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Drill Methods for Enhancing Reading Skills in the Era of Digital Disruption: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: Drill Methods for Enhancing Reading Skills in the Era of Digital Disruption: A Systematic Literature Review. Objectives: This research aims to systematically review various studies on the use of the drill method in enhancing reading skills, particularly in the context of the digital era. **Methods:** This research employs a systematic literature review using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) report guidelines. The articles selected for review meet the following criteria: (1) relevance to the topic, (2) peer-reviewed research publications, (3) published between 2010 and 2025, and (4) written in an international language. Data was collected by searching references in academic journal databases, such as ERIC, Google Scholar, Scopus and Web of Science. **Findings:** The results highlight several key points: (1) The drill method proves effective in improving reading skills by facilitating faster word recognition and enhancing memory retention; (2) It contributes to better reading speed, comprehension, and phonetic abilities; (3) Different types of drills, such as traditional, repetition-based, and incremental, can be tailored to specific learning needs; (4) The impact of drills is more significant when integrated with innovative teaching strategies; and (5) Digital technology enhances the effectiveness of drills, making learning experiences more interactive, adaptive, and engaging. **Conclusion:** This study affirms that the drill method significantly supports reading skill development, especially when combined with modern instructional approaches and digital tools. The results of this study are expected to encourage the integration of drill methods with digital technology and innovative strategies to improve the effectiveness of reading learning in the digital era.

Keywords: drill method, reading skills, systematic literature review.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital disruption era has transformed various aspects of life, including how individual access and process information (Puolitaival & Kiroff, 2021). Technological advancements have facilitated instant access to reading materials through the Internet, social media, and other digital devices (Kiroff & Puolitaival, 2021). However, this convenience has also led to significant changes in reading patterns, where many individuals tend to engage in skimming rather than deep reading (Çetinkaya et al., 2019). Rather than really understanding the texts, many contemporary readers skim whole sections of texts, getting just the basic idea of the information, but without engaging the brain in a deep way (Boonchum, 2018; Erdoğan & Kasranoğlu, 2018). When literacy skills are phasing out, it is particularly challenging for students in the early stages of decoding, their reading skills are still

developing, they are yet to master their new found decoder skills and hence are yet to be able to make†sense of what information they read and the critical thinking skills (Hariyanto et al., 2023).

The rapid†rise of fast and concise digital content has exacerbated the basic literacy phenomenon (Lailiza & Maisaroh, 2023). Bezerra et al. (2022) note that the focus on longer texts that demanded attention and deeper comprehension is being overshadowed by shorter and visually focused texts containing infographics, interactive videos or social media posts, as is the case for many readers, especially†children. This change in†preference can become an obstacle to developing necessary reading skills, such as reading rate, comprehension, and retention of acquired information (Azis et al., 2021; Raihan et al., 2022). Therefore, the reading instruction needs to be supplemented with adaptive and strategic approaches in order to maintain students with strong literacy skills aligned with changing information consumption patterns of the age of digitalization.

Learning strategies should be enhanced to solve primary literacy issues in the age of the digital, not just to respond to modern trends in consumption of information but also to ensure proficiency in deep reading (Fauzia & Lolita, 2018; Lailiza & Maisaroh, 2023). One of the methods likely to enhance reading ability is the drill method, which is dedicated to systematized and repetitive exercises in acquiring specific skills (Siahaan et al., 2024). This method creates better focused reading cultures, improves speed in reading, and improves reading comprehension (Boonchum, 2018). One of the most notable aspects of the drill method is that it follows a systematic and result-oriented strategy (Kristiana & Mahraini, 2024). Learning through this mode of instruction generally begins with introducing material, followed by a series of repetitive drills to form habits and improve response speed (Volpe et al., 2011). The more often they practice, the better the students become at remembering and applying what they learned (Fauzia & Lolita, 2018; Sullivan et al., 2013).

The drill method has several advantages in learning. It initially improves memory and retention, as repeated practice reinforces mental habits concerning the learned knowledge (Pramesti & Nelisa, 2018). It secondly develops fundamental skills with speed and accuracy, such as arithmetic computation, vocabulary mastery, or hand dexterity (Basuki, 2018). Third, drilling allows students to practice by themselves with minimal supervision as they can do exercises at their discretion (Edi & Rusmiati, 2024). In addition, this practice can be done in various ways, conventionally through written exercise and with electronic technology that provides immediate feedback (Kusiati & Aziza, 2024).

