

Investigating EFL Students' Experiences with ReadTheory.org for Reading Comprehension Enhancement: A Narrative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences of EFL students at the State Islamic University of Raden Intan Lampung in using the ReadTheory.org website to enhance their reading comprehension. Employing a qualitative narrative inquiry design, the research aims to gain in-depth insights into how students interact with and benefit from the platform. Data were collected primarily through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which includes four stages—concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—served as the analytical framework. The findings indicate that ReadTheory.org supports students' reading development by providing level-adjusted reading texts, which contribute significantly to improving their reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, EFL Students, Experience, ReadTheory.org*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought about major changes in various aspects of life, including in the world of education. One of the most noticeable transformations has occurred in learning methods, where the learning process, which was previously done manually or conventionally, is now shifting to a digital approach. In the context of English language learning, particularly reading skills, this change opens up new opportunities to create a learning process that is more interactive, flexible, and in line with the needs of the modern era (Maiboroda, 2024; Kizi, 2024).

Reading is a fundamental ability that is essential in every aspect of life, helping students comprehend any subject they choose. It provides information in print and visual media, increasing knowledge (Herlina et al., 2023; Krisna & Syafryadin, 2022). Reading is the main way students learn a language and is an interactive process that involves decoding, comprehending, text analysis, and responding. Students gain knowledge through reading, demonstrating the importance of this fundamental ability in their academic journey (Abeberese, 2014).

Reading comprehension is very important for students to understand a reading that they will study or read to add to their knowledge. With various factors that they face, such as understanding vocabulary and sentence structure. Reading comprehension is a crucial skill for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students as it enables them to understand and engage with academic and professional texts (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). However, many EFL students struggle with reading comprehension, which can hinder their academic and professional success (Koda, 2005). Researchers have found that various factors, such as vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and metacognitive strategies, can influence reading comprehension (Klingner et al., 2015). Students who use metacognitive strategies are better able to concentrate on comprehending the material, make connections between previously learned material and new information, and encode these connections in their

memories. Students how to develop goals and become effective and self-sufficient is the goal of cognitive strategies (Hasanah, 2023).

Reading nowadays involves more than just reading written materials like books, magazines, newspapers, and journals; it can also involve reading online, or "online reading." Furthermore, reading online is crucial in the technologically advanced world of today. People can access the internet from anywhere at any time using a variety of devices, including laptops, iPads, PCs, and cell phones (Qalby et al, 2021). Students' inclination to obtain information has altered as a result of the internet's ability to provide any kind of information that people require (Parapi et al., 2020). Usually, students will obtain advanced texts online rather than in print at the library (Rodzi et al., 2020). Students can use devices to discuss class content and share academic issues using various web-based media in addition to receiving data from the web (Bana, 2020). For students, digital reading has both advantages and disadvantages. From one perspective, it simplifies and improves the acceptability of reading and data transparency. On the other hand, it poses a threat to comprehending society. The fact that reading is no longer restricted to a single location, solitude, and perusing is one benefit of web-based reading. As long as they feel valued and comfortable, students can now read at any time and from any location. Another advantage is that using the web for media innovation (PC) can generate a lot of inspiration and enthusiasm for reading. This fact demonstrates that students have a positive perception of using the internet to learn reading appreciation topics (Bana, 2020).

Moreover, not all places are covered by internet networks. Not all educational establishments have an internet connection. It is not enough to cover online media, even if there is an internet connection. The fact that many aspects of teachers' and students' welfare continue to fall short of expectations and that they obviously cannot afford to use their internet quota to satisfy their online media demands makes costs another barrier. While there is a problem with the usage of online media, the financial skills and abilities of both teachers and students have not advanced in the same way (Qalby et al, 2021). But nowadays, teaching and learning will make the most of digital media (Oktaviani and Desiarti, 2017). Students can access a variety of English language learning platforms and applications at any time in the modern period (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019; Mandasari & Aminatun, 2019; Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020; Mandasari, 2020; Putri & Sari, 2020; Mandasari & Wahyudin, 2021). The students are drawn to something distinctive, digital, and online (Wike & Reza, 2021).

