

EFFECTS OF STORY READING ON IMPROVING EFL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AND CRITICAL THINKING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out the effects of story Reading on improving Reading comprehension and critical thinking of EFL students at Kandahar University. The design of the study was quasi-experimental with reading comprehension and critical thinking pre and Post-tests. Total 27 Afghan EFL students were selected based on their performance on Placement test. The participants' experimental groups listened to their teacher reading a story aloud. In order to find the improvement and different between these variables is significant the Paired Sample T-Test was administrated and the result indicates that there is significant improvement in post-tests in areas of

reading comprehension and critical thinking in story Reading. However, there is more improvement in critical thinking aspect through story reading.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, EFL Reading Comprehension, Story Reading.

INTRODUCTION

In real life we were used to listen to other people talking to us or reading for us. Stories have always been attractive and interesting tools for getting our attention. As children, we ought to listen to our parents while telling the stories such as fables, parables or fairy tales to motivate us for the positive doing and stop us from negative deeds. These stories have played key role in the personality development and their impact cannot be simply ignored. The constructive form of parents' criticism in the form of these stories, have always brought the aptitude and attitudinal change into our childhood lives. The moralistic and entertaining impact into our adulthood cannot be simply ignored. Attempting to take advantage of the undeniable fun and enjoyment in stories, teachers try to include stories in different classroom activities.

Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2011) have found that listening to stories, read aloud helped the students developed sound listening habits and at the same time paved the way to promote comprehension through consistent exposure to the interesting and meaningful content of the stories. He found that reading story aloud has positive impact on language skills.

Definition of Terms

Story reading: The oral presentation of a story by an individual to a person or group from the text of a picture book is story reading. In this case the pictures printed on the pages of the book are made visible to the students at least periodically during the story reading, movements, sound effects, or the use of props may sometimes accompany with reading (Gallets, 2005).

Critical thinking is defined as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action (Saadati, Tarmizi & Bayat, 2010).

Reading Comprehension: Meaning does not arrive because we have highlighted text or used sticky note or answered the comprehension worksheet. Meaning arrives because we are purposefully engaged in thinking while we read (Tovani, 2000).

Statement of Problem

Most of EFL students to whom English is foreign language have difficulty in reading. They have problem in reading comprehension the way they draw meaning from the printed and non-printed sources. According to Sahibzada, Ahmadzai, Niaz and Laftah (2020), EFL students in Afghan context have problems in reading comprehension. They have also state that there of students have reading rate below then 150 words for minutes though reading rate with 250 WPM is considered to be speaking rate for a native speaker. As reading associated with writing and vocabulary building and they have insufficient vocabulary to write and speak fluently. Although they are taking reading courses during their four years of careers. But when it comes to practical use to apply reading skills they still have limited skills of thinking critically. Sahibzada, Saeedi and Hussaini (2018) found out 83% of the teachers are not happy about their students' language skills improvement. They have found that students had problems in language skills while entering EFL classes and after they have been taught for years, they still had problem in their

four language skills. However, they have more problems in their reading and listening comparing to speaking and writing. The problem in reading comprehension has not been seen in Afghan context only, but it can also be found around the world regarding learners' reading difficulty and reading comprehension obstacles. According to Haycock and Huang (2001) half of all white seventeen year olds students, and about less than one-quarter of Latin seventeen years and less than one-fifth of African-American seventeen years old students can read at the level assessed by National assessment of educational progress.

There is need for implementing effective strategies that create interest of students with reading. Those which have been drop out or have been limited to an early age of learning according to some EFL teachers. Story reading and storytelling for EFL teachers or reading aloud are only habits confined to the early stages, but they are in fact vital tools used to improve literacy and improve language skills. Fredricks (2012) has found that the EFL students have lack of motivation for literary studies and literature courses. Because they are not exposed to story reading. The findings of this research suggest that though students are willing to read stories but the curriculum doesn't have room for it. It includes courses of introduction to literature but not practical use of literature and it consequently lead students being demotivated in reading comprehension and having negative perception toward reading and literature courses. They take them as difficult courses they have in their BA level. The study further finds that EFL learners are interested in reading comprehension skills to be developed with the use of short-stories in the classroom. Since they have experienced and are enjoying various linguistic, personal and emotional benefits from short-stories. It also significantly contributed in their learning and mastering of English as a foreign language.

Objectives of the Study

This study had aim to investigate the effectiveness of story reading on improving reading comprehension and critical thinking on adult EFL learners. However, if there is difference existed in the effect of story reading on reading comprehension and critical thinking such difference is significant or insignificant was another main objective of this research.

Research Question

- What is the effect of Story Reading on reading comprehension of EFL students?
- What is the effect of Story Reading on improving critical thinking of EFL students?
- Is there any significant difference in story reading in regards of improving critical thinking and reading comprehension among EFL students?

