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在國中英語教學上的應用

A WINDOW ON READING: CONDUCTING A READER'S THEATER
BASED ON ADOLESCENT LITERATURE READING PROGRAM
IN ENGLISH CLASSES IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background and Motivation

Reading plays an important role in language learning because it is the key to the world of language learning (Gunning, 1996). Particularly, encouraging students to read aloud to themselves, to one another, or to the audience appears to be a key guideline to offer students a variety of literacy experiences. Literature through the vicarious emotional, interesting, and motivating oral expressions draws students' attention, and cultivates their reading comprehension and creative thinking (Hennings, 1992; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 2005). By means of oral reading interactively with the teachers or classmates, a communicative reading circumstance is established to provide students with as more cooperative opportunities as possible to achieve their fluent reading (Scharer, Pinnell, Lyons, & Fountas, 2005; Simmons, Kuykendall, & King, 2000). Step by step, the repetition of interactive reading aloud makes students continue to experience as well as appreciate the power of words and lastly guide them to make sense of what they are reading. Students can learn that they create the meaning of a text by associating and communicating with the texts, experiences, and responses of their own and of the other classmates. In this case, their reading motivation can be triggered, and thus their reading comprehension can be promoted.

Interactive reading aloud can turn into a more efficient and enjoyable access to promoting the students' reading skills and knowledge by conducting interactive reading aloud as a reader's theater (herein RT). RT is the oral presentation of literature containing abounding narration and facial expression, so the performance of a RT is an appropriate opportunity for students to practice their oral and expressive

abilities (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 2005). According to Dean (2000) and Liu (2000), students are more likely to enjoy the reading aloud of a dramatic activity, which inspires more students to be engrossed in reading. Based on the benefit of reading aloud in groups, the advantages of RT, a kind of oral reading activity, have indeed resulted in its valid and convenient implementation in the language classrooms.

The form of performing RT is like a scenic drama and easily fascinates EFL students (Prescott & Lewis, 2003). For the truth that a successful reader obtains the interest, pleasures, learning from reading (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000), the role of EFL teachers enables students to be successful readers so as to read with fun. Whereas once students start to lose their interest and responses in reading little by little, more and more silent interaction will occur between students and teachers. What is more, the reading of frustration and helplessness destroys the students' reading interests (Blanton, 1993; Schiff & Calif, 2004). With a view to arousing their reading interests, the power and beauty of RT oral reading, including how to express intonation, stress, rhythm, and juncture well lays a significant impact on reading pleasures (Finn & Stevens, 1970). Because of rich narration and expression in RT, EFL students would be triggered to learn what will happen in the plot. Consequently, RT, a form of oral reading performance, can empower students to be more involved in reading activities with interest.

Furthermore, RT can be implemented in the classroom with little preparing time for teachers and students. Compared with the usual forms of dramatic activities in the classroom, RT does not take teachers and students a lot of time to prepare because sets, costumes, props, and even memorizing lines are not necessary for the RT (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1998; Martinze, Roser, & Strecker, 1999; Shepard, 1994). Therefore, students can spend more time reading than preparing for a drama.

The goal of RT is to make students substitute for the voices of the characters and enliven them. The preparing of RT focuses on how to direct students to be engrossed in reading with rich narration and facial expression by holding the script on the stage without memorizing the lines. In a word, the RT implementation in EFL language classrooms serves a more time-saving and efficient reading activity for teachers and students.

Through RT, teachers can satisfy students' needs in learning cooperation in the classroom (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Burish, 2000). The aim of cooperative learning is to make sure that the students are able to meet their different needs perfectly in reading courses by means of peer assistance (Simmons, Kuykendall, & King, 2000). Since teachers encourage students to discuss scripts and turn-taking reading, much more learning from peer-assisted processes can be propagated (Dubin & Olshtain, 1977). While writing scripts, preparing repeated rehearsals, and performing RT on the stage, heterogeneous students in groups need to handle the problems they encounter (Liu, 2000). Every member of the group does not feel isolated and alone when they are not able to cope with difficulties. They are actively stimulated to interact with the other group members. Students become able to build cooperative and supportive interaction with peers to overcome the difficulties they may encounter. For the purpose of accomplishing the assigned tasks along with ameliorating the classroom atmosphere, the cooperative learning has developed an additional significant part of the RT activity in a language classroom (Tyler & Chard, 2000).

A lot of research have proved the effectiveness of RT conducted in English classrooms currently. For instance, with the reading instruction integrating RT for nine weeks, second-grade students made progress in reading ability and changed their attitudes toward reading (Miller & Rinehart, 1999). In addition, by implementing a 30-minute RT in two second-grade classrooms for over ten weeks, Martinze, Roser,

and Strecker (1999) found that RT promoted the students' oral reading fluency and reading comprehension when the students explored the meanings of literature. Or the RT program was even proved to be effective in increasing the interest and confidence of the second and the third grade students with learning disabilities and improving their fluency in reading (Corcoran, 2005). Through the benefits of RT practice, students, hence, gained more opportunities to read aloud in front of audience, practiced and repeated reading their materials before performance, and interacted with teachers and other students. All the procedures had contributed to a visible and successful access to stimulating students to read with interest, confidence, accuracy, and fluency (Corcoran, 2005; Martinze, Roser, & Strecker, 1999; Miller & Rinehart, 1999; Rinehart, 1999; Tyler & Chard, 2000).

When selecting reading materials for a RT, a teacher has to take the readability of adolescent literature into consideration. If the texts of the reading materials with vocabulary, grammatical structures, and syntax are considered too complicated, they can not be comprehended by readers (Lazar, 1994). If teachers choose the unsuitable reading materials, the reading difficulties will bring about the fear for finishing reading the successive context and lastly students stop reading (Been, 1979). For the sake of avoiding the mentioned reading difficulties, teachers have to choose the reading materials for students with appropriate readability.

In addition, the empathy with the characters of the selected reading materials should be familiar to EFL readers. Ronnqvist and Sell (1994) confirmed that teenagers like the adolescent literature because the characters' thought and feelings are familiar and authentic to teenagers. In other words, what the characters said and thought, in fact, can be another kind of projection of what the teenage readers said and thought in their daily lives and their inner minds. Reading adolescent literature can become an access for teenage readers to mirroring their life. Such being this

case, adolescent readers have the capacity for gaining the empathic experiences through adolescent literature. Based on the foregoing keys of choosing the proper reading materials, the adolescent literature turns into a good access to enjoying reading inspiring teenagers' intellect, emotion, and linguistic ability (Lazar, 1990).

To sum up, some research have proved that reading aloud has a positive impact on students' reading comprehension (Kindig, 2006; Nation & Snowling, 2004). Even reading aloud interactively is also a valid means to develop students' reading comprehension (Scharer, Pinnell, Lyons, & Fountas, 2005). On the basis of the viewpoint, the above are all involved in RT. Besides, the idea of RT incorporates assisted reading, reading while listening, paired reading, and repeated reading (Therrien, 2004). Apart from the reading program, English adolescent literature implemented in this program also attract students' attention and interest with the readability and empathy of adolescent literature.

In order to enhance well the benefits of conducting a RT based on adolescent literature reading program (RTALRP) and the principle of how to improve EFL students' reading comprehension, it is necessary to identify the problems in the program. What happens to EFL students' reading comprehension after participating in the RTALRP? What attitudes and motivation do EFL students hold towards learning and reading English after joining the RTALRP? What opinions do EFL students express about the RT activities? What responses do EFL students show when reading English adolescent literary fiction? How do EFL students interact and cooperate with one another for performing RT? These questions are worth discussing in this study.

Purposes of the Study

With a view to helping EFL students open a window on reading, the RTALRP is

conducted in English classrooms. Specifically, the purposes of the study are listed as the followings:

1. to evaluate EFL students' English reading comprehension before and after the RTALRP.
2. to investigate the effects of the RTALRP on EFL students' responses to English learning, especially English reading.
3. to probe EFL students' opinions on the RT activities in the RTALRP.
4. to explore EFL students' responses to the two selected adolescent fiction in the RTALRP.
5. to examine EFL students' cooperative learning according to the team performance in the RTALRP.

Research Questions

By implementing the RT and English adolescent literature materials in the EFL students' reading instruction, the five research questions are addressed as follows:

1. How do EFL students perform English reading comprehension before and after the RTALRP?
2. How do EFL students change their responses to English learning, especially English reading before and after the RTALRP?
3. How do EFL students react to the RT activities in the RTALRP?
4. How do EFL students respond to the two selected adolescent fiction in the RTALRP?
5. How do EFL students respond to cooperative learning judging from the team performance in the RTALRP?

Significance of the Study

The study is an optional reading program for EFL students in junior high school. First, this RT reading program in this study can provide EFL students with an alternative English reading experience. RT inspires EFL students to enjoy reading aloud of a dramatic activity (Dean, 2000; Liu, 2000). Second, this study can provide EFL teachers with an optimal modal to instruct students to read English. RT can be implemented in the classroom conveniently because sets, costumes, and props are not necessary for the RT (Shepard, 1994). For the teaching materials, adolescent literature enriches EFL teachers' and EFL students' RT script adapting. Because of the low readability and empathic concerns of adolescent literature (Bushman & Bushman, 1997; Trites, 2001), EFL students are more likely to comprehend the content and adapt it as a script according to EFL teachers' guidance. Finally, this study may propose EFL teachers and students for more interactive communication by the RT based on adolescent literature reading program. During the program, EFL students need to discuss scripts and roles with their partners in groups. Hopefully, they will have more opportunities to communicate with their partners in cooperative learning.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations in this study. First, the subjects in this study were only 78 students in Kaohsiung Municipal Wu-fu Junior High School. Therefore, it is hard to generalize the study findings to all the students in Taiwan. Second, the selection of the adolescent literature books may be subjective. The two adolescent literature fiction in the study were chosen by the researcher rather than by the students. It is possible that the students might be interested in the fiction other than the selected two in the study. So, such a selection made by the researcher can not be generalized

to other reading programs based on other materials. Finally, the experimental time was restricted in a twelve-week time. During this period of time, students could not have enough time and practice to show what they really had learned in this program. Hence, the long-term effect of the RT practices, RT rehearsals, and RT performances can not be predicated definitely.

Definition of terms

Some terms are particularly defined in order to have the reader comprehend the study more clearly:

1. **Reader's theater:** Reader's theater is a form of drama which does not have sets, props, and costumes. It obviously requires the performers to read the lines aloud with rich expression without memorizing the lines (Corcoran, 2005). Based on these specific characteristics, the procedure of the reader's theater reading program can still include selecting a proper text to adapt in the reader's theater, writing a script from the plot, revising the script and adapt it, assigning the parts which students are responsible for, rereading the lines aloud and rehearsing in the group, and finally performing the script in front of the class (Latrobe, 1996; Prescott, & Lewis, 2003). In a word, the readers' theater is a play-reading to make the performers involve themselves in the foregoing procedure of drama production with a reading text and through the interaction with peers.
2. **Reading aloud:** Reading aloud is an oral reading skill to develop the literacy proficiency. Teachers read the intonation, stresses, and rhymes and students follow to read aloud again and again so as to be familiar with the words and gain the reading fluency (Kindig, 2006; Nation & Snowling, 2004). Reading aloud with rich expression and emotion is necessarily instructed as a reading

skill to play dramatic activities (Evans, 1984). Students are assigned to do such a voicing exercise to facilitate their reading.

3. Interactive reading: Interactive reading refers to reading is “an act of communication” (Gomez & Smith, 1991). It is an interactive process among readers, reading materials, teachers, and peers. Based on their background knowledge, readers interpret the meanings of texts as well as communicate and share their individual interpretation with teachers and peers. Through communication and sharing, readers are able to comprehend the plot and themes of reading material (Scharer, Pinnell, Lyons, & Fountas, 2005; Simmons, Kuykendall, & King, 2000).
4. Reading comprehension: Reading comprehension refers to the degree for readers to realize information of the text and then interpret it adequately (Grabe and Stroller, 2002). It is a thinking system requiring processes that produce some interaction between the reader and the written texts. Once all the processes of reading comprehension are achieved, the reading comprehension skills containing literal comprehension, interpretation, critical reading, and creative reading are practiced well (Smith, 1969).
5. Adolescent literature: Adolescent literature, or young adult literature, is a kind of literature whose works are created for the adolescent. It appears to provide particular properties to help the adolescent realize their physical and spiritual changes (Alsup, 2003). So the features in this literature are generally referred to teenager’s minds and deeds (Prater, 2003). With its genre relying on describing the growth of the adolescent, particularly implying the sort of struggling and experiencing the life, the plot, theme, characters, language of adolescent literature appeal to young adults (Bushman & Bushman, 1997; Trites, 2001).

6. Cooperative learning: Cooperative learning refers to an instruction method in which students at various proficiency levels study together in small groups to fulfill a mutual objective. The students can take the responsibility for one another's learning as well as their own. Hence, each one in a group or pair helps each other to achieve the success (Foster, 1993; Slavin, 1987; Slavin, 1991). The benefits of cooperative learning are to enable students to learn better as they work together, to learn how to cope with problems well, and to engage in the democratic and political society (Lyman & Foyle, 1991).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In pursuit of understanding this study thoroughly, relevant literature and rationales are discussed in this chapter. First, an overall view of how RT influences the students' language performance is provided to explore the development of four language skills containing listening, speaking, reading, and writing. After that, functions of reading adolescent literature are examined based on three aspects, cultural, linguistic, and personal developments to investigate students' awareness. Next, the literature focusing on reading comprehension is considered in terms of its difficulties and strategies. By realizing reading comprehension difficulties, appropriate reading strategies can be applied to help students read better. Lastly, the interaction between the teacher and students, students and students, and students and reading texts are explored in details. In classroom interaction, the cooperative learning and interactive reading are also included in this part.

RT and Language Performance

RT can benefit the development of four language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing when conducted in the classroom. RT dramatizes literature in a performing way to draw students' attention and interest. Most important of all, RT provides a visual, oral, and audio stimulus for students. Under such a rich learning circumstance, students who were unable to enjoy reading and appreciating literary texts before can have a fresh experience of reading literature. It incorporates all four skills, utilizes literary materials, and provides motivation for students in a communicative context (Flynn, 2004; Kelleher, 1997). In other words,

RT can be used to promote listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and further to enhance students to make the most of four language skills.

RT and Listening

In order to develop listening ability, active responses from the speakers during the dialogue are an essential key. Listeners ought to execute immediate responses to what they have listened through the speakers' facial expression, intonation, emotion, and so on. In addition, the natural interactive talk between speakers and listeners makes a positive impact on listening development (Grugeon, Hubbard, Smith, & Dawes, 1998; Ur, 1984). Based on the above viewpoints of listening responses, the RT activities to improve students' listening skills are possessed of encouraging students to interact, especially to trigger students to use imagination in listening. That is to say, students are invited to listen to and respond to what they have listened all the time.

RT shows a process of meaning-making for the purpose of communicating and evoking with an audience (Neelands, 1984). What is communicated and perceived by the audience students reflects to the extent they have listened and comprehended. Students experience language meaningfully by listening to the attitudes like excitement, sadness, and the like. Through observing the speakers' tones and attitudes, students are able to predict the meaning and stress in a dialogue (Grugeon, Hubbard, Smith, & Dawes, 1998; Haycraft, 1978; Spolin, 1986). Thus, storytelling RT urges students to enlighten their speaking and listening development.

In addition, RT enables the student audience to listen to as well as enjoy the intonation and rhymes of the words (Kelleher, 1993). Marcus (2002) stated that reading aloud to the students was a key to helping them obtain information. In particular, reading with facial expressions and changeable sounds made students

enthusiastic about the following plot and easy to participate in the responses. Students, expectedly, have developed their listening skills through communication with the performing readers and comprehension of reading materials. Rinehart (2001) and Wolf (1993) also indicated that in RT, students expressed and interpreted their reading script to the other students. While they were performing their accomplishment, they also provided the others in the classroom with a chance to practice English listening ability. The students as audience felt like listening to what the performer are talking about. In other words, the performing actors let the audience students join their responses. Such an environment training EFL students' English ability is likely to be more authentic and interactive.

Young and Vardell (1993) found that the student audience, indeed, benefited from RT. While the student audience was exposed to the performing students pleasing changeable voices and expressions, listening to RT performance could become enjoyable and amusing. Instead of interrupted by costumes, actions, props, and even settings, the audience students are able to listen to what the performers say more attentively and critically. They were called on to be involved in repetition of key phrases and sounds through scripts. Because students concentrated on the performers' oral reading, their listening skills were enhanced. In brief, RT oral reading performance provides communicative listening stimuli for students. Paying attention to the oral reading, students can make progress in listening proficiency.

RT and Speaking

RT can help students sharpen their English oral ability because RT emphasizes the oral and facial expressions rather than the staged preparation (Flynn, 2004). Students, therefore, can improve their English speaking by practicing oral reading. Especially through repeating rehearsing the scripts, students' oral reading becomes

more and more fluent so as to their speaking in English is enhanced.

Dougill (1987) indicated that the drama activities in the classroom could encourage students to use their spoken language in a meaningful context. In other words, the dialogues in dramatic activities provide students an authentic situation to communicate with each other. Because RT, a dramatic activity, enables students to act out dialogues in front of others, students can overcome their nervousness to speak expressively in a meaningful situation and to employ stress and intonation in language. The more attention students pay to their role, the more likely they are to produce natural language. It leads to the attainment that the reluctant students open their mouths to play their roles in RT by hiding their shy personality (Haycraft, 1978).

Moreover, Flynn (2004) suggested that in RT, students be divided into a group to rehearse the script which is read aloud rather than memorized. Without concentrating on the staged action, students can pay attention to spoken words and their facial expressions. Rehearsals and performances of RT scripts promote students' proficiency to read the lines fluently. Being a part of the group, they have to practice correct pronunciation, intonation, and expression when reading the text repeatedly. In order to present a perfect performance, all members are supposed to accomplish the oral reading as accurately as possible. Likewise, they continue to read the same text orally until they are ready to perform the script. Even for the purpose of making their reading performance better, students are willing to spend extra time practicing oral skills (Uthman, 2002). When rehearsing, students discuss the characters and their characteristics. They talk about what the tones, intonations, and expressions are more suitable for reading. Then they read the script repeatedly and silently many times during rehearsals. They help each other to overcome the anxiety and frustration they meet. In this case, students have collected practices to sharpen their spoken abilities.

With perfecting oral reading performances, all students have the opportunity to practice their speaking, little by little increase their confidence in speaking in front of others, and finally succeed in performing the script for an audience (Worthy & Prater, 2002). Consequently, oral skill development comes alive in RT activities. Besides, speaking is concerned with not only words, structures, and pronunciation but also thoughts, motivations and comprehension (Miccoli, 2003). The RT activities make students engaged in learning different meanings of spoken English in different situations in addition to word pronunciation. In short, when conquering fears and being willing to take risks in speaking in front of others, students make significant progress in improvement of oral skills along with realizing the underlined oral communication.

RT and Reading

The obvious evidence to prove the effect of RT on the progress of English reading ability is students' reading fluency (Corcoran, 2005; Flynn, 2005; Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999; Prater & Worthy, 2002; Tyler & Chard, 2000). Reading fluency is a backbone to readers' reading efficiency and comprehension (Griffith & Rasinski, 2004; Rasinski, 2004). It refers to the ability to read correctly and quickly with adequate expression and meaning. Once readers gain reading fluency, they have developed the ability to understand the underlined meanings embedded in the content more than to read orally and fluently. Being fluent readers, they ought to read not only accurately but also with proper expression because they are able to comprehend the text through their oral interpretation in an expressive and meaningful manner.

For the purpose of accomplishing reading tasks, students have to reach reading fluency. The significance of enhancing reading fluency primarily in a reading

instruction enables students to get involved in reading development and to obtain the potential of understanding the text. According to Stayter and Allington (2001), the instruction of reading fluency could include such activities as repeated reading, silent reading, rehearsing, and performing dramas. The RT dramatic practices composed of the above activities provide students with the opportunity to speak with character's voice. Students read not only from the text but with the thoughts, experiences, and attitudes of the characters and even authors. Through reading and repeated reading, students are getting accustomed to interpreting and transforming the meanings. Step by step, they enlighten reading fluency and foster reading comprehension.