The drilling method improves reading skills by enabling students to achieve fluency, accuracy, and understanding of text through repeated, systematic practice (Lailiza & Maisaroh, 2023; Siahaan et al., 2024). Systematic repetition through the drill method enables students to focus more on understanding word and sentence relationships, thus building stronger reading skills (Kristiana & Mahraini, 2024). Besides, constant practice enhances students' reading confidence, especially for those with word recognition or general meaning interpretation difficulties (Joseph et al., 2012). The technology has evolved to now merge the drill technique with multimedia and innovative digital strategies to enhance the efficiency of reading instruction (Dewi & Syifaul Fahmi, 2024; Pramesti & Nelisa, 2018; Rahmatulanisa et al., 2025). These are technological platforms such as interactive learning applications, educational games, and artificial intelligence that provide immediate feedback (Pramesti & Nelisa, 2018). Although the drill

approach has been used in education for several decades, gaps in research with regard to its effectiveness in most educational environments continue to exist, especially in the digital era.

There are some researches that indicate drills improve retention and learning speed in acquiring specific skills, while others denounce the practice as too mechanical and lacking in developing conceptual understanding (Basuki, 2018; Muchlisin, 2014). Differences in the use of drills, ranging from traditional approaches to integrating digital technology, also result in extreme differences in research outcomes (Sullivan et al., 2013). These are the age of the students, material difficulty levels, and instruction methods that also bring about inconsistency in the success of the method (Volpe et al., 2011).

A systematic review that measures the appropriateness and effectiveness of the drill method in the modern learning environment is required. Against the background of such issues, the aim of this research is to review systematically several studies on the drill method, particularly its use in advancing reading ability in the era of the internet. The research also attempts to synthesize critical findings of various studies in a bid to advise educators and researchers how the drill method can be maximized in response to contemporary learning needs. The results of this research should improve the understanding of the drill method and come with a potential for innovation in its use in education. Therefore, this study aims to answer three main questions:

1. What are the trends in the use of the drill method in improving reading skills in digital disruption?
2. How do the effectiveness of various types of drills differ in improving reading speed, text comprehension, and phonetic skills?
3. What is the optimal strategy for integrating the drill method with digital technology in reading learning?

METHOD

Research Design

This research employs a systematic literature review using PRISMA report guidelines. This study employs the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) strategy to organize the systematic review process systematic and orderly. PRISMA enhances systematic reviews and meta-analyses to be more reproducible, transparent, and scientifically valid by offering explicit instructions for the identification, selection, and analysis of included studies (Chong et al., 2022).

Search Strategy

Data was collected by searching references in academic journal databases, such as ERIC and Google Scholar. Keywords for literature searches were "Effect of Drill Method" OR "Impact of Repetitive Drill," "Reading Skills" OR "Reading Comprehension," "Digital Disruption" OR "Technology-Enhanced Learning," "Drill-Based Learning" OR "Repeated Reading Practice," "Fluency Development" OR "Literacy Improvement," "EdTech in Reading" OR "AI-Assisted Drill Methods," etc. Other databases such as Scopus and Web of Science were also employed to expand the number of appropriate references.

This study adopts the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure a structured and rigorous approach to the systematic review process. PRISMA promotes higher transparency, replicability, and scientific soundness of systematic reviews and meta-analyses through setting strict requirements for searching for, screening for inclusion of, and examining the included studies of interest. The following PRISMA flow diagram graphically depicts each stage in the review process, from identifying, screening and assessing for eligibility and inclusion of studies, giving a snapshot of how the final selection of literature was made.

