

## Exploring the Effectiveness of Audacity Readers' Theatre in Increasing Reading Motivation and Fluency Among Lower Primary ESL Learners

Hemalatha Devarajoo<sup>1</sup>  , Hamidah Yamat<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

 **Corresponding Author:** Hemalatha Devarajoo, E-mail: [hema\\_snakey@yahoo.com](mailto:hema_snakey@yahoo.com)

### ARTICLE INFORMATION

**Received:** December 25, 2020

**Accepted:** February 20, 2021

**Volume:** 3

**Issue:** 2

**DOI:** 10.32996/ijels.2021.3.2.13

### KEYWORDS

Audacity Readers' Theatre, motivation in reading, reading fluency, lower primary ESL learners, case study

### ABSTRACT

Being constantly motivated and capable to read fluently is one of the crucial aspects that should be acquired by an individual. This receptive skill is necessary in order to be able to decode written information and symbols of a language. The inability to read fluently imposes great threats to individuals as it may affect decoding skills and literacy. Low motivation and dysfluency in reading are regarded as the most blatant issues faced by learners in reading. This case study aimed to explore the effectiveness of Audacity Readers' Theatre in increasing Year 2 pupils' motivation and fluency in reading. The three Year 2 pupils were purposively selected due to their inability to read fluently and lack of motivation in reading. The main instrument used was the observation checklist where the lessons were observed and recorded by two observers. The pupils were interviewed to find out how Audacity Readers' Theatre motivated and helped them to read more fluently. The researcher wrote journals after the lessons to keep a record on pupils' behaviour and improvement throughout the lessons. Thus, the data from the semi structured interview and journal were used to triangulate the data from the observation checklist. The data which was analysed using thematic analysis illuminated on how Audacity Readers' Theatre aided the pupils in heightening their motivation level and reading more fluently. The findings of the study revealed the necessity of incorporating Audacity Readers' Theatre in the primary ESL classrooms to remedy problems of low motivation and dysfluency in reading.

### 1. Introduction

According to Lems (2012), motivating pupils to read has been one of the major issues faced by educators in ESL classrooms. Lems (2012) opined that children who learn a second or a foreign language possess high level of anxiety and low motivation and therefore refrain themselves from reading. This situation is also evident in Malaysian classrooms whereby the English language is being taught as a second language. Tay (2014) believed that reading fluency, literacy rates and reading motivation among the lower primary pupils in the Malaysian ESL classroom is rather appalling and that an official program or an intervention to remedy this problem has yet to be implemented in the Malaysian primary schools. The fluency rate of lower primary pupils should be enhanced to prevent further difficulty or dissuasion in reading when the pupils proceed to the upper primary level. Thus, this article is believed to provide stakeholders some insights on one of the reading programs that could be carried out in schools and classrooms to motivate pupils in reading thus achieving reading fluency.

In addressing the issue discussed above, a wide repertoire of studies about using Readers' Theatre in improving pupils' reading fluency had been carried out (e.g., Vogan, 2013; Mraz et. al, 2013; Lekwilai, 2014 and Young & Rasinski, 2017) and the studies were successful in assisting struggling readers to read more fluently. However, the studies carried out focussed on the effectiveness of Readers Theatre in improving the pupils' pace of reading rather than accuracy, automaticity and prosody. The research findings of Tay (2014) and Khor, Low and Lee (2014) revealed that some of the pupils were able to read words correctly but obtained low scores due to the inability to read the words within the stipulated time (1 minute). The researchers further

reasoned about using less subjective assessment tools to assess their accuracy and prosody and not the pace of reading in future studies.

According to Hasbrouck and Glaser (2016), readers need adequate time to learn how to read quickly with minimal pause as reading is a process. This statement is agreeable as pupils become fast readers with time and practice and it is almost impossible to gauge pupils' reading pace within a few months. This reveals the gap whereby the findings of this study will reveal how Audacity Readers' Theatre increased the pupil's accuracy in reading words and reading texts with meaningful expressions.

In addressing the problem of reading fluency, most of the previous studies were conducted without the inclusion of technology. Lekwilai (2014) claimed that Readers' Theatre improved pupils' prosody and comprehension but they perceived reading via Readers' Theatre as dull and monotonous. Vogan (2013) recommended that the usage of technology with Readers' Theatre will be beneficial for future research as it could increase pupils' motivation and would be an attempt to address the scarcity of studies in the area. This provided an insight to this case study due to the high usage of technological devices by the pupils in this study. Thus, this case study which involved three participants will provide an overview of Readers Theatre with the aid of a podcasting tool (Audacity) in increasing lower primary pupils' reading fluency and motivation. This case study is believed to have provided an extensive data about the ways Audacity Readers' Theatre improved pupils' reading motivation and fluency.

