

Understanding The Stagnation: Attitude As a Predictor of Extensive Reading Skills Without Observable Improvement Despite Metacognitive Integration

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of integrating Extensive Reading (ER) enriched with metacognitive strategies on ER skills and positive attitudes towards ER learning. The research employs a one-group pretest-posttest design involving 79 Arabic language students. The measurement of ER skills and positive attitudes towards ER activities was conducted using a questionnaire based on the ten principles of ER. Bayesian paired t-tests did not show a significant improvement in skills or attitudes towards ER activities post-intervention. However, Bayesian linear regression revealed a significant correlation between post-intervention skills and attitudes, with attitudes explaining most of the variation in skills. Although no direct improvement was observed, fostering a positive attitude towards ER may indirectly enhance reading proficiency. These findings underscore the necessity of addressing both cognitive and affective aspects in Arabic language teaching.

Keywords: *Extensive Reading, Metacognitive Strategies, Bayesian Analysis, Arabic Language Learning, Positive Attitude.*

Introduction

The demand for foreign language learning continues to rise (Alsagoff et al., 2012), including Arabic. In Indonesia, Arabic is a core subject at universities (Saud & Abduh, 2017). Arabic is significant for religious purposes, such as reading and interpreting the Quran and other religious texts, and for communication with native speakers in many Arabic-speaking countries (Seymour-Jorn, 2004). In other words, the teaching of Arabic at universities has two objectives: to support the development of spiritual attitudes and to enhance students' abilities to communicate effectively in a foreign language, thus enabling them to keep pace with the latest advancements in science and technology, balanced with religiosity.

Generally, there are four fundamental language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—that need to be developed in foreign language learning. One of the most critical challenges for foreign language learners is developing reading skills (Fälth et al., 2023). Students can gain numerous benefits from reading activities (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). Reading helps students acquire important information in class (Bleses et al., 2016). It can influence academic achievement and further personal development (Reed et al., 2017). Indeed, it can be said that low reading proficiency can lead to long-term problems and negative consequences for students (Fälth et al., 2023).

Reading is a cognitive process used by readers to comprehend texts (van den Broek & Helder, 2017). Furthermore, Snow (2002) explains that reading is the process of extracting and constructing meaning from written text. Thus, a reader needs to focus on gathering the main points. Even for fluent readers, reading skills are used unconsciously and automatically (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). Therefore, teaching reading must consider various efficient teaching strategies, one of which is exposing students to Extensive Reading (ER). ER is considered a highly effective strategy for teaching reading skills.

ER is defined as the practice of reading large amounts of text over extended periods (Grabe & Stoller, 2001). Students engaged in this activity enjoy high flexibility because they can choose their own materials, allowing them to match their proficiency levels (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002). ER has been discussed in various studies due to the perceived benefits for students (Day et al., 1998; Yamashita, 2008). Several

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previous studies have also reported positive impacts of ER on reading comprehension (Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011; Yamashita, 2008), reading fluency (Iwahori, 2008), and reading strategies or skills (Hitosugi & Day, 2004).

Despite the growing interest in Extensive Reading (ER), it has not yet gained significant attention in Indonesia (Waring & Husna, 2020). One contributing factor is that ER activities require faculty to think beyond the language-focused classroom. Similar to Taiwan, another reason for the lack of attention to ER in Indonesia is that foreign language education still focuses on improving test scores rather than fostering enjoyment. Additionally, the limited hours allocated to foreign language instruction contribute to the low prevalence of ER practice (Huang, 2015).

To address these issues, faculty can incorporate metacognitive reading strategies into ER activities. These strategies can enhance students' comprehension through summarizing, identifying key words, creating concept maps, and presenting multiple readings (De Dios, 2015). Halim et al. (2020) explain how metacognitive reading strategies can influence students' reading performance. Commonly used strategies include clarifying to create meaning, drawing inferences, visualizing with mental imagery, and restating important details. Damayanti (2017) found that oral presentations about what students have read can help them develop their ideas for writing. Thus, integrating strategies such as summarizing, mind mapping, and individual presentations into the curriculum has the potential to significantly improve students' reading comprehension within ER activities.