What's more, Therrien (2004) claimed that the idea of RT integrated assisted reading, reading while listening, paired reading, and repeated reading. The RT instruction containing these reading activities had an impact on students' reading proficiency. Especially for repeated reading, it was effective in fostering reading fluency and proficiency in reading. Samuels (1979) asserted that repeated reading helped students recognize words in the text automatically so as to reach reading fluency, a key to reading comprehension. Rasinski (2001) proclaimed that with reading repeatedly, students were stimulated to read again and again and then improved their reading rate, accuracy, fluency, and lastly comprehension.

RT effectively develops students' reading comprehension (Worthy & Prater, 2002). Students not only read aloud but merely gain the goal of reading fluency. With the repeated reading, they increase reading fluency instead of oral reading accurately. RT reading performance encourages students to read in a comprehensive manner rather than to simply read fast without understanding the meaning. According to Latrobe (1996), in addition to an activity with entertainments, RT mainly aims to encourage students to read independently. And students' fluent reading supports them to read more attentively because they are supposed to pay

attention to where is going on in the script (Flynn, 2005). Such being this case, reading comprehension has been built by reading independently and fluently.

RT and Writing

When teachers offer students a script, students in RT are inspired to write the script themselves. Latrobe (1996) stated that students felt confident of writing a script based on literary texts. By means of writing a script, students should continue to revise and modify their script to the end that they can perform better by a wonderful script where the lines are not only loyal to the original text but also interesting to the audience. Moreover, Stewart (1997) suggested that students should be encouraged to write by following the model if the original text could be a good model for writing. Subsequently, student's writing would be affected by the good model. The instruction of RT script writing, as West and Stremmel (1979) stated, was to focus on teaching students how to write down ideas, and how to have the ideas organized in a systematic as well as efficient way.

Students are visually capable of communicating what they think and feel by writing (Styles & Dunn, 1989). Ruddell (1971) asserted that the development of students' writing ability benefits in their oral language development. Such activities as reading literature and dramatic plays containing extensive usage of vocabulary and sentence structures can help students to properly express their own thoughts in oral as well as written contexts. According to Uthman (2002) and Young and Vardell (1993), in RT, each student in the same group was assigned to be responsible for certain pages of the text. They read assigned pages in their free time and adapted a script. Then they read other group members' scripts and decided which part was necessary to add and which part was not important to omit through countless communication. Therefore, RT provided students with an efficient means of

arranging story characters and then of developing what the characters are supposed to say. In such a positive interaction, students finally learned to write a good script for their RT performance.

Research has proved the effect of RT on students' writing development. For example, Forsythe (1997) claimed that the adaptation of the RT script could improve students' writing. The study was administered to the second-grade students. The concept of RT was introduced to the subjects and the oral performance was also done. Then, the adaptation of RT scripts had the subjects be familiar with the RT format. Next, the subjects chose their favorite stories to work on a script. They decided what should be said by narrators and characters. Each group was pleased with what they were doing and tried the best to finish adapting the script. Afterwards, several scripts were printed out. Groups shared their scripts together and observed their own defects. Through revision, the last writing had been completed to perform RT. Thus, the students' writing by means of a cooperative option was enhanced to develop. In addition, Stewart (1997) pointed out that having students appreciating appropriate literature works through adapting a script for RT performance contributed greatly to students' writing promotion. In her studies, *Charlotte's Web* was chosen to the reading text for her sixth-grade students because of its working on dialogues. Students were required to be aware of literary devices, characterization, and structures they were reading. After the groups finished reading aloud, they wrote responses to discuss with the other group members and even the whole class. They found quotes in what they had read to support their ideas. Especially, students' close attention to the dialogues in RT scripts had an impact on their writing. Students learned written dialogues develop faster than formal compositions. Thus, the experience of using RT scripts initiates students' awareness of reading contents and fosters their writing efficiently. Students cultivate such writing skills as summarizing, deleting, and

editing to accomplish RT scripts.

In RT, writing the script from the selected stories contains choosing proper quotes, sentences, interpretations, and even conclusions based on their own reading (Liu, 2000). These processes function to improve the writing skills of students through reading literature. With a view to accomplishing a script of RT, students need to make the most use of their capabilities of reflecting, evaluating, summarizing, and revising to enlighten their writing. Besides, RT makes students get to respond and discuss in an interactive way with their group members. Owing to such thoughtful practices, implementing RT enlivens reading to writing.

A lot of research focuses on conducting RT in primary and elementary education to instruct children to study their four language skills, whereas there are few research demonstrating the evident effect of RT on high school students. Millin and Rinehart (1999) stated that in elementary classrooms, RT activities were applied to prove its effect on children's English reading ability and attitudes toward English reading. Particularly for those less-skilled English readers, RT also fostered their motivation to be engrossed in English reading. However, few researchers investigated the implementation of RT in high school. Since the adolescent students' mental, cognitive, and physical developments are different from the children (Pattee, 2004), the effect of RT on the adolescents' language learning is worth exploring. Moreover, the studies of Corcoran (2005), Millin and Rinehart (1999), Rinehart (1999), and so forth confirmed the positive impact of RT on readers with reading difficulties or low-achievement. Nevertheless, conducting RT to instruct high-achieved students to improve their reading more is still missing. If a heterogeneous group composed of high-achieved and low-achieved students participates RT activities, how to stimulate the two-level students and promote their language learning at the same time can not be examined thoroughly. Therefore, there is still room for researchers to conduct

further studies to prove the effect of RT on students' language learning and performance.

In conclusion, experiencing the literary works by means of RT turns into a meaningful access not only to learning language but merely to enriching personal growth (Young & Vardell, 1993). During the participation in the processes of RT, students can give the literal words a voice and make the character come alive. They expand their language ability through the repetition of listening, speaking, reading and writing practices. Rich language knowledge has been developed bit by bit to internalize in their minds.

Functions of Reading Adolescent Literature

Abridgement and simplification texts have serious drawbacks (Ronnqvist & Sell, 1994). For instance, the learners sometimes complained that the language is boring and unenjoyable. By contrast, adolescent literature is written to appeal teenagers in an amiable way. Moreover, the characters of adolescent literature books share the same experience with students, so that students gain their individual responses through reading the characters' story (Prater, 2003). If the text is appropriate, students' motivation and reading habits will be influenced by the text (van Schooten & de Glopper, 2002). As for choosing the appropriate books for students in junior high school, adolescent literature turns into an adequate option for the reading materials. In order to investigate the functions of reading adolescent literature, the relevant literature about students' cultural, linguistic, and personal developments are explored in details.

Cultural Development

Adolescent literature can create a foreign world distinguished from where they

exist now. Literature is displayed in a wide perspective to introduce foreign cultures, societies and backgrounds to readers (Brumfit, 1986). With a view to deeply appreciating literary works, adolescents are supposed to take an adequate attitude toward the unfamiliar cultural background. They need to experience the world foreign to them without any cultural, historical, and even racial barriers.

Adolescent literature can function to build a tolerance toward different cultures for adolescents (Mckay, 1986). Carter and Long (1991) proclaimed that as contacting with literary texts full of thoughts and customs different from their own culture, readers were influenced to change their original prejudices and then to perceive dissimilarities derived from foreign cultures. In addition, Lazar (1993) assumed that if students learned a foreign language, they could get to know its culture by reading literature. Even though a lot of literary texts in English were written by authors from other countries aside from America and England, they still displayed divergent cultures and offered students a broad global world. That is to say, adolescents have been cultivated to appreciate and realize that the world, after all, is composed of various peoples, and that learning to accept other peoples' cultures presents humanities in everyone's mind.

What's more, young students perceive the vision of the customs and values belonging to other countries and learn to genuinely communicate and appreciate from the cross-cultural point of view (Chevalier & Houser, 1997; Strong, 1996). As Soter (1999) pointed out, through reading adolescent literature, teenagers stretched their cultural sense and recognition. Whatever the characters in the plot behave and reflect, teenagers learn that after all, there is general essentiality existing in mortal beyond those cultural differences. Take instructing teenagers to read *Holes* (Sachar, 1998) for example. Teenagers are more able to enrich their knowledge of American culture. Teenagers learn Wild West in the U. S. A. and expansion because Elya

Yelnats went to America from Latvia, Europe across Atlantic and the first Stanley Yelnats moved from New York to California. Besides, teenagers realize American family history by names. Families in America follow the tradition of naming a child after a member of a previous generation or giving a name with particular meaning such as Stanley Yelnats. Even teenagers learn about the American costume. Because Camp Green Lake is in Texas, Mr. Sir wore sunglasses and a cowboy hat, and the Warden wore a black cowboy and black cowboy boots which were studded with turquoise stones.

Adolescent readers are capable of going on a journey through racial awareness. The interpretation of the racial themes illustrates how readers experience the complicated racial discrimination and ultimately, how they conquer the prejudice and perceive a new ethnic equalization (Brooks & Hampton, 2005). Located in the multicultural literary texts, teenagers inspect the diversities of cultures, customs, and social values by means of receiving others ethnics to contemplate racial issues. By sharing experiences about people who are despised and insulted owing to their color of skin like Negros, teenagers learn to empathize with others and employ the perspective of global world (Tiedt, Tiedt, & Tiedt, 2001).

Furthermore, based on the events described in literature, young readers get to become aware of the historical background (Lazar, 1993), and start to sympathize with the weakened or minor races. They own the opportunities to encounter races with various cultures, languages, beliefs, and the like. Hence, teenagers realize that everyone is individual, but is still connected with each other, and even every race is independent, but can still count on each other. Take *Souder* (Armstrong, 1969) for example. It is the story of a young African American boy's life to struggle when his father was jailed because the boy's father was driven to steal food to feed his family. Teenagers understand the powerful parable of poverty, hope, prejudice, inhumanity,

and ultimate survival from African Americans. Especially, the boy experienced a great deal of unfairness when going on one of his many journeys in search of his father. Also, teenagers learn ethnic consideration in America by reading *Holes* (Sachar, 1998). In Camp Green Lake, X-ray, Armpit, and Zero are black. Stanley, Squid, and Zigzag are white. Magnet is Hispanic. All of them ought to live together well. Also, Sam was not allowed to attend classes and to kiss a white woman because he is a Negro. Obviously, *The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank* (Frank, 1947) describes the serious issues of racial discrimination. The awful suffering of Anne and her family in the Second World War because they are Jews can show readers the tragedy resulted from the violence of ethnic cleansing.

Linguistic Development

Adolescent literature promotes extensive vocabulary usage by catching readers' attention to word forms and everyday conversations (Mckay, 1986). Adolescent literary texts guide adolescents to extend the number of words and deepen the usage of lexica so as to foster their language acquisition. Carter and Long (1991) claimed that literary texts could be used as an instrument concerned with the guidance of certain vocabulary and structures in certain language uses. The more readers read literary texts, the more they accumulate their word bank. Also, the vocabulary derived from the literary sentences and paragraphs presents young students obvious comprehensible evidence (Fry, 1991; Strong, 1996). They penetrate the meanings of the words, phrases, and sentences and seek for the true interpretation the author originally desired to express. The more adolescent literature teenagers read, the more lexical knowledge they learn.

Adolescent literature is a great mixture of language structures. Littlewood (1986) assumed that literary texts offered many an example of grammatical usages.

By reading sufficient adolescent literary works, young readers little by little accustom themselves to several grammatical and structural sentences. Under such a linguistic influence, adolescents can get to learn how to express accurate and suitable grammatical instances in their speaking and writing. To the significant extent, they can develop their syntax knowledge and make best use of what they have learned from adolescent literature. As Hopper (2006) stated, accurate and comprehensive grammatical sentence structures could be accessible through appropriate readability without feeling confused about lexical difficulties. Then, the use of grammatical structures will be digested in reader's expressional language. For instance, in *Holes* (Sachar, 1998), young readers can learn the structure of sentences like *if only* from the song Stanley's father used to sing to him. Even they can broaden to study if yes, if possible, and so on. Teenagers, through Stanley's teaching Zero how to read and write, use the capital letters at the beginning of a word, if only it's the start of a sentence, or if it's a proper noun, like a name.

Adolescent literature makes adolescents familiar with different language varieties in some occasions. Reading adolescent literature with various genres and styles from formal to informal enables readers to express authentic language use naturally (Chang, 1998). As Littlewood (1986) and McKay (1986) pointed out, because literary works showed a range of genres from spoken registers to written ones, readers' literary competence could be enlightened. Furthermore, literary styles from conversational use to poetic ones could enliven readers' linguistic development. As readers get in touch with a work full of local dialects, they become inclined to be acquainted with local dialects and learn to when and where to use them in a proper way. Moreover, a word or a phrase itself is rich in several meanings. Or it may imply another meaning beyond its definition in the dictionary. Then, because adolescent literature is written in a way as young adults express in lives, reading

adolescent literature is the access to becoming familiar with the multiple complex meanings behind the words or sentences (Lazar, 1993). For example, after reading *Holes* (Sachar, 1998), teenagers can learn the implication of the words. Flowerpot means someone whose head is empty. Or Jack-O'-lantern means something is half rotten. Likewise, some characters have their own nicknames because of their specialties or physical symbols. For instance, Stanley's nickname is Caveman because he keeps his mouth shut most of the time. Hector Zeroni's Zero is derived from the contempt that Zero implies nobody and people think he has no brain. Ironically, Clyde Livingston is called Sweet Feet because his feet, in fact, smell very bad.

Personal Development

Adolescent literature provides the emotional, cognitive, and physical experiences for adolescents (Mckay, 1986). It mostly focuses on the issues of adolescent's mental as well as physical development during the puberty. Therefore, personal growth in adolescent literature is inevitably arranged as a primary function of what adolescents have learned from the events, humans, and surroundings.

Adolescent literature is intended to bring life hope and reality to adolescents (Donelson & Nilsen, 1989). As the protagonists are depicted in adolescent fictions, they often survive in every unfortunate, crucial, realistic crisis. They show adolescents the hopeful light of overcoming hardship as well as reality. With the inspiration and endurance, young adolescents enable themselves to confront the puberty and the future (Mertz & England, 1983; Santoli & Wanger, 2004). They have the ability to find themselves in the conflict and decide the solution to it. Similarly, adolescent literature makes teenagers believe that they are not neglected. They continue to seize the light of hope to encounter the life.

Reading adolescent literature is to help adolescents to grow and cope with what happens around them (Carter & Long, 1991). In order to undergo the puberty, adolescents need to handle many complicated situations (Trites, 2001). They gain the similar experiences from protagonists in the literary texts, and then gain enlightenment to control their individual affection, thoughts, and behaviors. In other words, it is essential for young students to obtain an entry into probing themselves and others more clearly and exploring the world more widely (Tiedt, Tiedt, & Tiedt, 2001). Owing to the realization of themselves and the world, teenagers acquire the means along with solutions to their perplexities. Fuchs (1987) emphasized that best of all, teenagers could refer to adolescent literature as a good story inducing them to think of real problems in several flexible perspectives and inevitably supporting them to deal with the problems. Consequently, adolescents must learn to exert their wisdom in the dilemma.

Young readers can study some personal feedback by exploring the plots of books as well as the characteristics or distinctive features of characters in *Holes* (Sachar, 1998). In order to keep a good peer relationship, when Stanley came to Camp Green Lake, he had better follow the rules in D tent. So when he finds the gold tube, he gave it to X-Ray because X-Ray was the leader. Or Stanley told Mr. Sir it was he that stole the sack of sunflower seeds and covered up for others. These just prove if Stanley wanted to be regarded as a member of the group, he needed to sacrifice something. Stanley got used to digging a hole, and his body became stronger and adjusted to the heat and harsh condition. After Zero ran away from Camp Green Lake, Stanley made up his mind to find him. Finally, he was patient enough to find water and onions. So students can learn from Stanley's growth. Also, in *Bridge to Terabithia* (Paterson, 1977), the protagonists, Jess and Leslie, were the best friends each other. When Jess was told that Leslie died for she tried to swing into Terabithia

and the rope broke, he could not accept it at first at all. Several days later, he finally recognized the courage, hope, and strength that his friendship with Leslie had offered him.

On account of being confused about the mental and physical changes during the puberty, adolescents ought to be aware of themselves under the surroundings and then develop the awareness of self-identification (Pattee, 2004). In other words, teenagers are extremely concerned with the role they play in the family, the peers, the school, and even the society. Hence, their first mission appears to identify themselves evolved in the events of their world (Bushman & Bushman, 1997). However, toward the protagonists of adolescent literature, their substituted experiences of self-identification have offered teenagers a medium for comparing to those struggling protagonists. Teenagers gain insight into their needs, thoughts, and values from literary texts (Fuchs, 1987). In sum, adolescents can identify themselves with the characters who face the same obstacles and downcasts through reading adolescent literature instead of considering themselves alienated from others. For example, in *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* (MacLachlan, 1985), Anna wanted Papa, Caleb, and herself to be perfect for Sarah. This situation, indeed, has made teenagers realize why those who have no mother along with themselves desire someone to substitute for the mother's love and care so strongly.

By reading *The summer of the Swans* (Bya, 1970), the story of a fourteen-year-old girl, Sarah Godfrey, and her mentally disabled brother, Charlie, teenagers experience the adolescent period and confront the same mental as well as physical problems as Sarah. Because the plot of the story is about an adolescent girl, Sarah, who learned to grow up, adolescents empathize themselves with Sarah. Especially, adolescents' immature personalities are the key to triggering the following events. But most important of all, another obvious theme is to prove children's

change to maturity. As the swans came here, and then would grow and fly to the land of their own, teenagers like Sarah will learn something important to make themselves become better and stronger in the future.

To sum up, English adolescent literature enlightens teenagers to develop cultural awareness, linguistic knowledge, and personal growth. Through reading and appreciating English adolescent literature, adolescent readers identify themselves with the characters in the plot and get to realize they are not isolated from others. Once they gain the sense of identification, they step by step learn to probe knowledge by encountering problems and then solve them. Hence, with the functions of reading adolescent literature, teenagers may go through the puberty and obtain internal and external development.

Reading Comprehension

Reading, a meaning-making process, is complicated thinking which involves both readers' background knowledge in a social context and the written texts (O'Donnell & Wood, 1999; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000; Walker, 1996). Generally speaking, the goals of reading are to seek for information, skim fast, learn from the context, integrate information, write, critique texts, and gain general comprehension (Grabe & Stroller, 2002). A good reader is a strategic reader possessing the foregoing goals of reading to speculate and verify meanings among sentences, paragraphs and passages, and achieve reading comprehension in the end. Consequently, reading comprehension is the essential goal for readers to achieve ultimately. In order to explore reading comprehension better, reading comprehension difficulties and reading comprehension strategies are discussed in details below.

Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Reading comprehension means that readers are able to make sense of the words, sentences, paragraphs, and articles. However, there are some readers who can not figure out what the author expressed in the words. They meet the difficulties comprehending what they intend to read. In other words, readers cannot understand the meanings behind the words. In order to apprehend what resulted in reading comprehension difficulties, the factors leading to reading comprehension difficulties as well as the categories of reading comprehension difficulties are investigated in the following.

Factors of Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Good comprehenders are supposed to not only possess a broad field of knowledge containing background information, linguistic and discourse knowledge, comprehension strategies but also maintain positive motivation (Snow & Sweet, 2003). In addition, appropriate reading texts play a meaningful part in reaching successful reading comprehension (Snow & Sweet, 2003). Based on the above viewpoints, the factors resulting in reading comprehension difficulties could be analyzed from two aspects, the students and the text.

As far as students are concerned, their background knowledge has a positive impact on comprehension. O'Donnell and Wood (1999) described background knowledge, prior knowledge or world knowledge, as the knowledge of the world that has stored in students' memories. Because reading comprehension covers combining what students have known about the topic of the text with what is mentioned in the content, to what extent students have known determines how much students will comprehend. Once students lack such prior knowledge, comprehension can not come up. Then for linguistic knowledge, Rispen (1990) described that

inefficient language input might lead to students' slower lexical recognition, and syntax along with semantic access; therefore, reading comprehension difficulties that occur to poor readers result from the problem of linguistic and discourse knowledge.