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of Readers Theatre and the Audacity software in developing Year 2 pupils' motivation and fluency in reading. The strategy is effective in increasing motivation, accuracy, prosody and automaticity in recognizing words. Therefore, the ways Readers Theatre and the Audacity software helped in developing motivation and reading fluency were highlighted. Thus, this study was carried out to answer two research questions, (a) How does Audacity Readers' Theatre motivate Year 2 pupils to read? (b) How does Audacity Readers' Theatre increase Year 2 pupils' reading fluency? The findings of this study are catered specifically to the three pupils who faced difficulty in being motivated to read fluently and thus could not be generalised to a larger population which served as one of the limitations of the study. Future researchers could therefore obtain insight from this qualitative research in order to broaden the horizon of the research under the quantitative paradigm. The findings of the study revealed that incorporation of technology via the Audacity app and the existence of repetitive reading and scaffolding via Readers' Theatre helped to increase pupils' motivation and reading fluency.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Motivation in Reading**

Alhamdu (2016) opined that the existence of motivation in reading would allow pupils to reach their full capability in learning and the absence of motivation would bring catastrophe to pupils' reading fluency and comprehension. Ericksen (2016) claimed that educators nationwide face grave difficulty in motivating pupils to read. Ericksen (2016) also claimed that pupils are unmotivated to read due to their fluency level, high anxiety level and perception of the pupils whereby some of them find reading monotonous and dull. Pupils who spend little time in reading would face difficulty in recognising and pronouncing printed words automatically. Hence, educators should be capable of finding tools or strategies that would motivate pupils to read more thus increasing their reading fluency.

### **Reading Fluency**

Reading fluency encompasses three elements; accuracy, prosody and automaticity. Hasbrouck and Glaser (2016) claimed that when reading, the accuracy of the words pronounced should be given greater importance than the speed of reading. In other words, natural reading comes with a few pauses and this should not be given grave scrutiny which could impede pupils' attitude towards reading. Pupils should not possess the false assumption that reading fluency can only be achieved if an individual could read quickly. Hasbrouck and Glaser (2012) opined that accuracy of the words pronounced should be given importance compared to rate of reading to prevent ingrained errors among young readers.

Rasinski (2012) asserted that a fluent reader is not someone who does speed reading but is someone who has the ability to express the meaning of the text using one's own expressive voice. This is known as prosody whereby readers read texts or passages using appropriate pitch, intonation apart from being able to pause after commas, question marks and periods. Ashby (2016) opined that disfluent readers often read monotonously and therefore the meaning of the sentences would be obscured and vague. Prosody is a crucial aspect of fluency in order to comprehend the intended meaning of sentences and texts.

Automaticity has been defined as the ability to recognise words automatically without difficulty. This includes words like sight words and other words that pupils have learnt. Wolf (2018) claimed that automaticity comes through practice and via reading a wide variety of materials. For instance, an avid reader would have encountered sight words such as 'am', 'go', 'has', 'have', 'play' and many more via reading a variety of materials. Hence, when the reader encounters these words in different texts, the individual would automatically remember and have the capability to read those words aloud. Therefore, in order to achieve automaticity in reading, one has to continuously read and gain vocabulary in order to be fluent in reading.

### **Audacity Readers' Theatre**

Reutzler and Cooper (2011) stated that Readers' Theatre is an expression of literary works whereby a particular text is read repeatedly in groups during rehearsals and then is staged in front of an audience. A particular text will be selected and the teacher will provide guidance in rereading the text in order to familiarise the words present in the text before performing in front of the selected audience. The sole reason of Readers' Theatre is to provide a platform for pupils to perform by reading texts with expressions, accuracy, pitch and intonation. However, before being able to read fluently, one should be motivated to be involved in the reading process.

According to Yienger (2016), it is undeniable that reading habits amongst young children as well as adults is deteriorating due to excessive usage of technological devices such as mobile phones and I Pads. According to Celik (2020), when young learners utilize more screen time, they are more inclined to pick up the language from listening rather than reading which explains the plight of struggling readers. Due to this, pupils face difficulty in reading and thus refrain themselves from doing so. The same technological devices could be used in order to motivate pupils to be indulged in reading due to the ubiquitous use of these devices by pupils in their daily lives.

Beamish and Brown (2012) believed that Podcasting tools could be implemented in the classroom to remedy this issue and to encourage pupils to be actively involved in reading and other classroom activities. After a few sessions of repeated reading with the model (teacher) in Readers' Theatre, pupils could be introduced to the Audacity software whereby pupils take turns to record their voices when reading the text. Hicks, Winnick and Gonchar (2018) claimed that Podcasting tools such as Audacity and Soundtrap immerse and encourage pupils in the process of inquiry and spur them to be actively engaged in tasks. Vasinda and Mcleod (2011) believed that repeated reading via using microphones and Audacity software would increase the motivation level of pupils compared to practicing via the traditional method. Thus, this reveals the gap of this study as one of the Podcasting tools (Audacity software) is incorporated with Readers' Theatre to enhance motivation in reading which could then help pupils to attain fluency.

### **Activity**

According to Irvine (2019), self-determination theory asserted that pupils would be spurred to learn new things for satisfaction and accomplishment (intrinsic motivation) and pride (extrinsic motivation). Performing for an audience confidently to receive praises and acknowledgements would be a source of extrinsic motivation for pupils to rehearse reading with correct word pronunciation, pitch and intonation. Godsey (2018) opined that Podcasting software (incorporation of technology) motivates distracted pupils and digital natives to learn and perform. The final recording of the pupils' which would be broadcasted is a source of extrinsic motivation for pupils as they would want their voices to be heard by the audience.

The whole process of being engaged in the reading lessons, exploring the software, recording, editing and broadcasting carried out by the pupils would be the reason for their self-satisfaction and accomplishment as they are responsible for their own learning. According to Nunez and Leon (2015), self-determination theory exemplifies that this would be a source of intrinsic motivation for the pupils as they would accomplish self-satisfaction and pleasure via indulging themselves actively during lessons and activities. Discussing during lessons, helping peers to rectify mistakes by editing their voices would encourage pupils intrinsically as the opportunity to be independent learners were given to the learners. Rectification of peers' mistakes and helping each other to pronounce words would allow the pupils to comprehend that they are being directed towards learning, improving and edifying each other which would increase their self-satisfaction and purpose for learning.