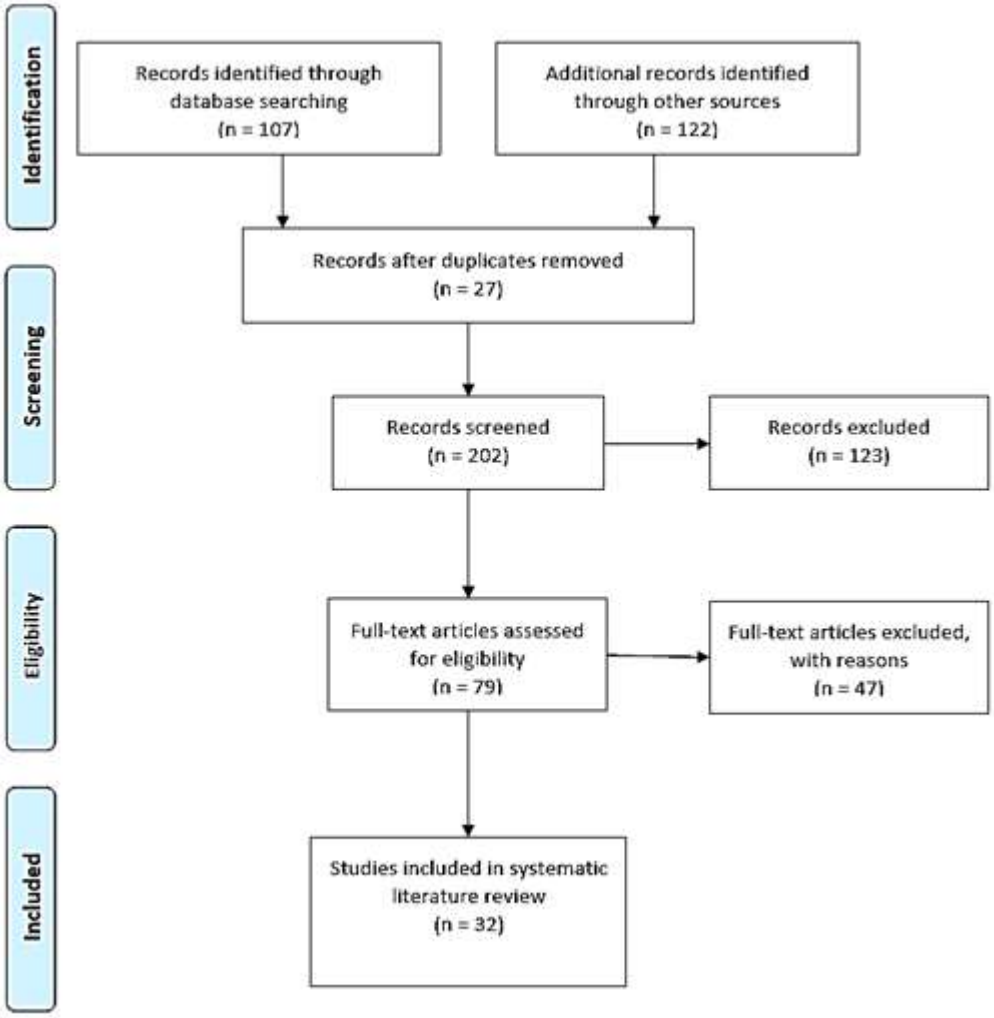

Figure 1. PRISMA diagram flow

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

It makes use of sound inclusion and exclusion criteria to prevent low-quality resources that are non-relevant to the subject under consideration from entering the Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Inclusion criteria are: (1) the article must be specifically pertinent to the research question; (2) the proceeding or article must be peer-reviewed scientific literature; (3) the article must be published between 2010–2025 in order to reflect current data; and (4) the article must be presented in an internationally accepted language, e.g., English. On the other hand, exclusion criteria are: (1) articles lacking a direct connection to the research topic; (2) non-scientific articles such as opinion pieces, literature reviews without empirical bases, or meta-bibliometric reviews; (3) articles published outside the 2010–2025 period, which would be less relevant to modern-day situations; and (4) articles published in languages not universally accepted, thereby becoming inaccessibility to the global academic community.

Data Analysis

This study uses data analysis techniques, namely thematic analysis techniques in qualitative research. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis that analyzes classifications and presents themes (patterns) related to the data. The 6-phase

coding framework for thematic analysis will be used to identify themes and patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) The phases are: (1) familiarization of data; (2) generation of codes; (3) combining codes into themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) determine significance of themes; and (6) reporting of findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

What are the trends in the use of the drill method in improving reading skills in digital disruption?