Numerous online resources, including Kahoot, Quizizz, and ReadTheory, can be utilized to help students become better readers. ReadTheory stands out as a go-to platform for reading education due to its up-to-date materials, vocabulary-building features, and progress-tracking graphs accessible to both students and teachers. It provides personalized reading comprehension exercises and assessments using adaptive technology that tailors content to individual student levels, promoting engagement and improvement. The platform offers thousands of skill-building activities across all reading levels, from primary to college, and aligns with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and national benchmarks. ReadTheory fosters an engaging learning environment and enables educators to deliver more tailored instruction through detailed reports with charts and statistics. To enhance motivation, the program incorporates gamified elements such as reading scores, achievement badges, and points, encouraging students to track their progress. ReadTheory.org is completely free, with accounts that do not collect personally identifiable information and remain under teacher supervision. Students can access the platform anytime, anywhere, using mobile devices, whether at home, in class, or on the go.

In the English Education study program, especially in semester 5, students take Reading Comprehension courses designed to improve their ability to understand English texts in depth. To support this learning process, lecturers choose the ReadTheory.org platform as an innovative teaching medium. This platform offers a variety of reading materials designed to suit the individual ability level of the students. The materials presented are always up-to-date, so they are relevant to the context of everyday life and

attract students' interest in learning. Through ReadTheory.org, students are asked to learn important aspects of reading, such as vocabulary mastery, main idea identification, and context analysis in reading (Alam, 2022). The use of this platform provides a new experience for students because they not only learn to read passively but are also actively involved in an interactive learning process. They are exposed to challenging readings according to their abilities, while receiving immediate feedback for every answer they give.

One of the best features of ReadTheory.org is the integrated progress reporting chart. This feature allows students to monitor how far their skills have progressed, from the improvement of their scores, the number of exercises they have completed, to the level of difficulty of the reading they have mastered. With this report, students can more easily evaluate themselves and identify areas that need improvement. This phenomenon is interesting to study because the use of ReadTheory.org as a teaching medium in learning reading comprehension provides a new dimension in the English learning process. Students not only gain a better understanding of the reading text, but also get a learning experience that focuses on gradual and measurable skill development. This research will explore students' experiences in utilizing ReadTheory.org as a learning medium, including its impact on their reading comprehension skills, the challenges they face, and how this experience affects their overall learning. Therefore, the study wants to disclose the students' experience in using the ReadTheory website as a tool to enhance their comprehension skills, in which the students can engage with the materials. According to Dewey (1938), experience is a fundamental aspect of the learning process, as it allows individuals to engage with their environment and actively construct knowledge. This perspective is further supported by Kolb (1984), who emphasizes the role of experiential learning in the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Experiential learning, as described by Kolb (1984), involves a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This approach encourages students to engage with the material on a deeper level, fostering a more meaningful understanding of the subject matter (Kolb, 1984).

Concrete Experience:

The student gets to experience something tangible. This could be a novel circumstance or encounter, or it could be a reworking of past experiences in the context of novel ideas. In essence, learning by doing requires taking part in the event: What was this experience? What happened?

Reflective Observation of the New Experience

The student considers the new experience in the context of what they already know. Any discrepancies between experience and comprehension are especially significant. Stepping aside from the situation and giving it thoughtful consideration: Thinking about the experience and what happened, why do you think it unfolded as it did? How does this all relate to your understanding?

Abstract Conceptualization

After reflecting on one's experience, one may develop a new notion or modify an old abstract concept. The ability to interpret what has transpired and place it in the perspective of previous knowledge and experiences: What do you already know about this type of event/experience? What have you read about this topic?

Active Experimentation

Experimentation is sparked by the recently developed or altered thoughts to see what occurs; the student applies their notion or ideas to the environment. Students can now reflect on how this experience has influenced their knowledge and how it may impact their practice going forward: What do you now understand about the experience you had? How will you put your learning into practice in the future? Will this experience change your future practice?

Students are said to be learning effectively when they go through a four-stage cycle: (1) having a concrete experience, (2) observing and reflecting on that experience, (3) forming abstract concepts (analysis), and (4) using those abstract concepts and generalizations

(conclusions) to test a hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences (McLeod, 2017).