Importance of the Study

As the reading is done for comprehension and improving critical thinking skills, but they are developed through stories and exposing to story reading. There is need to investigate effects of story reading on adult EFL learners wither it improve their critical thinking and reading comprehension or not. For they are key to success in any major and they are especially vital for language learners. It is teachers' responsibility to use interesting methods and techniques for the students for actively engaging and enabling them to achieve program outcomes. That has been set out by respected faculty of their departments. Among other role that teachers are playing, they have the role of materials providers. They would not be successful teachers by using the same method in every context or every course. Literature, in the form of short-stories, makes learning English an enjoyable and attractive process for EFL learners. Since stories helps to

arouse students' interest toward target culture and language. Incorporating short-stories in EFL classrooms also open the passage to the EFL learners' involvement with rich, authentic uses of the foreign language Collie and Slater 1987 (as cited in A l-Dersi, 2013). One of the main responsibilities of a facilitator is to create a stress-free environment where students are enthusiastic for active engagement in the learning process and internalize it through constructivism. Teachers should adopt the new teaching methodologies and adopt the new findings around the world which change the lives of students. As the teacher is responsible to illuminate the darkness in every household and make learners capable of doing their best. Using traditional methods and concepts cannot grantee the accomplishment of desired outcomes or to walk in clear defined world of achievements.

Hence either we will extinct from the world by implementation of traditional methodologies or we will be remained unskilled labor force for the developed countries. In order to improve the quality of higher education, it is necessary to change classic methodology of teaching in the classroom into modern teaching approaches.

Currently it has a vital place in EFL classes and used as an excellent innovative tool for providing teachers and learners with resources for language learning. Around the world, people choose storytelling and story Reading as their major and it's used as an importance component of curriculum design. It also plays a major role in field of education. Although it is famous around the world, but unlike the general awareness on the importance of reading books, the importance of story reading is not almost emphasized in Afghan culture. Yet, the stories make a great contribution to teaching techniques. Stories have been used as an effective tool for developing competence in language learning both in acquiring native language and learning foreign languages.

The reason adults read to children for the hope that reading exciting stories to children might help them in turning children in getting excited in learning in order to read books for themselves. However, storybook reading has been proved to be effective for the children in many ways (Gallets, 2005). The study will provide teachers with effective teaching methods based on students' needs, interests, levels and desires. It is positive effects will pave a way to the curriculum designers and instructors to include it into the curriculum and specially the language instructors for enhancing the language ability. The current study will pave the way for adding using it as an important tool of learning for improvement of critical thinking and reading compression which are not only helpful for reading but also for all language skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The story reading as an important tool for the development of students' language ability is widely accepted in the field of education and much of the study has been conducted in the effects of it on children and adult learning. The researchers have attempted in section of literature review to summarize the conducted studies on the effect of story reading on learning of students in various geographical locations, scholars' different view regarding story reading and researches that investigate the effects of story reading on learning and literacy development.

Impacts of Story Reading

Morrow, O'Connor and Smith (1990) have investigated the effects of a storybook reading program as means for literacy development with at-risk students. Their study has found that the experimental group where story reading was presented performed better than the control in both free and probed recall comprehension. Their findings also indicated that comprehension of

narrative and sense of story structure are enhanced when children are actively involved in story reading processes. They have suggested that reading stories are an act of construction, and children must be actively involved in the process. They further suggested that story reading strategies that actively involved children in story retelling should consist and teachers should attempt to include readings of favorite stories, and book experiences should be shared.

Furthermore, researchers have suggested the impacts of story reading in various areas of EFL. Stories are highly motivating and can help develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language and language learning. They can create a desire to continue learning, raise the imagination, link fantasy and the imagination with the child's real world (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). P1). In addition to that, Ceylan (2016) have studied impact of using short stories in reading skills class and find out that studying short stories extends students' perspectives and provide the new experiences which they never have them previously. He further suggests that they provide them with a better understanding for different behavior. They also develop empathy and better understanding of the people in different situations and behaviors.

In addition to that, Khalili and Rezvani (2015) have investigated the effects of reading online and paper-based (conventional) short stories on reading comprehension of intermediate Iranian EFL learners. Their results indicated that online reading technique can have a significantly positive effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension scores. Their study further found that students in the online group performed significantly better than those in the print-based group. Also Karabacak and Erdem (2015) conducted an experimental research on the effects of activities which have been adapted from English story books on English course. They have found success of students in English courses in reading comprehension. They have further suggested that story books and activities contribute to the foreign language education by increasing foreign language success of the students. In addition to that, Saka's 2014 (as cited in Ceylan, 2016) reading stories is effective method in teaching EFL classes which consequently improve reading skills he further asserted that reading short story increased their wish to read more and appreciation for literature. Rivera (2016) has found story reading the tools to enhance reading comprehension. She suggests that English learning and category of Storytelling and story reading help most of the students to write their own productions. Sanaeifar (2018) investigated the effect of word exposure frequency through story reading and storytelling on learning collocations. He has found that the word exposure frequency through story reading and storytelling have statistically significant effect on collocation learning and also the story reading group performed better than the Story Telling group in learning collocations.