The research findings indicate that the drill method for improving reading skills has been studied in various countries with diverse focuses. Out of the 32 articles reviewed, the majority come from Indonesia (23 articles), highlighting the application of the drill method in reading instruction at different educational levels, particularly in elementary schools. The United States (5 articles) examined the effectiveness of drills in improving reading speed and comprehension, with many studies integrating digital technology and artificial intelligence into learning. Meanwhile, Croatia (1 article) discussed the application of the drill method in supporting students with learning difficulties, and Kuwait (1 article) focused on using drills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Thailand (1 article) and Malaysia (1 article) also explored the implementation of the drill method in their national education contexts.

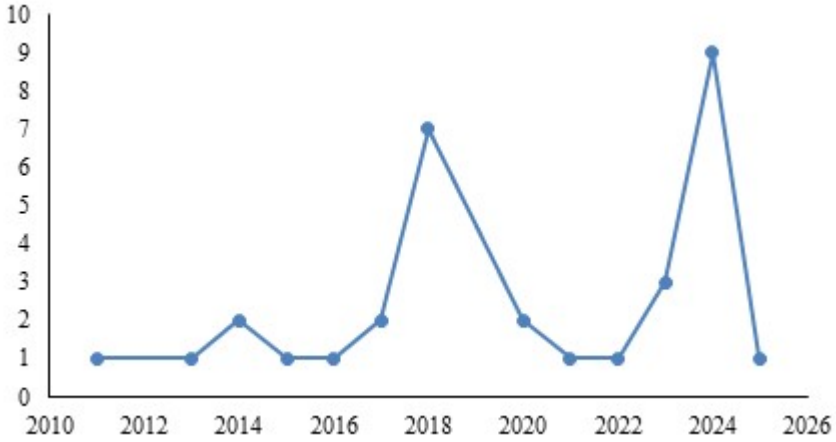

Figure 2. Publication trends by year

Besides geographic distribution, studies on the drill method in enhancing reading skills can also be analyzed based on their publication years. The publication trend from 2011 to 2025 shows fluctuations in the number of studies conducted annually. Figure 1 illustrates that the number of articles discussing the drill method in reading experienced a significant increase during certain periods. From 2010 to 2015, the number of publications remained relatively low, ranging between 1 and 2 articles per year. The trend began to rise in 2017, peaking in 2018 with seven publications. After a decline from 2019 to 2021, research numbers increased again in 2023, reaching a peak in 2024 with nine articles. However, in 2025, the number of publications sharply declined. Fluctuations in the number of publications can be caused by factors such as increased research interest in a particular period, changes in research funding policies, academic trends, and the availability of resources and technology to support studies in this field. This trend indicates that the drill method remains relevant and continues to be used in various educational contexts despite changing times.

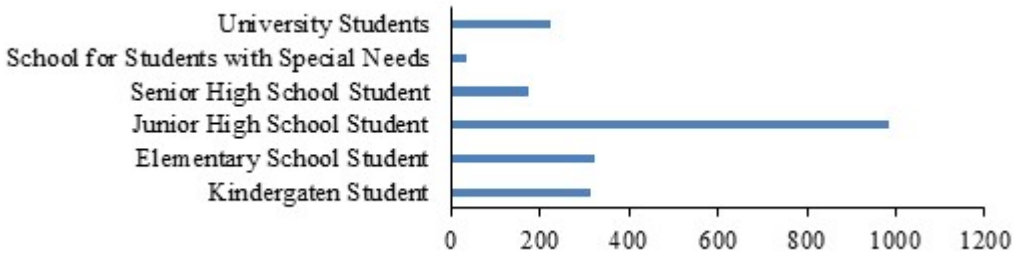

Figure 3. Publication trends by research subjects

Furthermore, Figure 3 shows that the trend of publications on the drill method in reading, based on research subjects, demonstrates dominance in the Junior High School student group, with the highest number of studies, approaching 1,200 research subjects. Meanwhile, elementary school and kindergarten students have fewer publications, but the number of studies on senior high school students and university students still exceeds. The least-researched group is students with special needs (School for Students with Special Needs), with the lowest number of publications in this trend. This trend may be influenced by the greater academic focus on junior high school students, as they are at a critical stage of reading developm, while research on students with special needs remains limited due to methodological challenges and fewer specialized studies in this area. This trend suggests that the drill method is more frequently applied and studied in the junior high school education context, likely due to students' cognitive development at this level, which still requires reinforcement in basic reading skills.