Likewise, Schön (1983) highlights the importance of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, which enable learners to adapt their strategies and approaches based on their experiences. Furthermore, Dewey (1938) emphasizes the role of experience in promoting continuity and interaction, which are essential for the growth and development of the individual. By engaging in meaningful experiences, students can connect their prior knowledge to new information, leading to a more holistic understanding of the subject (Dewey, 1938). The concept of experience in education is widely recognized as a crucial component of the learning process. By embracing experiential learning and fostering reflective practices, educators can create an environment that nurtures critical thinking, problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Based on previous studies, Salwa Al Anquoudi et al. (2023), in her research entitled *"Improving EFL Learners' Reading Motivation with Intensive Reading Using ReadTheory,"* implemented an online intensive reading club aimed at engaging unmotivated students in improving their reading through task-based learning using the ReadTheory website. Participation in the intensive reading club resulted in heightened motivation and improved reading skills due to the students' active engagement in the ReadTheory-enhanced intensive reading tasks. Similarly, Fatmah Sewelem Alalwany (2021), in her study entitled *"Enhancing Reading Skill via ReadTheory.org: Students' Attitudes, Motivation, Autonomy, and Perceptions,"* found that students held positive sentiments toward the gamified platform. Her research demonstrated that using ReadTheory encouraged students to read independently, both inside and outside the classroom. The primary benefit of ReadTheory is its portability, making it a superior alternative to conventional reading techniques and a valuable tool for enhancing students' reading comprehension. However, the impact of using ReadTheory on reading skills needs to be studied further, especially in the context of education in Indonesia or foreign language learning. Therefore, this research will be conducted with fifth-semester students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung, where in the reading course, they are asked to use the ReadTheory platform to improve their reading comprehension.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative method with a narrative inquiry design to gain in-depth insights into students' experiences with the use of the ReadTheory.org website to enhance reading comprehension. Narrative inquiry, as a qualitative research approach, allows researchers to explore the lived experiences of individuals by collecting, interpreting, and analyzing their personal stories (Clandinin, 2006; Fasikha & Chubbi, 2023). It emphasizes the significance of context, temporality, and the interaction between the researcher and the participant in shaping meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). By focusing on narratives, researchers can uncover not only what participants experienced but also how they made sense of those experiences over time. In this study, narrative inquiry is particularly suitable because it facilitates a deep understanding of how students interact with digital reading tools like ReadTheory.org, how they perceive its impact on their learning, and what personal or emotional challenges they encounter during the process. Narratives are powerful tools that help bring to light the nuanced and often overlooked aspects of learners' experiences. They represent more than mere recounts of events; they reflect the beliefs, values, and transformations that occur through those events (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

According to Amsterdam and Bruner (2000), as well as Webster and Mertova (2007), stories serve as vessels of human meaning-making. They often highlight key moments—successes, failures, breakthroughs, and barriers—thus providing a holistic view of the human experience. In educational research, narrative inquiry offers a platform for participants to express their inner thoughts, emotions, and reflections in a way that is both authentic and personally meaningful. It allows voices that are often marginalized in traditional data-gathering methods to be heard and valued. Through in-depth interviews and careful analysis of students' stories, this research aims to construct rich, descriptive

accounts of how EFL students at the State Islamic University of Raden Intan Lampung (UIN Raden Intan Lampung) engage with ReadTheory.org. The study explores not only the cognitive aspects of reading comprehension improvement but also the motivational, emotional, and contextual factors that shape students' learning experiences. Ultimately, narrative inquiry enables the researcher to represent the complexity of student experiences in a way that honors their individuality while identifying patterns and themes relevant to digital learning environments.

The participants were selected based on their qualifications as English Department students; in total, 2 students. The crucial criteria are used to choose the participants such as; students show their interest and desire to participate in this study by openly agreeing to share their experiences using ReadTheory as a tool to enhance their comprehension skills; students also use ReadTheory with a high audience engagement rate, which shows how successful and influential their skills are.

The researchers collected the data mainly through semi-structured interviews to get relevant and valid data. Depending on the participants' comfort level and level of language competency, the interviews were held in both English and Indonesian. The participants' informed consent to record the sessions and transcribe the interview results into English was requested and received by the researchers before the interviews (N A Aflahah et al, 2023). The interviews are designed as the main instrument to answer the research problem and to describe the experience of using the ReadTheory.org website as a medium for reading comprehension.

