



Empowering EFL Students' Reading Proficiency via the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) Approach

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Abstract This study explored the effectiveness of the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy in improving reading comprehension among tenth-grade EFL students through a one-group pre-test–post-test pre-experimental design with 36 participants. The MIT approach focused on teacher-guided meaning-making, strategic reading, and contextual understanding to help students engage more deeply with texts. A multiple-choice reading comprehension test was given before and after the instruction to measure student progress. Data analysis using a paired samples t-test in SPSS 17 showed a statistically significant improvement in reading scores, with the mean rising from 10.08 (pre-test) to 14.94 (post-test), $t(35) = 8.63$, $p < 0.05$. These findings suggest that the MIT strategy had a strong positive effect on students' reading performance. The results support incorporating mediated instructional techniques into EFL reading classes, as such approaches enhance comprehension and promote active learner participation and greater cognitive engagement with texts. MIT shows its potential as a practical and effective teaching model for developing reading skills in EFL settings by fostering a more profound understanding and encouraging reflective reading habits.

Keywords: reading comprehension, Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT), EFL learners, pre-experimental design, English language teaching

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the essential skills in English language learning that significantly contributes to academic achievement, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It serves as a medium for acquiring knowledge, enhancing language exposure, and developing critical thinking. Grabe and Stoller (2019) argue that reading involves more than decoding linguistic symbols—it requires strategic engagement with texts, comprehension monitoring, and purposeful interaction with meaning. Despite its importance, reading comprehension remains a significant challenge for many EFL learners, especially at the secondary level. Students frequently struggle with vocabulary limitations, unfamiliar grammatical structures, and a lack of strategic reading awareness (Nation, 2020; Rahmat, 2022). Consequently, they often approach reading passively, resulting in superficial understanding and limited text engagement.

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Conventional methods of teaching reading in many classrooms tend to focus on bottom-up processes such as word recognition and sentence translation. While these methods offer some benefits, they often neglect the cognitive and metacognitive strategies necessary for constructing meaning at the discourse level. Brown (2003) and Bulan et al. (2020) highlight traditional instruction's shortcomings that fail to foster student autonomy, critical reading, or inference-making. In light of these limitations, it becomes essential to introduce more student-centred approaches that build linguistic competence and empower learners to become active readers.

One promising instructional strategy that addresses the limitations of traditional reading instruction is the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT). Rooted in the theory of mediated learning experience (Feuerstein et al., 2006), MIT positions the teacher as a simple transmitter of knowledge and a strategic facilitator who guides students through the comprehension process. This approach incorporates several key instructional elements—pre-reading discussions to activate prior knowledge, scaffolded questioning during reading, and reflective dialogue afterwards—to help learners construct and internalise meaning. The teacher's role in modelling cognitive strategies and promoting metacognitive awareness is crucial to the effectiveness of MIT, as it enables students to become more reflective and engaged readers.

Empirical research supports the effectiveness of mediated instruction in promoting more profound understanding, especially for learners who struggle to use reading strategies independently. For example, Abu-Rabia and Siegel (2017) found that guided mediation significantly improved the reading outcomes of EFL learners by encouraging active monitoring and self-regulation. Similarly, Rokhmat (2021) reported that structured mediation in reading tasks enhanced students' ability to make inferences and connect ideas across texts. These findings emphasise MIT's potential to improve reading performance and foster the cognitive habits necessary for long-term literacy development. Therefore, MIT remains a pedagogically sound and practically feasible approach for enhancing reading comprehension in EFL classrooms.

Although many studies have underscored the benefits of strategy-based reading instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, implementing the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy remains notably underexplored, particularly in secondary education settings within less-researched regions. In many Indonesian classrooms, for example, the dominant instructional method remains teacher-centred, with little focus on learners' cognitive involvement in constructing textual meaning. MIT, focusing on structured mediation and gradual scaffolding of comprehension, presents a potentially transformative model that shifts the emphasis from passive reception to active engagement with texts. Nonetheless, empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness within Indonesian EFL classrooms is limited, highlighting a pressing need for systematic research into how this strategy supports learners' reading development.

In response to this gap, the present study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy in improving reading comprehension among tenth-grade EFL students in Indonesia. By doing so, the research contributes to the growing body of literature on effective reading pedagogy and offers practical implications for instructional innovation in under-resourced educational settings. The following research questions guide the study: (1) Is the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy effective in teaching reading to tenth-grade EFL learners? Moreover, (2) How much does the MIT strategy improve their reading comprehension performance?