Moreover, comprehension strategies encourage students to monitor their reading performance and responses and assist them to promote their motivation to persist in reading (Risko, Fairbanks, & Alvarez, 1991). When students exert appropriate strategies that modify the way students alternate, systematize, and memorize information, they will become convinced that taking enough effort achieves some success and they will become motivated to continue reading. Given that students are unwilling to use strategies to pay attention to the text, their concentration will fail to focus on the content and later word recognition and sentence comprehension will not work (Bender & Larkin, 2003). Reading difficulties could start to appear. According to Sideridis et al. (2006), students who are weak in reading comprehension lack high motivation. What's more, they tend to be unwilling to be involved in the reading process.

Texts that cannot connect background knowledge with students, are not written or structured well, and exclude important information are difficult to comprehend (Snow & Sweet, 2003). Hence, the readability of the reading materials decides to what degree students comprehend the text. Richardson and Morgan (1997) declared that text structures, discourses, and text coherence decided the main part of readability. Adopting inappropriate structures, inconsiderate discourses, and low coherence in the text hinders students from comprehending. In addition, Nist and Mealey (1991) remarked that readability judging from text structures coping with linguistic analysis, logical relationship, and story organization influenced students' comprehension. Complex textual structures easily restrained students from recalling their knowledge and from succeeding in applying it in time. In a word, the use of proper reading

texts is the key to successful reading (Therrien, Gormley, & Kubina, 2006), whereas inappropriate reading materials result in student's reading difficulties.

Categories of Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Based on the factors resulting in reading comprehension difficulties, there are mainly four categories of reading comprehension difficulties while students are reading. Students may encounter the failure of schema theory, the limited language knowledge, the inefficient application of reading strategies, and low motivation. These categories of reading comprehension difficulties are discussed in details.

The effect of prior knowledge that fails to manage as students get in touch with the new information of the reading text causes students to encounter reading comprehension difficulties. Students cannot integrate information of the new text with their prior knowledge so that they are unable to comprehend the new text (Kozminsky & Kozminsky, 2001). Based on the reading difficulties, schema theory so called the function of students' prior knowledge desolates. Nist and Mealey (1991) announced that the schema offered the performance of connecting what students had known about the topic of the text with what they would learn from the content of the text. If the schema could not facilitate students' prior knowledge, the textual information would not fit into the accurate position. The worse students organize the framework of old and new information, the more confusion they receive.

No sufficient language knowledge causes readers with reading difficulties to become ineffective readers. Williams (1984) assumed that the effective readers could read fluently and efficiently because they acquired enough language knowledge including lexical, syntax, and semantic rules. Readers know how to operate the linguistic competence and can read texts well. In contrast, readers with limited linguistic knowledge may be confused with the context, and then have difficulties.

Little by little, the readers with reading comprehension difficulties in understanding the word forms, word orders, and sentence structures are considered not to be fluent readers.

Even though students have acquired language knowledge, they may have difficulties executing an adequate strategy that enables them to use the insufficient information and then catch on the text (Olson, Duffy, & Mack, 1984; Walker, 1996). Walker (1996) indicated that the truth that they could just depend on language knowledge caused them to become inefficient readers. Students are stuck over the text and not able to identify the text with their experience. Particularly, when reading a heavy text, students may fail in comprehending the meaning of the text. After all, reading is a strategic process where strategies assist students to figure out the text. Without the proper application of reading strategies, students worsen their reading comprehension difficulties. Olson, Duffy and Mack (1984) remarked that the readers who lacked knowledge about comprehension strategies didn't adjust themselves to various texts and purposes flexibly. Therefore, students without the capability of employing comprehension strategies could fail to be aware of comprehension during reading and make up for ineffective reading.

Students become reluctant to read when they are not motivated to appreciate what they have read. Smith (1997) indicated that students could not gain the joy of reading, especially when the reading materials were irrelevant and boring to them. They were enforced to perceive something nonsensical to them, to encounter continuing failure, and in the end to be frustrated with reading comprehension. In addition to the effect of limited language knowledge, students are influenced by the content that interests them and the goal that stimulates them (Alvermann & Eakle, 2003). Once the classroom activities and reading materials do not motivate students, they show boredom and troubles in comprehending. With regarding reading as a

failed experience, students will not be engaged in reading comprehension. As Schiff and Calif (2004) stated, the reiteration of failure in reading caused students a sense of helplessness. When students do not tolerate frustrating experiences, they ultimately quit reading.

To sum up, the failure of schema theory, the limited language knowledge, the inefficient application of reading strategies, and low motivation tend to happen to those who are unable to read fluently, effectively, and independently. The four categories of reading comprehension difficulties may cause students to give up reading finally. To instruct students to read is not only to make them read word by word but also to guide them to deal with reading difficulties. In that case, students can obtain the joy of reading.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

To deal with reading comprehension difficulties, there are strategies applied to help students while reading. Reading comprehension strategies improve students' comprehension, and most important of all, encourage them to be active in the process of reading (Seyler, 2000). Hence, based on reading comprehension strategies, students are capable of grasping what they read and fulfilling reading purposes. In order to realize reading comprehension strategies more, the features and categories of the strategies are discussed in the following section.

Features of Reading Comprehension Strategies

Because reading is a meaning-making process, the strategies to comprehend the text need to be developed. The knowledge and instruction of when and how to adapt reading comprehension strategies allow students with and without reading comprehension difficulties under diverse reading circumstances to be effective in

reading (Bimmel, 2001; Kozminsky & Kozminsky, 2001; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). Thus, reading comprehension strategies are essentially a technique taken to accomplish reading purposes with great efficiency.

Grellet (1981) affirmed that whether the easy words or complicated ideas, the strategies to study, hypothesize, anticipate, skim, confirm, predict, and reread the text aimed at helping students to achieve reading comprehension well. Bender and Larkin (2003) assured that especially for students with reading comprehension difficulties, comprehension strategies could enhance them not only to concentrate on reading but to participate in grasping important information effectively. Myers (1991) indicated that strategies containing predicting, questioning, and summarizing could foster students to read and solve obstacles during reading. Hence, reading comprehension strategies basically serve the function of self-monitoring.

Research on reading comprehension strategies has demonstrated the significance of students' performance in their strategy use during reading. Taraban, Kerr, and Ryneason (2004) claimed that reading strategies such as underlining, highlighting, annotating sentences or words were to remind students of the specific information of the text. The obvious marking helped students to review important information. Furthermore, it made students turn information into their memory. In addition, Aarnoutse and Schellings (2003) proved that the students in the experimental program were instructed to develop reading comprehension strategies in problem-oriented reading environment. The result showed that in order to overcome reading comprehension difficulties, the students exerted various reading strategies. And the learning of using reading strategies to face problems also positively influenced students' motivation.

In a study, Lau and Chan (2003) found that good readers were capable in using reading strategies to comprehend text. They knew how to realize effective strategies

to build and digest cognitive meanings of the text. And students' internal motivation showed the significant relation with the students' ability on using reading strategy. To summarize, reading comprehension strategies are demonstrated to play a vital role in students' reading comprehension performance. The reading strategies help students cope with reading difficulties efficiently and continue their reading.

Categories of Reading Comprehension Strategies

Reading comprehension strategies are generally classified to employ in three phases: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Although the strategies are applied in the three individual phases, all of them aim at offering students approaches to fluent, efficient, and independent reading.

First, the reading comprehension strategies in pre-reading are to stimulate students' interest in the topic through identifying their background knowledge and incorporating it into new information (Larkin, 2001). They also enable students to bring about significant vocabulary and phrases to fit into the text (Williams, 1984). For example, such preparation strategies as previewing a text, predicting what it is about, activating prior knowledge, and setting the reading goal are encouraged before reading. Gunning (1996) indicated that activating prior knowledge and previewing a text could let students predict what they would read and then set their individual reading goal so that they were able to continue their reading.

Kindig (2006) assumed that pre-reading strategies, such as asking students what they know about the topic for facilitating background knowledge, asking students what they desire to learn about the text for creating a purpose for reading, and requesting students to predict what the text will be for providing an anticipation could force students to initiate their reading. Schiff and Calif (2004) advised that pre-reading comprehension identified the purpose of reading by means of questioning

strategies. Students ought to observe specific information when skimming, scanning, and surveying text questions. These pre-reading questions are used to predict the content, concentrate on the main ideas, and even distinguish relevant supported examples.

In the while-reading process, the comprehension strategies are carried out to involve a framework of language knowledge so as to help students be aware of the meaning of the text and the author's purpose (Belk, Seed, & Abdi, 2005; Williams, 1984). The implementation of while-reading strategies involves monitoring what is understood or not understood and adapting timely reading skills to facilitate understanding. To increase word recognition, Valtin and Naegelé (2001) advised that by alphabetic and sound-out strategies students could recognize words through connecting relevant phonetic forms with the meanings of the words. To perceive complicated sentences, Schiff and Calif (2004) assured that parsing strategies should be taught to students. Students highlight or mark difficult words, complex sentences, and rhetorical structures. As rereading, students parse syntactically to get forward thorough understanding.

Therrien, Gormley and Kubina (2006) indicated that rereading or repeated reading strategies were effective reading instruction for improving reading fluency, especially for students with comprehension difficulties because rereading or repeated reading strategies would aid word reading which promotes fluent passage reading. In addition, writing strategies such as annotating let students be engaged in reading activities and insist on concentration during reading (Seyler, 2000). Annotating is to mark up the text, underline the sentences, label the ideas, and illustrate differences and similarities. The annotating way forces students to make distinctions and note the key points. In a word, annotating inspires students to read with brains. And using paraphrasing or summarizing strategies helps students to identify topic, main

ideas, and supporting details (Lebzelter & Nowacek, 1999). As reading a paragraph, students ask themselves to recognize the main ideas and supported details and write them down in their own words or summarize them. Students benefit from the process of paraphrasing and summarizing.

Finally, reading comprehension strategies in post-reading guide students to conclude what they have read and respond their individual opinions (Williams, 1984). Dowhower (1999) stated that the post-reading would lie in the development of students' independent reading. Strategies primarily guide students to recall the content, respond their feedback, and even extend relevant texts. The fundamental key is to sequence what students have read (Barringer, 2006). When students can correctly string the plots together, they can think about the characters or contents. Furthermore, students can monitor the strategies they use and evaluate their performance by themselves or with peers.

Seyler (2000) asserted that reflecting as well as reviewing after reading could make students memorize the text better and make the text more meaningful to them. Through reflection, students can bring themselves with the meanings of the text because students are able to attach what they have read to the events in their lives. When developing the habit of reflecting on reading, students can gain pleasure from reading. When students also spend time reviewing and reflecting, they may prepare something, recheck annotations, and answer the questions in the text. All of these strategies ensure students' remembering. Consequently, reading turns into part of significance in students' memories.

To sum up, the reading comprehension strategies in three phases including pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading provide students to handle reading thoroughly. As long as students learn to make proper use of the reading comprehension strategies, their reading difficulties can be cleared up in time. To a

certain extent, students get to make progress in reading comprehension with the assistance of reading strategies.

Interactive Reading

Both the bottom-up reading model and top-down reading model help students read with efficiency. But when the students with low lexical and grammatical knowledge apply bottom-up reading skills, they would be unable to make correct meaning from the reading texts (Campbell & Malicky, 2002). In other words, students have no capability of enlightening interaction with the text. On the other hand, top-down reading focuses on students' constructing meaning based on their background knowledge and the context. Eskey (1988) asserted that because the students executing top-down reading were first supposed to be those excellent in lexical and grammatical knowledge, top-down reading could not take the students with decoding difficulties into consideration. Once the students with decoding difficulties read in top-down skills, they would also fail to obtain the interaction from the text. Since neither the bottom-up reading model nor top-down reading model fulfills the need of readers, alternative reading models have to be suggested. Generally, interactive reading is a reading method to let students succeed in communicating with teachers, other classmates, and texts while reading. With a view to gaining a more insight into interactive reading, the following section is to investigate classroom interaction first, to specifically explore cooperative learning conducted in reading activities, and further to examine the types of interactive reading according to the diverse interactions with the teacher, other classmates, and the text.

Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction is managed not only by teachers but by students.

Especially, learning takes place in an interactive environment where students enable themselves to construct meanings from experiences that they interact with other classmates and teachers (Allwright, 1984; Fisher, 2005). Essential interaction patterns in the classroom can be classified into the patterns of teacher initiation, student responses, and teacher evaluation. Teachers' recalling, encouragement, clarifying, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing, and students' responding, discussing, sharing, and cooperating consist of classroom interaction (Cazden, 1988; Dillon & Searle, 1981). In a word, classroom interaction is not more than teacher action and students reaction (Malamah-Thomas, 1987). Classroom interaction lies in teachers' acting and students' reacting reciprocally. Hence, teachers need to modify their actions based on the subsequent student reaction until learning occurs effectively. Teacher action upon the class and student reaction to teacher action are mutually influenced.

Cook (1991) also asserted that active interaction could be derived from bountiful face-to-face conversation. Students learn languages by communicating with classmates to solve obstacles or discuss problems. With increasing communication, classroom interaction is enlightened. Students obtain authentic opportunities to experience learning of their own. Besides, Ellis, Tanaka, and Yamazaki (1994) found that interactive input resulted in better comprehension for language learners. The teachers provided students with an interactive environment. In peer, or groups, students employed language to communicate with others. Most important of all, Tsui (1995) claimed that classroom interaction had a significant effect on language learning because students' active participation in language activities empowered the communication between teachers and students, and that between students and students. Such meaningful interaction in the classroom brings about discourses in language usage. Thus, the more positive interaction takes place, the better students acquire

language (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Classroom interaction plays an influential part in facilitating language acquisition.

Team work, class discussions, and teacher-students talks are efficient accesses to promoting classroom interaction because students are encouraged to initiate individual agreement and disagreement, opinions, and responses in front of teachers and students. (Labercane & Hunsberger, 1990; Pica & Doughty, 1985). In this way, students' learning is stimulated in a social environment. Robinson (1994) revealed that through verbal as well as nonverbal interaction, students and teachers could be involved in the reciprocal dialogue. During the dialogue, both students and teachers are active in exploring learning and teaching. In short, positive classroom interaction gives rise to powerful learning and teaching.

Cooperative Reading and Learning

Cooperative learning means that students work in small groups and help one another through various cooperative methods to achieve the academic goal. It offers cooperative methods to organize group work. Then, students interact with other group members and are stimulated to improve each other's learning (Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Slavin, 1990a).

The main essences of cooperative learning are interdependence, accountability, interaction, and interpersonal skills (Coelho, 1992; Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1984; Ravenscroft, 1997). In cooperative groups, each of members has to complete the same academic goal, and the task is finished by the whole group better than the individual one. If one individual want to succeed, he must cooperate with others. Thus, students are aware of their interdependence with other group members. In addition, each of group members is individual accountable for their part although students work together.

As students master their individually assigned task, they share, discuss, negotiate, and communicate with one another. The interaction and interpersonal skills are gradually derived from students' cooperation.

Cooperative learning benefits students' learning. Olsen and Kagan (1992) remarked that cooperative learning created chances for students to employ active communication and use of language to develop language and integrate language with the natural content. Students ought to exchange information for accomplishing the task so that communication takes place authentically and naturally. When students communicate, clarifications to ensure comprehension and academic achievement to language development are put into practice. Coelho (1992) denounced that in cooperative learning, students gained affective support from other group members. Because each of group members had the same academic goal to achieve, they needed to take and give assistance for learning. Each member's fulfillment resulted in the success of the group. Thus, peer support and acceptance for learning in cooperative activities enlighten students' affective development.

Most important of all, the approach to apply cooperative learning to reading contains partner reading, reading aloud, figuring out meanings, retelling stories, independent reading, and the like, in reading groups (Slavin, 1990b). Many scholars have proved that a cooperative learning approach has facilitated students' reading proficiency. For example, Calderon, Hertz-Lazarowitz, and Slavin (1998) demonstrated that the effect of the cooperative integrated reading and composition program offered the subjects everyday opportunities to use language. Through finding meanings and solving problems, the subjects made progress in reading performance. The longer the subjects were engaged in cooperative reading experiences, the better their reading performance developed. Also, Stevens (2003) maintained that by implementing Student Team Reading and Writing including the

principles of cooperative learning, the subjects had significant achievement in reading comprehension besides in language expression.

McDonell (1992) revealed that students learning in a cooperative environment could be well-prepared for the subsequent challenges. Cooperative learning encourages students to learn how to be responsible not only for the learning of their own but for that of other group members. The positive interdependence derived from cooperative learning activities contributes to create a community where students are willing to work cooperatively for the reading purposes. Particularly, students are able to communicate, cooperate, mediate, and finally problem-solve during reading.

Types of Interactive Reading

One of the most effective way in which teachers encourage students to develop effective language skills such as reading is to embed language in the natural and authentic activities because learning is embedded in a reciprocal environment (Coelho, 1992; McDonell, 1992). Students need to interact on meaningful missions with one another. As Adams and Hamm (1990) suggested, reading activities had better integrate sections such as making predictions, reading to each other, organizing summaries, and sharing responses. This is the truth that interactive reading occurs when students learn to read through listening to teachers, resolving conflicts, sharing opinions, and making decisions with classmates, and questioning and concluding the reading materials. Hence, there are primarily three types of interactive reading implemented, reciprocal teaching, cooperative reading with others, and responses to the text.

Reciprocal teaching is a reading method for teachers to interactively promote students' reading ability (Gambrell, Mazzoni, & Almasi, 2000; Palincsar & Brown, 1986; Richardson & Morgan, 1997). Under reciprocal teaching, students can acquire

the teacher's guidance through summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting to reinforce their reading. So teachers and students work together to comprehend the text. Collis and Lacey (1996) affirmed that the interactive teachers could play the role of facilitating students' learning, developing students' relationships, initiating students' reflections, and most important of all, providing students with scaffolding. Edwards and Westgate (1994) and Fisher (2005) elaborated that the communication between teachers and students could fire up the power of interaction. With increasing interaction, teacher-student relationship is highly enhanced. The enhanced teacher-student interaction affects students' learning to read. Even according to Gomez and Smith (1991), and Harel (1992), in the interactive reading activities, although teachers spoke little, they could offer expansive questions to excite thinking, help students to encounter authentic tasks, and provide students with enough freedom to predict instead of controlling thoughts and deeds.

In order to interactively read with classmates, cooperative reading in groups is implemented. Take an interactive reading activity, Jigsaw, for example. Students master their different reading assignments in expert groups. Then they return to their original groups and share what they have mastered in expert groups with the other groups. Coelho (1992) indicated that this method was significant in the heterogeneous group. High-achieved students assist low-achieved students until all of them are able to understand the assigned reading and perform it well. Students discuss the material with one another, help one another understand it, and encourage one another to work hard. In addition, reading activities focusing on interacting with classmates reinforce the abilities of students' problem-solving (Adams & Hamm, 1990; Arvaja, Hakkinen, Rasku-Puttonen, & Etelapelto, 2002). Through interaction with other classmates, students are involved in mutual discussion and negotiation to successfully identify reading confusion and create reading comprehension.

Interactive reading enhances students to actively respond to the reading text. In addition to the positive relationship with the expert teacher and other classmates, interactive reading should also reflect on what students have comprehended from the text (Wells, Chang, & Maher, 1990). That is to say, opportunities for students' individual response to the reading text need to be enriched in the interactive reading. This type of interactive reading focusing on readers' responses makes students learn to construct their own meaning by connecting the textual material to issues in their lives and describing what they experience as they read. As Walker (1989) stated, students integrate their prior knowledge with the text, elaborate and interpret meanings from the text, and monitor their understanding of the text during interactive reading. So they can make sense of their reading and respond to it appropriately.

In conclusion, interactive reading makes students take responsibility for their individual reading and reflections on it with the teacher's facilitation and other classmates' cooperation (Gross, 1991). The interaction mainly counts on the reciprocal relation with the teacher, the mutual interdependence on others, and the reflecting feedback from the reading text. The more students are engaged in interactive reading, the better readers students become.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods implemented in the study. There are four sections included here. First, the subjects involved in the study are introduced briefly. Then, the instruments to accomplish the study are interpreted. Third, the study procedures are described explicitly. Finally, how the data are analyzed is explained in details.

Subjects

The subjects in this study were 78 students from two classes in the ninth grade of Kaohsiung Municipal Wu-fu Junior High School. The 78 students came from Class 907 and Class 911. Each class was composed of 39 students.