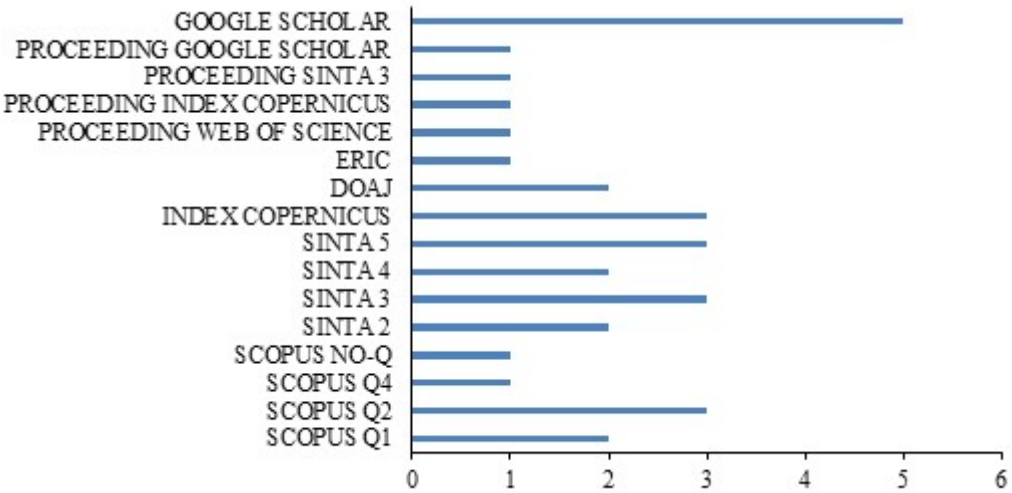

Figure 4. Publication trends by journal indexing

The publication trend of 38 articles related to the drill method in reading is distributed across various journal indexes and proceedings, as shown in Figure 4. The figure indicates that Google Scholar is the most dominant platform, with the most publications reaching nearly six articles. On the other hand, publications indexed in reputable databases such as Scopus Q1 and Q2 are also significant, reflecting high-quality research that has undergone rigorous peer review. However, the number of publications in Scopus Q4 and journals without quartile classification (Scopus No-Q) is lower. Publications indexed in national systems, such as SINTA 2 to SINTA

5, show relatively even distribution, with a slight advantage in SINTA 3 and SINTA 4. Additionally, some articles are published in databases such as Index Copernicus, DOAJ, and ERIC, and proceedings are indexed on various platforms. Indexation in reputable databases such as Scopus, SINTA, and DOAJ can indicate research quality, because listed articles have generally gone through a rigorous review process. Publication in Scopus Q1 and Q2 reflects higher academic standards, while journals with national indexing such as SINTA continue to provide relevant contributions in the local context. Therefore, the selection of articles based on indexing in this SLR study ensures that the research analyzed has credibility and validity that can be accounted for. This trend suggests that the drill method remains a subject of academic research and is published across different indexing levels, both nationally and internationally.