Despite the potential benefits, ER practice in Indonesia remains limited, and there is a lack of comprehensive information on students' attitudes toward the application of metacognitive strategies in ER activities. Existing research shows a connection between reading abilities and students' emotional and psychological well-being. For example, reading difficulties can be associated with anxiety (Nelson & Harwood, 2011) and other internalizing behaviors (Boyes et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding students' perspectives on the integration of ER with metacognitive strategies is crucial to addressing these challenges.

This study aims to fill the gap in understanding how ER as a strategy can enhance ER skills and build positive attitudes toward ER learning when integrated with metacognitive reading strategies. The study will provide valuable insights into the integration of ER and metacognitive strategies, ultimately contributing to a more engaging learning experience for students and paving the way for improving ER skills. Thus, the research statement proposed in this study is as follows.

- How do students' ER skills change after participating in ER activities enriched with metacognitive reading strategies?
- How do students' attitudes toward reading change after participating in ER activities enriched with metacognitive reading strategies?
- How do students' attitudes toward reading predict their ER skills in the context of ER activities enriched with metacognitive reading strategies?

Literature Review

Extensive Reading (ER) As A Learning Strategy And Skill

Extensive Reading (ER) is an individual reading activity (Eisenmann, 2014) where one reads as much as possible at a pace suited to their ability (I. S. P. Nation & Waring, 2020). Day et al. (1998) outlined 10 principles of ER, which Sun (2023) later summarized into several key points: lecturers provide easy

materials on various topics, guide the students in their reading, and act as role models, while students are encouraged to select their own reading materials and develop a love for reading, hence it is also referred to as pleasurable reading (Huang, 2015). Another principle applied in this study is reading large amounts of material, including novels or short stories, newspaper articles, or magazines (Hedge, 2000).

Based on the implementation of ER outlined by Day (2015) and the format presented by Waring & McLean (2015), the ER activities in this study were conducted independently and within a literary framework. ER as literature has garnered significant attention due to its strengths and weaknesses. The benefits of this ER format include the provision of lexical, syntactic, and semantic features within a textual context (K. Nation, 2017). On the other hand, literary ER poses challenges for students with intermediate proficiency levels (Macalister & Webb, 2019).

Despite these challenges, we observe a high interest in the implementation of ER in a literary format due to the perceived benefits in fostering reading comprehension (Bloemert et al., 2019; Saka, 2018; Viana & Zyngier, 2020). Thus, extensive reading emerges not only as a skill that enhances aspects such as reading fluency and vocabulary acquisition but also as a strategic approach that fosters autonomy and enjoyment in language learning. In other words, ER is a crucial component in language education, encompassing both skill development and strategic engagement with texts.

ER Strategies Have The Potential To Improve Attitudes And Skills

Several prior studies have consistently indicated that student reading attitudes can be positively influenced through their engagement in Extensive Reading (ER) activities (Day et al., 1998; Yamashita, 2008). This engagement not only fosters intrinsic motivation for mastering a second language but also serves as a catalyst for instilling a positive disposition towards the learning process itself. In Malaysia, Mohd Asraf & Ahmad (2003) attempted to implement ER activities within the framework of an English language program. The results showed that most students who were initially reluctant to read developed a positive attitude towards reading, although it was not certain if there was an improvement in reading proficiency.

Turning to Japan, research reported by Powell (2005) revealed the significant role of ER activities in secondary schools, which led to noticeable improvements in students' reading comprehension skills and fostered a substantial shift in attitudes towards reading in a foreign language. Numerous other reports have also documented similar findings, demonstrating that ER activities can cultivate positive attitudes towards reading in a foreign language (Haider & Akhter, 2012; Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011; Safaiea & Bulca, 2013). This collective insight underscores the vital role of ER not only in enhancing linguistic proficiency but also in fostering a deeper appreciation for the act of reading itself.

Incorporation of Cognitive Reading Strategies

The use of cognitive reading strategies is claimed to be crucial for students to achieve better reading skills and knowledge (Luz, 2007). Reading, in detail, is a cognitive process that requires high mental functions (Villanueva, 2022). Meanwhile, metacognition refers to the knowledge that regulates cognitive processes, including planning, monitoring, evaluating, and revising reading outcomes (Block & Pressley, 2002). The application of metacognitive strategies in the reading process is appropriate because it enables students to be aware of the language used and to understand the patterns of the texts they read.