All of the subjects have learned English as a foreign language for at least four years, including two years in elementary school and two years in junior high school. They were from two classes taught by the researcher of the study. In order to develop their cooperative learning and distribute jobs fairly, each class was divided into six groups. The group members should contain the students with elementary, intermediate, and advanced language proficiency. Therefore, the teaching procedure was not interrupted by the subjects' disabled performance.

Instruments

Three instruments were applied to achieve the purpose of the study. They were teaching materials, the English reading comprehension pretest and post-test, and the pre-study and post-study questionnaires on the responses to the RTALRP of the

students. Each of them had different functions, and is described in details as follows.

Teaching Materials

In order to motivate the subjects' interests, the researcher chose two adolescent fiction for this study: *The Magic Finger* (Dahl, 1997) and *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* (MacLachlan, 2004). Both fiction were written by celebrated authors. One is Roald Dahl, who has finished such best sellers as *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The other is Patricia MacLachlan, who is awarded the Newbery Medal and the Gold Kite Award for her novels. What is more, both fiction were written with the low readability (Level 6) which is appropriate for the ninth-grade students to understand. Even though there are some unknown grammatical usages and words, the students are still able to comprehend the whole meaning by making use of observing the entire context. Nevertheless, the distinctions between *The Magic Finger* and *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* are identified based on the plot, characters, setting, theme, and style.

First, *The Magic Finger* is the story about an eight-year-old girl who possessed a very special gift, a magic finger. When the girl pointed at something with this magic finger, the thing she pointed at would change. She could not tolerate anyone to hunt. However, her neighbors, the Gregg family, hunted for fun. It was useless for her to dissuade the Greggs from hunting, so she turned the Greggs into ducks and ducks into the Greggs with her magic finger. Because of becoming ducks, the Greggs experienced the difficult life and started to regret their hunting behaviors. As they were like normal humans again, they had learned a lesson about how to love and protect birds.

On the other hand, *Sarah, Plain and Tall* is the story about a widowed

Midwestern farmer, Jacob Whitting, with his two children, Anna and Caleb.

Because Jacob's wife died after Caleb was born, Jacob put an ad in the newspaper to look for a wife. He received a letter from Sarah from Maine. After several letters, Sarah decided to leave her hometown and visit for a month. During this period of time, a lot of events happened between Sarah and the Whittings. Even though she felt homesick for Maine, she finally stayed with Jacob, Anna, and Caleb in Kansas.

In terms of the different themes and plots, *The Magic Finger* and *Sarah, Plain and Tall* have opposite styles. *The Magic Finger* is fantasy fiction which focuses on triggering readers' imagination. The untrue plot puts emphasis on the good and evil, and the dark and bright instead of the historical development of the characters. On the contrary, *Sarah, Plain and Tall* is realistic fiction that stresses on reflecting the real minds of the characters. There are no illusional images in this fiction. The writer of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* depicted the spiritual development of the characters in a realistic and straightforward way. By means of such a way, the plot of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* appears to be more amiable as well as easy for readers. Hence, *The Magic Finger* is a fiction with fantasy which may attract the subjects' interest to read. It is arranged to read in the first four weeks. *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* is a fiction which describes more realistic plots and more literary words; thus it is to read in the latter eight weeks.

The English Reading Comprehension Pretest and Post-test

With a view to evaluating the differences of English reading comprehension of the students between before and after the RTALRP, there were two English reading comprehension tests conducted for the study. Before the implementation of the RTALRP in English classes, all subjects took the English proficiency pretest (Appendix B) which emphasized on their English reading comprehension at the

beginning of the new semester. After the twelve-week application of the RTALRP, all the subjects took an English proficiency post-test (Appendix C) at the end of the semester. The researcher then compared the results of the two tests to investigate how EFL students perform English reading comprehension differently before and after the RTALRP.

The Pre-study and Post-study Questionnaires on the Response to RTALRP of the Students

The pre-study questionnaires on the student responses to English learning (Appendix D) were given to all the subjects for the purpose of exploring their experience of learning English. All subjects answered the pre-study questionnaires before the study. The questionnaire consisted of three parts to probe the three research questions including investigating the subjects' responses to English learning, especially English reading and exploring the cooperation in English classrooms before the RTALRP. Each part had five items. Each items contained a five-scale multiple choice, including "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," "strongly disagree."

The post-study questionnaires on the student responses to RTALRP (Appendix E) were given to all the subjects for the purpose of primarily exploring the effect of the RTALRP on the subjects' English reading and their responses to the RTALRP. All subjects answered the post-study questionnaires after the study. The questionnaire consisted of the main two sections to probe the five research questions overall. The first section had five parts separately requiring the subjects to respond to English learning, especially English reading, the RTALRP, the selected adolescent literature fiction, and the cooperative learning. Each part had five to six items. Each items contained a five-scale multiple choice, including "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral,"

“disagree,” “strongly disagree.” The second section was designed to list three open-ended questions to investigate the research question more deeply. One was to ask what process in the RTALRP the subjects would like best and why they liked it best. Another was about which novel the subjects enjoyed reading better, *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* or *The Magic Finger* and the reasons why they chose it. The other was to require the subjects to write down whether they liked to learn cooperatively and why they liked or did not like that. The three open-ended questions were expected to express the subjects’ comments and suggestions for the RTALRP.

With a view to verifying reliability and validity, the data of the pre-study questionnaires and post-study questionnaires were collected and computed with SPSS for Windows. Based on the statistical reliability analysis of SPSS, the reliability coefficient of pre-study questionnaires was .91 (Appendix H-1) and that of post-study questionnaires was .96 (Appendix H-2). The reliability coefficients of the pre-study questionnaires and post-study questionnaires were higher than .70, so the two questionnaires were considered reliable. In addition, according to the results of the factor analysis of SPSS, the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy of pre-study questionnaires was .82 and that of post-study questionnaires was .83. The KMO Measures of Sampling Adequacy of the pre-study questionnaires and post-study questionnaires were higher than .70. The results showed that the pre-study questionnaires and post-study questionnaires were considered valid and adequate.

Procedures

The study was designed to conduct in twelve weeks. Before implementing the RTALRP, the researchers designed the appropriate English reading comprehension examination as a pretest and post-test, and the two pre-study and post-study questionnaires. The second step was to have the subjects take the English reading

comprehension pre-tests and reply to the pre-study questionnaires.

In order to conduct the RTALRP, the researcher distributed the script to every subject and asked them to read it together at the beginning. Then, the researcher guided the subjects to read the script in turns. After taking turns at reading, some subjects were instantly assigned to play the given roles of the script and read the lines aloud. When the subjects had understood the plot of the script, the subjects were divided into heterogeneous groups based on their English proficiency. To facilitate the RTALRP, each member of the group took their individual duty to accomplish the assignment containing cooperatively writing, reading, and rehearsing the rewritten script. Finally, each group performed their individual script in front of the teacher and classmates. Afterwards, the researcher asked the students to read the other assigned pages of the first and the second fiction in the same RT procedures.

After the RTALRP, all the subjects took the English reading comprehension post-tests and answered the post-study questionnaires. Afterwards, the researcher collected, computed, and analyzed the scores of the subject' English reading comprehension tests and the responses of their post-test questionnaires. Briefly, the procedures of the study were presented in Figure 1:

Data Analysis

The data of the study were collected from the subjects' English reading comprehension pretests and post-tests and their responses to the pre-study and post-study questionnaires before and after the RTALRP. They were analyzed in two ways. One was a quantitative analysis and the other was a qualitative analysis. After the two sorts of analyses, a more subtle understanding of the effects of the RTALRP was carried out.

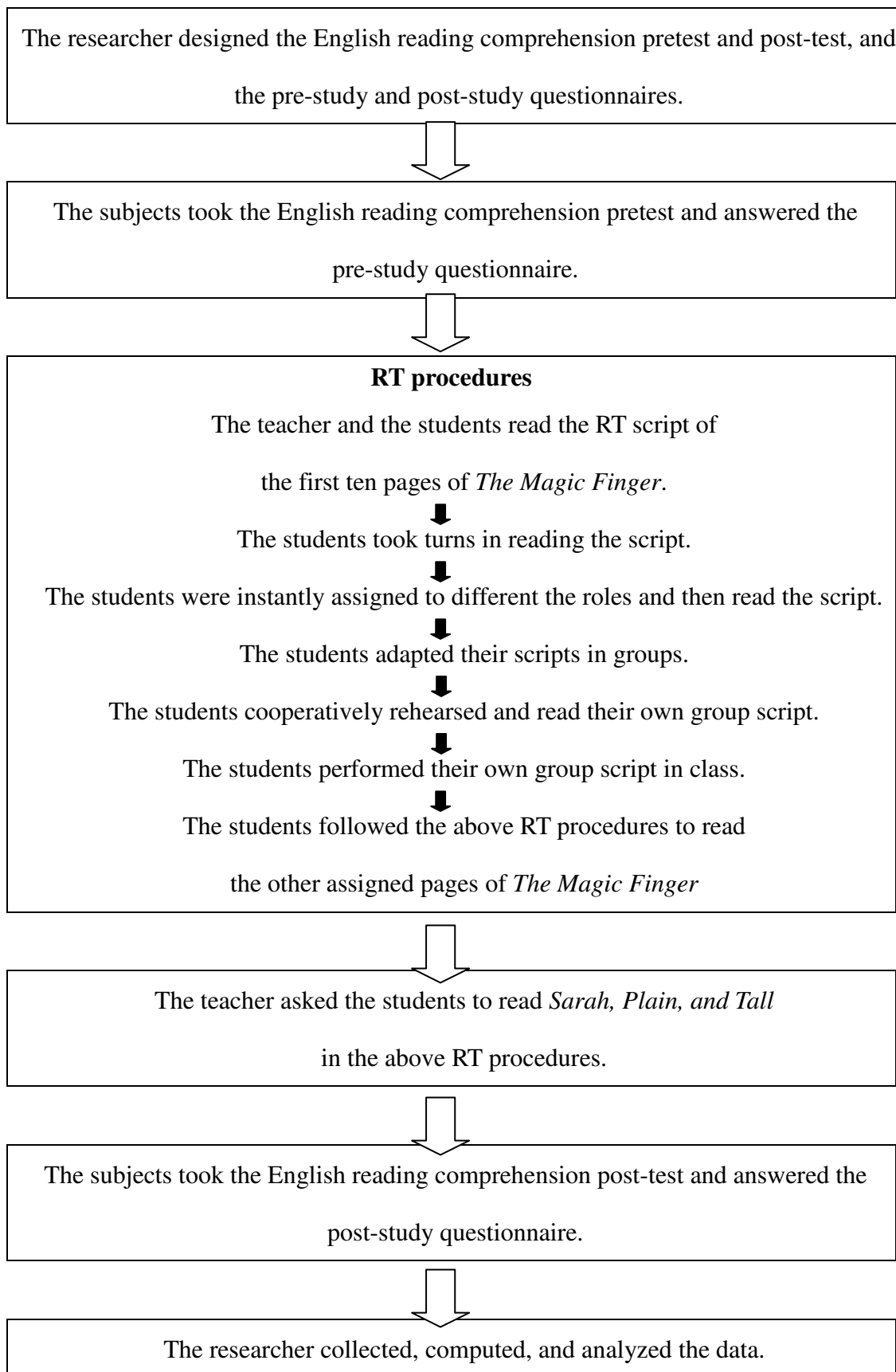


Figure 1. A flow chart of the study procedures

A Quantitative Analysis

To accomplish a quantitative analysis, the subjects' scores of their pretest and post-test of English reading comprehension and their responses to the pre-study and post-study questionnaires before and after the RTALRP were collected and computed with the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for Windows and later compared by *t*-tests. By comparing the subjects' scores of the pretest and post-test of English reading comprehension by *t*-tests, the research first investigated whether there was any significant difference in the subjects' English reading comprehension. In addition, the subjects' responses to the pre-study and post-study questionnaires were also analyzed by *t*-tests to examine the student responses to English learning, especially English reading, the RT activities, the selected adolescent literature, and cooperative learning before and after the RTALRP.

A Qualitative Analysis

In the qualitative analysis, the subjects responded each of the open-ended questions in the second section of the post-study questionnaire. The whole subjects replied to the open-ended questions including Items 39, 40, and 41. These responses were also examined and generalized in a qualitative way to investigate the subjects' responses to the RT activities, the selected adolescent literature, and cooperative learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to display the study results and to investigate the effects of RTALRP on English learning, especially on English reading comprehension of 78 junior high school students. The results and discussions are addressed to explore the effect of RTALRP in terms of the five research questions. First, the comparison of the students' English reading comprehension tests before and after RTALRP was presented. Second, the differences of the student responses to English learning, particularly English reading before and after RTALRP were compared. Third, the student opinions on the RT activities were probed. Fourth, the student responses to the two selected adolescent fiction, *The Magic Finger* and *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*, were examined. Finally, the comparison of the students' cooperative learning before and after RTALRP was discussed.

The data collected in this study were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. To be specific, the scores of the students' English reading comprehension pretest and post-test, and the student responses to Items 1 to 19 of the pre-study questionnaire and Items 1 to 38 of the post-study questionnaire were analyzed in a quantitative way. On the other hand, the student replies to the open-ended questions, including Items 39, 40, and 41 of the post-study questionnaire, were analyzed in a qualitative way.

Changes in English Reading Comprehension of the Students

The purpose of this section is to investigate the changes in English reading comprehension of the subjects between the pretest and post-test. The subjects took the English reading comprehension pretest before the RTALRP and the English

reading comprehension post-test after the RTALRP. The pretest and post-test respectively contained two sections. The first section was composed of 9 questions based on three English dialogue articles. The second section consisted of 16 questions based on six English articles. The questions totaled up to 25. Each question was four points; 25 ones were one hundred points. For the purpose of exploring the changes in English reading comprehension tests of the subjects, a paired-sample *t*-test of SPSS for Windows was employed to compare the results of the two English reading comprehension tests. The results are showed in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of English Reading Comprehension of the Students between the Pretest and Post-test

Item		Number	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Reading	Pretest	78	62.77	23.01	-9.40	.00*
Comprehension	Post-test	78	76.54	20.29		

Note: * $p < .05$ SD: Standard Deviation

As shown in Table 1, there is a significant difference between the pretest and post-test because the *p*-value ($t = -9.40, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the mean score of the post-test ($M = 76.54$) is higher than that of the pretest ($M = 62.77$). The result reveals that with the application of the RTALRP, the subjects have obtained great improvement in English reading comprehension. The RTALRP aimed to stimulate the subjects' interest to read English. With the motivation derived from participation the RT activities, the subjects finished reading the selected fiction and then, they promoted their reading ability little by little.

Before conducting the RTALRP, the 78 subjects were not highly willing to pick

up other English literature texts such as novels, magazines, and so on to improve their English knowledge actively and eagerly. They read English for doing well on the English tests as well as entering their ideal senior high schools. Even they considered other English texts too difficult to comprehend and too long to finish reading. As a result, they did not adapt themselves to reading English materials except for their English textbooks in class. Namely, because of spending less time on reading, the subjects got few opportunities to make use of reading comprehension strategies appropriately. While taking the English reading pretest, the subjects regarded the pretest as a difficult and time-wasting test because they were frustrated by their insufficient vocabulary, poor grammatical knowledge, and awkward reading strategies.

However, the subjects started to involve themselves in extensive English materials during the RTALRP. The selected fiction provided the subjects with abundant cultural backgrounds, linguistic information, personal growth examples, and so forth. In order to carry out the RT activities well, the subjects needed to comprehend the content of the selected fiction thoroughly. Accordingly, they ought to avail themselves of reading strategies to deal with the reading comprehension difficulties during the process of the RTALRP. In this way, they would be able to write the good script and perform it well on the stage through reading the selected fiction with full comprehension. When the subjects took the English reading comprehension post-test, they knew how to take advantage of the reading comprehension strategies and linguistic knowledge they had learned before to answer the questions in the post-test.

With the implementation of the RTALRP, the subjects got accustomed to reading English texts. The comparison of the pretest and post-test mean scores indicates a gain of 13.77 on the reading comprehension of the subjects. This result proved that

the RTALRP benefited the subjects' English reading comprehension to a significant extent. This study finding is in consistent with Martinze, Roser, and Strecker's statement (1999) that the RT activities promoted the subjects' English reading comprehension by oral reading practices in exploration of literature. In this study, the students were triggered to be involved in the RT activities, including repeated reading the English scripts before performance, discussing and solving problems with other students, reading aloud in front of the class, and so forth. These RT activities have empowered the students to read and even appreciate the joy of English reading. With the engagement of reading, they learned to sharpen the reading skills and make progress in English reading comprehension step by step.

Comparison of the Student Responses

In this part, the student responses to English learning, especially to English reading collected from the pre-study questionnaire (Appendix B) and the post-study questionnaire (Appendix C) were analyzed and discussed to probe whether or not the students changed their responses to English learning and English reading after the 12-week RTALRP. Hence, the results of the student responses were compared by a *t*-test of SPSS for Windows in order to investigate the differences of the student responses English learning and English reading.

Comparison of the Student Responses to English Learning

Before and After the RTALRP

This section presents the effect of the RTALRP on the student responses to English learning. With a view to exploring the differences of the student responses to English learning before and after the RTALRP, a paired-sample *t*-test of SPSS for Windows was conducted to compare the student responses to Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

between the pre-study questionnaire and the post-study questionnaire. The statistical results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparison of the Student Responses to English Learning Before and After the RTALRP

Item	Number	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. I think learning English is important.					
Pre-study	78	4.29	.77	-2.32	.02*
Post-study	78	4.46	.67		
2. I think learning English is interesting.					
Pre-study	78	3.27	.89	-5.85	.00*
Post-study	78	3.86	.80		
3. I like to learn English listening.					
Pre-study	78	3.10	.94	-4.59	.00*
Post-study	78	3.55	.84		
4. I like to learn English conversation.					
Pre-study	78	3.23	1.04	-4.23	.00*
Post-study	78	3.69	.81		
5. I like to learn English reading.					
Pre-study	78	3.15	1.05	-5.80	.00*
Post-study	78	3.82	.76		
6. I like to learn English writing.					
Pre-study	78	2.94	1.10	-2.93	.00*
Post-study	78	3.31	.93		

Note: * $p < .05$ SD: Standard Deviation

As shown in Table 2, there are six significant differences found in the student responses to Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 before and after the RTALRP. To be more specific, concerning the student responses to Item 1, the *p*-value ($t = -2.32$, $p = 0.02$) is lower than 0.05. Besides, the mean score of Item 1 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.46$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 4.29$). The result

reflects that after taking part in the RTALRP, the subjects improved English reading comprehension and then agreed that English learning, indeed, played an important part in their lives. As Gunning (1996) pointed out, reading acted like a trigger for learning languages. Because of the improvement of English reading comprehension, the subjects obtained the sense of achievement in learning English and recognized the importance of English learning.

Regarding the student responses to Item 2, the p -value ($t = -5.85, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the mean score of Item 2 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.86$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 3.27$). The result implies that the RTALRP motivated the subjects to learn English. The subjects agreed that English learning could be more interesting than it used to be before the RTALRP. Because RT was a dramatic activity to fascinate the students (Prescott & Lewis, 2003), the students would be inspired to be engaged in reading with interest.

In the student responses to Item 3, the p -value ($t = -4.59, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. Additionally, the mean score of Item 3 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.55$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 3.10$). Because of the significant differences in Item 3 between the pre-study questionnaire and the post-study questionnaire, it is proved that the RTALRP provided the subjects with a valuable access to developing English listening. According to Kelleher (1997), reading aloud of RT was a good way for the students to enjoy the wonderful sounds of the words, so the students were able to be absorbed in learning English listening. In the RTALRP, reading aloud with expressional intonation and rhymes made the subjects pay attention to the performer and listen to the plot enthusiastically. Therefore, the subjects started to have fun listening English by means of the RTALRP.

As to the student responses to Item 4, the p -value ($t = -4.23, p = 0.00$) is lower

than 0.05. Besides, the mean score of Item 4 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.69$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 3.23$). The significant difference reveals that the RTALRP would assist the subjects to be engrossed in spoken English. Repeatedly and silently reading in the RTALRP, the subjects felt more confident in speaking English in front of the class and liked to be blessed with the chance to read aloud. Besides, the subjects were fond of exerting their spoken English along with abounding facial expressions and affectional intonation to perform the conversation of RT English scripts. This finding of the study corresponded with Flynn (2004), who indicated in her study that the RT, a dramatic activity emphasizing the oral and facial expressions to repeatedly rehearse and perform the script, could enhance the students to practice their spoken English conversation. With the joy of performing English conversation in RT scripts, the students could empower their motive for learning English conversation.