Thus the story reading has been studied and tested its various effects and much of the studies are conducted on children. The literature above is generally summarized the comparative study done on story reading, its effects on students learning and developing aptitude. There was need for study on the effects of Reading on adult intermediate EFL learners mainly for investigating critical thinking and comprehension effects.

METHODOLOGY

Participants: A total number of 27 intermediate junior Afghan EFL undergraduate students from the English departments of Languages and literature faculty and Education Faculty of Kandahar University have taken part in this study. They shared the same first language Pashtu and Dari and were selected through performance in placement test. Among them, only two were female. The 10 of them were Dari language speaker and 17 were Pashtu speaker.

Research Design and Materials: The study was a quasi-experimental research with one experimental group. A placement test for selecting samples from the population was an objective test contains 23 questions measuring reading comprehension and critical thinking aspects was developed from reading book by Mikulecky & Jeffries (2003). The second instrument was used for pre and Post-tests to test reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. It had two parts and contained 38 multiple choice questions, 19 for critical thinking and 20 for reading comprehension. The first part aim to test critical thinking skills through 19 multiple choice questions among which 9 were by Watson (1980) for making inference from the given text and 10 were for critical thinking to select best ending taken from Free Practice Critical Thinking Test (n.d). The second part was to test reading comprehension skills which contained passages followed with comprehensions multiple choice questions taken from Test Prep Review (2019). The Reliability of instruments was tested before use through test-retest method of reliability and scores result showed stability over time used. The part of validity was checked for content and construct validity of all questions required for testing critical thinking and reading comprehension dimensions. Besides these instruments, a story collection, A World of Fiction by Marcus (2005) was used to present stories in group of storytelling and story reading

Procedures: In the first phase of the study, the volunteer junior students of both English departments including Pre-service, In-service and Night-shift took part in a placement test inside university campus. Then the qualified subjects who got higher marks have been shifted to experimental group that contains 30 students. they took the Post-test in stress free environment and attend 10 week sessions of treatment in which they were listened to stories read and had accessed to the stories in printed form. For the ethical dimension and to reduce possible confounding variables that may affect the study outcome, participants were assured about their identity to be kept confidential. To avoid possible anxiety, the participants were given the choice of withdrawing their participation at any time and during ten-week session some of the students withdraw their participations and some did not attend Post-tests and 27 remained took parts in Post-test. After ten-week treatment 90 minutes for week they answered the questions of the Post-test in equal time provided.

Data Analyzing Procedure: Both pre and post test score were administrated in Microsoft Excel, SPSS 24 version and Graph pad prism. The result was analyzed for showing percentage, mean and standard deviation. Paired Sample T-test was used to show the significant improvement and differences and the result for all of them presented through tables and graphs.

FINDINGS

As mentioned before, the experiential study was conducted to find out the effects of story reading on improving critical thinking and reading comprehension. The findings presented based on each research questions and for the question “What is the effect of Story Reading on reading comprehension and critical thinking of EFL students?” The data was collected in order to find the effect of story reading on improving critical thinking and reading comprehension.

Table 1. Story Reading Pre-and Post-Result

Number	Name	F/Name	Critical thinking		Reading Comprehension	
			pre	post	Pre	post test

			test	test	test	
1	Hamidullah	M. Azam	25	35	21	37
2	Mubariz	Ali Ahmad	35	50	32	42
3	Ajab Noor	Shah zada gul	55	55	21	11
4	M.Ehson	M.zahir	55	65	16	32
5	Qudratullah	M.Nazeer	45	50	37	42
6	Javed Ahmad	Jalaludin	25	50	11	21
7	M. Mugeem	Dust Mohammad	30	30	5	21
8	M. Hashim	M.Qasim	30	35	16	37
9	Zubir Ahmad	Wazir Ahmad	40	55	11	32
10	Naweed	M.Rasoo	30	45	32	47
11	Fazludin	Hesamudin	20	50	16	21
12	Safeullah	Abdullah	25	45	32	32
13	Qudratullah	Niamatullah	30	45	21	32
14	Abdul Kabir	Abdul Satar	30	50	26	42
15	Ahmad Zia	Asmatullah	20	35	32	37
16	Abdul Wali	Abdul Baqi	45	45	26	11
17	Habibullah	Fazul Mohammad	10	35	21	37
18	M.Arif	Noor Ahmad	50	55	11	37
19	Nazir Ahmad	Said ahmad	25	35	16	21
20	M. Dawood	Mir dil	30	40	16	21
21	M.Osmaan	abdul Ahad	45	55	16	58
22	Habibrahmnan	Abdul Rahman	30	50	16	26
23	Naqeebullah	Obidullah	50	55	5	16
24	Ahmad	Abdul Ahad	55	60	11	21
25	Jamil Ahmad	Toor Yali	40	55	16	68
26	Hedatullah	Khuday dost	25	30	26	37
27	Abdul Wajid	Abdul Ahad	35	35	21.1	16