Furthermore, Meniado (2016) explains that the process of monitoring one's own comprehension while reading is the most effective strategy for achieving flexibility in reading. Conversely, ER is a flexible reading activity that contributes to reading success. This flexibility allows for the integration of metacognitive strategies and the adaptable nature of ER, culminating in improved reading comprehension outcomes. By combining cognitive reading strategies with metacognitive proficiency, students embark on a journey of awareness regarding the importance of reading and the enhancement of reading skills. Therefore, the synergistic convergence of cognitive reading strategies, metacognitive intelligence, and the adaptable nature of ER emerges as a powerful catalyst for strengthening reading proficiency.

Method

Design and Participants

The research design employed in this study was a one-group pretest-posttest design. The intervention consisted of Extensive Reading (ER) instruction enriched with metacognitive reading strategies. This instruction was conducted over 14 weeks, from January to May 2024. Consequently, pretests and posttests were administered before (the first week) and after (the sixteenth week) the intervention on the same group.

The technique used for participant selection was convenience sampling. The primary reason for choosing this method was its practicality and high accessibility during the intervention and measurement phases. A total of 107 participants were recruited from third-semester undergraduate students enrolled in the Qiroah Muwassaah course, typically aged between 20 and 21 years. However, 28 students were excluded from the research sample due to not completing the pretest and/or posttest or not meeting the 80% attendance requirement. The students in this study were confirmed to have been familiar with the Arabic language since secondary school and demonstrated intermediate proficiency levels. Additionally, Indonesian was used as the medium of communication during the ER instructional process.

During the intervention, the principal researcher, along with the course instructor, took steps to mitigate potential barriers to the development of ER skills and positive attitudes towards ER learning. These issues included limited access to reading materials and a lack of awareness regarding the benefits of ER. Efforts were made to introduce the potential of ER to students by providing comprehensive explanations of the activities involved and the benefits they would gain from participating in this research.

Ethical considerations were also a crucial part of the research process. Ethical approval was obtained from the institution where the ER instruction took place, namely Universitas Negeri Malang (Project Number:). This study adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the institution and complied with the Declaration of Helsinki. Before participating, students were informed about the research objectives and procedures, as well as their rights as participants. We ensured that all participants consented voluntarily. Several measures were also implemented to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, especially through the use of anonymized data and the non-disclosure of participant identities in any scientific publications. All these steps aimed to create a conducive environment for students to engage actively and comfortably, safeguard their rights, and uphold the highest standards of research ethics.

Procedure

This study integrated cognitive reading strategies into ER instruction. This procedure was meticulously designed to foster an optimal environment and further aimed to enhance the ER abilities of Arabic language students and their positive attitudes towards ER. The following was a detailed synthesis of how metacognitive strategies were intricately woven into the ER learning process within the context of Arabic language studies.

- **Flexibility in Time and Reading Quantity:** The volume of reading required in the ER learning process ranged from one hour daily to two reading materials weekly (Susser & Robb, 1990). This measure highlighted the debate over the quantity of reading and the minimal time needed in ER activities. Recognizing the similarities between Indonesia and other Asian contexts such as Japan (Powell, 2005) and Taiwan (Huang, 2015), and to optimize students' metacognitive skills, the researchers prioritized time flexibility over reading quantity. The participants in this study had diverse schedules, so time flexibility could accommodate their availability and engagement levels.
- **Duration of ER Activities:** The ER activities were extended over 14 weeks to encourage sustained student engagement in ER activities. A sufficiently long duration allowed students more opportunities to familiarize themselves with various texts, practice metacognitive strategies, optimize their ER skills, and develop a sense of enjoyment through habituation during ER learning.

- **Reading Materials:** The selection of reading materials was based on learning objectives and students' proficiency levels. However, the texts provided were diverse, ensuring exposure to various genres, styles, and topics. This effort aimed to enrich students' reading experiences and serve as a motivator for improving their ER skills.

Overall, throughout the 14-week duration, metacognitive reading strategies were seamlessly integrated into every aspect of ER. The process began with the introduction of ER enriched with metacognitive reading strategies before the intervention, familiarizing students with the crucial role of these strategies. During the intervention, instructors facilitated ER activities in detail, including guiding students in selecting available reading materials that matched their interests. Since students were encouraged to apply these strategies independently, they were also prompted to develop their own metacognitive awareness.