The researchers employ thematic analysis to examine the data, following the procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Fasikha and Chubbi (2023): familiarizing themselves with the data, generating initial codes, identifying potential themes, reviewing possible themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The researchers will analyze students' experiences using the ReadTheory platform to enhance their reading abilities in the reading class through the lens of Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984), which consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings from the interviews that have been conducted, students have gained meaningful experiences in utilizing ReadTheory as a medium to enhance their reading comprehension. Their stories reveal a range of experiences—some challenging, others exciting—that reflect the multifaceted nature of learning through digital tools. To gain a deeper understanding of these experiences, the researchers employed Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which outlines a four-stage learning cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

Within the framework of narrative inquiry, these stories are more than just chronological events; they are expressions of how students experience, reflect, and learn in real-world contexts. By aligning the analysis with Kolb's theory, the researchers were able to structure the narratives to trace the developmental process of learning through experience. For instance, students' initial encounters with ReadTheory (concrete experience) often involved curiosity or confusion. These were followed by moments of reflection—on their struggles, strategies, or progress—representing the reflective observation phase. As students continued using the platform, they began to internalize new concepts about reading strategies and comprehension, which aligns with abstract conceptualization. Finally, they applied their insights in further reading tasks, both on and outside the platform, representing active experimentation.

Concrete Experience

The researchers found answers regarding the concrete experience. Based on their own experiences related to concrete experience, they talked about their direct involvement with ReadTheory and background, such as how they first used and knew the ReadTheory website, what motivated them to use it, and how often they used it. In concrete experience,

students learn things for the first time, or basic, learning by doing, and being part of it. What was this experience? What happened? What was your role? (Kolb, 1984)

Based on the story of participant A regarding his experience, who has used the ReadTheory website related to concrete experience, *"I got the ReadTheory from the lecturer in the course ..."* (Participant A). *"The first time I knew ReadTheory... the first time I knew ReadTheory was from the lecturer's recommendation. So, when there was a reading course, if I'm not mistaken, the lecturer recommended using the ReadTheory website."* (Participant B)

Moving on to the next question related to the motivation of using ReadTheory in practicing their reading skills, *"Because ReadTheory is very easy in practicing our reading to understand a text, because in ReadTheory it can adjust to our level of ability."* (Participant A). *"Motivation... the motivation can improve my reading comprehension, even though it is a requirement from the lecturer to be able to pass the course. But, on the other hand, it can also improve my reading comprehension."* (Participant B)

Then move on to questions related to their involvement in using the ReadTheory website, how long and how often they use the ReadTheory website for reading practice, *"About a month, maybe. Maybe about 2-3 times, but it also depends on the desire sometimes it can be less sometimes it can be more. and can use about 30 minutes."* (Participant A). *"I have been using it for about 1-2 months. It was used last year during the semester I forgot. But the point is used for 1-2 months. If in a week ... how many times, yes, it can be up to 4-5 times, because it pursues the level and demands of the lecturer for a certain level to pass the course. So often, in 1 time it can be up to 4-5 times, depending on the time too, because I do it when I have free time. It can be a few minutes, up to 30 minutes, depending on how much time I take to answer the text (question). Usually, the text in ReadTheory is long, so if you work on it, it can take a long time. 1 text can take 5 minutes to think about which answer, but for many texts, a day can spend about 30 minutes."* (Participant B).

In the story about students' concrete experience, they learned about the website through a lecturer's recommendation to engage in learning activities and improve their reading skills. This aligns with their motivation to enhance these skills through the ReadTheory website. The relationship between stimulation and reaction is mediated by learning motivation. In other words, a learner's personal beliefs about various topics shape their motivation for learning, which in turn influences their individual learning needs (Ming-Hung et al., 2017). According to Koff and Mullis (2011), learning motivation refers to the purpose or desire of students to engage in and exert effort toward learning, as demonstrated by their choice of specific learning activities and the effort they invest in them. Thus, learning motivation can be defined as the process of guiding students' continued learning and efforts toward the learning objectives set by teachers. Chou et al. (2012) also found that while students may seek help from teachers when facing learning challenges (where external stimuli trigger behavior), they often prefer to solve certain assignments independently (where behavior is driven by intrinsic motivation).