There is a significant difference in the student responses to Item 5, because the p -value ($t = -5.80, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. And the mean score of Item 5 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.82$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 3.15$). It is definitely found that the subjects were fond of English reading after the implementation of the RTALRP. This is in agreement with Miller and Rinehart's finding (1999) that a RT reading program could be effective in making the students enjoy English reading. In other words, the subjects liked to learn English reading through integrating RT activities such as reading aloud, paired reading, rehearsing, and so on.

Finally, as to the student responses to Item 6, the p -value ($t = -2.93, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. Additionally, the mean score of Item 6 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.31$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.94$). The gain of the mean score indicates that the subjects who originally disliked English

writing have taken a more positive attitude toward English writing such as composition and translation after the RTALRP. They made progress in writing by adapting an appropriate English script for their RT performance. Little by little, the subjects were skilled in organizing, modifying, and revising RT scripts and learned how to compose English well. This study results confirm Forsythe's finding (1997) that RT can provide the students with an access to reinforcing their interest in practicing English writing by means of learning how to adapt an adequate English script for the RT performance.

Comparison of the Student Responses to English Reading

Before and After the RTALRP

This part shows the effect of the RTALRP on the student responses to reading English adolescent literature. For the purpose of exploring the differences of the student responses to English reading before and after the RTALRP, a paired-sample *t*-test of SPSS for Windows was conducted to compare the student responses to Items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 between the pre-study questionnaire and the post-study questionnaire. The results of the student responses to Items 7 and 8 are to present the effect of the RTALRP on the students' motivation for reading English adolescent literature. The results of the student responses to Items 9 and 10 are to investigate the changes in the students' anxiety on reading English adolescent literature. The results of the student responses to Items 11, 12, 13, and 14 are to observe the differences in the students' intellectual reaction on reading English materials. The statistical results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3***Comparison of the Student Responses to English Reading Before and After the RTALRP***

Item	Number	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
7. I am active in reading English adolescent literature.					
Pre-study	78	2.58	.91	-8.59	.00*
Post-study	78	3.42	.84		
8. I am interested in reading English adolescent literature.					
Pre-study	78	2.78	1.00	-7.57	.00*
Post-study	78	3.67	.86		
9. When I read English adolescent literature, I do not feel nervous.					
Pre-study	78	2.85	1.02	-7.22	.00*
Post-study	78	3.73	.89		
10. I think reading English adolescent literature is easy.					
Pre-study	78	2.46	.93	-7.43	.00*
Post-study	78	3.26	.90		
11. I think reading English adolescent literature is important.					
Pre-study	78	3.56	.83	-6.81	.00*
Post-study	78	4.27	.76		
12. I think I should get into the habit of reading English adolescent literature.					
Pre-study	78	3.42	.81	-7.11	.00*
Post-study	78	4.15	.82		
13. I think reading English adolescent literature can improve my reading comprehension.					
Pre-study	78	3.73	.90	-6.16	.00*
Post-study	78	4.38	.81		
14. I think reading English adolescent literature can help me learn English.					
Pre-study	78	3.64	.86	-6.90	.00*
Post-study	78	4.37	.70		

Note: * $p < .05$ SD: Standard Deviation

According to Table 3, there are two significant differences in the student responses to Item 7 ($t = -8.59, p = 0.00$) and Item 8 ($t = -7.57, p = 0.00$) which indicate the students' motivation for reading English adolescent literature. In the student responses to Item 7, the p -value ($t = -8.59, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. And the mean score of Item 7 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.42$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.58$). It is found that the subjects held more active attitudes toward reading English adolescent literature after participating in the RTALRP. Through the form of RT, reading English adolescent literature appeared to turn out another available option when the subjects would like to read English. That is to say, English adolescent literature enabled the subjects to actively involve themselves in reading English rather than get tired of reading English.

As to the student responses to Item 8, the p -value ($t = -7.57, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the mean score of Item 8 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.67$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.78$). The gain of 0.89 in mean scores Item 8 implies that the RTALRP really grasped the subjects' interest in reading English adolescent literature. The subjects expressed increasing interest in reading the authentic plot in English adolescent literature. As mentioned by Prater (2003), because the genre of adolescent literature focusing on describing the growth of the adolescent appeals to the students, adolescent literature would enhance the students to be engaged in reading with interest and joy.

Based on Table 3, there are two significant differences in the student responses to Item 9 ($t = -7.22, p = 0.00$) and Item 10 ($t = -7.43, p = 0.00$) which show the students' anxiety on reading English adolescent literature. Concerning the student responses to Item 9, the p -value ($t = -7.22, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. Besides, the mean score of Item 9 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.73$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.85$). It is obvious that the content of English

adolescent literature could be a proper reading material for the subjects to read at ease. According to Ronnqvist and Sell (1994), the characters, plot, and theme of adolescent literature are familiar and authentic to teenager students. Thus, the subjects felt close to the issues in the English adolescent literature. Once the subjects read English adolescent literature, they would not feel anxious about the content.

From the student responses to Item 10, the p -value ($t = -7.43, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the mean score of Item 10 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 3.26$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.46$). The result shows that with the appropriate readability of English adolescent literature, the subjects read English adolescent literature with fewer comprehension difficulties. This finding is in consistent with Hopper's statement (2006) that without being confused about lexical difficulties and grammatical complex, the students would consider reading English adolescent literature to be accessible.

As shown in Table 3, there are four significant differences in the student responses to Item 11 ($t = -6.81, p = 0.00$), Item 12 ($t = -7.11, p = 0.00$), Item 13 ($t = -6.16, p = 0.00$), and Item 14 ($t = -6.90, p = 0.00$) which display the students' intellectual reaction on reading English adolescent literature. In the student responses to Item 11, the p -value ($t = -6.81, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the mean score of Item 11 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.27$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 3.56$). The statistic result infers that after the RTALRP, the subjects learned the importance of reading adolescent literature. The more English adolescent literature the subjects read, the more advantage they gained. So the subjects considered that reading English adolescent literature was beneficial to their English reading and personal growth.

Regarding the student responses to Item 12, the p -value ($t = -7.11, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. Besides, the mean score of Item 12 in the post-study questionnaire

($M = 4.15$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 3.42$). It is found that with some meaningful experiences from the protagonists in the selected fiction, the subjects thought reading English adolescent was worthy to form the habit. As far as the subjects were concerned, getting into the habit of reading English adolescent literature could benefit their emotional as well as cognitive cultivation. In other words, reading English adolescent literature offered the subjects with the emotional and cognitive inspiration. Such inspiration enabled the subjects to expect themselves to face their puberty and future confidently as the protagonists behaved in the English adolescent literature. This finding is in agreement with Fuchs' notion (1987) that adolescent literature is worth reading for young students because adolescent literature like a good counselor could guide the young students to think of solutions to the similar problems that happened to the protagonists in adolescent literature. To be brief, it is apparent that reading English adolescent literature would help the young students to go through the puberty so that the young students recognize the importance of forming the habit of reading English adolescent literature.

From the student responses to Item 13, the p -value ($t = -6.16, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the mean score of Item 13 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.38$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 3.73$). The result reveals that the subjects developed their reading comprehension after the RTALRP. Especially, reading the selected fiction along with the RT activities enabled the subjects to be bent on reading and then to promote their English reading comprehension. With the experiences of enjoying reading English adolescent literature, the subjects gained plenty of linguistic knowledge, including vocabulary and grammar, and were skilled in reading strategies step by step. Therefore, they could improve their English reading comprehension after the RTALRP.

In respect of the student responses to Item 14, the p -value ($t = -6.90, p = 0.00$) is

lower than 0.05. Besides, the mean score of Item 14 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.37$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 3.64$). It is proved that reading English adolescent literature assisted the subjects to learn English effectively and widely. According to Carter and Long (1991), plenty of vocabulary as well as sentence structures in language uses which could empower linguistic knowledge of the students are stored in English adolescent literature. Furthermore, reading English adolescent literature with various genres and styles enlightened the students' literary and linguistic development (Littlewood, 1986). As long as the students started to get in touch with English adolescent literature, they could acquire abounding literary and linguistic knowledge to cultivate their English reading comprehension abilities. Later on, the progress in English reading comprehension stimulated the students to enrich their English learning. As for choosing the proper reading texts for the students, English adolescent literature could turn into an adequate option when the students read English.

Student Responses to the RT

In this section, the student responses to the RT activities were analyzed and discussed. To be more specific, the student responses were explored in terms of the following parts: (a) the student responses to reading English, (b) the student responses to the RT activities including reading scripts aloud, comprehending scripts, writing scripts, and performing scripts, and (c) the student opinions on the interaction with the other students and teachers. For the purpose of realizing the mentioned above, the results collected from the student responses to Items 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4
The Student Responses to the RT

Item	SA	A	N	DA	SD	Total	Mean
20. The RT activities make me like reading English more.							
Number	9	49	19	1	0	78	3.85
Percentage	11.5	62.8	24.4	1.3	0	100	
21. The RT activities make me better at reading the script of <i>The Magic Finger</i> aloud							
Number	25	37	12	3	1	78	4.05
Percentage	32.1	47.4	15.4	3.8	1.3	100	
22. The RT activities make me better at reading the script of <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> aloud.							
Number	25	39	11	2	1	78	4.09
Percentage	32.1	50.0	14.1	2.6	1.3	100	
23. The RT activities make me more understand the content of <i>The Magic Finger</i> .							
Number	24	38	14	1	1	78	4.06
Percentage	30.8	48.7	17.9	1.3	1.3	100	
24. The RT activities make me more understand the content of <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>							
Number	28	36	12	1	1	78	4.14
Percentage	35.9	46.2	15.4	1.3	1.3	100	
25. The RT activities make me write the script better.							
Number	16	31	23	6	2	78	3.68
Percentage	20.5	39.7	29.5	7.7	2.6	100	
26. The RT activities make me perform the script more actively.							
Number	18	24	30	5	1	78	3.68
Percentage	23.1	30.8	38.5	6.4	1.3	100	
27. The RT activities enhance my interaction among classmates.							
Number	21	39	17	1	0	78	4.03
Percentage	26.9	50.9	21.8	1.3	0	100	
28. The RT activities enhance my interaction with the teacher.							
Number	17	43	18	0	0	78	3.99
Percentage	21.8	55.1	23.1	0	0	100	

Note: SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree N: Neutral DA: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

According to Table 4, the student attitudes toward reading English with the effect of the RT activities in Item 20 were investigated. In the student responses to Item 20, 74.3% of the subjects (11.5 %for strongly agreed and 62.8% for agreed) agreed that when joining the RTALRP, the RT activities made them enjoy reading English materials. Besides, the mean score of the student responses to this item is 3.85. The result suggests that the subjects started to appreciate the joy of reading English and learned how to adjust themselves to reading English. Based on their wonderful experiences, the subjects really liked reading English with all their hearts step by step. That is to say, the RT activities dramatized the selected fiction in such a fresh way to attract the subjects' attention and interest. This study result is in accordance with Corcoran's finding (2005) that the RT activities can be effective in enriching the students' interest and motivation in reading English. Under the effect of the RT activities, the students are able to enjoy reading English and relish English literary texts. Hence, the RT activities supply the students with another option to appreciate English reading.

As for the student responses to reading scripts aloud, Items 21 and 22 were discussed. In the student responses to Item 21, 79.5% of the subjects (32.1% for strongly agreed and 47.4% for agreed) claimed that through the practices of the RT activities, they were good at reading the script of *The Magic Finger* aloud. Additionally, the mean score of the student responses to this item is 4.05. It also reveals that the subjects made great progress in reading English aloud in front of others. The repeated reading aloud in the RT activities was an efficient strategy to enlighten the subjects' oral reading ability. Likewise, in the student responses to Item 22, 82.1% of the subjects (32.1% for strongly agreed and 50.0% for agreed) expressed that the RT activities had an influence on reading aloud the script of *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*. Besides, the mean score of the student responses to this item is 4.09.

The high mean score implies that the subjects became engaged in reading *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* aloud because of participating in the RT activities.

Consequently, the results of Items 21 and Item 22 support Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson's idea (2005) that RT effectively helps students to cultivate their oral reading with bountiful expressions. Because in RT, students obtain the opportunities to practice reading English scripts aloud with others, they keep reading and rehearsing for the purpose of performing RT well on the stage. Through repeatedly practicing reading, rehearsing, and performing in the RT activities, students can be more skilled in reading English scripts aloud than before.

As far as the student responses to comprehending the script of RT was concerned, Items 23 and 24 were explored here. From the student responses to Item 23, 79.5% of the subjects (30.8% for strongly agreed and 48.7% for agreed) thought that they could understand the content of *The Magic Finger* after the RT activities. In addition, the mean score of the student responses to this item is 4.06. It can be widely acknowledged that the RT activities yielded a significant impact on the subjects' reading comprehension. And in the student responses to Item 24, 82.1% of the subjects (35.9% for strongly agreed and 46.2% for agreed) considered that the content of *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* appeared to be comprehensive by the guidance of the RT activities. Besides, the mean score of the student responses to this item is 4.14. This result infers the subjects regarded the RT activities as a helpful implementation to improve their reading comprehension in *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*.

According to the results of Item 23 and Item 24, the subjects would be able to perceive the content of the selected fiction well by participating in the RT activities. As Therrien (2004) stated, the RT activities incorporating various readings such as reading aloud, assisted reading, repeated reading, and so forth, provided students with the access to developing their reading comprehension efficiently. That is to say, the

RT activities which have students acquire the experiences of reading English scripts aloud, reading along with adequate assistance from other classmates, and repeatedly reading English scripts can be effective in promoting students' reading comprehension.

Regarding the student responses to writing the script, Item 25 was examined. In the student responses to Item 25, 60.2% of the subjects (20.5% for strongly agreed and 39.7% for agreed) agreed that the RT activities enabled the subjects to learn how to write a good RT script. And the mean score of the student responses to this item is 3.68. The result shows that the RT activities benefited the subjects' writing abilities. According to Uthman (2002), each student in RT was assigned to complete certain pages of the reading texts. The students have to decide which was necessary or unnecessary to be adapted in their script. Through countless practices, students finally can learn to write a good script for their RT performance.

As for the student responses to performing the RT scripts, Item 26 was proved. In the student responses to Item 26, 53.9% of the subjects (23.1% for strongly agreed and 30.8% for agreed) agreed that they were active in performing the script during the RT activities. In addition, the mean score of the student responses to this item is 3.68. It is proved that performing the RT script was favorable for the subjects. Particularly, the RT activities enabled the subjects to read aloud with the appropriate tone and intonation. Little by little, the subjects knew how to perform the RT script well in front of the class. This finding is in agreement with Worthy and Prater's statement (2002) that students in RT could obtain the chances to perfect their speaking abilities and to finally perform the script for an audience successfully.

The student responses to Items 27 and 28 were investigated to realize the subjects' opinions on the interaction with other classmates and teachers. In the student responses to Item 27, 76.9% of the subjects (26.9% for strongly agreed and

50.0% for agreed) emphasized the significant interaction among classmates. Besides, the mean score of the student responses to this item is up to 4.03. The result showed that because of the group work in the RTALRP, the subjects were supposed to discuss and communicate their ideas with other group members to reach the same goal.

Obviously, the interaction took place in the groups. According to Liu (2000), heterogeneous students in groups could work out the problem they met because they had to interact with others to write, rehearse, and perform scripts in the RT activities.

As to the student responses to Item 28, 76.9% of the subjects (21.8% for strongly agreed and 55.1% for agreed) agreed that the RT activities reinforced their interaction with teachers. Additionally, the mean score of the student responses to this item is 3.99. It also implies that in the RT activities, the interaction between students and teachers was enlightened. Teachers' verbal and nonverbal directions encouraged the students' reply and empowered their reciprocal interaction (Robinson, 1994).

In order to further realize what the subjects' responses to the RT in this reading project, the open-ended question, Item 39, was discussed. The statistical results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Ranking of the Student Responses to the Activities of the RT

Ranking	The Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1 st	Enjoy RT performance	33	42.3%
2 nd	Read aloud	21	26.9%
3 rd	Group work	18	23.1%
4 th	Write a script	6	7.7%
Total		78	

Based on Table 5, 42.3% of the subjects enjoyed the RT performance. Most of the subjects acknowledged that the RT performance benefited their English reading

comprehension of the selected fiction. The subjects took advantage of appreciating others' RT performance or preparing their own RT performance to improve their English abilities. The following excerpts translated from the original Chinese transcriptions could supply a glimpse of the reasons why the subjects enjoyed the RT performance.

The RT performance is interesting to me. And I am able to comprehend the content of the script by watching the RT performance. (Student 21, Class 907)

I will pay more attention to the RT performance because I want to know what will happen next in the following plot. (Student 43, Class 911)

I can learn from the others by observing their RT performance and examine whether I made the same mistakes as others or not. (Student 70, Class 911)

Moreover, 26.9% of the subjects liked to read English scripts aloud. These subjects chose reading English scripts aloud to be their favorite part in the RTALRP. The following excerpts translated from the original Chinese transcriptions could supply a glimpse of the reasons why the subjects liked to read aloud.

I gained the practice to read English aloud and correct my English pronunciation until I can read the whole paragraph fluently. (Student 10, Class 907)

Reading aloud created more opportunities for me to perform English. (Student 69, Class 911)

Although my English is not very good, I enjoyed reading aloud because reading aloud impressed me a lot and improved my spoken English. (Student 77, Class 911)

Then, 23.1% of the subjects liked to join team work. Eighteen of the 78 subjects referred to the RTALRP as a meaningful experience of cooperative learning. While they were working with other group members, they developed the interpersonal skills to build a perfect communication. As to the reasons why the subjects liked to join group work, the following excerpts translated from the original Chinese transcriptions could provide a glimpse.

I can share my knowledge and talk about the feedback with other group members after reading the selected fiction. (Student 3, Class 907)

The team work makes me more familiar with those who I seldom get along with. (Student 36, Class 907)

I can use free time to discuss and rehearse the script with my classmates, and I am not nervous when performing the RT with them. (Student 60, Class 911)

Finally, only 7.7% of the subjects liked to write English scripts. Seven of the 78 subjects considered writing English scripts, in fact, was not as difficult as they thought. It could be a challenge to require the subjects to practice adapting a good script. As to the reasons why the subjects liked to write a script, the following excerpts translated from the original Chinese transcriptions could provide a glimpse.

I understand the usage of vocabulary and grammar which were originally unfamiliar to me by practicing adapting a script. (Student 29, Class 907)

I grasped the theme of the selected fiction more and watching others perform the script written by me caused my sense of achievement. (Student 54, Class 911)

Adapting a script could make me more understand the content of the selected fiction, so I liked to write a RT script. (Student 76, Class 911)

According to the above excerpts, it could be concluded that the RT activities would benefited the subjects' English reading comprehension by providing a visual, oral, and audio stimulus. By means of reading English aloud, adapting a proper script, performing on the stage, and concerning in group work, the subjects improved their English abilities including listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as mending their relationship with other classmates at the same time. As Young and Vardell (1993) claimed, because RT provides positive learning advantages, students are able to develop both language knowledge and personal growth. Therefore, the RT activities in the RTALRP fostered not only the subjects' English learning but also their interpersonal skills.

Student Responses to the Selected Fiction

This section presents the student responses to the selected fiction, *The Magic Finger* and *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*. For the purpose of this, the results are collected from the student responses to Items 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 in the post-study questionnaire.