Besides that, the fruitful end product of the recording which will be broadcasted would be the source of motivation for pupils to read fluently during the practice stages. Therefore, it is proven that Readers' Theatre is a good tool in developing pupils' reading fluency of struggling readers apart from acting as a tool in motivating pupils to read. It is believed that the inclusion of the Audacity software with Readers' Theatre could motivate pupils to read apart from improving their reading fluency. Vogan (2013) recommended that the inclusion of technology with Readers' Theatre will be beneficial for future research and would be an attempt to address the scarcity of studies in the area of reading motivation and fluency. This reveals the gap in this study as most of the previous studies focussed on using Readers' Theatre in improving motivation and fluency of pupils without the inclusion of technology.

### **Repetition**

Repeated readings in Audacity Readers' Theatre improve automaticity of the pupils in recognising words. Al Jaffall (2014) opined that repeated reading would help pupils to pronounce words and sentences with intonation automatically and without difficulty. Pupils will be able to pronounce words learnt automatically as pupils will be reading the particular sentence continuously until the fluency level is attained before moving on to the other sentences. Consequently, frequent repetition of words improves the

accuracy of pronunciation as well as the ability to pronounce the same word correctly when it is encountered in a different context.

The concept repetition in repeated reading is further elaborated with Tolman's latent learning theory. This theory depicts that humans and animals learn best via repetition. Tolman (1948) claimed that the experiment proved that the rats were able to find the food in the maze after a few days as they tend to 'learn the environment' via repetition. Thus, pupils tend to discover information and store them in their memory easily when the actions are repeated. The tendency to acquire knowledge or skills is higher due to constant exposure to the repeated practice and behaviour. According to Weibell (2011), a stimulus that is constantly repeated generates a natural tendency for the response to occur again. Repeated reading that is present in Readers' Theatre acts as the stimulus whereby pupils are constantly engaged pupils into reading the same text or passage. When pupils are engaged in repeated readings, the tendency to improve their word pronunciation and prosodic skills will increase due to the repeated exposure to the words in the text.

### **Scaffolding**

Guthrie (2017) asserted that repeated reading will be more effective when pupils tend to repeat after models such as peers, parents or teachers. According to Myrset (2014), Readers' Theatre has improved the reading fluency of struggling readers due to repeated readings of the passage which is accompanied by appropriate modelling from the teacher. Alamri (2016) claimed that pupils and model reader will be immersed in the constructivist approach during repeated reading. The model reader or teacher would provide guidance for the pupils during these repeated readings. For instance, during the first two sessions of repeated reading, the teacher would provide guidance whenever the pupils pause or hesitate before pronouncing words, when they mispronounce words or when they tend to read without giving regard to the prosodic features present in the text. These forms of guidance are known as scaffolding which is based on the Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development by Lev Vygotsky. This is called a constructivist approach as pupils are constructing knowledge based on the guidance provided by the model.

According to Abtahi, Graven and Lerman (2017), Lev Vygotsky's theory proposed that pupils can achieve something that is difficult to attain with the help of a more knowledgeable other (MKO). This is identified as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) whereby the new information from the MKO is blended with the existing schema and uses them to learn independently in future. Readers' Theatre supports this theory as pupils tend to learn to pronounce new words (new information), blends them with the existing schema (sight words) with the help of the teacher (MKO). For example, when the teacher rectifies pupils' mistakes during repeated reading, pupils tend to learn the 'new' and the correct way to pronounce words and thus self corrects themselves when reading the same words, the pupils are claimed to be in the zone of proximal development for learning how to read fluently. During repeated reading in Readers' Theatre, the technique of adult modelling is applied whereby a tutor or the MKO provides scaffolding by modelling the correct way to read with accuracy, pitch and intonation so that the pupils will be able to identify the correct way of reading.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study intends to explore the ways Audacity Readers' Theatre helps reluctant readers to read. Therefore, this study aims to obtain knowledge and understanding about the pupils' experience in using the Audacity Readers' Theatre to increase their motivation and fluency in reading. Hence, a case study research design suits the purpose of this study.

### **3.2 Participants in the Study**

There were 29 pupils in the Year 2 class which makes the population of this study. Three pupils from the class participated in this case study. Based on the preliminary study carried out, these three pupils are fluent in speaking but refrain themselves from reading due to lack of motivation and incapacity in reading fluently. Hence, the three pupils chosen were intentionally and purposively selected due to having low motivation in reading apart from their inability to read fluently. The cases chosen helped in looking into how Audacity Readers' Theatre aided them in increasing their motivation and fluency in reading.

### **3.3 Research Instruments / Observation checklist**

The observation checklist was prepared by the researcher. The previous lessons that were recorded were observed by two English language teachers instantaneously. The checklist was developed based on the conceptual framework of this study. Before the observation, the checklist was checked by other teachers from the English department. According to Zohrabi (2013), observation is a tool that is planned beforehand and is carried out to provide answers to the research questions. Hence, via the video recordings, the observers identified the ways Audacity Readers' Theatre motivated the pupils and enabled the pupils to read more fluently via repeated readings and guidance from the teacher. The observers also recorded the pupils' behaviour and the occurrences throughout the lessons in the observation checklist. This was used to analyse the data and to answer the research questions.

