggle to determine the main idea comprehending and grasping the text. It is consistent with Desi and Dian, who found that the difficulties encountered are identifying the main idea, referencing, making conclusions, comprehending vocabulary, and providing information. (Desi et al., 2021).

The last is that lack of interest in reading. It is supported by Wahyuni Fitria, who has found that a person's level of interest in reading plays a pivotal role in their ability to comprehend text. When individuals lack enthusiasm or curiosity about

reading, it can hinder their motivation to engage with the material actively, which, in turn, affects their overall comprehension skills. Therefore, fostering a genuine interest in reading is essential to enhancing one's capacity to grasp and absorb the meaning of written texts. (Fitria, 2019).

Therefore, the writer concluded that reading box can improve the students' reading comprehension. The writer conducted several results. First, the students were more active and enjoyed the teaching-learning process in the class. It is in line with Yuniarti, Wardarita, & Utami (2023), who found that there is a change in students' behavior in the implementation of learning that they show enthusiasm, activity, discipline, and responsibility in each implementation.

The second is that using the reading box as a teaching media can improve teachers' teaching skills, students' activities, and reading learning outcomes. This is consistent with the study conducted by Val Harwood, which determined that employing the reading box as a teaching tool has the potential to elevate teachers' instructional capabilities, increase student engagement, and yield improved outcomes in reading education. There are some of the benefits of the reading box that it provides access to books and educational materials to teacher and students, inspires children to read and learn, trains teachers to improve their teaching skills, improve students' reading skills and learning outcomes, and encourages a love of reading and learning among children. (Learnfoerderung, 2019).

The third is that during the implementation of the reading box, students were enthusiastic and paid attention to the stories. Students are allowed to discuss their ideas and possible answers with the other students in their group. Sri Andreani supports it, and Utari Praba Astuti found that the Reading Box has been shown to increase student reading interest within the classroom context successfully, and it satisfies the requirements for a diverse assortment of reading materials. (Andreani S et al., 2011).

The fourth is that after implementing the reading box, students are highly motivated, giving a sense of achievement when they understand the materials and encourage further reading. It is consistent with Nur Indah, who observed that the Reading Box can be used as a teaching media to improve students' reading skills. (Indah N, 2022)

The last is that after implementing the reading box, students reading skills increased including: students have the opportunity to enhance their capacity for comprehending and grasping the text. And implementation of the Reading Box can additionally contribute to enhancing reading fluency. Through regular practice

using the Reading Box, students can develop greater fluency in their reading skills. Several limits can be encountered when conducting study. These limitations include limited vocabulary and knowledge and limited access to resources. These limitations suggest that more study and resources are needed to support effective teaching of reading. It is consistent with (Indah N, 2022) and (Fitria W, 2019), who found that study endeavors often confront various constraints that can impede the investigative process. Among these constraints are restricted vocabulary and knowledge reservoirs and constrained access to pertinent resources. These limitations underscore the necessity for additional study initiatives and resource allocation, particularly in bolstering the efficacy of reading pedagogy.

### Conclusion

Reading box can help students improve their reading skills. The procedure of the writer stages shows the improvement of the students' test after giving the treatment by using reading box. The mean score on the post-test stage is higher than the score on the pre-test score ( $32.16 < 78.16$ ). Besides, the value of *t-count* is 10.778 with the *df* (degree of freedom) value 11 while the *t-table* for the standard of significant level 0,05 (5%) on *df* = 11 is 2.228. It means the value of *t-count* is higher than the value of *t-table*. The result of the students' score on post-test become higher than the pre-test represents the effectiveness of the treatment stage in contributing to help the students increase the reading skill. Furthermore, due to the efficiency of reading box media in enhancing students' reading abilities, its usage might be accepted as an appropriate medium for improving reading skills. little revisions.

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