Result in table 1 above shows the participants of story reading, their pre and post test results of reading comprehension and critical thinking. It should be worth to mentioned that the section of their identity have been intentionally hidden for ethical consideration that have been promised before data collection and experiment. The group of story reading contains 27 students who attended 10 weeks' course designed to find out wither story reading have help them in improving critical thinking and reading comprehension. The pre and post test result indicate that majority the participants' in story reading test scores have increased in critical thinking and reading comprehension but only few students' marks have either decreased or did not improve. For instance, student 3 who got 21% marks in comprehension Post-testbut his Post-test decrease into11% also in section of critical thinking he got 55% marks in pre-test and remains unimproved in Post-test. Although student 7 in reading comprehension score has increased from 5% marks into 21%marks yet his critical thinking scores 30% in pre-test has remain the same in post-test. Also students 12 pre-test in reading comprehension section got 32% marks and his post-test seem no changes although his critical thinking section improved from 25% into45%. Beside that student 16 who got 45% marks in critical thinking but nothing has changed in post-test. However, his score in comprehension pre-test decreased into 11% from 26%.In addition to

that student 27 who got 35% marks in pre-test of critical thinking section has remained 35% and his post-test in reading comprehension decreased into 16% from 21% in pre-test.

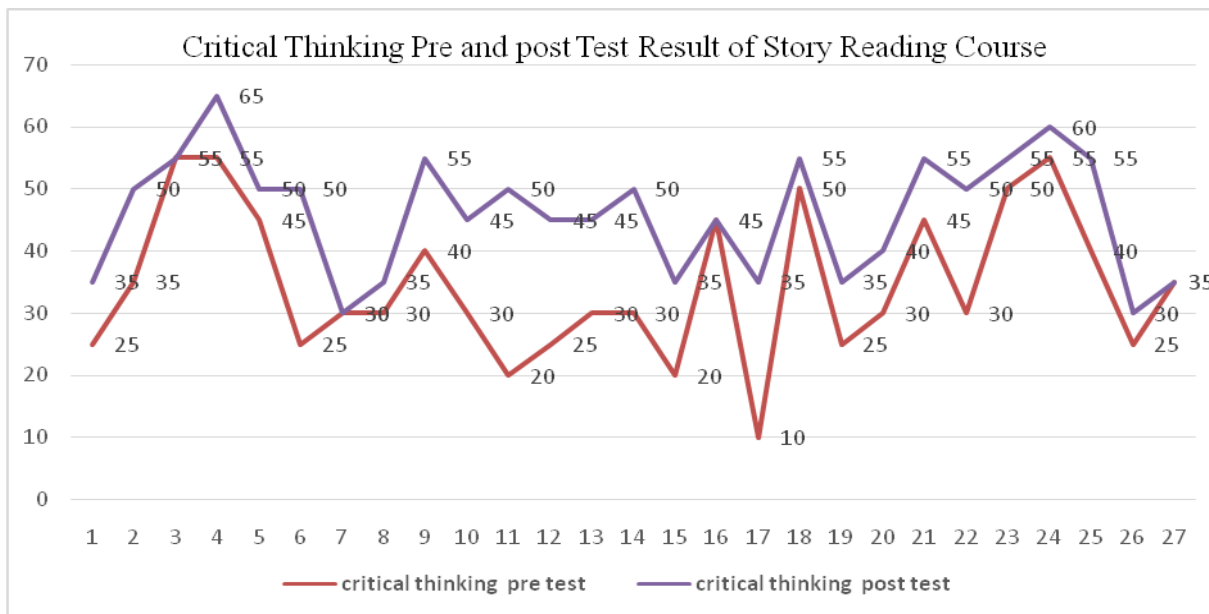


Figure 1. Comparative Result for Pre and Post Test of Critical Thinking Aspect

Figure 1 above indicates the pre and post test result of critical thinking section. Red color represents pre-test and the yellow color represents Post-test. Post-test result shows there is improvement in student’s marks. However, the improvement is varied from students to students that can be inferred some students’ critical thinking skills improved much while there are also some students whose’ marks are little improved. Among 27 students in story reading course only four students’ pre and Post-test marks remain the same.