Instrument

This study utilized non-test techniques to evaluate the impact of ER activities enriched with metacognitive strategies on students' ER skills and their positive attitudes towards ER activities. Instead of traditional tests, we developed a questionnaire instrument based on the 10 principles of ER outlined by Day et al. (1998) as the foundational framework for effective ER implementation. Consequently, each questionnaire item developed aligned with one or more ER principles.

The skill and attitude questionnaires each consisted of 30 items designed to measure the development of students' ER skills and to explore their perceptions or attitudes towards ER activities holistically. All questionnaire items underwent rigorous expert evaluation and limited pilot testing. Expert assessment ensured the instrument's appropriateness for evaluating students' comprehension skills and behavioral attitudes towards ER. Pearson correlation analysis and Cronbach's Alpha (α) were used to assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The results indicated that each item had a strong correlation with other items (p value < 0.05) and achieved an α greater than 0.7 for each dimension and the total score.

Data Analysis

Bayesian statistical methods were employed to evaluate the development of students' skills and attitudes towards ER activities. Bayesian analysis was chosen for its advantages over traditional approaches, particularly in the context of educational research. Bayesian methods can accurately model uncertainty and parameter estimation, which is crucial in educational research where sample sizes may be limited, potentially leading to measurement errors. Additionally, credible intervals can convey reasonable values, enhancing the interpretation of the results. Bayesian methods are believed to enhance the validity and reliability of research findings.

In this study, the Bayesian paired t-test was specifically used to assess changes in students' ER skills and attitudes from before to after the intervention. Meanwhile, Bayesian correlation analysis, employing methods such as Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC), provided a deeper understanding of the relationship between ER skills and attitudes. This approach ensures a robust analysis, accommodating the inherent uncertainties and providing a more nuanced interpretation of the data.

Results

Two tests were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of ER instruction enriched with metacognitive strategies on ER skills and attitudes. First, we performed a Bayesian paired t-test to investigate the improvements from pretest to posttest in both ER skills and attitudes towards ER activities. Second, we used Bayesian linear regression analysis to explore the relationship between ER skills and attitudes post-intervention. This analysis revealed three main findings:

ER Skill

Bayesian paired t-test analysis of students' ER skills showed a median effect size (δ) of 0.093 which ranged from 0.005 to 0.278 (95% credible interval). These results suggest the possibility that there is a positive impact of ER learning enriched with metacognitive strategies on ER skills. However, the Bayes Factor analysis provides a further hill. The Bayes Factor comparison result for the null hypothesis (BF_{+0}) with the alternative hypothesis (BF_{0+}) is 5.729. Meanwhile, the Bayes Factor comparison result for the alternative hypothesis (BF_{0+}) compared to the null hypothesis (BF_{+0}) is 0.175. This result indicates that there is moderate evidence in favor of the null hypothesis (no effect), or in other words that there is relatively weak evidence for a positive impact of the intervention.

The posterior distribution plot (Figure 1) depicts a peak around the median effect size. The highest density is around the median effect size of 0.093. Meanwhile, the sequential analysis plot shows how evidence accumulates as more data is collected, i.e. evidence fluctuates at the beginning and stabilizes at the end. Broadly speaking, it can be said that with the current sample, the intervention in the form of ER learning enriched with metacognitive strategies is not able to improve students' ER skills.

