

Improving Beginning Reading Skills of Foreign Learners through Repetition Theory: A Case Study of BIPA Learners at Thammasat Wittaya, Thailand

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i1.620>

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effectiveness of applying repetition theory to enhance beginning reading skills among foreign learners at Thammasat Wittaya School in Thailand. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this classroom action research involved 15 Matthayom 2 students over one month in August 2024. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The study focused on five assessment criteria: accuracy of voicing and writing, pronunciation fairness, intonation fairness, fluency, and clarity of voice. The results indicate that repetition theory positively impacts learners' reading abilities, with significant variation in performance among students. Some learners showed consistent improvement, while others required more intensive support. such as Nunchaona getting 18, Sadeen getting 17, Najwa getting 16, and Chanapa getting 16, showing consistent good performance in all aspects of the assessment. On the other hand, learners like Nisna got 7, Nadir got 7, and Nur got 10. These learners need more intensive guidance. In-depth analysis of learners' reading ability was conducted through five main aspects: accuracy of writing, pronunciation fairness, intonation fairness, fluency, and clarity of voice. The results showed significant variation in ability among learners.

Keywords: BIPA, Beginning Reading Ability, Repetition Theory

Article History:

Received 28th December 2024

Accepted 21st January 2025

Published 24th January 2025



INTRODUCTION

Reading is a critical skill for foreign language learners, and enhancing this ability requires effective instructional strategies. Repetition theory, which involves the repeated practice of material to strengthen memory and fluency, has been recognized as a powerful tool in language acquisition. This study aims to explore the application of repetition theory in improving beginning reading skills among foreign learners at Thammasat Wittaya School in Thailand. By investigating the impact of repeated practice on learners' reading performance, this research seeks to provide insights into the practical application of repetition theory in foreign language education. Indonesian for Foreigners or BIPA is now known almost throughout the world. Until now, there are approximately 400 million people who can understand Indonesian (Fariqoh, 2016). Indonesian is studied in 72 countries (Rohayani, 2014). Thailand is one of the ASEAN member countries that offers many BIPA study programs. As Indonesia's role in the regional and international context increases, Indonesian is increasingly in demand by foreign speakers. This is especially true in educational institutions such as Thammasat Witaya. Teachers as people who are influential and responsible in learning activities are required to be able to see the learning outcomes of

students from various perspectives of complete and comprehensive psychological performance. With the influence given by teachers in learning activities, it is hoped that students will gain new and positive psychological experiences (Butar Butar, C & Siregar, 2017).

In learning Indonesian in developing literacy is an activity of reading to be able to understand the information obtained in the reading text with the understanding obtained information based on local wisdom makes the learner's attraction to read about a view in life to carry out activities that are often carried out by the local community with events that are not as expected in life make changes so that it will have a big enough impact so that it becomes material for considering the basic values and norms of goodness that have been applied, believed in and maintained from generation to generation in the local environment that makes it their place of residence (Febriyana, Sitepu and Harahap, 2023).

Initial reading comprehension is one of the basic skills that must be mastered by learners in learning Indonesian for Foreigners (BIPA). Starting to read is an important foundation, because it is the first step to recognizing and understanding written symbols in the language. This process includes the ability to identify letters, pronounce sounds, and understand the meaning of simple words (Tarigan, 2015). For BIPA learners, the challenge of learning to read tends to be more complex considering the differences in writing and phonological systems between Thai and Indonesian. Based on the kemdikbud.go.id website, as many as 8,950 BIPA students from 30 countries were supported from 2021 to September. This is a significant development of the BIPA program (Tamara et al., 2021). The development of this program will certainly be more meaningful if it is in line with the development of various teaching materials to support BIPA learning, especially the integration of photos in reading skills. A person's skills in a language depend on the opportunity to use the language. Therefore, it is clear that the first language is easier to learn than the second language. If someone is equally proficient in two or more languages, they may be equally proficient in both languages. In developing teaching materials, reading activities are one type of competency in BIPA learning.

Reading is a complex cognitive process in which individuals interact with written texts (Shiotsu, 2010). In addition, reading can be viewed as a process, a way of thinking, a life experience, and a tool, so it can be said that the reading process involves a series of complex processes and skills (Babashamsi et al., 2013). Hidayati (2019) added that through reading, students' knowledge gradually increases, other language skills increase, and their intellectual abilities develop. In BIPA learning, the media and learning materials used should also provide a description of Indonesia to students so that they can be more interested in learning Indonesian (Saddhono et al., 2020). Reading ability is a complex ability that requires cooperation between a number of abilities. Reading ability is reading speed and understanding of content. The success of students in participating in learning is greatly influenced by their ability to read. This means that students will understand the material in all subjects they take through reading activities (Syamsuyurnita, et al. 2023).