Student Responses to The Magic Finger

In order to investigate the student responses to *The Magic Finger*, the data collected from Items 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33 in the post-study questionnaire are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

The Student Responses to The Magic Finger

Item	SA	A	N	DA	SD	Total	Mean
29. The plot of <i>The Magic Finger</i> is arranged properly.							
Number	17	37	24	0	0	78	3.91
Percentage	21.8	47.4	30.8	0	0	100	
30. The characters of <i>The Magic Finger</i> interact vividly.							
Number	20	38	19	1	0	78	3.99
Percentage	25.6	48.7	24.4	1.3	0	100	
31. The setting of <i>The Magic Finger</i> is described lively.							
Number	21	39	15	3	0	78	4.00
Percentage	26.9	50.0	19.2	3.8	0	100	
32. The theme of <i>The Magic Finger</i> appears to be clear.							
Number	21	41	15	1	0	78	4.05
Percentage	26.9	52.6	19.2	1.3	0	100	
33. The language style of <i>The Magic Finger</i> corresponds to what the characters express.							
Number	23	32	22	1	0	78	3.99
Percentage	29.5	41.0	28.2	1.3	0	100	

Note: SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree N: Neutral DA: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

As Table 6 presented, the mean scores of all the items are above 3.91 (> 3.00), which is higher than the neutral opinion of 3.00 point. The subjects, generally

speaking, admired *The Magic Finger* very positively. In the student responses to Item 29, 69.2% of the subjects (21.8% for strongly agreed and 47.4% for agreed) reported that the plot in *The Magic Finger* is appropriately organized. In other words, the subjects learned that *The Magic Finger* described the story about an eight-year-old girl who possessed a magic finger. The girl did not like her neighbors, the Gregg family, to hunt for animals. So she punished them by having them become ducks until they regretted their wrong and cruel behaviors. In a short, the whole plot of *The Magic Finger* obviously focused on the girl's sense of justice and the Gregg family's retribution for sin. Based on the two features, the subjects confirmed that the plot of *The Magic Finger* is properly organized to comprehend.

Regarding the student responses to Item 30, 74.3% of the subjects (25.6% for strongly agreed and 48.7% for agreed) affirmed that they were impressive with the characters of *The Magic Finger*. In *The Magic Finger*, the main character was a girl, whose personality was rich in fairness. The assistant characters were the Gregg family, who were very selfish and cruel. The opposite personalities of the main and assistant characters vividly interweaved in the story. On the ground that there were the opposite personalities of the girl and the Gregg family arranged in the plot, the subjects observed that there was vivid interaction among the characters while they were appreciating *The Magic Finger*.

As far as the student responses to Item 31, go, 76.9% of the subjects (26.9% for strongly agreed and 50.0% for agreed) agreed that the setting of *The Magic Finger* is described lively by the author. The story happened in the Gregg family's house and the ducks' nest in the trees. Judging from the artificial house and the natural nest, the selfish Gregg family could learn a lesson from the harsh circumstance. In particular, the role the Gregg family play was the neighbor who was a common and authentic role in the subjects' daily lives. Thus, the subjects could be aware of the

realistic and lively setting of *The Magic Finger*.

In the student responses to Item 32, 79.5 % of the subjects (26.9% for strongly agreed and 52.6% for agreed) showed the emphasis that the theme of *The Magic Finger* was explicit enough to impress readers. The theme involved human beings' selfishness and cruelty on the wild animals. The author focused on the wild animals' right to exist in the world even though wild animals lived such a harsh environment. The mankind ought to sympathize with other creatures on earth. On account of such an obvious theme depicted in *The Magic Finger*, the subjects learned that as human beings, they were supposed to develop sympathy for any thing around themselves. Most important of all, the subjects could know to put themselves in others' shoes.

Finally, with regard to the student responses to Item 33, 70.5% of the subjects (29.5% for strongly agreed and 41.0 % for agreed) claimed that what the characters expressed indeed corresponded to the language style of *The Magic Finger*. In *The Magic Finger*, the eight-year-old girl always used her innocent and frank speech to express how she disliked the Greggs' deeds. On the contrary, the Gregg family conveyed their mean characters to have their way. Hence, the subjects clarified the appropriate values based on the explicit language styles. In other words, the subjects learned that the language styles described by the author needed to correspond to what the characters wanted to express in the plot. As the different language styles respectively belonged to the girl and the Gregg family, the subjects were able to distinctively perceive what the girl and the Gregg family expressed.

Student Responses to Sarah, Plain. And Tall

With a view to investigating the student responses to *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*, the data collected from Items 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 in the post-study questionnaire are shown in Table 7.

Table 7***The Student Responses to Sarah, Plain, and Tall***

Item	SA	A	N	DA	SD	Total	Mean
34. The plot of <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> is arranged properly.							
Number	33	34	11	0	0	78	4.28
Percentage	42.3	43.6	14.1	0	0	100	
35. The characters of <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> interact vividly.							
Number	35	32	11	0	0	78	4.31
Percentage	44.9	41.0	14.1	0	0	100	
36. The setting of <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> is described lively.							
Number	31	36	10	1	0	78	4.24
Percentage	39.7	46.2	12.8	1.3	0	100	
37. The theme of <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> appears to be clear.							
Number	29	35	14	0	0	78	4.19
Percentage	37.2	44.9	17.9	0	0	100	
38. The language style of <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> corresponds to what the characters express.							
Number	31	33	14	0	0	78	4.22
Percentage	39.7	42.3	17.9	0	0	100	
Note: SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree N: Neutral DA: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree							

As Table 7 showed, the mean scores of all the items are above 4.19 (> 3.00), which is higher than the neutral opinion of 3.00 point for the student responses. The result implies that the subjects appreciated the fiction, *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, very much. In the student responses to Item 34, 85.9% of the subjects (42.3% for strongly agreed and 43.6% for agreed) realized the plot of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* very thoughtfully. The subjects were familiar with the plot depicting that a girl called Anna and her brother, Caleb, desired the maternal love after her mother died.

Therefore, when Sarah came to their home, both of them expected Sarah to stay with them and get married to their father. The overall plot was organized well under the warm expectation of Anna and Caleb.

With respect to the student responses to Item 35, 85.9% of the subjects agreed (44.9% for strongly agreed and 41.0% for agreed) that the characters of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* presented vivid interaction. The main character, Anna, was a girl without a mother and the assistant characters contained Jacob, her father, Caleb, her little brother, and Sarah. The coming of Sarah brought Anna and her family a fresh experience. All of them tried the best to get accustomed to their new lives. Hence, the writer vividly depicted the characters' personalities based on their different backgrounds.

As to the student responses to Item 36, 85.9% of the subjects (39.7% for strongly agreed and 46.2% for agreed) indicated that they were impressive with the setting of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. The story happened in Anna's home, which was located in the Midwestern part of the United States. The writer described the Wittings' farm lively to compare with Sarah's hometown, Maine near the sea. On account of the realistic description, the subjects perceived how the Wittings and Sarah led a life.

In the student responses to Item 37, 82.1% of the subjects agreed (37.2% for strongly agreed and 44.9% for agreed) that the theme of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* was very explicit. This story explored the themes of abandonment, loss and love. As far as Sarah was concerned, she knew "there is always something to miss, no matter where you are." Although she still missed the scenery in her hometown, Maine, especially the seascape, she bought three colored pencils to paint the colors of the sea for her own future when she made her mind to relieve her homesickness and live another new life. These also reflected how those who needed to accustom themselves to the new environment convinced themselves and opened their narrow

mind.

Lastly, from the student responses to Item 38, 82.1% of the subjects (39.8% for strongly agreed and 42.3% for agreed) claimed that what the characters stated displayed their own styles. For example, Sarah was from Maine so her language usage was different from the Wittings'. She sometimes said "Ayuh" to mean "Yes" in her conversation with the Wittings. This way partially demonstrated Sarah and the Wittings' different language styles because of their distinct backgrounds. Consequently, the subjects could examine the language styles expressed by the characters from diverse family backgrounds.

Comparison of Student Responses to the Two Selected Fiction

To further explore the student responses to the selected fiction, the comparison of the subjects' favorite selected fiction should be emphasized. For the purpose of this, the open-ended question, Item 40, was discussed. The data collected from this item is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Ranking of the Students' Favorite Selected Fiction

Ranking	Reading Selections	Frequency	Percentage
1 st	<i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i>	56	71.8%
2 nd	<i>The Magic Finger</i>	22	28.2%
Total		78	

According to Table 8, the rank ordering of the subjects' favorite adolescent literature fiction in the RTALRP was shown. Evidently, 71.8% of the subjects chose *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* to be their favorite fiction in the RTALRP. On the other hand, only 28.2% of the subjects chose *The Magic Finger* to be their favorite fiction in the

RTALRP. With a view to figuring out the reasons why the subjects chose *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*, we could catch a glimpse by the following excerpts translated from the original Chinese transcriptions

The setting occurred in the real world, in the Midwestern part of the United States, so its natural and simple culture impressed me a lot. (Student 1, Class 907)

The theme to describe Anna and Caleb's long for maternal love is interesting to me. (Student 12, Class 907)

I appreciated the relationships between parents and children and that between men and women described by the writer. (Student 42, Class 911)

The content of Sarah, Plain, and Tall touched my heart. Its plot is so authentic that I cannot help but remember the same experiences. (Student 71, Class 311)

In terms of the above excerpts, the grounds that the subjects preferred *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* as their English reading materials could be attributed to several reasons. First, the subjects were concerned about the plot of *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*. What happened to Anna and Sarah, how Anna and Caleb behaved themselves to convince Sarah to stay with them, and so on drew the subjects' motivation. Second, the theme of *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* was similar to the issues which might happen to the subjects. It is likely that the subjects could be easily moved by the story. Most important of all, the vivid characters, settings and language styles in *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* were authentic to the subjects. They were absorbed in the relationships between parents and children, sisters and brothers, and males and females. These findings are in

agreement with Bushman and Bushman's statement (1997) that adolescent literature describes the plot, theme, characters, and languages which appeal to young students, so that young students are stimulated to read it.

Comparison of the Student Responses to Cooperative Learning

This section aims to investigate the student responses to cooperative learning and explore the effect of cooperative learning on the students' English learning. In order to examine the student responses, two types of data were analyzed here. First, the student responses to Items 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 collected from the pre-study questionnaire and post-study questionnaire were analyzed with a paired-sample *t*-test of SPSS for Windows. Then, the student responses to the open-ended question, Item 41, in the post-study questionnaire were discussed. The statistic results are shown in Table 9.

As Table 9 presents, there are five significant differences in the student responses to Items 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 collected from the pre-study questionnaire and post-study questionnaire. With regard to the student responses to Item 15, the *p*-value ($t = -17.49, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the mean score of Item 15 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.26$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.38$). The statistic result implies that the students agreed the group work in the RTALRP created the chances to cooperate with other classmates. The finding is in accordance with Johnson and Johnson's statement (1999) that in the group, the students should work as a group. Each of members in the group had to accomplish the same goal by sharing, discussing, negotiating, and communicating with one another. Therefore, the students in the RTALRP were interdependent until they fulfilled their performance of the RT script.

Table 9***Comparison of the Students' Cooperative Learning Before and After the RTALRP***

Item	Number	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
15. English classes increases my cooperation with the other classmates.					
Pre-study	78	2.38	.68		
Group work increases my cooperation with the other classmates.				-17.49	.00*
Post-study	78	4.26	.69		
16. English classes reinforces my interaction with the other classmates.					
Pre-study	78	2.65	.66		
Group work reinforces my interaction with the other classmates.				-15.63	.00*
Post-study	78	4.06	.70		
17. English classes help me solve problems in groups.					
Pre-study	78	2.59	.82		
Cooperative learning helps me solve problems with classmates.				-13.63	.00*
Post-study	78	4.08	.71		
18. English classes provide me with opportunities to learn English.					
Pre-study	78	2.69	.85		
Cooperative learning provides me with opportunities to learn English.				-12.00	.00*
Post-study	78	4.10	.74		
19. English classes enhance my interest in learning English.					
Pre-study	78	2.99	.96		
Cooperative learning enhances my interest in learning English.				-9.52	.00*
Post-study	78	4.14	.75		

Note: * $p < .05$ SD: Standard Deviation

From the student responses to Item 16, the p -value ($t = -15.63$, $p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the mean score of Item 16 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.06$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.65$). Judging from the result, it is apparent that cooperative learning cast a significant influence on the subjects' interaction with others. That is to say, working with other classmates in a

group enlivened the relationships among students. The finding of the result corresponded with Labercane and Hunsberger's confirm (1990) that the activities in group work such as class discussions were an effective means to promoting classroom interaction because the students were inspired to communicate their personal ideas with others. Such being this case, the more group work the subjects got involved in, the better interaction they kept with others.

As to the student responses to Item 17, the p -value ($t = -13.63, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. Besides, the mean score of Item 17 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.08$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.59$). Based on this significant difference, it reveals that cooperative learning cast an impact on the subjects' problem-solving. In other words, the subjects in the RTALRP cooperated with one another to confront the problems they met. Although each of the members was accountable for their work to complete the RT performance, the subjects were interdependent on other group members. Once some had trouble in the job, others would help them to cope with it. As Coelho (1992) pointed out, in cooperative learning, students supported each other to handle the problems and to achieve their goal. Each member of the group worked together to brainstorm various possible ways and seek for the best one to solve the difficulties they might confront. Accordingly, the result of Item 17 indicated that students could acquire problem-solving skills by means of cooperating with other classmates.

Regarding the student responses to Item 18, the p -value ($t = -12.00, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. And the mean score of Item 18 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.10$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.69$). It is proved that the subjects, through cooperative activities, were more engaged in learning English than before. As a member of the group, the subjects were supposed to be responsible for their RT assignments and needed to learn and perform English with

other group members. With a view to achieving the good RT performance, the accountability and cooperation resulted in the advantage that the cooperative activities integrating with language use enabled the subjects to learn and show English more. The finding of the result is in agreement with Olsen and Kagan's (1992), who claimed that cooperative learning provided the students with available opportunities to employ the use of language to communicate and display what they thought because the students had to be accountable for their individual assignments and be interdependent with each other.

In the student responses to Item 19, the p -value ($t = -9.52, p = 0.00$) is lower than 0.05. The mean score of Item 19 in the post-study questionnaire ($M = 4.14$) is higher than that in the pre-study questionnaire ($M = 2.99$). The gain of the mean scores, 1.15, in Item 19 implied that cooperative learning in the RTALRP yielded a significant impact on the subjects' interest in learning English. That is to say, the cooperative activities promoted the subjects' interaction with teachers and other students so that the subjects were stimulated to learn English with interest. According to Slavin (1990a), because the students acquired positive interaction with other students and teachers, they would be motivated to be involved in learning. Similarly, as Tsui (1995) stated, positive interaction in the classroom cast a meaningful influence on the students' learning because the communication between teachers and students, and students and students could be enhanced. To conclude, fostering the students' interest by means of cooperative learning is a good way to trigger their English learning.

Table 10

Ranking of the Student Responses to Cooperative Learning After the RTALRP

Ranking	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1 st	I like to be involved in cooperative activities.	71	91%
2 nd	I dislike to be involved in cooperative activities.	7	9%
Total		78	

As Table 10 presented, 91% Of the subjects liked to participate in the cooperative activities in the RTALRP. The result of the student responses to Item 41 also reveals that the cooperative learning involved in the group work of the RTALRP drew the subjects' motivation to join this reading program. With a view to further figuring out how the subjects' responses to cooperative activities were, the following excerpts translated from the original Chinese transcriptions could supply a glimpse of the reasons why the subjects liked to join the cooperative activities after the RTALRP.

I can help my classmates to solve problems. For example, when my group members did not know how to pronounce the words correctly, I could teach them.
(Student 7, Class 907)

Unlike the traditional classroom , the atmosphere in the classroom through cooperative learning was relaxing. (Student 25, Class 907)

Cooperating with others in a group makes me feel that learning English is not as difficult as I used to think. With the assistance from my group members, I could also successfully take my responsibility to put my job into practice. (Student 45, Class 911)

Because of my interaction with other classmates was enhanced, I could know them better and build deep friendship with them. (Student 73, Class 911)

Judging from the above excerpts, cooperative learning was employed successfully in the RTALRP. The subjects indeed reached their academic achievement and acquired certain precious gains. First, the subjects did not feel nervous and anxious when joining the cooperative activities. They were inspired to express what they thought and share it with other group members. Moreover, the subjects learned problem-solving skills by means of consulting, discussing, and communicating with others. As Slavin (1990a) stated, even though the students were accountable for their assigned work, they still had to discuss, negotiate, communicate with other group members because they needed to make sure that each of members had learned what was taught for the purpose of fulfilling their goal as perfectly as possible. Then, the subjects' cooperation and interaction in groups led to their motivation to learn things. That is to say, cooperative learning enabled the subjects to feel that they were not alone when they learned English reading. On the contrary, the subjects were encouraged to confront and handle challenges with other group members. And they could be absorbed in their English learning. To be brief, the subjects learned English more actively and broadly through the cooperative activities in the RTALRP.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study focuses on investigating the effect of the reader's theater in an adolescent literature reading program on the junior high school students. In terms of the data analysis and discussions in Chapter Four, this chapter concludes the effect of the RTALRP on the students' reading comprehension, the student responses to English learning, particularly English reading after the RTALRP, the student responses to the RT activities in the RTALRP, the student opinions on the selected fiction in the RTALRP, and the student responses to cooperative learning. In addition, several pedagogical implications for EFL teachers are proposed. Finally, suggestions are provided for researchers to conduct further relevant studies in the future.



Conclusions

With the data analysis and discussions of the statistical results in Chapter Four, the major findings of the study corresponding with the five research questions can be stated as follows. First, it is evident that the RTALRP benefited the students' development of English reading comprehension. Before the application of the RT in this reading program, the students did not have the chance to adjust themselves to reading long English dialogues and English articles. When they took the English reading comprehension pretest, they considered that the dialogues and articles of the pretest were too difficult to perceive what the English dialogues and English articles meant. Worst of all, the students could not be patient enough to finish reading the overall English dialogues and English articles. Some of the students would persist in reading the English dialogues and English articles regardless of their poor vocabulary

and grammar. However, they were still unable to comprehend all the reading dialogues and articles. On the other hand, some of the students would give up the pretest as they confronted the content they could not figure out. Judging from the above mentioned, the students failed in doing well on the English reading comprehension pretest. But after participating in the RTALRP, the students got in touch with English adolescent literature and enjoyed reading it through the RT activities. During the twelve-week reading program, the students accustomed themselves to appreciating the selected fiction. They acquired the experiences of comprehending the English reading text by means of activating their background knowledge, linguistic competence, and reading strategies. Little by little, the students promoted their English reading comprehension. Consequently, the students made progress in taking the English reading comprehension post-test.

With regard to changes in the student responses to English learning, it is apparent that after the implementation of the RTALRP, the students considered English learning to be more important and interesting than before. To be more specific, the RT activities caught the students' motivation to learn English. The students changed their concepts and habits of learning English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills because in the RTALRP, the RT activities guided the students to learn in a pleasant and relaxing way. As far as reading English was concerned, the students turned into holding an active attitude toward reading English adolescent literature. The selected English adolescent literature, *The Magic Finger* and *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* enabled the student to cultivate their cultural, linguistic, and personal development because English adolescent literature was abundant in comprehensive English vocabulary and grammar. Besides, the content of English adolescent literature focused on the issues the young students were concerned with so that the students were stimulated to enjoy reading English. Under the effect of the RT

activities and English adolescent literature, the students empowered their reading abilities and improved their attitudes toward English learning and reading.

Regarding the students' opinions on the RT activities in the RTALRP, the students reflected that reading English along with the RT activities appeared to provide the students with several significant advantages. First, the RT activities inspired the students to be enthusiastically engaged in reading English. With such a wonderful reading experience, the students thought of reading English as an interesting learning and were willing to spend time reading English. Moreover, because the RT activities consisted of adapting the script, reading the script aloud, rehearsing the script, and performing the script, the students became familiar with the reading content. Through repeatedly practicing the RT activities, the students could obtain abounding English linguistic knowledge as well as foster their English reading fluency and efficiency. In addition, for the purpose of accomplishing the RT performance, the students needed to discuss and work in every part of the RT activities. In this way, they enhanced the interaction with the other classmates and the teachers during the RTALRP.