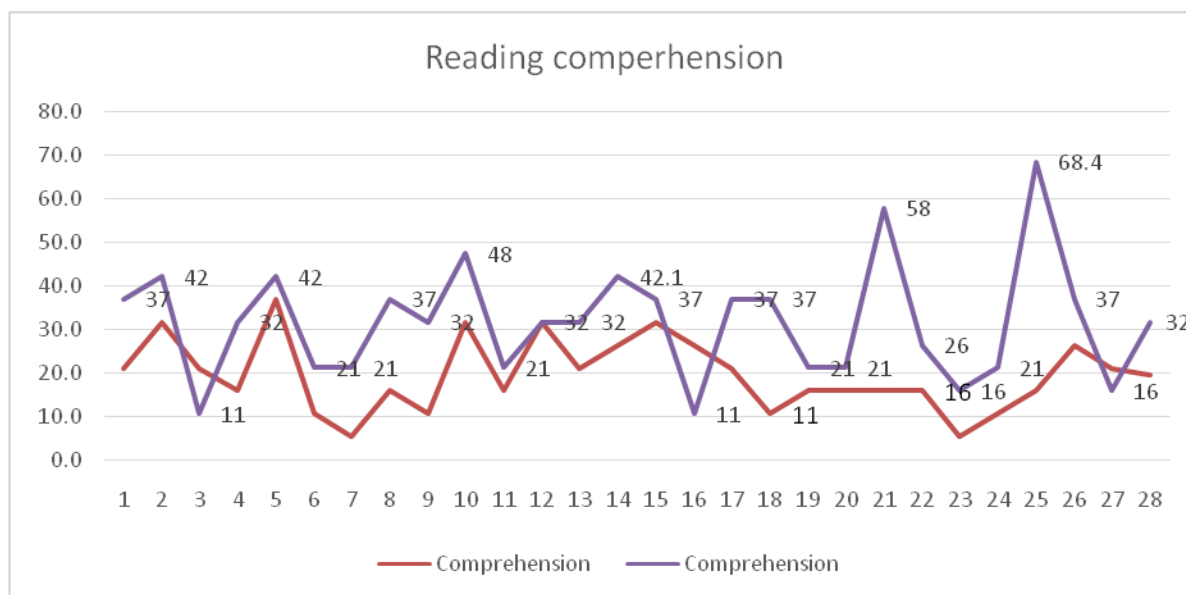


Figure 2. Reading Comprehension Pre and Post Test Result of Story

Figure 2 indicates pre and post test result of reading comprehension section. The result indicates that majority of the students scored higher in Post-test than they had in pretest. Among 27 students in story reading course, three students' pre-test scores are less than the Post-test only; one student's Post-test and post test result remains the same and the rest of students' Post-test scores are higher in the Post-test.

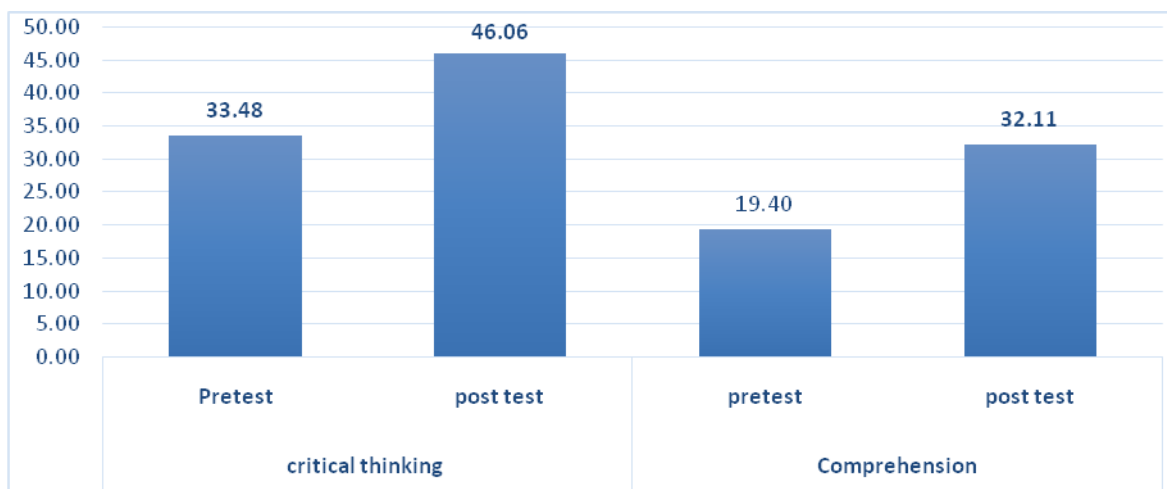


Figure 3. Means Score of Pre and Post Test of Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Figure 3 above represents the mean score of pre and post test result. Students mean scores in pre-test of critical thinking section is 33 mean score and it increased into 46 mean score in post-test. However, in reading comprehension section their pre-test means scores is 19 mean score which is increased into 32 mean score in Post-test. The result indicates there is more improvement in students' marks in critical thinking section than reading comprehension section through story reading.