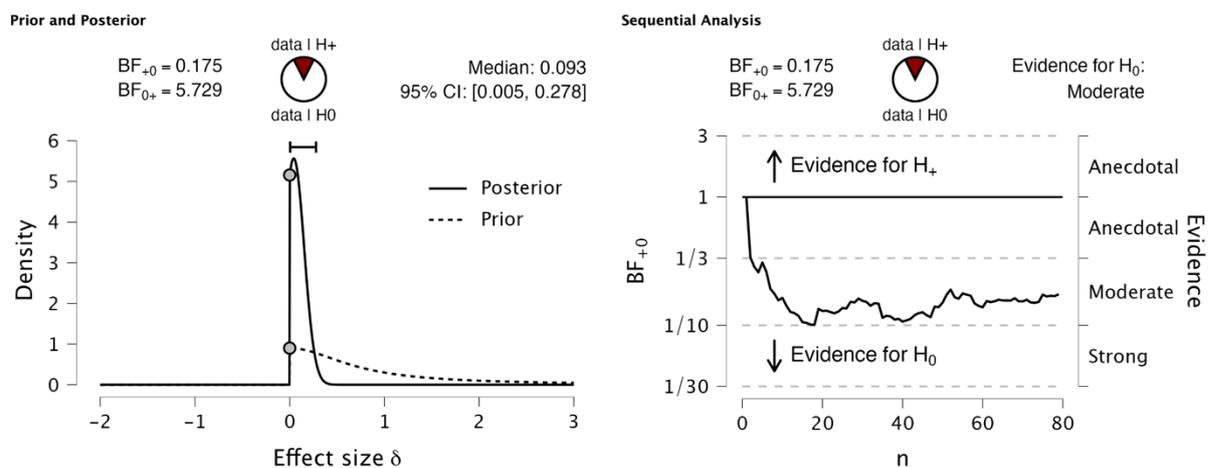


Figure 1. Posterior and Sequential Analysis on Students' ER Skills

Attitude

Bayesian paired t-test analysis of student attitude showed a median effect size (δ) of 0.070 which ranged from 0.003 to 0.238 (95% credible interval). These results suggest the possibility that there is a positive impact of ER learning enriched with metacognitive strategies on attitude. However, the Bayes Factor analysis provided a further hill. The Bayes Factor comparison result for the null hypothesis (BF_{+0}) with the alternative hypothesis (BF_{0+}) is 8.819. Meanwhile, the Bayes Factor comparison result for the alternative hypothesis (BF_{0+}) compared to the null hypothesis (BF_{+0}) is 0.113. This result indicates that there is moderate evidence in favor of the null hypothesis (no effect), or in other words that there is relatively weak evidence for a positive impact of the intervention.

The posterior distribution plot (Figure 2) depicts a peak around the median effect size. The highest density is around the median effect size of 0.070. Meanwhile, the sequential analysis plot shows how evidence accumulates as more data is collected, i.e. evidence fluctuates at the beginning and stabilizes at the end. Broadly speaking, it can be said that with the current sample, the intervention in the form of ER learning enriched with metacognitive strategies was not able to improve student attitudes.

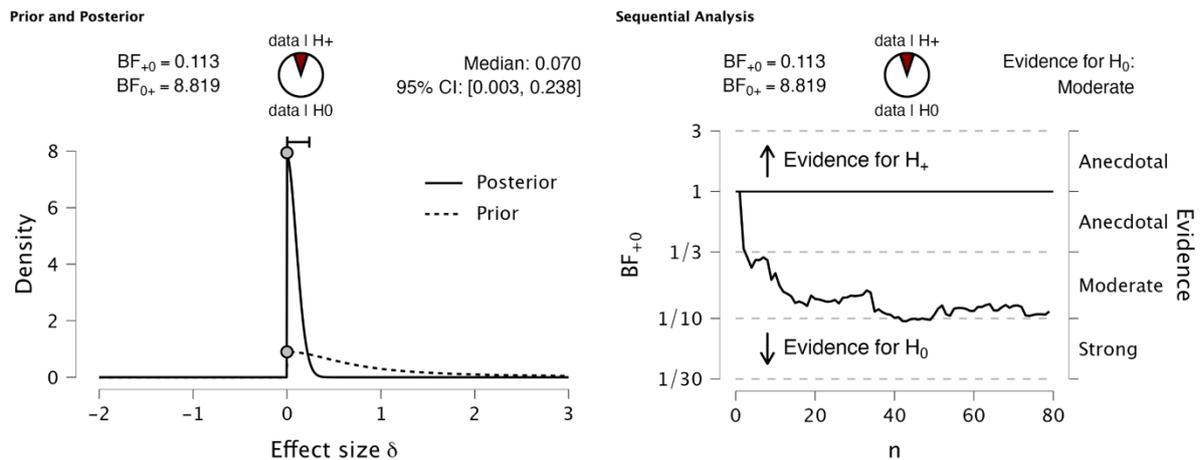


Figure 2. Posterior And Sequential Analysis on Students' ER Skills

Relationship between ER skill and Attitude

Bayesian linear regression analysis shows that the intercept has a mean of 109.038, ranging from 106.461 to 111.326 (95% credible interval). Meanwhile, the attitude coefficient has a mean of 0.729 (standard deviation 0.073), and ranges from 0.571 to 0.870. Furthermore, the Bayes factor for inclusion ($BF_{inclusion}$) was 3.897×10^{12} which further supports the inclusion of attitude variables into the model, indicating a very strong influence of attitude on skill. Attitude significantly predicted skill with 56.8% variance. The very high Bayes factors for the attitude model and $BF_{inclusion}$ indicate a large body of evidence supporting the positive impact of metacognitive strategy-enriched ER learning methods.