### **3.4 Research Instruments / Semi Structured Interview**

The interview questions were prepared by the researcher. The questions were developed based on the conceptual framework of this study and was checked by the teachers from the English department. The pupils that have been exposed to Readers Theatre were interviewed to view how Audacity Readers' Theatre helped the pupils in reading fluently. Since the pupils are of lower primary, their attention span is limited and therefore a lengthy interview was not conducted. According to McLeod (2014), participants' ability and background should be taken into consideration before interviewing them.

The pupils are also good in oral skills and therefore oral interview would be more appropriate rather than a written interview. Semi structured interview was carried out to probe and elicit more information about how Audacity Readers' Theatre helped them to read more fluently apart from identifying how it helped to motivate them in reading.

### **3.5 Research Instruments / Journals**

Daily journals were written by the researcher after observing the video recordings. This enabled the researcher to keep track with the pupils' behaviour in relation to the motivation level of pupils apart from identifying how the repeated readings and guidance increased pupils' fluency in reading. The journals were written immediately; while watching or after watching the recording to prevent inability to recall incidents or event.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the observation checklist, interview and field notes. The comments from the observation checklist, answers from the interview and reflection and observation from the field notes was read thoroughly and notes were written to aid in the analysis process. Suitable codes that describe pupils' and observers' response was written down. From the codes, the themes were generated. The themes and codes were discussed in the findings. Inappropriate themes were rejected and overlapping themes were re-examined. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), the themes should be well elaborated and explained using literature. For example, the themes were then related to past studies and literature. The themes were then used to answer the research questions. The themes provided clear explanations about the features of Audacity Readers' Theatre that improved the pupils' motivation and reading fluency.

### **3.7 Context**

The Audacity Readers' Theatre lessons were recorded. The recordings were then observed by two teachers from the English department in order to find out how Audacity Readers' Theatre motivated the refrained readers in reading and helped them to increase their reading fluency. The video recording of the researcher's lesson enabled the observers to revisit the occurrences that were failed to notice.

The three pupils that experienced Audacity Readers' Theatre were interviewed. Semi structured interview was carried out. The researcher adhered to the specific set of questions given but also asked questions to have a deeper understanding on their statements. Jamshed (2014) believed that semi structures interview provides in-depth response as the participants answer open-ended questions. Thus, the open-ended questions enabled the researcher to analyse the findings extensively and relate them to the research questions. The three pupils were interviewed individually and due to their short attention span, the interview did not exceed 10 minutes. The oral interview session was recorded in order to help code their response. Oral interview was preferred as the cases were more fluent in communicating the language via speaking rather than writing.

The researcher wrote journals when watching the recordings that were recorded during the implementation of Audacity Readers' Theatre whereby reflections and comments on the pupils' behaviour, motivation level and fluency of the pupils were explored. The video recordings helped the researcher from missing out any data or descriptions.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

Maxwell (2012) believed that an extensive data should be obtained via observations to ensure validity and reliability. The researcher substantiated the checklist with video recordings of the lessons to assure validity and reliability. By doing so, observers were capable of revisiting the videos over and over again to get a better picture of behaviours and occurrences related to the research (Maxwell, 2012). The validity and reliability of the data analysis was reinforced via triangulation. According to Roulston (2018), by comparing results from various sources, a comprehensive and valid data can be obtained in a qualitative research.

When interviewing the pupils, the researcher used semi structured interview questions. According to Zohrabi (2013), this type of interview questions has increased validity and reliability as different participants express their different views. Hence, a rich data can be obtained from semi structured interview that involves open ended questions. Various factors were taken into consideration while interviewing the pupils such as pupils' attention span, language and types of questions. Zohrabi (2013) believed that interview questions that exhibit content validity and reliability has simple language and avoids multiple and yes-no

questions. Thus, the researcher ensured that the words used in the interview were clear and simple in order for the pupils to understand the questions asked. Concomitantly, multiple questions were also avoided to prevent ambiguity and confusion.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### RQ 1: HOW DOES AUDACITY READERS' THEATRE MOTIVATE YEAR 2 PUPILS TO READ?

Three themes are generated and used to answer the first research question. The themes are technology incorporation, self-directed learning and activity.

##### Technology Incorporation

During the preliminary investigation, it was revealed that the pupils refrained themselves from reading as they perceived reading as dull and monotonous activity. However, the theme above shows that the existence of the recording app (Audacity) which acts as a stimulus for the pupils' motivation enhanced pupils' level of excitement. The preliminary investigation revealed that the pupils were digital natives. Therefore, in order to motivate the pupils to read, Audacity Readers' Theatre was used. The inclusion of technology is believed to have motivated the three pupils to read.

As educators, teachers should identify pupils' proficiency level, prior knowledge and interest in order to motivate pupils in learning. Thus, since the preliminary investigation revealed that the three dysfluent pupils are interested in technology and apps, Readers' Theatre merged with the Podcasting tool, Audacity was used during the lessons.

*Their **motivation level was high** because they were **eager** when it was their turn to use the **computer's microphone**. (O2)*

The excerpt was taken from the observation checklist whereby one of the observers claimed that pupils were excited during the voice recording phase. As discussed in the literature review, Hicks, Winnick and Gonchar (2018) claimed that Podcasting tools such as Audacity and Soundtrap immerse and encourage pupils in the process of inquiry and spur them to be actively engaged in tasks. When the pupils took turns in recording their voices, they were excited to hear their own voice. Hence, the presence of the Audacity software (technology) motivated the pupils to read. The findings from the observation checklist is further reinforced using the findings from the semi structured interview.