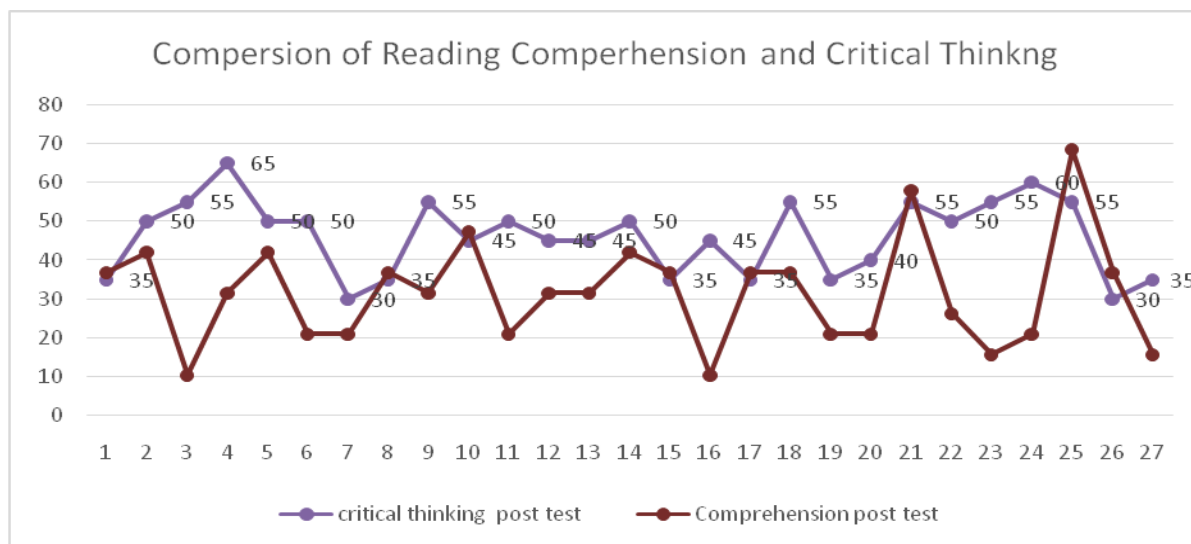


Figure 4. The Compression of Post Test Result for Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Figure 4. above indicates post test result compression of critical thinking and reading comprehension. Red line shows reading comprehension post test result and yellow indicates post test result of critical thinking. Students' get higher marks in Post-test in critical thinking section than reading comprehension through story reading.

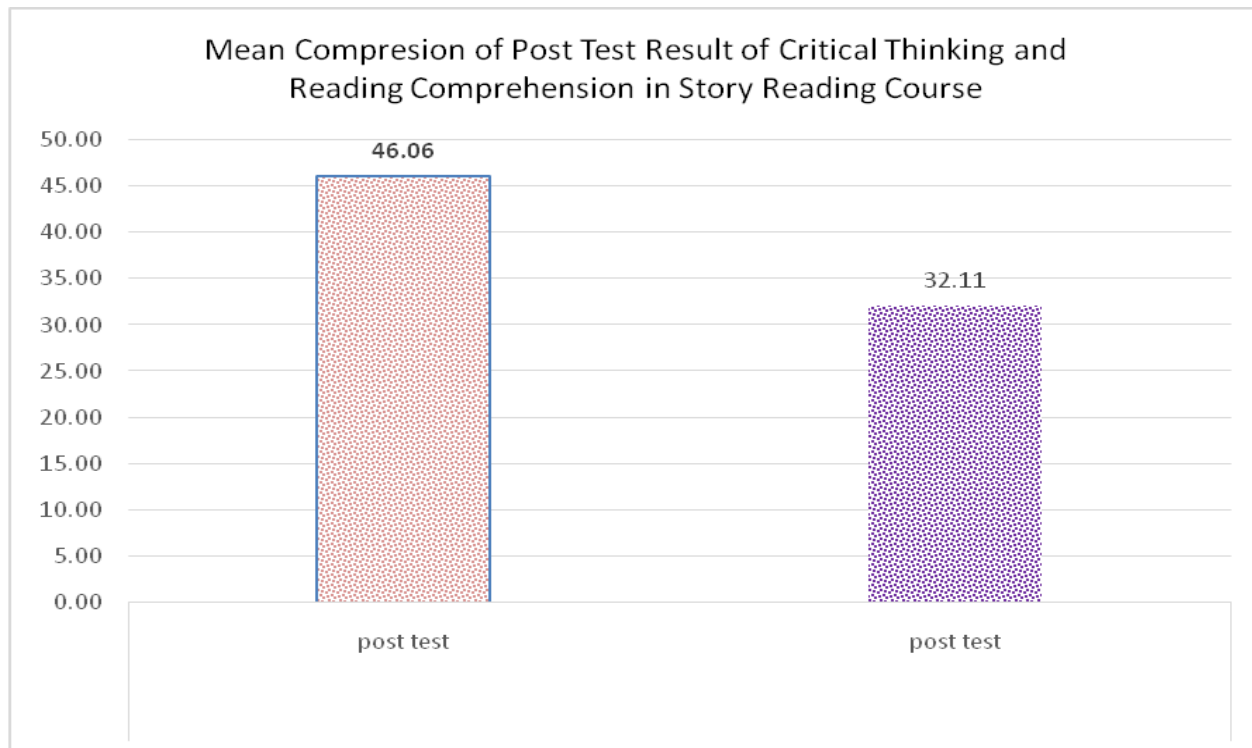


Figure 5. Mean Compression of Post Test of Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking through Story Reading