Students also shared how often they use the ReadTheory website for reading practice. Based on the story above, they have spent 1-2 months with a week that can be 2-5 times of use in 30 minutes a day. They can also spend 5 minutes per 1 text with several questions to work on, depending on the length of the text and the difficulty level of the questions. The effective duration of web-based reading learning to improve reading comprehension does not have an exact number agreed upon, but some studies show that structured and repeated online learning sessions over several weeks significantly improve reading comprehension skills. Duration and Frequency of Learning by Conducting Study with twice-weekly training for two months (about 16 sessions) using an online platform with elaborative feedback showed significant improvement in reading comprehension sub-skills such as inference, main idea, and detailed reading (Biresaw & Bogale, 2023). Digital learning sessions of 12 times, each lasting 75 minutes, have also proven effective in improving reading comprehension in elementary school students (Ortlieb et al., 2014). In short, web-based reading comprehension learning is effective if done in a structured manner, with a frequency of 1-2 times per week for at least 1-2 months. Sessions of 60-75 minutes per meeting are

sufficient to produce significant improvements in reading comprehension. The key to success lies in consistency, immediate feedback, and the use of interactive digital materials.

Reflective Observation

Participants reflect on new experiences in the context of existing knowledge. Most important is the distinction between experience and understanding. Take a step back from the event and think deeply about what happened. Can you put this into context by discussing it with others? (Kolb, 1984). In reflective observation, the researchers asked several questions related to their background information, experience with ReadTheory, and effectiveness in improving their reading comprehension. The researchers found some answers to questions related to this context, such as;

Have participants used other online methods like ReadTheory before? And how they compare, "yes, Duolingo. It is an application like that (ReadTheory). If the comparison is that each application has different features. Duolingo is more about vocabulary, but ReadTheory makes it easier for us to understand a long text." (Participant A). "Another platform like ReadTheory is ... I will try to remember ... like Duolingo ... Yes, like Duolingo, but if I prefer Duolingo. Because it is like fun, like there are interesting visuals, like funny. If ReadTheory is more rigid, it is just full writing, there are no other visuals. But if it improves reading comprehension, I think ReadTheory is better." (Participant B)

Did you notice a change in the level of difficulty as you progressed? How did you feel about it? "Yes, because in ReadTheory, if, for example, we can answer questions from the text, the text will usually be more difficult for the next questions, and it is also more difficult to understand because it means that my reading progress has also increased to a more difficult level. I don't think so (challenged and find it difficult) just keep trying because if for example we can answer questions from the question, the text and questions are even more difficult, but if for example we answer questions from the text that are the most difficult and the most difficult questions and our answers are wrong, then the next question will be made easier by the website (ReadTheory)." (Participant A). "Ooo, like the difficulty level, if I realize it. In ReadTheory, there is a feature like a level, so the more we answer correctly, the higher our level goes. So, it is like I feel like every text that I do over time, the level of difficulty is felt, like the level of difficulty is increasing. My feeling is ... how is it ... at the beginning, when I know 'Wow, how come this is getting more and more questions' like it is hard to answer. However, if we read carefully and then understand correctly, we will get used to it. Yes, we see it as a challenge in itself, because the challenge of the text is already difficult to answer." (Participant B)

And in your opinion, is ReadTheory better at improving vocabulary, comprehension, or both? "I think yes, both. Because using ReadTheory, my vocabulary also increases, and I also often find new words from the text, and my understanding also increases because in ReadTheory, many types of texts are usually like science and history, so my general understanding increases." (Participant A). "I think it is both. First, we can improve our reading comprehension from ReadTheory itself, and we can also add new vocabulary insights. So, in each text, sometimes there are new vocabulary words that I have never found in ReadTheory (before)." (Participant B)

In this case, students shared their experiences of using similar websites, such as the ReadTheory website, and gave their opinions about the comparison. They agreed that ReadTheory has differences with the one they have used (Duolingo), they said that ReadTheory is more suitable for understanding long texts such as extensive reading but it is less interesting and less interactive because it seems rigid and monotonous without any supporting visualizations like the website they have used (Duolingo) which presents interesting visuals in it.

They also shared stories and feelings about the difficulty level of the questions they worked on as they progressed. They confirmed that the difficulty level of the questions would increase along with their progress. With the level feature, they could also see the level they were at that time. The more questions that are answered correctly, the more difficult the next question becomes. However, if they answer the question incorrectly, then ReadTheory will give an easier question for the next question. In essence, ReadTheory gives questions to students according to their ability and capacity to answer questions. And their feelings about it, at first, they wondered, but over time, it became familiar to them. Increasing the difficulty

of reading comprehension questions can challenge students and encourage growth, but without proper support and gradual exposure, it often leads to lower comprehension. Effective improvement comes from a balanced approach: gradually increasing the level of difficulty, providing instructional support, and encouraging engagement with higher-level questions (Dirgantari et al., 2020; Rajik, 2023).