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design featuring a one-group pre-test–post-test format. This design is commonly used in educational research to evaluate the impact of a treatment without a control group (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The aim was to assess the effectiveness of the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy on students' reading comprehension performance. Participants were tested before and after the instructional intervention using the same measures to identify learning gains attributable to the treatment. As Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012) explain, experimental research allows researchers to examine causal relationships by manipulating an independent variable (in this case, MIT) and observing its effect on the dependent variable (reading comprehension).

The study was conducted during the academic year 2024–2025 and involved tenth-grade students from a public secondary school in Indonesia. The total population consisted of 177 students across five tenth-grade classes. A purposive sampling method selected one class considered representative of average academic ability and classroom dynamics. The selected class ($n = 36$ students) received the intervention and participated in the pre- and post-test phases. Purposive sampling is commonly employed in small-scale educational research when researchers aim to examine a specific subgroup that meets predefined criteria (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019).

Reading comprehension performance was assessed using a researcher-developed multiple-choice test comprising 20 items. The test items reflected core skills aligned with the national curriculum, including identifying main ideas, understanding the purpose of texts, recognising word references, and interpreting explicit and implicit information. Each correct answer was awarded one point, resulting in a maximum score of 20. Two experts in English education reviewed the instrument's content validity, and its internal reliability was confirmed through a pilot test, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80, indicating acceptable reliability (Taber, 2018).

The intervention was carried out over four weeks and involved eight instructional sessions using the MIT strategy. Each session followed a structured format, including guided reading, teacher-mediated questioning, vocabulary scaffolding, and reflective activities. Instructional mediation, as described by Neale and Langer (1992), involves the teacher's active role in guiding students through comprehension tasks by linking background knowledge with textual content and offering structured opportunities for interpretation and discussion. This approach promotes understanding by allowing students to work together to process texts, receive feedback, and internalise reading strategies (Fisher & Frey, 2021).

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 17.0. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarise students' performance on the pre-test and post-test. A paired-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether the scores were statistically significant. Before hypothesis testing, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were examined. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. This statistical procedure is consistent with widely accepted practices in quantitative research in second language acquisition (Mackey & Gass, 2021).

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy in enhancing EFL learners' reading comprehension. A pre-test was conducted before the

intervention, and a post-test was carried out after the instructional treatment to measure students' progress. The pre-test was intended to establish a baseline of students' reading ability, while the post-test evaluated the improvement level following the implementation of the MIT strategy.

Descriptive statistics were utilised to evaluate student performance across both testing sessions. The results indicated that students' scores ranged from 3 to 15 in the pre-test, while scores ranged from 9 to 17 in the post-test. This change reflects an overall enhancement in reading comprehension. The mean score increased from 10.08 (SD = 3.28) in the pre-test to 14.94 (SD = 1.76) in the post-test. This notable improvement suggests that the MIT strategy positively impacted student learning outcomes. Table 1 summarises the mean scores and standard deviations.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	10.08	3.28
Post-test	14.94	1.76

Assumption Testing

Before hypothesis testing, checks for normality and homogeneity were carried out to validate using a parametric paired-samples t-test. Normality was evaluated using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The results showed that both the pre-test ($p = .083$) and post-test ($p = .174$) scores were normally distributed, as their significance values exceeded the .05 threshold. This confirms that the data meet the normality assumption necessary for further parametric analysis.

Table 2. Normality Test (Kolmogorov–Smirnov)

Test	Statistic (p-value)
Pre-test	0.083
Post-test	0.174

Levene's test was conducted to examine whether the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met between the pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis yielded a significance value of $p = .14$ ($F = 3.729$), which is above the commonly accepted alpha threshold of .05. This result indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in the variance between the two sets of scores, thereby confirming that the assumption of equal variances was satisfied and justifying parametric tests for further analysis.

Table 3. Homogeneity of Variance Test (Levene's Test)

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig. (p)
3.729	4	30	0.14

Hypothesis Testing

A paired-samples t-test was performed to assess the statistical significance of the observed improvement in students' reading comprehension. The analysis revealed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, $t(35) = -8.63$, $p < .001$, indicating a robust effect of the intervention. This result provides strong empirical support for the effectiveness of the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy in enhancing EFL learners' reading comprehension performance.