***Nice to use the computer app to read.** (Pupil A, SSI)*

*I like the **edit [sic], recording and using microphone to read. I want to do again and again.** (Pupil B, SSI).*

*After read, I like **try [sic] the editing, speaking with [sic] microphone and hearing to [sic] my own voice.** (Pupil C, SSI)*

The statements above were claimed by all three pupils during the interview. The word 'again and again' implies that the pupil's motivation and interest has increased due to the usage of the software throughout the lessons. The statement above consolidates the findings of this study as the Audacity software acts as a stimulus in ensuring that reading will be enjoyed permanently by the pupils as Pupil B claimed that he would want the reading lessons to be carried out repeatedly.

*Pupils were **squealing with joy and excitement** when it was their turn to **record their voices**. (RJ)*

The excerpt which was taken from the researcher's journal proves that the pupils were highly motivated in using and exploring the Audacity software to ensure that their pronunciation, prosodic features and their delivery during the performance would be perfect. They enjoyed exploring the contents of the software and were attracted to the attractive features such as the keys to record and edit as well as the keys for the background music. This enhanced their motivation to read and improve themselves and their performance. This supports the research of Vasinda and Mcleod (2011) whereby they opined that pupils' motivation and attitude towards learning would increase when Podcasting tools are used in the classroom due to the incorporation of technology.

##### Self-directed Learning

The theme self-directed learning also depicts how Audacity Readers' Theatre motivated pupils to read. This is portrayed in the data from the observation checklist, pupils' interview and researcher's journal. The excerpt below shows the response from one of the observers.

*They were **dominating most of the lessons** because during lesson 2, pupil B constantly corrected pupil C's mistake when he pronounced the word baker and during lesson 3, pupil B asked if pupil C could pronounce the word baker. (O1)*

During the lesson, pupils were asked to reread the script while the teacher models pronunciation and intonation. After that, the teacher acts as a facilitator as the teacher guides the pupils whenever necessary. While using the Audacity app, pupils were given the liberty to explore the app thoroughly which included recording and editing, rectifying peers' mistakes and evaluating

appropriate background music for the performance. The data from the observation checklist is supported by the data from the semi structured interview.

*Because it's **not just read and read**. After read, I like try [sic] the editing, speaking with [sic] microphone and hearing to [sic] my own voice. (Pupil C, SSI)*

The response was the answer to the question 'how did Audacity Readers' Theatre motivate you to read?' The excerpt clearly showed that Audacity Readers' Theatre is not confined to the reading process but also allows the pupils to be active and responsible in their own learning. The use of Audacity software could function as a mini project as the pupils collaborated with each other to practice reading in order to enhance their reading fluency. By delivering their voice in order to convey the meaning of the text read, pupils took the role of anchors when broadcasting their performance.

*They even asked and discussed if the chosen background music would be apt for their performance. This shows that **pupils were allowed to take control of their own learning**. (RJ)*

The above excerpt which was taken from the researcher's journal is used to triangulate the data from the observation checklist and semi structured interview. Based on the excerpt above, the pupils were constantly discussing appropriate pronunciation and other elements to produce their own work. The keyword such as 'take control of their own learning' reveals that the pupils took the responsibility to improve themselves to produce a valuable performance. Therefore, this tool is believed to reduce the satiation level of struggling readers apart from motivating them to read more.

This coincides with Nunez and Leon's (2015) explanation about self-determination theory as the theory exemplifies that self-directed learning would be a source of intrinsic motivation for the pupils as they would accomplish self-satisfaction and pleasure via indulging themselves actively during lessons and activities. When pupils are no longer being told of what to do all the time, they will feel more motivated and curious about the whole learning process. They would portray more initiative in reading by exploring the Audacity software in future reading lessons. Thus, this would contribute to being intrinsically motivated as they are capable of directing their own learning.

### **Activity**

The activity present in Audacity Readers' Theatre (performance) is believed to be one of the factors that motivated the pupils to read. The excerpt below shows the response from one of the observers.

*The **performance motivated the pupils to read** because they were constantly **reminding each other not to make mistakes during the performance**. (O2)*

The observer clarified that the pupils were excited to perform and thus they were reminding each other not to make mistakes. The performance therefore acts as an impetus for the pupils in achieving reading fluency and motivation to read. The responses from the pupils also revealed that the pupils were motivated to read due to the existence of the performance stage.

*We get to **perform** and my mom and friends told me that **I did well**. (Pupil A, SS1)*

*It is so nice! (laughs) I not [sic] scared to make mistakes because we can record again. **Got a lot of likes and comments so I am so happy**. (Pupil B, SSI)*

When the pupils were asked about what made them enjoy about Audacity Readers' Theatre, they claimed that they enjoyed the performance stage. This coincides with self-determination theory as Irvine (2019) opined that this theory exemplifies that individuals would be motivated to learn new things for their own satisfaction and accomplishment (intrinsic motivation) and pride (extrinsic motivation). Performing for an audience confidently to receive praises and acknowledgements would be a source of extrinsic motivation for pupils to rehearse reading with correct word pronunciation, pitch and intonation. The pupils' codes elucidates that the pupils had achieved a sense of pride and accomplishment. Thus, the performance enhanced their motivation to perform more in upcoming reading lessons thus portraying their interest towards reading with the use of Audacity Readers' Theatre. Response from the researcher's journal is used to triangulate the data.