They also agreed that ReadTheory could improve their vocabulary and comprehension. Because using ReadTheory, they found a lot of new vocabulary in the questions and also a new understanding, because the material presented by ReadTheory is universal, but according to the provisions of the reading text. Vocabulary knowledge is a major predictor of reading comprehension at various levels of education, both in first and second language learners (Acikgoz, 2018; Dong et al., 2020; Rabadi, 2023; Wei, 2020; Zhang & Anual, 2008). Students with richer vocabularies tend to score higher in reading comprehension tests (Acikgoz, 2018; Rabadi, 2023; Wei, 2020; Zhang & Anual, 2008). Vocabulary features in questions, such as those on ReadTheory.org, are critical to improving students' reading comprehension. The development of a broad and deep vocabulary, as well as the use of tasks that encourage active processing of word meanings, is effective in supporting reading comprehension.

Abstract Conceptualization

Reflection gives rise to new ideas or modifications of existing abstract concepts (the person has learned from their experience). The ability to understand what has happened and put it into the context of other experiences and learning, or in short, to understand and make connections (Kolb, 1984). In this case, the researchers asked several questions relating to aspects of effectiveness in improving reading and reflections relating to personal advice. The researchers found answers that led to abstract conceptualization from the following interview questions;

Do you think ReadTheory has helped improve your reading comprehension skills? "Yes, very helpful. Because this ReadTheory can be faster to understand a text with various questions in the text." (Participant A). "If you think about it, yes, it's not bad to improve reading comprehension, because in ReadTheory, the text is quite long, up to 1-3 paragraphs. So, to improve reading comprehension, it is quite fast. Because usually I also juggle to get a lot of questions, so I can read a lot and read quickly. It can capture the information needed quickly. So, answering the text can be fast too because you are used to reading fast and the text is long." (Participant B)

How does ReadTheory affect your ability to understand and analyze texts in other academic courses? If in other academic courses, for example, in ReadTheory, there are features such as vocabulary, so in vocabulary courses, it also helps you. Or, for example, in terms of grammar, it also helps you. "ReadTheory can help me in understanding texts that are very long in other courses. Like reading articles, for example. Yes, in ReadTheory, it affects vocabulary. In vocabulary, it is influential. Because if, for example, we read in ReadTheory or text, there are usually words that cannot be understood, then I will open the dictionary and increase vocabulary knowledge." (Participant A). "The effect is yes, the effect on other academics is that being able to analyze texts in the course can be fast. Then we can also conclude the reading carefully because we are used to using ReadTheory in reading courses. In terms of vocabulary, it helps. I used to read ReadTheory because I was fascinated by the new vocabulary I found. Indirectly from there, it is like adding new vocabulary insights like that." (Participant B)

If you could change or improve something about ReadTheory, what would it be that you like to improve? "For example, if there is an answer that is wrong, if we can be given the correct answer and told how to find the correct answer, then maybe add something like vocabulary exercises too." (Participant A). "What is it, if possible, the text should not be too long, if possible, 1-2 paragraphs only, not more than 3 paragraphs." (Participant B)

Regarding abstract conceptualization, the students stated that the use of ReadTheory helped them improve their reading comprehension skills. They reported significant improvement in their comprehension abilities due to the habit of reading long texts to answer questions. There is a strong relationship between the habit of reading long texts and

the ability to understand reading content. Eye movement patterns when reading long texts can predict a person's level of comprehension, suggesting that such exercises train cognitive processes that support deep understanding (Southwell et al., 2020). This improvement is also influenced by the requirement to meet course-related targets. Metacognitive strategy training and working memory strengthening through long text reading exercises have also been shown to enhance comprehension, particularly in tasks that require more complex discourse processing (Artuso et al., 2019; Carretti et al., 2014; Urrutia et al., 2024).