In light of the student responses to the selected adolescent literature in the RTALRP, it is found that the students highly appreciated the plots, characters, settings, themes, and language styles of the two selected fiction, *The Magic Finger* and *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Compared with *The Magic Finger*, the students tended to show more interest in reading *Sarah, Plain and Tall* according to the increasing mean scores of the study. Furthermore, most of the students chose *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* to be their favorite fiction in the RTALRP. These results reveals that the students were fond of reading the issues associated with what usually happened to them. For instance, Anna and Caleb in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, who lost their mother, were so eager to seek for maternal love from Sarah as the adolescents, who came from single parent

families, expected parental care and love to warm their inner hearts. They were impressive with the relationships between parents and children as well as that between sisters and brothers. With the students' empathizing with Anna and Caleb, the students triggered themselves to be engrossed in the plot. Even the students were able to have an insight into how Anna, a young girl, could play the role of looking after her little brother, Caleb, and her hard-working father, Jacob. The students finally learned that in the realistic and cruel circumstance, they were supposed to be like Anna to take the duty for encountering the difficulties. In a word, reading English adolescent literature, the selected fiction in the RTALRP like *Sara, plain and Tall*, certainly enriched the students' mental growth together with linguistic knowledge and cultural information, and guided them to confront their future in a positive perspective.

Finally, concerning the students' reflection on cooperative learning, the group work in the RTALRP cast a significant impact on the students' cooperation and interaction. With a view to performing the RT script well in front of the class, each of group members took the responsibility for their assigned work. They discussed, negotiated, communicated, and shared diverse ideas derived from other group members to overcome the problems they could meet. In this way, the interaction and cooperation among one another were reinforced to motivate the students to get involved in the group work and learning reading English in the RTALRP. In other words, through the cooperative activities in the RTALRP, the students cultivated their interaction and cooperation with others and problem-solving skills. Besides, because the students coped with the problems together, they did not feel lonely during learning and reading English. Such being this case, they would be stimulated to learn and read English. Therefore, the students realized that the more they cooperated with their group members, the better they performed the RT scripts.

In conclusion, the RTALRP was beneficial to the students in junior high school. By means of implementing the RTALRP, the students were triggered to improve their English reading comprehension. They took active responses to English learning and English reading. In addition, since the subjects enthusiastically participated in the RT activities, they became absorbed in reading the selected English adolescent literature. Lastly, with precious cooperative learning experiences, the subjects increased the interaction with the others and obtained problem-solving skills. To be brief, the RTALRP provided the students with the opportunities to learn and read English based on attractive English adolescent literature in an optional medium integrating with pleasurable cooperating activities.

Implications

According to the findings of the study, the RTALRP yielded a significant impact on the students. Hence, some pedagogical implications for the teachers and researchers are given as follows.

First, the teachers can apply the RT activities in their teaching. The RT activities were effective in improving the students' English reading comprehension and enhancing their motivation in reading English. Before the RTALRP, the students would not be active in reading English materials because they considered reading English to be boring and difficult. Nevertheless, the students appeared to be stimulated by the RT activities when taking part in the RTALRP. Reading the RT script aloud and enjoying the RT performance enabled the students to be engaged in English reading. With the joyful reading the RT activities offered, the students held the active position on reading English. Based on the above advantages, the RT activities are highly recommended to English teachers.

English adolescent literature successfully appealed to the students in the

RTALRP. In addition, the readability of English adolescent literature inspired the students to surf through the plot comprehensively. By guessing and reading the context, the students are likely to acquire the unknown vocabulary and grammatical rules. In this way, they can develop abundant linguistic knowledge. Besides, the students are able to gain the same experiences as the protagonists in the adolescent fiction do. The students would perceive that they are not isolated from the world. Confronting the difficulties and defeating the enemy with the protagonists, the students can be enlightened to develop mental growth. Thus, teachers can make most of English adolescent literature in the classroom so as to empower the students' linguistic knowledge and personal growth and help them to encounter the puberty.

Lastly, with the cooperative learning's benefiting the students, the teachers can bring about a learning environment integrating with the group work. Based on the findings of the study, it is proved that the students in the RTALRP were more enthusiastic about their learning English. They actively adjusted themselves to working with other group members. Especially when they faced the problem, they could deal with it together instead of feeling frustrated about their failure and incapability. The students learned that they were interdependent one another and each of them owned the individual chance to fulfill the group performance. Little by little, they started to have confidence in learning English, and even in expressing English in class. Consequently, the teachers should create a cooperative learning environment for the students.

Suggestions

This present study mainly aims to explore the effect of the RTALRP on English reading of the students in junior high school. But there are more issues for researchers to conduct further relevant studies in the future. On the basis of the

findings and results of the study, some suggestions are displayed in the following.

First, the number of the subjects can be increased. Only 78 ninth-graders were from two individual classes in Wu-fu Junior High School in Kaohsiung. Because the sample size of the subjects was limited, the findings of the study could not be generalized to other junior high school students. In order to make the further studies reliable and credible, it is recommended that the subjects can be expanded to be from different graders, from different schools, and even from other areas of Taiwan.

Second, the researcher can lengthen the time for conducting the study. Owing to the time limitation, the study was conducted in only twelve weeks. The long-term effect of the RTALRP on the students' English reading comprehension cannot be examined thoroughly. Thus, the further studies should prolong the time of implementing the study to obtain an overall insight into the effect of the RTALRP on the students' English reading comprehension.

Third, the purpose of the further study can be extended to investigate the students' English listening, speaking, and writing performance. The goal of this study focused on probing the students' English reading comprehension, so the pretest and post-test of English reading comprehension were designed. However, such pretests and post-tests could not provide the researcher with the function of observing changes in the students' English listening, speaking, and writing performances. Since the RT activities integrated with four English language skills, the future research is suggested to explore the effects of the RTALRP on the students' English listening, speaking, and writing performances in addition to their English reading comprehension.

Last but not least, more English adolescent fiction can be applied in the further reading program. In the RTALRP, only two selected adolescent fiction were used as the reading materials because of the time limitation. But based on the results of this

study, the students were actively engaged in reading English adolescent fiction. If possible, the researcher can arrange more than two English adolescent fiction to be applied in the further study. Moreover, English adolescent fiction concerning the other themes such as friendship, racial discrimination, and so forth, are also recommended to be introduced to the students. Through appreciating proper and meaningful English adolescent fiction, the students will be induced to face the problem with a flexible attitude.

Appendix A

A Lesson Plan for the Readers' Theater Program

Course Subject: English	Grade: 9 th -grade students in junior high school		
Time: 3 class periods (135 minutes)			
Text: <i>The Magic Finger</i>			
Teaching Aids: worksheets, scripts, a blackboard and chalks.			
Lesson Objectives: <div>1. To stimulate the students’ motivation and confidence in English reading.</div> <div>2. To advance the students’ reading English texts more fluently and extensively.</div> <div>3. To promote the students’ English reading comprehension.</div> <div>4. To develop the students’ abilities to utilize reading strategies coordinated in the readers’ theater.</div> <div>5. To broaden the students’ accesses to English reading texts such as adolescent literature.</div> <div>6. To foster the students’ sense of cooperation in the classroom.</div>			
Teacher’s Activities		Student’s Activities	Time (minutes)
I. Warm up: <div>1. Give the students’ worksheets.</div> <div>2. Asking students what three of the most desirable things they would feel like accomplishing if they had the magic power are.</div> <div>3. Show the students the culture of hunting ducks in America and how to hunt ducks legally there.</div> <div>4. Compare the culture in America with that in Taiwan.</div> <div>5. Ask the students what is a more appropriate punishment for those who lack kindness to animals or those who maltreat animals.</div> <div>6. Collect and show the students’ responses and then motivate them by associating hunting and maltreating ducks with the relevant plots</div>		<div>Listen and respond.</div> <div>Listen.</div> <div>Listen.</div> <div>Discuss and respond.</div> <div>Listen.</div>	<div>5</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>5</div> <div>5</div>

in the reading texts, <i>The Magic Finger</i> .		
II. Presentation:		
1.Divide the students into groups.	Follow the teacher's direction.	5
2.Introduce the readers' theater to the students.		
3.Show the students the sample script of <i>The Magic Finger</i> from page 7 to 16.	Listen to the teacher carefully.	5
4.Explain the script of the readers' theater to the students and make them discuss the script in groups.	Listen and discuss.	5
5.Make all the students read the lines of the script together.	Read together.	5
6.Assign the students and have them take turns reading the lines of the script.	Read in turn.	5
7.Instruct some students to play the given roles of the script and allow them to switch roles.	Read instantly.	5
8.Ask the students if there is any problem about the readers' theater reading program.	Respond.	
III. Practice:		
1. Divide the students into a group composed of six members heterogeneously.	Find the group members.	5
2. Assign each group to write the script of <i>The Magic Finger</i> from page 17 to 25.	Discuss and write the script.	20
3. Make the students discuss their own written script.		
4. Give each group some positive suggestion to perfect their written script.		
5. Let the students decide which role they want to be responsible for.	Decide the responsible role.	5
6. Have the students read their lines repeatedly.	Reread the lines loudly.	5
7. Ask the students to rehearse the script with the other group members.	Rehearse and read the script cooperatively.	10
IV. Production:		
1. Ask each group to hand in their group written script.	Hand in the script.	5
2. Assign each group to take turns at	Perform the readers'	40

performing their script of the readers' theater in front of the classmates.	theater on the stage.	
V. Assignment:		
1. Ask each group to revise the script and make it more complete.	Revise the script.	
2. Ask the students to finish the after-reading worksheets based on the context of <i>The Magic Finger</i> from page 7 to 15.	Work on their worksheets.	
3. Ask the students to hand in the above assignments including the revised script and worksheets next class.	Hand in the assignments.	
4. Ask the students to read <i>The Magic Finger</i> from page 16 to 30 in advance.	Read.	

Appendix B

The English Reading Comprehension Pretest

(The English dialogues and English articles were adapted from *Let's Talk in English* and *Studio Classroom*.)

Test 1

Jenny: Honey, I just made a doctor's appointment for you.

Oscar: Jenny! I'm not sick. I don't need to go to the doctor.

Jenny: But it is good for you to get a health checkup. You haven't had a checkup in years.

Oscar: But... I don't want to go to the doctor.

Jenny: Oscar! You sound like a little boy.

Oscar: Well... you sound like a mom.

Jenny: Oh, honey! You need to take good care of yourself for our family, too.

Oscar: OK, fine. I'll go to the doctor.

- () 1. What are Jenny and Oscar arguing over? They are arguing over_____.
- (A) whether Oscar sound like a little boy.
 - (B) whether Jenny sound like a mom.
 - (C) whether Oscar need to have a checkup.
 - (D) whether Jenny need to have a checkup.
- () 2. Which is **true** in test 1?
- (A) Oscar is really sick.
 - (B) Oscar doesn't like to go to the doctor.
 - (C) Oscar wants to take care of Jenny.
 - (D) Oscar wants to have a health checkup.
- () 3. What is the relationship between Jenny and Oscar?
- (A) Mother and son.
 - (B) Wife and husband.
 - (C) Teacher and student.
 - (D) Brother and sister.

Test 2

Emma: Hi, are you really busy right now?

Mike: Sort of. To tell the truth, I'm preparing for an exam. Why? What's wrong?

Emma: I need to the department store to exchange something latter. Can you take

me?

Mike: I'd love to, but...

Emma: You have a lot of studying to do?

Mike: Right. Can Mom take you?

Emma: Maybe. But Dad said that you've seemed a little worried lately. I suggest shopping would cheer you up.

Mike: You're right. OK, I think it'll be all right to go out with you. Thanks for your suggestion.

- () 4. What is Mike doing now?
- (A) He is exchanging something.
(B) He is studying for a test.
(C) He is going out for an exam.
(D) He is taking an exam.
- () 5. Who will take Emma to exchange the thing?
- (A) Mike. (B) Mom. (C) Dad. (D) Nobody.
- () 6. Which is **true** in test 2?
- (A) Emma has been very busy lately.
(B) Mom will take Emma latter.
(C) Dad is worried about Mike.
(D) Mike thought shopping would cheer Emma up.

Test 3

Ann: That's really a beautiful necklace you have on. If you don't mind my asking, where did you get it?

Sally: Thank you. My husband gave it to me for my birthday. The earrings go with it.

Ann: They are also good. They look like an aboriginal design.

Sally: Yes. He bought them on a trip to the east of Taiwan several days ago.

Ann: I got it. He truly has good taste. They also go very well with the dress.

Sally: I think so. To match them, I especially bought it in SOGO.

Ann: **I wish my husband had the same taste as yours.**

Sally: Why?

Ann: Just take a look at the ring he has me. You will agree with me

- () 7. How many kinds of things did Sally get from her husband?
- (A) 1 (B) 2 (C) 3 (D) 4
- () 8. What does the underlined sentence really mean here?
- (A) Ann's husband can eat things better and Sally's.
(B) Ann's husband can't eat things better than Sally's.

- (C) Sally's husband can choose things better than Ann's.
 (D) Sally's husband can't choose things better than Ann's.
- () 9. Which is **true** in test 3?
- (A) Sally bought the dress in SOGO with her husband.
 (B) Sally likes her own earring more than Ann's ring.
 (C) Ann truly envies Sally's necklace, earrings and dress.
 (D) Ann's husband gave her ring as a birthday present.

Test 4

Hebe and Ella seem like common American girls. They go to school, chat with friends, and love computer games. But unlike most children, their favorite hobby is playing in a rock band. The two girls form the rock band H.E.S.

Hebe, aged 14, plays the keyboard and sings. She has played the piano since she was four years old. Twelve-year-old Ella plays the drums. She just began taking drum classes last year. The two girls write their own songs. Their music has started to be popular with young people. Even they had their first album in 2003.

They have a younger sister named Selina, aged 9. She starts to practice playing the guitar. Hebe and Ella hope Selina will join their band in the future. And their parents are very proud of their daughters. They want their kids to think music is part of their life.

- () 10. Who is the oldest?
- (A) Hebe (B) Ella (C) Selina (D) H.E.S.
- () 11. What instrument can Ella play?
- (A) The keyboard (B) The drum (C) The piano (D) The guitar
- () 12. Which is **true** in test 4?
- (A) Selina has joined the rock band.
 (B) Hebe has played the piano four years.
 (C) Hebe, Ella, and Selina are real sisters.
 (D) Hebe, Ella, and Selina had the first album.

Test 5

People have known for a long time why birds sing. A scientist, Robert Dooling, has been studying how birds hear and learn their songs. Birds' tiny brains aren't as good to study as people's brains are. But their ways of communication are much simpler. And the way that many birds learn songs is the same as how people learn to talk. That is part of the reason they're such good animals to study. Robert said though it took a lot of patience and cares to learn things from birds, it

was so much fun when he discovered something new.

- () 13. Which is **true** in test 5?
- (A) Peoples' brains are smaller than birds' brains.
 - (B) Peoples' brains are better than birds' brains.
 - (C) Peoples' brains simpler than birds' brains.
 - (D) Peoples' brains more fun than birds' brains.
- () 14. Why are birds good animals to study?
- (A) Because they like to sing songs.
 - (B) Because they can communicate with people.
 - (C) Because they have a lot of patience and care.
 - (D) Because they are the same as people in singing and talking.

Test 6

One summer, Bill traveled to America. He hoped to enjoy a two-month vacation. However, he was there only two weeks when all his money was stolen on bus. He had no choice but to go home early.

But that wasn't bad enough. There was a serious problem at the airport in New York. It let 70,000 people wait there. Bill was one of them. He had a standby ticket, but it did him no good. It was also impossible for him to get a plane seat. The only way to go home was to pay more money for a new ticket. But money was the only thing he didn't have.

Luckily, two guys helped Bill. They helped him get another ticket on the other day, and get a hotel room for the night. They paid for not only the hotel but all his meals. Even they took him to buy some postcards of New York. They were strangers but they treated Bill like friends.

- () 15. About the two guys' help, Bill felt _____ finally.
- (A) sad (B) angry (C) warm (D) cold
- () 16. What **didn't** the two guys help Bill?
- (A) They helped him get a plane ticket.
 - (B) They took him to visit New York.
 - (C) They took him to buy postcards.
 - (D) They paid for all his meals.
- () 17. Which is **true** in test 6?
- (A) Bill had enough money to buy a new plane ticket.
 - (B) Bill's money was stolen at the airport.
 - (C) Bill knew the two guys very well.
 - (D) Bill stayed in America for two weeks.

Test 7

You are at the top of a hill on a skateboard. You push off and race down the hill at seventy miles an hour, or more. Sound like fun? Speed boarders around the world think it's a lot of fun.

Speed boarders find the road on steep hills so that they can skate down and getting as much speed as they can. Hurtling down the road, they ride on and off sidewalks. They also skated in and out between parked cars. Besides, they have to dodge moving cars.

Speed boarding is dangerous, so safety is a must-have. Speed boarders wear helmets and special gloves to keep their head and hands from hurting. Serious speed boarders even wear suits to protect their whole body.

Speed boarding is surely gaining interest all over the world. Therefore, watch out! **It might be coming to a hill near you.**

- () 18. What is speed boarding?
(A) A board. (B) A sport. (C) A hill. (D) A road.
- () 19. What does the underline sentence mean here? It means_____.
(A) There might be a hill near you.
(B) You might be a speed boarder near a hill.
(C) Speed boarding might happen around you.
(D) Speed boarding might be popular with you.
- () 20. Which is **true** in test 7?
(A) When speed boarding, you don't need to wear helmets.
(B) Every one thinks speeding boarding is a lot of fun.
(C) Watch out! Speed boarding might hurt your body.
(D) Speed boarders don't need to avoid moving and parked cars.

Test 8

Yu Zhen-huan is famous for his most hair all over his body in China. Hair covers 96% of his body when he was born in Shenyang. People laughed at him and called him a caveman, but he wasn't afraid. He would throw stones back and fight with them as a kid before. Because he's had a lot of trouble having so much hair, he said "It's a price that I have to pay." Now he grows up and learns how to face the problem.

Yu is interested in singing, so he decides to use his special body looking well and put pictures of himself on his web site: [www. maohai. com.](http://www.maohai.com) or [www. Hairboy. com.](http://www.Hairboy.com) He hopes to make more people understand him and enjoy his singing. Some day people on earth will say that's Yu's singing, not "hairboy's singing."

- () 21. Why did people laugh at Yu Zhen-huan?

- (A) Yu Zhen-huan threw stones and fought .
 - (B) Yu Zhen-huan is different from others.
 - (C) Yu Zhen-huan is really a cave man.
 - (D) Yu Zhen-huan has more trouble than others.
- () 22. Where can people in the world know Yu Zhen-huan more?
- (A) In China. (B) In Shenyang. (C) On the Internet. (D) On earth.

Test 9

More than one hundred years ago, American writer, Mark Twain, said, “Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.” Well, everyone’s still talking about the weather. But now, people really are trying to do something about it. Scientist and world leaders are working to solve the weather problem.

It has become clear that the world is slowly warm up. This slight warming is causing big changes. Glaciers are getting less. Polar ice is getting thinner. The oceans are going to rise. Because of these, there will be serious problems in the future. Many scientists and leaders thought that the warming is made by greenhouse effect. This happens when burning oil and fuels. So **they** say we should change our ways. We must burn less oil and fuel and make what we burn cleaner. However, not all countries on earth have joined the activity. The warming has still climbed up to now.

- () 23. What does “they” mean in the second paragraph?
- (A) Scientists.
 - (B) World leaders.
 - (C) Scientists and world leaders.
 - (D) Writers like Mark Twain.
- () 24. According to the reading, what won’t the warming cause?
- (A) Glaciers are getting less.
 - (B) Polar bears are going to die.
 - (C) The oceans are going to rise.
 - (D) Polar ice is getting thinner.
- () 25. What can we know from the reading?
- (A) Every national leader has cared about the greenhouse effect.
 - (B) People have no way to change the warming.
 - (C) The warming is getting worse and worse.
 - (D) Mark Twain knew nobody does anything about the weather now.

Appendix C

The English Reading Comprehension Post-test

(The English dialogues and English articles were adapted from the selected fiction, *The Magic Finger* and *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*.)

Test 1

Mrs. Gregg: Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Ducks have taken our house. What should we do? We have no place to go!

Philip: We will be eaten by cats and foxes in the night!

William: I want to sleep in my own bed.

Mr. Gregg: Now then, it isn't any good crying. That won't help us. Shall I tell you what we are going to do?

Philip: What?

Mr. Gregg: We are going to build a nest.

William: A nest! Can we do that?

Mr. Gregg: We must do it. We've got to have somewhere to sleep.