*The **moment after the performance**, pupils B and C **claimed excitedly** that they could not wait for their voices to be broadcasted. (RJ)*

The researcher claimed that the pupils were eager to listen to their own performance which proves that the pupils were highly motivated to perform. This supports the study of Godsey (2018) whereby he claimed that Podcasting tools encourages digital natives and refrained readers to learn and perform. As claimed by Irvine (2019), self-determination theory states that pupils need to achieve a sense of pride and satisfaction in order to be extrinsically motivated in acquiring knowledge and skills. Similarly, the

performance stage acts as a sense of pride and satisfaction as the performance will constantly remind them of their productive performance. Thus, the pupils will be encouraged to read when Audacity Readers' Theatre is used during the next lessons due to the pleasure of getting their voices broadcasted and delivered for others to listen and enjoy.

## **RQ 2: HOW DOES AUDACITY READERS' THEATRE INCREASE YEAR 2 PUPILS' READING FLUENCY?**

Two themes have been identified in answering the research questions which will be discussed in the following section.

### **Repetition**

The theme repetition will be discussed in relation to the ability to pronounce words, ability to read with intonation and ability to recognise words automatically as these three elements form the core of reading fluency as discussed in the literature review.

#### **a. Ability to Pronounce Words**

*Pupils **pronounced words better** in lesson 2 and 3 compared to lesson 1 due to **reading the same text repeatedly**. (O2)*

The excerpt above is taken from the observation checklist whereby one of the observers claimed that repeated reading improved the pupils' fluency in reading. The observer stated that due to being exposed to the same text repeatedly, pupils' pronunciation became better in the next two lessons as compared to the first lesson. This is due to the fact that the pupils had been immersed in the text during lessons 2 and 3 compared to the first lesson. This reinforces the study of Guthrie (2017) as he opined that pupils' constant exposure to the same passage can effectively improve accuracy and speed of reading.

*I **repeat and repeat** so now I know to [sic] read. (Pupil A, SSI)*

*We **repeat again and again** the story [sic] so it is easy for me to read the words. (Pupil B, SSI)*

Both the excerpts were taken from the pupils' interview. The pupils were aware that they were capable of reading and pronouncing the words easily and fluently due to repeated reading. This is aligned with Weibell's (2011) statement and Tolman's behaviourism theory whereby he claimed that repetition allows the behaviour to occur again and again. When using Readers' Theatre, pupils were asked to read sentences repeatedly until a maximum amount of perfection is reached. Therefore, this enabled the pupils to recognise the words and pronounce them correctly.

*Pupil C who usually stammer when pronouncing the word 'baker' **could pronounce the word in lesson 2 without guidance due to repetition**. (RJ)*

The excerpt above is used to consolidate the data from the other two instruments as the researcher believed that one of the pupils' pronunciation improved after reading the same text repeatedly. Previously, the preliminary investigation revealed that the three pupils were incapable of identifying sight words and other words in print while reading. However, due to the existence of repeated reading in Audacity Readers' Theatre, the pupils were able to recognise and pronounce sight words and other words without much difficulty.

#### **b. Ability to Read with Intonation**

Repetition also allowed the pupils to read with intonation. The pupils claimed that they were capable of reading the text with the correct intonation because of reading the same text repetitively.

*When you read miss I follow so I read with inton- intonation. When we **so many times [sic] read the story**, we know how to read **correct intonation** for performance. (Pupil A, SSI)*

The excerpt above is taken from pupils' interview whereby pupil A claimed that he is capable of identifying different intonation of different sentences due to repetition. Therefore, this clearly shows that repeated reading enabled the pupils to read with appropriate intonation. The word 'so many times' mentioned by the pupil proves that being constantly exposed to the same text causes the pupils to attain fluency in reading due to having enough practice. This supports the findings of Al Jaffall (2014) where he opined that repeated reading would help pupils to pronounce words and sentences with intonation automatically and without difficulty. In other words, pupils will 'get used' to the correct ways to read the sentences or dialogues with correct pitch, pause and intonation when they practice reading the same text constantly thus improving their reading fluency.

***Repeated reading also helped the pupils to stop during commas and full stops and use appropriate tones according to context. For example, when I kept repeating the falling tone for the command "give the cookies to me now", the pupils were able to grasp the tone in the next lesson.** (RJ)*



The excerpt was taken from the teacher's journal whereby the researcher claimed that pupils were capable of using falling tone for commands after repeated reading. Thus, when pupils encounter commas and full stops repeatedly, they tend to notice that they should pause after these specific punctuations apart from identifying the different tones for different sentences. Thus, it is proven that repeated reading increased the pupils' ability in reading with the appropriate intonation.

### c. Ability to Recognise Words Automatically

Repetition also helped the pupils to recognise the words automatically.

**Reading the story repeatedly** greatly **helped** the pupils to **recognize the same words in different parts of the text**. For instance, during the first lesson itself, the teacher guided the pupils in reading the word 'cents' as the pupils stuttered when pronouncing the word. When the **pupils saw the same word in a different part of the text, the pupils could recognise the word and blurt them out** before the teacher could even guide them (O2).

The excerpt above is extracted from the observation checklist. It is clearly proven that repetition in Audacity Readers' Theatre is an impetus for pupils' ability in recognising words automatically. The observer stated that the pupil who stammered at the word 'cents' upon sight could easily identify the same word due to high exposure to the same text. This is due to consistent and constant practice which enables the pupils to recognise words in print without any guidance.