On the other hand, ReadTheory also has an effect in improving comprehension and analysis of texts for other academic courses, this happens because they can add new vocabulary along with working on problems while using ReadTheory. Reading habits in general, including reading long texts, improve reading fluency, vocabulary expansion, and inferential and critical comprehension skills (Napa-Rodríguez, 2025). Students who have high reading motivation tend to be more focused, experience less mind wandering, and are more active in monitoring comprehension and elaborating on reading content, resulting in better understanding (Soemer et al., 2023; Urrutia et al., 2024). Students also expressed some of their wishes regarding the features they would like to see on the ReadTheory website, if they could change them, such as making text questions no more than 3 paragraphs long and providing some tips regarding finding answers.

Active Experimentation

Experiments are based on newly developed or altered notions. Students apply their theories to the real world to observe the results. You can now reflect on how this experience has influenced your understanding and how it could influence your practice going forward (Kolb, 1984). In the interviews that have been conducted by the researchers, the researchers asked several questions related to the effectiveness of improving reading comprehension and reflections related to personal advice. The researchers found some answers related to active experience by triggering the following questions;

Do you apply the reading strategies from ReadTheory to books, novels, or article texts?
"Yes, I apply the techniques when reading other texts such as textbooks, articles, and also novels. I usually also read them like looking for keywords and then understanding the concept". (Participant A).
"Yes, I apply it. Like, first I read everything first and then I understand the content of the text, then I can know what the content of the text is." (Participant B).

Would you recommend ReadTheory to other EFL students? *"For me, yes, I highly recommend it to other EFL students, because ReadTheory is very useful for students to improve their reading comprehension effectively because it adjusts to our ability level." (Participant A).* *"If I recommend it, because I think ReadTheory is quite helpful in reader comprehension and quite helpful in adding new vocabulary insights." (Participant B).*

How do you see the role of technology like ReadTheory in the future in English language learning? *"In my opinion, technology like ReadTheory will probably be more important and very important for English language learning. Because technologies like ReadTheory can provide a learning experience that is more flexible, more personalized, and also easier because it can be used anytime and anywhere." (Participant A).* *"Maybe in the future, ReadTheory will play an important role if we want to increase reading comprehension. Because this (ReadTheory) is quite flexible, we can do it anywhere and whenever we are free. Flexible, like it does not have to be today (target). Because we can do it via smartphone, I think it has an important role for people who want to improve reading comprehension." (Participant B).*

Regarding active experimentation, the students shared that they applied reading strategies from ReadTheory.org to English reading materials that they usually read, such as textbooks, articles, and novels. One of them used the strategy of finding keywords and then understanding the concept. A reading strategy that relies on finding keywords and then understanding the concept is called the keyword strategy (Gema De Las et al., 2022; Julia et al., 2020). This strategy is very useful for accelerating and facilitating the understanding of reading content, and is often used in skimming and scanning techniques (Aditya et al., 2023). And another one uses the strategy of reading all the text to completion and then

understanding the content of the text. This strategy can be called directed reading activity (DRA), which this strategy guides students to get information from the text read thoroughly, connecting the knowledge they already have with the content of the reading, so that understanding becomes more complete after reading the entire text (Yesica et al., 2020). They also recommended the ReadTheory.org website to some other students who want to improve their reading comprehension skills, followed by their opinions on the use of technology such as ReadTheory.org (web-based learning) which facilitates access to training anywhere because it is easier, flexible, personalized, and can adjust to the abilities of the users.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined students' experiences using the ReadTheory.org website to enhance their reading comprehension. Students were introduced to the platform through a lecturer's recommendation for course-related use. The website presents reading passages ranging from one to five paragraphs, with questions that increase in difficulty as students' abilities grow, which in turn boosts their motivation and engagement. Initially, students felt confused and challenged, but over time they adapted and continued learning with set goals. ReadTheory proved effective in improving both reading comprehension and vocabulary, as evidenced by students' increased vocabulary mastery and their ability to quickly grasp information from texts. Students recommended the platform due to its flexibility and interactive features that allow them to monitor their own progress. These findings highlight the value of integrating adaptive digital tools like ReadTheory into educational settings to support differentiated instruction, student engagement, and independent learning, particularly in EFL contexts. The study also emphasizes the importance of providing guidance during the initial stages of digital tool use to help students fully benefit from the platform and experience meaningful improvements in comprehension, vocabulary, and motivation.

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