Table 4. Paired Samples T-Test Results

Comparison	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test vs Post-test	-8.63	35	.000

These findings strongly support the effectiveness of the MIT strategy in improving EFL learners' ability to understand reading texts. The rise in scores and statistical significance offers empirical proof that strategic mediation during reading lessons can markedly boost student comprehension results.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy significantly enhances EFL learners' reading comprehension. The measurable improvements between pre-test and post-test scores reflect more than just numerical progress—they highlight the importance of deliberate, structured mediation in reading instruction for learners who may struggle to derive meaning independently. In many EFL settings, students often rely on superficial reading, limited by vocabulary constraints and underdeveloped comprehension strategies (Nation, 2020). MIT directly tackles these issues by providing students with scaffolds to anticipate, process, and verify meaning, encouraging deeper engagement with the text.

To Better understand these outcomes, it is helpful to examine them through the lens of instructional scaffolding theory (Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2019). Scaffolding theory expands on earlier cognitive perspectives by emphasising the dynamic role of the teacher in providing support tailored to students' emerging needs. Within the MIT framework, scaffolding occurs through teacher-led questioning, modelling, and metacognitive prompts that encourage learners to reflect on their predictions, monitor their comprehension, and revise their understanding in real time. These interactions foster autonomy and activate self-regulated reading behaviour, which has been shown to positively correlate with comprehension achievement (Meniado, 2019; Bai & Wang, 2021).

Furthermore, this study aligns with constructivist learning theory, especially the work of Bruning et al. (2020), which suggests that learners actively create meaning through interaction with content and context. The MIT strategy promotes students to generate meaning before, during, and after reading, transforming reading into a dialogic, meaning-making process. This change is significant in EFL contexts, where reading instruction relies more on teacher explanation than learner exploration (Cahyono & Widiati, 2018). Through prediction, clarification, and verification phases, MIT places learners as active participants who test hypotheses and refine their interpretations. This process not only enhances understanding but also fosters confidence and motivation.

These findings align with the results of recent empirical studies. Bai and Wang (2021), for instance, found that scaffolding reading strategies significantly improved Chinese secondary students' reading comprehension, especially when instruction included prediction and self-monitoring phases. Likewise, Alshammari (2021) reported that Saudi EFL learners taught through scaffolded strategy instruction performed significantly better than those taught through conventional methods. These findings suggest that strategic mediation supports comprehension growth across diverse EFL contexts when implemented consistently.

Another theoretical perspective worth highlighting is the Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, Ayres, & Kalyuga, 2019), which suggests that learners' working memory has limited capacity and that

instructional design should minimise extraneous load and optimise germane processing. MIT does precisely this: by chunking information into manageable stages and aligning questioning techniques with learners' cognitive readiness, the strategy reduces mental overload. It allows more cognitive resources to be dedicated to meaning construction. This view is particularly relevant for EFL learners simultaneously decoding unfamiliar words, parsing new sentence structures, and inferring meaning from context.

Although this study shows positive results, it has certain limitations. The absence of a control group means we cannot make definitive claims about causality, and the small, localised sample limits how broadly the findings can be applied. However, the consistent improvements observed and aligned with existing research suggest that MIT is a promising, reproducible teaching model. Future research could address these limitations by employing randomised controlled trials, including qualitative feedback, and exploring long-term retention of understanding skills. Additionally, cross-cultural comparative studies could provide insights into MIT's functions in diverse educational systems and linguistic backgrounds.

This study contributes to an expanding body of research supporting strategy-based, scaffolded reading instruction in EFL classrooms. It confirms that significant improvements in comprehension can be achieved when learners are provided with structured, reflective, and cognitively accessible opportunities to engage with texts. The Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy, grounded in contemporary learning theories, offers a practical and theoretically sound approach to more effective reading instruction that enhances outcomes and considers the learner's cognitive and emotional experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Mediated Instruction of Text (MIT) strategy is an effective teaching method for enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension, especially among tenth-grade students. The significant increase in students' post-test scores, supported by statistical analysis, demonstrates the positive impact of MIT in promoting more meaningful engagement with texts. By designing reading lessons with guided mediation—such as prediction, clarification, and textual elaboration—MIT helps learners develop stronger inferencing skills, improved comprehension monitoring, and deeper involvement with reading materials.

Beyond just improving statistics, MIT addresses the teaching need for interactive and learner-centered methods in EFL classrooms, especially in settings traditionally focused on teacher-led instruction. Its focus on scaffolding understanding, activating prior knowledge, and fostering reflective reading closely matches modern ideas about effective literacy teaching. Future research could build on this by comparing MIT with other strategy-based methods and examining its long-term impact on reading independence and academic success in different educational environments.

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