Figure 5 above shows mean compression of Post-test of reading comprehension and critical thinking in story reading group. Pink color shows post test result of critical thinking in which students in story reading course scored with mean of 46 mean score purple color shows post test result of reading comprehension in which students scored with mean of 32 mean score which is lower than mean score of critical thinking section.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Story Reading for Pre and Post-test Result of Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension

		Critical thinking pre-test	Critical thinking post test	Comprehension pretest	Comprehension Post-test
N	Valid	27	27	27	27
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		35.7407	46.1111	19.5037	31.5815
Std. Deviation		12.45791	9.64099	8.48811	13.68301

Table 2 above indicates mean and standard deviation of story reading course pre and post result of critical thinking and reading comprehension. M represent the mean score while SD shows standard deviation. Result indicates students in story reading course in pre-test of critical section got the mean score 35.7 with SD of 12.5 and they got in their post-test M score 46.1 however, their pre-test in reading comprehension section M score 19.5 with SD 8.5 and the post-test increased into M 31.7 with SD 13.7.

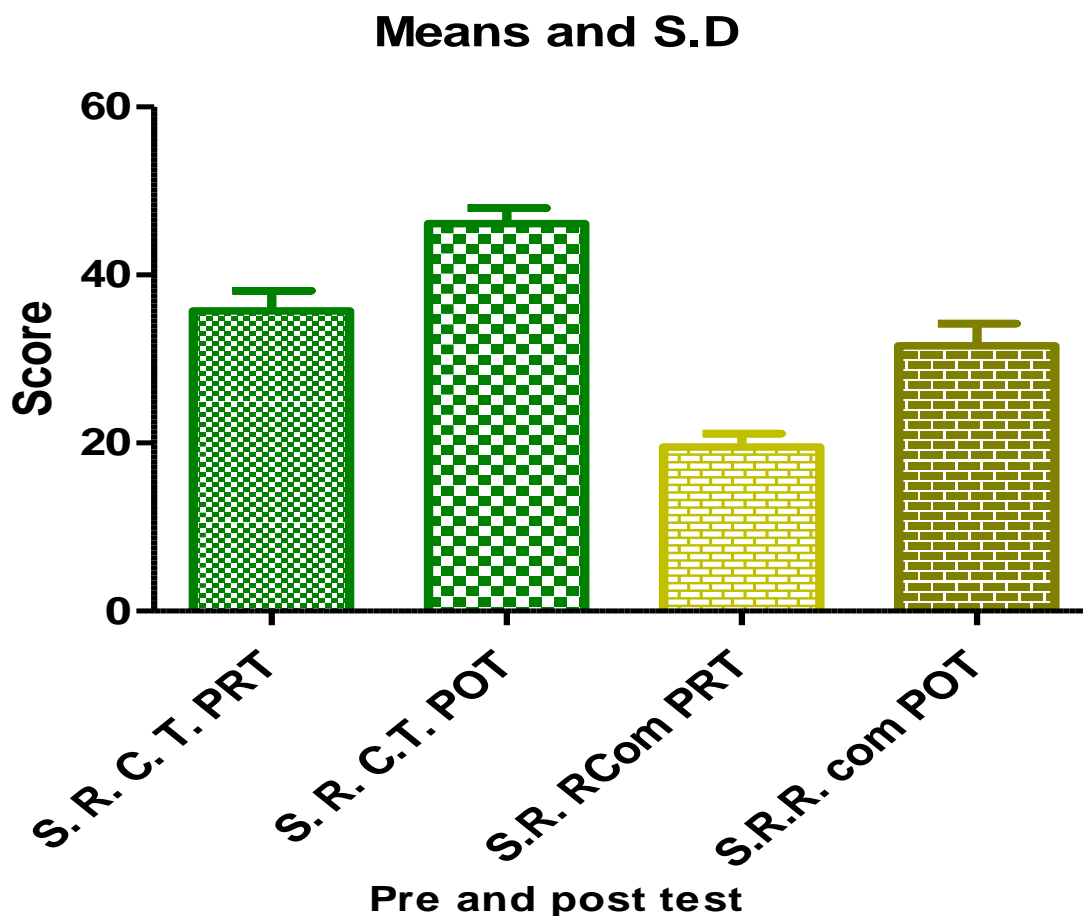


Figure 6. Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre- and Post-Test Result of Story Reading Course for Its Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension Section

Figure 6 above represents the mean and standard deviation of pre- and post-test result of story reading course for its critical thinking and reading comprehension section. The abbreviation S.R stands for Story Reading, C. T for Critical Thinking, PRT for Pre-test POT for Post Test, RCom and R.com stand for Reading comprehension. The color green on the left indicates mean and standard deviation of pre-test result of critical thinking section in story reading course while green in the right represent post-test result of result of reading comprehension. On the other hand, light gray color on left represent M and SD of pre-test result of reading comprehension section in story reading course while dark gray color on the right represent M and SD of reading comprehension post-test result.