I realised that **repeated reading** allowed the pupils to **identify words read previously without difficulty**. I realised that pupil A had serious **difficulty in pronouncing the word 'where'**, however, by the time we reached the third lesson, **he was able to pronounce the word without any guidance**. (RJ)

The excerpt above from the researcher's journal proved that the pupil was able to automatically recognise the word 'where' without difficulty due to reading the same text for numerous times. This coincides with the study of Al Jaffall (2014) as he opined that repeated reading would help pupils to pronounce words and sentences with intonation automatically and without difficulty.

I was dumbfounded when pupil C could **associate the previously read word 'count'** in lesson 1 with the **suffix 'ing'** in lesson 2 and **pronounced the word naturally**. (RJ)

The above extract which is taken from the teacher's journal exhibits that the pupil was able to associate the previously read word with the suffix due to the stimulus (repeated reading). Therefore, repetition present in Audacity Readers' Theatre helped the pupils in recognising words automatically thus enabling them to achieve fluency in reading.

### Scaffolding

The theme scaffolding will be discussed in relation to how Audacity Readers' Theatre helped the pupils to enhance their reading fluency. The excerpt below depicts the responses from the two observers.

**The teacher guided the pupils** so that they can pronounce the words with the correct pitch. (O1)

**Teacher's guidance helped the pupils to identify pauses** and therefore helped them to pronounce words and read with proper intonation. (O2)

The observers expressed that the teacher's help and guide was necessary in aiding the pupils to pronounce words correctly apart from reading with appropriate intonation. Without a model or guidance, it would be difficult for the pupils to identify correct word pronunciation and intonation. The findings support the statement of Abtahi, Graven and Lerman (2017) in relation to Lev Vygotsky's theory which claimed that pupils can achieve something that is difficult to attain with the help of a more knowledgeable other (MKO). Similarly, the pupils needed a model in order to help them to recognize words that they are not familiar with. The model (the teacher) represents the More Knowledgeable Other as the teacher offered expertise in pronouncing words and reading with correct intonation to assist the pupils.

**Miss you read the story first and help me reading** with correct intonation. (Pupil C, SSI)

The following excerpt was taken from the interview transcription whereby pupil C claimed that the teacher guided the pupils to read the story with the correct intonation. It is clearly evident that the teacher helped the pupil to read the text with the correct intonation by modelling the appropriate prosody. Thus, this helped the pupil to grasp the correct intonation. For example, when the teacher constantly guides the pupils in pausing after commas and full stops, pronouncing words correctly according to word stress and intonation and reading with appropriate tone and expressions, pupils would be able to cognize the correct ways of reading thus increasing their reading fluency. The data from the observation checklist and interview are reinforced and triangulated with the data obtained from the researcher's journal.

**When I guided the pupils, I realised that the pupils were capable of recognising words especially sight words without much difficulty.** (RJ)

The excerpt above is extracted from the researcher's journal. The researcher claimed that one of the pupils were capable of rectifying peer's mistake in pronouncing word. The pupil was capable of doing so due to the guidance of the teacher during the Readers' Theatre lessons. When using Audacity Readers' Theatre, the teacher is responsible in scaffolding the pupils to pronounce words, pause during commas and full stops, varying expressions accordingly and reading with proper intonation thus increasing their reading fluency.

## 5. Conclusion

A few limitations of this study are discussed in this section. In doing so, suggestions are provided to enable future researchers to consider about before carrying out their research in this related context. Firstly, this case study which was carried out under the qualitative paradigm did not explore on the background or the characteristics of the pupils. This study could be further explored by investigating and exploring the economic differences or gender of the participants in order to find out if these characteristics affect the pupils' motivation in reading motivation and reading fluency. This would provide an extensive understanding of the phenomenon. The study could also be carried out under the quantitative paradigm to find out the effects of the tool to a larger population as the findings of this case study had limited number of participants thus could not be generalised to a larger population.

In addition, while conducting the research, the pupils faced difficulty in editing their voices at times due to large size of the app. To remedy this issue, different Podcasting tools which are smaller in size can be taken into consideration in future research. Apart from the Audacity software, a wide repertoire of software such as Adobe Audition, Pinna and Soundtrap are available and they have similar functions to the Audacity software. Although the Audacity software is free and easily accessible, the software collapses at times when it is used constantly without halt. Thus, future researchers could try using different software to remedy this issue and to explore other interesting features in the other software.

This research was conducted in a primary school to explore how Audacity Readers' Theatre improved Year 2 pupils' motivation and reading fluency. The findings revealed that the pupils' motivation level increased due to the existence of the Audacity software which contributed to autonomous learning. Teachers should pose as a facilitator by allowing the pupils to learn independently while guiding them when necessary to allow satiation to take place. The findings of the study also proved that the pupils could pronounce unfamiliar words and read sentences with intonation. Apart from that, the guidance given by the teacher and repeated readings helped the pupils in recognising words in print automatically which depicts that their reading fluency had improved. Thus, as educators, it is important for teachers to identify tools or teaching styles that could help their pupils in attaining success so that language learning can take place effectively.