Reading comprehension is one of the fundamental skills in foreign language learning and plays an important role in the development of overall language skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). For foreign learners, early reading comprehension is the most important gateway to understanding the target language system and developing further language skills. This first reading stage itself is difficult, because students must become familiar with the orthography, phonology, and structural systems of the language that may be very different from their mother tongue (Koda, 2016). In the context of foreign language learning, early reading skills not only include letter and word recognition, but also involve complex processes that integrate various linguistic aspects (Nation, 2019).

Learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) in Thailand faces unique challenges, given the significant differences between the Thai and Indonesian language systems, both in terms of phonology, morphology, and syntax (Kusmiatun, 2019). According to Muliastuti

(2017), these differences in language systems are often the main obstacle in the BIPA learning process for Thai speakers. In this context, the application of repetition theory is one promising approach to increasing the effectiveness of BIPA learning. This theory, as stated by Ellis (2019), emphasizes that systematic repetition in language learning can strengthen understanding and retention of learning materials. Research related to the implementation of the beginning reading skills of foreign learners was conducted to conclude the impact of the existence of learners in the application of repetition theory.

Thammasat Wittaya School is one of the study abroad destinations in Thailand, but this school is a study abroad destination for students from Thailand and Malaysia who have been in Thailand for a long time. The location of Thammasat Wittaya School is in Tambon Khuan Sato, Khuan Don district, Satun Thailand, and it is one of the places with a large number of native Thai residents. One of the three dharmas of higher education is research and community service. This research was conducted with the aim of overcoming the problem of early reading comprehension of foreign students using repetition theory. The International KKN-DIK International Program organized by FKIP UMSU will be a place for students to research and learn how to deal with various types of problems faced at Thammasat Wittaya School in Satun, Thailand.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method to evaluate the effectiveness of daily reading activities based on repetition theory. The study focused on 15 Matthayom 2 students at Thammasat Wittaya School, Thailand, who participated in these activities for one month, in August 2024. The intervention aimed to enhance students' reading skills, including accuracy, pronunciation, fluency, and clarity, through the repetition of short passages and texts. Data were gathered from classroom observations, student interviews, and teaching documentation analysis. The assessment was conducted based on five criteria: writing and voicing accuracy, pronunciation fairness, intonation fairness, fluency, and voice clarity. The qualitative analysis of the collected data provided insights into the intervention's effectiveness in improving the students' reading performance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study revealed that the application of repetition theory led to varying improvements in the learners' reading skills. Among the 15 learners, several demonstrated consistent progress across all assessment aspects, such as Nunchaona (18 points), Sadeen (17 points), and Najwa (16 points). These learners exhibited improved accuracy, pronunciation, and fluency. However, other learners, such as Nisna (7 points), Nadir (7 points), and Nur (10 points), showed limited progress and require further support. The analysis indicates that repetition theory is effective for most learners, but individual differences in learning pace and ability suggest that more personalized guidance is necessary for certain students. The data analysis instrument used in this study is an instrument developed from the interview theory framework. (Sugiyono, 2015), and the theory of repetition implementation initiated by Ahmadian & Tavakoli (2011). The following are the findings and discussions in the application of repetition theory in the beginning reading class for grade VIII BIPA students in Thammasat Wittaya Thailand. During the observation, there was very good potential for students to follow the repetition of reading texts in Indonesian. Students read the reading text at a slow tempo and with clear pronunciation. Then the students followed the reading text. Students admitted that they understood the meaning of the reading text, but sometimes did not know how to read and the meaning in Indonesian. Some students were already able to read the text correctly but still found it difficult to pronounce. Reading ability classes with grade VIII students in Thammasat Wittaya Thailand were held every day. The following is

the Beginning Reading instrument and a description of students' reading ability guided by students.

Table 1. Beginning Reading Instrument

No	Aspect	Penskoran			
		4 (Very Good)	3 (Good)	2 (Enough)	1 (Need Guidance)
1	Accuracy of voicing writing	Students pronounce the writing clearly and fluently	Students pronounce the writing clearly but not fluently	Students pronounce the writing clearly but not fluently	Students pronounce writing unclearly and not fluently
2	Pronunciation fairness	Students pronounce the writing correctly and fluently	Students pronounce the writing correctly but not fluently	Students pronounce writing incorrectly and less fluently	Students pronounce the writing incorrectly
3	Intonation naturalness	Students pronounce words and sentences with correct intonation	Students can pronounce most words and sentences with correct intonation.	Students can pronounce a small number of words and sentences with the correct intonation.	Students cannot pronounce words and sentences with proper intonation.
4	Smoothness	Students read all readings fluently	Students read all readings fluently with little teacher assistance.	Students read some of the reading fluently.	Students cannot read at all
5	Clarity	Students read in a clear and loud voice so that all students can hear.	Students read in a voice that only some students can hear.	Siswa membaca dengan suara yang hanya didengar oleh teman sebangku	Students read in a clear voice that can only be heard by their desk mates.