- () 1. Who is in the Greggs' house now?
(A) Cats. (B) Foxes. (C) Ducks. (D) People.
- () 2. What are the Gregg family going to do?
(A) They are leaving their house.
(B) They are going to build a house.
(C) They are going to sleep at night.
(D) They are going to be eaten.
- () 3. Which is **true** in test 1?
(A) Mrs. Gregg is worried they have no place to go.
(B) Mr. Gregg wants to sleep in his own bed.
(C) Philip doesn't want to build a nest.
(D) William is afraid to be eaten by cats and foxes.

Test 2

Mr. Gregg: The building of the nest has been done. Try it.

Mrs. Gregg: Oh, isn't it lovely! I feel I might lay an egg any moment.

William: How warm it is!

Philip: And what fun to be living so high up. We may be small, but nobody can hurt us up here.

Mrs. Gregg: But what about food? We haven't had a thing to eat all day.

Mr. Gregg: That's right. So we will now fly back to the house and go in by an open window and get the tin of biscuit when the ducks aren't looking.

Mrs. Gregg: We will be pecked to bits by those dirty great ducks!

Mr. Gregg: We shall be very careful, my love.

Mrs. Gregg: Just look at that beastly duck cooking at my stove!

Mr. Gregg: And look at that one holding my lovely gun!

William: One of them is lying in my bed.

Philip: And one of them is playing with my electric train!

Mrs. Gregg: Oh, dear! Oh, dear! They have taken over our whole house! We shall never get it back.

Philip: I will not eat warms.

William: Or slugs.

Mrs. Gregg: Don't worry. I can mince it all up very fine and you won't even know the difference. Lovely slugburgers. Delicious wormburgers.

William: Oh, no!

Philip: Never.

Mr. Gregg: Disgusting! Just because we have wings, we don't have to eat bird food. We shall eat apples instead. Our trees are full of them. Come on!

- () 4. What will the Gregg family eat for dinner?
 (A) Slugburgers (B) Wormburgers (C) Apples (D) Biscuit
- () 5. What **aren't** the four ducks doing in the house?
 (A) One is holding Mr. Gregg's gun.
 (B) One is cooking at the stove.
 (C) One is playing with the electric train.
 (D) One is eating warms and slugs.
- () 6. Which is **true** in test 2?
 (A) Mrs. Gregg doesn't like the nest.
 (B) Philip enjoys living so high up.
 (C) William wants to eat wormburgers.
 (D) Mr. Gregg has to eat bird food.

Test 3

Anna: Papa taught Sarah how to plow the fields. Papa guided the plow behind Jack and Old Bess. When the chores were done, we sat in the meadow with the sheep. We watched Papa finished plowing the fields.

Caleb: Jack doesn't like to work. He wants to be here in the sweet grass with us.
 Sarah: Tell me about winter.
 Anna: Winter is very cold everywhere.
 Caleb: We go to school in winter. Sums and writing and books.
 Anna: I am good at sums and writing.
 Sarah: I loved books. How do you get to school?
 Anna: Papa drives us in the wagon. Or we walk the three miles when there is not too much snow.
 Sarah: Do you have a lot of snow?
 Caleb: Lots and lots and lots of snow. Sometimes we have to dig our way out to feed the animals.
 Sarah: In Maine the barns are attached to the houses sometimes.
 Caleb: So you could have a cow to Sunday supper?
 Anna: Sarah and I laughed.

- () 7. What did Papa teach Sarah to do? He taught Sarah to _____.
 (A) clean the barn (B) plow the fields
 (C) paint the picture (D) mop the floor
- () 8. When there isn't much snow, how did Anna and Caleb go to school?
 (A) On foot. (B) By car. (C) By bus. (D) By bike.
- () 9. What **didn't** Anna and Caleb do in school?
 (A) Sums. (B) Reading. (C) Writing. (D) Drawing.

Test 4

When morning came, Mr. Gregg was the first to wake up. He opened up his eyes. He was about to put out a hand for his watch to see the time. But his hand wouldn't come out. He lay still and wondered what was up. Maybe he had hurt his hand in some way. He tried the other hand. That wouldn't come out either. He sat up. Then, for the first time, he saw what he looked like. He gave a yell and jumped out of bed. Mrs. Gregg woke up. And when she saw Mr. Gregg standing there on the floor, she gave a yell, too. She found **he** was now a tiny little man. He was maybe as tall as the seat of a chair, but no taller. And where his arms had been, he had a pair of duck's wings instead.

- () 11. What happened to Mr. Gregg when he woke up?
 (A) He really hurt his hand.
 (B) He became a tiny duck.
 (C) He fell on the floor.

(D) He couldn't open eyes.

() 12. What does the word, "**he**", mean in test 4?

(A) Mr. Gregg. (B) A duck. (C) Philip. (D) William.

Test 5

That night, while Mr. and Mrs. Gregg, Philip, and William were trying to get some sleep up in the high nest, a great wind began to blow. The tree rocked from side to side, and everyone even Mr. Gregg, was afraid that the nest would fall down. Then came the rain. It rained and rained, and the water ran into the nest and they all got as wet as could be and oh, it was a bad, bad night. At last, the morning came, and with it the warm sun. When Mrs. Gregg got up and looked over the side, she cried. On the ground below them stood the four ducks, as tall as men, and three of them were holding guns in their hands. One had Mr. Gregg's gun, one had Philip's gun, and one had William's gun. The guns were all pointing right up at the nest where the Gregg family stayed.

() 13. Where did the Gregg family sleep at night?

(A) The house. (B) The nest. (C) The hotel. (D) The ground.

() 14. What **didn't** the Gregg family have at night?

(A) Rain. (B) Wind. (C) Water. (D) Sun.

() 15. What stood below the Gregg family on the ground?

(A) Tigers. (B) Dogs. (C) Ducks. (D) Cats.

Test 6

Mr. and Mrs. Gregg, Philip, and William hopped out of the nest and flew down. Then all at once everything went black before their eyes, and they couldn't see. At the same time, a funny feeling came over them all, and they heard a great wind blowing in their ears. Then the black that was before their eyes turned to blue, to green, to red, and then to gold, and suddenly, there they were, standing in lovely bright sunshine in their own garden, near their own house, and everything was normal once again because their wings were gone and their arms came back. Philip and William were so glad that they began dancing about with joy. At that time, they heard the call of a wild duck. They all looked up, and saw the four birds, lovely against the blue sky, flying very close together, heading back to the lake in the woods.

() 16. How many colors before the Gregg family's eyes when they flew down?

(A) 3 (B) 4 (C) 5 (D) 6

- () 17. After the change, where were the Gregg family?
 (A) The garden. (B) The house. (C) The nest. (D) The park.
- () 18. Which is **true** in test 6?
 (A) The Gregg family were ducks finally.
 (B) Mr. Gregg's arms didn't come back.
 (C) The ducks didn't come back to the lake.
 (D) Everything was normal once again.

Test 7

Dear Anna:

Yes, I can braid hair and I can make stew and bake bread, though I prefer to build bookshelves and paint.

My favorite colors are the colors of the sea, blue and gray and green, depending on the weather. My brother William is a fisherman, and he tells me that when he is in the middle of a fog-bound sea, the water is a color for which there is no name. He catches flounder and sea bass and bluefish. Sometimes, he sees whales. And birds, too, of course. I am enclosing a book of sea birds so you will see what William and I see every day.

Very truly yours,

Sarah Elisabeth Wheaton

- () 19. What **isn't** Sarah's favorite color?
 (A) Blue. (B) Red. (C) Gray. (D) Green.
- () 20. What did Sarah send Anna?
 (A) Whales. (B) Bluefish. (C) Book. (D) Sea birds.

Test 8

The sheep made Sarah smile. She sank her fingers into their thick, coarse wool. She talked to them, running with the lambs, letting them suck on her fingers. She named them after favorite aunts, Harriet, Mattie, and Lou. She lay down in the field beside them and sang "Summer is Icumen in," her voice drifting over the meadow grasses, carried by the wind.

She cried when we found a lamb that had died, and she shouted and shook her fist at the turkey buzzards that came from nowhere to eat it. She would not let Caleb or Anna come near. And that night, Papa went with a shovel to bury the sheep and a lantern to bring Sarah back. She sat on the porch alone. Nick crept up to learn against her knees.

After dinner, Sarah drew pictures to send home to Maine. She began a

charcoal drawing of the fields, rolling like the sea rolled. She drew a sheep whose ears were too big. And she also drew a windmill.

- () 21. What did Sarah name the sheep by?
(A) Her uncles. (B) Her aunts. (C) Her father. (D) Her mother.
- () 22. Why did Sarah cry?
(A) Because a sheep was dead.
(B) Because she missed her home.
(C) Because she couldn't draw pictures.
(D) Because she couldn't eat lamb.
- () 23. Which is **true** in test 8?
(A) Sarah didn't draw pictures to send
(B) Sarah was sad that Nick had died.
(C) Sarah didn't like the sheep and lambs.
(D) Sarah drew the fields, a sheep, and a windmill.

Test 9

Sarah went to stand between Caleb and Papa by the window. She looked a long time without speaking. Finally, she touched Papa's shoulder. Papa said nothing. But he put his arm around her, and leaned over to rest his chin in her hair. I closed my eyes, suddenly remembering Mama and Papa standing that way, Mama smaller than Sarah, her hair fair against Papa's shoulder. When I opened my eyes again, it was Sarah standing there. Caleb looked at me and smiled and smiled until he could smile no more.

We slept in the hay all night, waking when the wind was wild, sleeping again when it was quiet. And at dawn there was the sudden sound of hail, like stones tossed against the barn. We stared out the window, watching the ice marbles bounce on the ground. And when it was over we opened the barn door and walked out into the early morning light. The hail crunched and melted beneath our feet. It was white and gleaming for as far as we looked, like sun on glass. Like the sea.

- () 24. Why was there the sudden sound of hail? Because of _____.
(A) stones (B) ice marbles. (C) rain (D) wind
- () 25. Which is **true** in test 9?
(A) Caleb was happy that a storm's coming.
(B) Caleb stood between Sarah and Papa.
(C) Anna's mother was smaller than Sarah.
(D) Only Sarah once stood by the window.

Appendix D

The Pre-study Questionnaire on Students' Responses to English Learning and Reading

親愛的同學：

這份問卷主要是希望能了解現在國中生對英文學習和閱讀的態度有何變化。每一題都是單選題，請指出（打✓）你對每個問題贊成或不贊成的程度。

這份問卷答案無所謂對錯，僅供本人研究之用，不對外公開，也不會列入成績考核，請放心作答，謝謝你的合作。

國立高雄師範大學

英語系教學碩士班研究生 黃素娟

班級：_____ 座號：_____ 姓名：_____

Part 1 英文學習態度

	非常贊成	贊成	沒意見	反對	非常反對
1. 我認為學習英文是重要的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 我認為學習英文是有趣的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. 我喜歡學習英文聽力(L)。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. 我喜歡學習英文口語對話(S)。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. 我喜歡學習英文閱讀(R)。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. 我喜歡學習英文寫作翻譯(W)。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 2 英文閱讀態度

7. 我會主動閱讀英文書籍資料。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. 我對閱讀英文書籍資料有興趣。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. 我對閱讀英文書籍資料不會感到緊張。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. 我覺得閱讀英文書籍資料是容易的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. 我覺得閱讀英文書籍資料是重要的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. 我覺得應該養成閱讀英文書籍資料的習慣。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. 我覺得閱讀英文書籍資料可以提升我英文閱讀理解能力。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. 我覺得閱讀英文書籍資料可以幫助我英文學習的成效。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3 合作學習的經驗

15. 上英文課促進同學間的合作。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. 上英文課使我更融於同學間的互動。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. 上英文課幫助我和同學一起解決問題。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. 上英文課增加我平日學習英文的機會。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. 上英文課增進我學英文的興趣。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix E

The Post-study Questionnaire on Students' Responses to English Learning and Reading

親愛的同學：

這份問卷主要是希望能了解在青少年文學讀者劇場十二週的閱讀教學計畫影響下，國中生對英文學習和閱讀的態度有何變化。

這份問卷答案無所謂對錯，僅供本人研究之用，不對外公開，也不會列入成績考核，請放心作答，謝謝你的合作。

國立高雄師範大學

英語系教學碩士班研究生 黃素娟

班級：_____ 座號：_____ 姓名：_____

第一部份：每一題都是單選題，請指出（打✓）你對每個問題贊成或不贊成的程度。

Part 1 英文學習態度

	非常贊成	贊成	沒意見	反對	非常反對
1. 我認為學習英文是重要的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 我認為學習英文是有趣的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. 我喜歡學習英文聽力。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. 我喜歡學習英文口語對話。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. 我喜歡學習英文閱讀。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. 我喜歡學習英文寫作翻譯。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 2 英文閱讀態度

7. 我會主動閱讀英文書籍資料。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. 我對閱讀英文書籍資料有興趣。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. 我對閱讀英文書籍資料不會感到緊張。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. 我覺得閱讀英文書籍資料是容易的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. 我覺得閱讀英文書籍資料是重要的。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. 我覺得應該養成閱讀英文書籍資料的習慣。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. 我覺得閱讀英文書籍資料可以提升我英文閱讀理解能力。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. 我覺得閱讀英文書籍資料可以幫助我英文學習的成效。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Part 3 青少年文學讀者劇場的反應

20. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使我更喜歡閱讀英文。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
21. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使我更掌握 *The Magic Finger* 朗讀故事劇本。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
22. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使我更掌握 *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* 朗讀故事劇本。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
23. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使我更了解 *The Magic Finger* 書本內容。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
24. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使我更了解 *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* 書本內容。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
25. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使我更熟悉編寫劇本。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
26. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使我更參與上台讀劇的表演。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
27. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使同儕之間互動更多。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
28. 讀者劇場閱讀活動使師生之間互動增加。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Part 4 青少年文學書籍 *The Magic Finger* 和 *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*

29. *The Magic Finger* 劇情安排適當。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
30. *The Magic Finger* 角色間互動良好。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
31. *The Magic Finger* 情境描述生動。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
32. *The Magic Finger* 主旨呈現明確。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
33. *The Magic Finger* 人物話語符合他個人應表現的語言方式。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
34. *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* 劇情安排適當。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
35. *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* 角色間互動良好。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
36. *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* 情境描述生動。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
37. *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* 主旨呈現明確。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
38. *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* 人物話語符合他個人應表現的語言方式。 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Part 5 合作學習的經驗

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 15. 分組活動促進同學間的合作。 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. 分組活動使我更融於同學間的互動。 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. 分組活動幫助我和同學一起解決問題。 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. 分組活動增加我平日學習英文的機會。 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. 分組活動增進我學英文的興趣。 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

第二部分：請回答下列問題，並寫出原因理由。

39. 實施完讀者劇場的閱讀教學計畫後，我最喜歡的讀者劇場活動是—

☐大聲朗誦 ☐編寫劇本 ☐欣賞同學們表演 ☐和同學們互相合作

原因：

40. *The Magic Finger* 和 *Sarah, Plain, and Tall* 這兩本青少年文學讀本，我比較喜歡的小說是一

☐ *The Magic Finger* ☐ *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*

原因：

41. 我是否喜歡在上課中參與合作學習這樣的活動—

☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡

原因：

Appendix F-1

An Original Text of the Fiction *The Magic Finger*

The farm next to ours is owned by Mr. And Mrs. Gregg.

The Greggs have two children, both of them boys. Their names are Philip and William. Sometimes I go over to their farm to play with them.

I am a girl and I am eight years old.

Philip is also eight years old.

William is three years older. He is ten.

What?

Oh, all right, then.

He is eleven.

Last week, something very funny happened to the Gregg family. I am going to tell you about it as best I can.

Now the one thing that Mr. Gregg and his two boys loved to do more than anything else was to go hunting. Every Saturday morning they would take their guns and go off into the woods to look for animals and birds to shoot. Even Philip, who was only eight years old, had a gun of his own.



Appendix F-2

A Sample RT Script of the Fiction *The Magic Finger*

Narrator 1:  The Gregg family lives next to a girl.


All: A girl.

Narrator 2:  The Gregg family has two sons.


Narrator 3:  Their names are Philip and William.

All: Philip and William.


Girl 1:  Philip is eight years old.

Girl 2:  I am at the same age as Philip.


Girl 3:  William is eleven years old.

Girl 1:  I am younger than he.

Girl 2:  Sometimes I go over their farm to play with them.

Girl 3:  But something happened to the Gregg family last week.


All: Something happened.

Narrator 1:  Mr. Gregg and his two boys love to go hunting.

All: Love to go hunting.



Narrator 2: They take their guns to hunt animals and birds.

Narrator 3:  Philip, a little boy, did, too.

All: Wooooooo go hunting, hunting, hunting.

Appendix G-1

An Original Text of the Fiction *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*

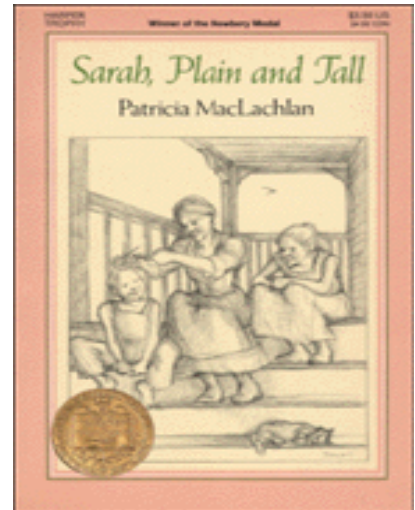
"Did Mama sing every day?" asked Caleb.

"Every-single-day?" Ha sat close to the fire, his chin in his hand. It was dark, and the dogs lay beside him on the warm hearthstones.

"Every-single-day," I told him for the second time this week. For the twentieth time this month. The hundredth time this year? And the past few years.

"And did Papa sing, too?"


"Yes, Papa sang, too. Don't get so close, Caleb. You'll heat up."



He pushed his chair back. It made a hollow scraping sound on the hearthstones, and the dogs stirred. Lottie, small and black, wagged her tail and lifted her head. Nick slept on.

Appendix G-2


A Sample RT Script of the Fiction *Sarah, Plain, and Tall*


Narrator 1:  It was dark and the dogs lay beside Caleb on
the warm hearthstones.


Caleb:  Did Mama sing every day?

Caleb:  Every-single-day?

Anna 1:  Every-single-day.


Anna 2:  I told him for the second time this week.


Anna 3:  I told him for the twentieth time this month.

Anna 1:  I told him for the hundredth time this year?


All: The hundredth time.

Caleb:  Did Papa sing this, too?


Anna 1:  Yes, Papa sang, too.


Anna 2:  Don't get so close, Caleb.

All: You will heat up.

Narrator 1:  Caleb pushed the chair and made the scraping
sound.

(All make the scraping sound.)

Narrator 2:  One of the dogs, Lottie, wagged her tail and
lifted her head,

Narrator 1:  One of the dogs, Nick, slept on.

Appendix H-1

Reliability (Alpha) Analysis of the Pre-study Questionnaire

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Overall Alpha (α)
1	.581	.915	.919
2	.542	.916	
3	.503	.917	
4	.655	.913	
5	.603	.915	
6	.683	.912	
7	.651	.913	
8	.660	.913	
9	.517	.917	
10	.608	.914	
11	.501	.917	
12	.594	.915	
13	.726	.912	
14	.708	.912	
15	.504	.917	
16	.532	.916	
17	.517	.916	
18	.538	.916	
19	.546	.916	

Appendix H-2

Reliability (Alpha) Analysis of the Post-study Questionnaire

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Overall Alpha (α)
1	.592	.961	.962
2	.677	.960	
3	.581	.961	
4	.619	.961	
5	.739	.960	
6	.612	.961	
7	.523	.961	
8	.687	.960	
9	.405	.962	
10	.584	.961	
11	.632	.961	
12	.634	.961	
13	.740	.960	
14	.804	.960	
15	.384	.962	
16	.587	.961	
17	.539	.961	
18	.703	.960	
19	.702	.960	
20	.667	.961	
21	.702	.960	
22	.747	.960	
23	.766	.960	
24	.789	.960	
25	.531	.961	
26	.657	.961	
27	.661	.960	
28	.562	.961	
29	.593	.961	
30	.527	.961	
31	.487	.961	
32	.502	.961	

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Overall Alpha (α)
33	.587	.961	.962
34	.644	.961	
35	.574	.961	
36	.614	.961	
37	.635	.961	
38	.643	.961	

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