Table 3. Paired T-Test of Reading Comprehension Mean Comparison of Pre and Post Test Result

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Reading Comprehension Pre-test	19.504	27	8.488	1.633
	Reading Comprehension Post-test	31.581	27	13.683	2.633

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Reading Comprehension Post-test & Reading Comprehension Post-test	27	.292	.139

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Reading Comprehension Post-test – Reading Comprehension Post-test	-12.078	13.833	2.662	-17.550	-6.605	-4.537	26	.000

Table 3 above indicates paired T-Test of mean comparison of story reading course for Reading Comprehension. Students in pre-test got the mean score 19.5 and they got in Post-test 31.6 and the mean difference between pre and Post-test is 12.0 with significant value of .000, so the H₀ null is accepted there is significance improvement in reading comprehension in story reading course.

Table 4. Paired T-Test of Critical Thinking Mean Comparison of Pre and Post Test Result

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean

Pair 1	Critical Thinking Pre-test	35.741	27	12.458	2.397
	Critical Thinking Post test	46.1	27	9.6	1.85541

Paired Samples Correlations

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Critical Thinking Storytelling Post-test	40.3704	27	18.39345	3.53982
	Reading Comprehension Storytelling Post-test	33.5244	27	13.85573	2.66654
			N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Critical Thinking Pre-test & Critical Thinking Post test		27	.689	.000

Table 4 above indicates Paired T-Test of critical thinking mean comparison of pre and Post-test result in story reading course. Result indicates student in Post-test of critical in story reading group got the mean score 35.8 which have been increased into 46.1 mean score in Post-test. The different between pre and Post-test improvement is -10.4 and the significant value is .000 thus there is significant improvement between pre and post in critical thinking aspect in story reading course.

Table 5. Paired T-Test Mean Compression of Post-tests of Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Critical Thinking Post-test	46.1111	27	9.64099	1.85541
	Reading Comprehension Post-test	31.5815	27	13.68301	2.63330

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
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Pair 1	Critical Thinking Post-test & Reading Comprehension Post-test	27	.108	.592
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Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Critical Thinking Post-test & Reading Comprehension Post-test	14.52 963	15.86 529	3.05 328	8.2535 3	20.80 573	4.7 59	26	.000

Table 5 above indicates Paired T-Test mean compression of Post-tests of critical thinking and reading comprehension in story reading group. Student in story reading course got 46.1 mean score in critical thinking Post-test while they got 31.6 mean score in reading comprehension Post-test. There is 14.5 mean difference between these two and the P-value indicate .000 significant difference in Post-tests in term of reading comprehension and critical thinking in story reading course.

DISCUSSION

Result of the current study shows that there is improvement in reading comprehension and critical thinking of the students in story reading group. However, the result indicates in Post-test of story reading course in the area of critical thinking students' marks improved from 36 mean score into 46 mean score. On the other hand, there is improvement in reading comprehension section in story reading group from mean score 20 into 32.

This study is also aligned with Rivera (2016) who found out that story reading as the tools to enhance reading comprehension. Though there is improvement in the areas of critical thinking and reading comprehension, there is over all mean improvement of 13 from Post-test in critical thinking section story reading group. On the other hand, students in reading comprehension of story reading group have improved 12.7. Result of descriptive means shows improvement is higher in critical thinking aspect through story reading then reading comprehension through story reading.

Thus the result further needed to be tested through Paired Sample-Test for mean comparison in order to find out the existed difference and improvement is significant or not. It was find out there is P Value 000 which shows significant improvements in reading comprehension pre and post test result through story reading and critical thinking respectively.

Paired Samples T-Test was used to find out within the group difference in term of reading comprehension and critical thinking Post-test comparison and the result indicated that

there was P value .000 indicated significant difference between critical thinking and reading comprehension through story reading.

CONCLUSION

Story reading is the important tools for literacy development and its impacts on language development should not be simply ignored. Story reading empowers comprehension and critical thinking skills which are highly required and EFL students should master. The elements of stories (inferences, suspense, exploring themes, genera, symbols thinking and literary terms) lead learners to think for the meaning and comprehension. Thus, thinking for these elements increase critical thinking. It's through critical thinking one can improve language and presentation skills. Thinking clearly and systematically can advance the way we express our ideas. It helps us in learning how to scrutinize the rational structure of texts and through critical thinking one can develop his/her comprehension aptitudes.

A critical thinker has the self-awareness of logic to recognize the difference between rational views and careful expression. Yet, an emotional response is on personal bias. Emotion is the enemy of reason. By understanding own point of view, one can also think about the perspective of others and come to a conclusion based on reality not emotional feelings.

The findings of this study show that there is significant improvement in areas of critical thinking and reading comprehension through story reading. However, the students' achievements vary in terms of critical thinking and reading comprehension in story reading. That is, improvement is higher in critical thinking aspect in the story reading group which is 13% improvement in mean score from pre to post. Story reading should be considered as tools for literacy development in EFL classes which are plying significant role in language skills development in various areas. As its impacts in reading comprehension and critical thinking has been investigated in this study their impacts on vocabulary building, listening comprehension, writing improvement and other areas has been documented in the literature review of the study.

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