## References

- [1] Abtahi, Y., Graven, M. & Lerman, S. (2017). Conceptualising the more knowledgeable other within a multi-directional ZPD. *Educational Studies in Mathematics: 275-290*.
- [2] Alamri, S.D. (2016). The effects of repeated reading strategies on Saudi Arabian 5th Graders. [Doctoral Dissertation, State University of New York], State University of New York.
- [3] Alhamdu, A. (2016). Interest and reading motivation. *Journal of Islamic Psychology, 1(1)*, 1-10.
- [4] Al Jaffal, F.M. (2014). The effect of repeated reading strategy on oral reading fluency of a fourth grade student with reading difficulties. [Doctoral Dissertation, United Arab Emirates University], Al Ain.
- [5] Ashby, J. (2016). Why does prosody accompany fluency? Re-conceptualizing the role of phonology in reading. [Doctoral Dissertation, Central Michigan University], Michigan.
- [6] Beamish, P. & Brown, J. (2012). Podcasting in the classroom: A case study. *Teaching & Professional Practice: 21-23*.
- [7] Celik, B. (2020). A study on the factors affecting reading and reading habits of preschool children. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 1(10)*, 101-114.
- [8] Ericksen, S.K. (2016). Motivating students to read: A case study. [Doctoral Dissertation. State University of New York], New York.
- [9] Godsey, M. (2018). The benefits of using podcasts in the classroom. *Reading Rockets*. <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/benefits-using-podcasts-classroom> [28 April 2020].
- [10] Guthrie, R.M. (2017). Effectiveness of repeated reading and error correction strategies on the reading fluency skills of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. [Doctoral Dissertation, Western Kentucky University], Kentucky.
- [11] Hasbrouck, J. & Glaser, D.R. (2012). *Reading Fast or Reading Well*. Slide. New Orleans: Center for Development & Learning.
- [12] Hasbrouck, J. & Glaser, D.R. (2016). *Teaching Fluency Not Speed Reading*. Slide. New Orleans: Center for Development & Learning.
- [13] Hicks, J., Winnick, L. & Gonchar, M. (2018). Project audio: Teaching students how to produce their own podcasts. *The Learning Network in the New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/19/learning/lesson-plans/project-audio-teaching-students-how-to-produce-their-own-podcasts.html> [28 April 2020].
- [14] Irvine, J. (2019). Self-determination theory as a framework for an intermediate/senior mathematics preservice course. *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies: 1-27*.

- [15] Jamshed, S. (2014). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *NCBI Journal*.<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4194943/> [16 June 2019].
- [16] Khor, C.P., Low, H.M. & Lee, L.W. (2014). Relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension among ESL students. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* 3(14), 19-32.
- [17] Lekwilai, P. (2014). Reader's Theatre: An alternative tool to develop reading fluency among Thai EFL learners. *PASAA*: 89-111.
- [18] Lems, K. (2012). Reading fluency and comprehension in English language learners. *ResearchGate*: 1-17.
- [19] Maguire, M. & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: a practical step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *Dundalk Institute of Technology*: 3351- 3365.
- [20] Maxwell, J.A. 2012. Qualitative research design: an interactive approach. *Language Studies*:12-14.
- [21] McLeod, S. (2014). The methods of research: The interview method. *Simply Psychology*. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/interviews.html> [16 June 2019].
- [22] Mraz, M., Nichols, W., Caldwell, S., Beisley, R. & Sargent, S. (2013). Improving oral reading fluency through readers theatre. *Reading Horizons* 2(2): 163-180.
- [23] Myrset, A. (2016). A case study of Readers Theatre in a primary Norwegian EFL class. *Nordic Journal of Modern Language Methodology*, 4(1), 49-66.
- [24] Nunez, J.L. & Leon, J. (2015). Autonomy support in the classroom: A review from self-determination theory. *European Psychologist*, 20(4), 275-283.
- [25] Rasinski, T. (2012). Why reading fluency should be hot!. *The Reading Teacher*: 516-522.
- [26] Reutzell, R.D., & Cooper, R.B. (2011). *Strategies for reading assessment and instruction: Helping every child succeed* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- [27] Roulston, K. (2018). Triangulation in qualitative research. *QualPage*. <https://qualpage.com/2018/01/18/triangulation-in-qualitative-research/> [7 May 2020].
- [28] Tay, T.S. (2014). Impact of shared reading on L2 learners' reading fluency. *English Studies*: 1-52.
- [29] Tolman, E.C. (1948). Cognitive maps in rats and men. *Psychological Review*: 189-208.
- [30] Vasinda, S. & Mcleod, J. (2011). Extending Readers Theatre: A powerful and purposeful match with Podcasting. *ResearchGate*: 485-497.
- [31] Vogan, K.L. (2013). What research says about Readers Theater and the impact on first through eight graders' oral reading fluency. [Doctoral Dissertation. University of New York], New York.
- [32] Weibell, C.J. (2011). Principles of Learning: 7 principles to guide personalized, student-centered learning in the technology-enhanced blended learning environment. *Wordpress*. <https://principlesoflearning.wordpress.com/> [28 April 2020].
- [33] Wolf, G.M. (2018). Developing reading automaticity and fluency: Revisiting what reading teachers know, putting confirmed research into current practice. *Creative Education*: 838-855.
- [34] Yienger, M.E. (2016). Too much tech harms reading retention in young children. *Inquiries Journal* 3(8), 1-2.
- [35] Young, C. & Rasinski, T. (2017). Readers theatre: effects on word recognition automaticity and reading prosody. *Journal of Research in Reading*: 1-11.
- [36] Zohrabi, M. (2013). Mixed method research: instruments, validity, reliability and reporting findings. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 3(2),254-262.