The improvement can be proven by the absence of responses in Indonesian in the second to fifth meetings. The addition of vocabulary and accuracy of answers can also be seen in the fifth meeting compared to the first meeting when the learner delivered a self-introduction. Learners were able to improve the use and selection of vocabulary and the arrangement of good sentence structures. Learners also showed an increase in reading skills in the fifth meeting compared to the first meeting.

Table 2. Learner-guided reading ability of learners.

No	Name	Aspect					Total Assessment
		Accuracy Voicing Writing	Natural Pronunciation	Natural intonation	Fluency	Clarity	
		Scoring					
1.	TK	3	3	3	2	3	14
2.	NS	4	3	3	2	3	15
3.	HN	2	3	2	3	2	12
4.	NT	4	3	3	3	3	16
5.	MN	2	3	3	2	2	12
6.	NJ	4	3	3	3	3	16
7.	NR	2	2	2	2	2	10
8.	CP	4	3	3	3	3	16
9.	NS	1	2	2	1	1	7
10.	LN	3	3	3	3	3	15
11.	ND	1	2	1	2	1	7
12.	SD	4	3	4	3	3	17
13.	NC	4	4	3	3	4	18
14.	SK	2	3	3	2	2	12
15.	SL	3	2	3	3	2	13

Analysis of the research results presented based on data in Table 2 on Learner Reading Ability, here is a comprehensive description: Research on 15 grade VIII BIPA learners in Thammasat Wittaya Thailand shows variations in early reading ability using repetition theory. Here is a detailed analysis based on assessment aspects:

Accuracy of Voicing Writing

There is a significant variation in students' abilities in voicing writing. Several students, including Nusroh, Najwa, Nunchaona, and Sadeen, scored 4, indicating very good performance in this aspect. Some students achieved a score of 3, reflecting good abilities. However, there are students, such as Hannefah, Manassanan, and Sakis, who scored 2, suggesting their performance is only sufficient. Nisna and Nadir scored the lowest with a score of 1, indicating a need for additional guidance and support in voicing writing.

Pronunciation Fairness

The majority of students demonstrated good pronunciation skills, with most scoring 3. Nunchaona excelled in this aspect, earning a score of 4 for very good pronunciation. On the other hand, Nur scored the lowest with a score of 2, showing a need for further training and practice to improve pronunciation skills.

Intonation Fairness

Most students were able to pronounce words and sentences with fairly accurate intonation, reflecting their ability to use proper rhythm and tone. Sadeen stood out with a score of 4, demonstrating very good intonation skills. However, some students, such as Nadir, require further guidance and support to improve their intonation in pronunciation.

Fluency

The ability to read fluently varied among the students. Najwa, Natsameeya, and Chanapa displayed good fluency, earning a score of 3. However, some students, like Nisna and Nadir, struggled with reading fluency, receiving scores of 1 and 2, which indicates difficulty and the need for more focused training to improve their reading fluency.

Clarity of Voice

Most students were able to read with a fairly clear voice, achieving a score of 3. Nunchaona excelled in this aspect, earning a score of 4 for very good clarity of voice. However, Nisna received the lowest score of 1, highlighting the need for additional training and practice to enhance voice clarity during reading.

Based on the results of the study, there are main findings: Learners who consistently show good performance: Nunchaona, Sadeen, Najwa, Chanapa. Learners who need more intensive guidance: Nisna, Nadir, Nur. The application of this repetition theory shows positive potential in improving early reading skills. Based on research conducted at Thammasat Wittaya School, Thailand on 15 grade VIII BIPA learners, the application of repetition theory in early reading learning shows interesting and diverse results. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of the repetition method in improving the early reading skills of foreign learners.

The results of the observation showed very good potential from the learners in following the repetition of Indonesian reading texts. In the early stages, learners read the text at a slow tempo and with clear pronunciation, then followed the reading text. They admitted that they understood the meaning of the text, but still had difficulty reading and interpreting some words in Indonesian. In-depth analysis of students' reading ability was conducted through five main aspects: accuracy of written voice, pronunciation fairness, intonation fairness, fluency, and clarity of voice. The results showed significant variation in ability among students.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the application of repetition theory has demonstrated potential in enhancing the beginning reading skills of foreign learners. The study found positive improvements in reading performance for most students, though variability in individual progress highlights the need for tailored approaches in instruction. Future research should focus on identifying specific factors that influence the effectiveness of repetition theory, including learner characteristics and the type of texts used in practice. This study contributes to the growing body of research on language learning strategies and provides valuable insights for foreign language educators.

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