Discussion and Conclusion

With increasing attention to the incorporation of metacognitive strategies in reading activities (Soto et al., 2019; Villanueva, 2022), this study sought to test whether an intervention in the form of ER activities enriched with metacognitive strategies could result in a marked improvement in students' ER skills and attitudes. The urgency of this study lies in the need to identify effective reading learning methods for university students. In addition, this study can provide insights for the development of better interventions to create positive student attitudes towards reading activities.

The findings of this study highlighted the effectiveness of the intervention in improving ER skills and students' attitudes which was contrary to our initial expectations. Despite the demonstrated positive impact on skills and attitudes, moderate evidence against the null hypothesis suggests that ER activities with metacognitive reading strategies did not substantially improve either. This finding is inconsistent with previous studies, which provide evidence that there is a positive impact of ER programs on college students' reading proficiency (Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011; Yamashita, 2008).

Moreover, despite efforts to foster positive attitudes towards ER through instructional support of incorporating ER and metacognitive strategies, the observed changes in students' attitudes were not significant. This finding contradicts previous studies that reported positive attitudes towards reading after engaging in ER activities (Haider & Akhter, 2012; Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011; Safaia & Bulca, 2013). There are a number of factors that may have contributed to these results, including limitations in applying metacognitive strategies and contextual factors affecting student engagement (Smith et al., 2021).

However, Bayesian linear regression analysis presented a different perspective showing attitudes significantly predicted students' ER skills after engaging in the intervention. Despite previous results that the improvement in ER skills and attitudes after the intervention was not substantial, ER attitudes emerged as a strong predictor of ER skills. This underscores the importance of students' attitudes towards ER in

influencing their reading proficiency, in line with previous research highlighting the role of positive attitudes in shaping good reading performance (Cremin & Scholes, 2024; Winberg et al., 2022).

The findings of this study have several implications. Theoretically, ER skills and students' positive attitudes towards ER that did not increase after the intervention emphasized the complexity of efforts to integrate metacognitive reading strategies into ER activities. This certainly challenges the assumption that integrating cognitive and metacognitive strategies in ER activities can automatically improve students' skills and attitudes. On the other hand, the significant contribution of attitude to ER skills certainly highlights the interaction between affective and cognitive factors in the development of ER skills. This underscores the importance of considering students' positive attitude as a determinant of their ER proficiency. Thus, future theoretical frameworks and ER learning models may need to focus on attitude as the first level, and then move on to ER skills as the next level of learning outcomes. In fact, it is said that reading attitude is an important mediator between contextual factors and students' reading/learning engagement (Cremin & Scholes, 2024; Winberg et al., 2022).

From a practical standpoint, these findings have implications for educators and practitioners who focus on learning to read, especially ER. The less encouraging results of the intervention conducted in this study provide direction that there needs to be a different approach in designing and implementing ER learning. Educators need to consider contextual factors when planning ER activities to maximize their effectiveness on ER attitudes and skills. Furthermore, the positive result that attitude has a significant influence on ER skills underscores the importance of fostering a positive attitude towards ER. Educators may consider focusing on developing a positive attitude towards ER as a way of indirectly improving ER skills.

In conclusion, although the Bayesian paired t-test showed limited practical significance, the Bayesian regression analysis highlighted a strong relationship between students' attitudes and skills. Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, there are some limitations that should be recognized. First, the lack of significant improvements in ER skills and attitudes towards ER may be due to limitations in the implementation of the intervention. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms underlying this relationship and to develop targeted interventions that effectively improve students' attitudes towards ER to enhance their reading skills. Second, the findings of this study may be limited by the specific educational context and sample characteristics. Further research with larger sample sizes or different methodologies may be needed to conclusively determine the effectiveness of interventions. Longitudinal studies that track students' progress over time would also provide deeper insights into the sustained impact of ER interventions on ER skills.

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