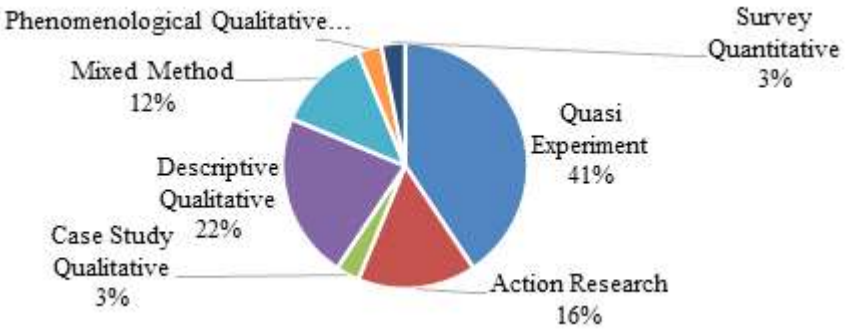

Figure 5. Publication trends by research method

Regarding research method trends, Figure 5 shows that the dominant research approach used is the quasi-experimental approach (Quasi Experiment), with the highest proportion at 41%. The descriptive qualitative approach is also widely used (22%), reflecting research emphasizing an in-depth exploration of reading instruction using the drill method without direct intervention. Action research-based studies (16%) highlight that some researchers gradually employ practice-based approaches to improve learning quality within the classroom context. Meanwhile, mixed-method studies (12%) indicate that some research combines quantitative and qualitative analyses to gain a more comprehensive understanding. Qualitative case studies (3%), qualitative phenomenology (3%), and quantitative surveys (3%) have smaller proportions. This trend suggests that research on the drill method is predominantly conducted using experimental approaches to measure its effectiveness directly in learning contexts. The dominance of the quasi-experimental approach may be due to its ability to measure the effectiveness of the drill method in a controlled setting, while the prevalence of descriptive qualitative and action research reflects the need for in-depth exploration and practical classroom-based improvements, whereas mixed-method and less common qualitative approaches are used to provide broader contextual insights.

The publication trend of the drill method based on related strategies/media shows that research on the drill method for improving reading skills is dominated by Traditional drills (12 articles), demonstrating the effectiveness of conventional approaches. Incremental Drill and Flashcard Media (3 articles each) are also frequently applied. Repetition Drill (2 articles) highlights the importance of repetition. Meanwhile, innovative strategies such as Games Drill, Interactive Multimedia, Song Drill, and integration-based methods only appear in 1 article, indicating limited exploration. The dominance of traditional drills suggests a strong

reliance on established methods with proven effectiveness, while the limited exploration of innovative strategies may be due to a lack of technological integration, experimental studies, or challenges in adapting new approaches to existing curricula. The complete data can be seen in the following table on publication trends of the drill method based on related strategies or media.

Table 1. Publication trends on drill method based on related strategies/media

Related Strategy/Media	Frequency
Drilling Routine Task	1
Equipped Method	1
Games Drill	1
Homeschooling	1
Incremental Drill	3
Integrated with PAKEM	1
Integrated with 3P Method	1
Integrated with Think Pair Share	1
Interactive Multimedia	1
Media Flashcard	3
Media WordSheets	1
Reading Racetrack	1
Repetition Drill	2
Song Drill	1
Traditional Drill	12
Wondershare Quiz	1
Total	32

How do the effectiveness of various types of drills differ in improving reading speed, text comprehension, and phonetic skills?

A review of 38 articles indicates that the drill method is highly effective in improving reading skills across various languages, including national and international languages, such as English and Arabic, in the context of Qur'anic reading instruction. This method emphasizes repetitive exercises to build automation in reading skills, thereby helping students achieve reading fluency more quickly and efficiently (Dewi & Syifaul Fahmi, 2024; Utami et al., 2022).

A critical aspect of the drill method is its ability to enhance reading speed. Through systematic and structured practice, students become accustomed to recognizing words and sentence patterns more quickly, reducing the time needed to read texts (Kristiana & Mahraini, 2024; Sianipar, 2018). Higher reading speed also positively impacts the comprehension of texts since students can focus on the text without any interference in word recognition (Fauzia & Lolita, 2018). Moreover, the drill method has improved students' memory retention of what they have learned. Repetitive use of words and phrases under various contexts enables memorization and internalization of word usage (Utami et al., 2022). This is especially useful in language acquisition, particularly for learning vocabulary and interpreting intricate sentence structures (Heryani et al., 2024).

The drill technique is also useful in acquiring phonetic competence. Phonetic ability is necessary to foreign language learners to ensure correct pronunciation (Laily & Febrianingrum, 2023). The drill technique allows learners to recognize sound patterns in words and improve the precision of pronunciation. In foreign language acquisition and learning Arabic, contrastive

phonetics have a tendency to make learners complex (Hasibuan & Jundi, 2024; Utami et al., 2022).

Additionally, the drill method assists students in expanding their vocabulary. Ongoing exposure to words through reading exercises makes recalling and understanding word meanings as well as their usage in varying contexts easy (Shanmugavelu & RK Sundaram, 2020). Vocabulary enhancement contributes directly to reading comprehension because students are no longer challenged by recognizing text keywords. The drill method facilitates learners to cognitively process texts and achieve reflex responses when reading (Safrodin et al., 2024). The students can read fluently without undue processing of individual words. Automatization works a critical task in establishing readers' confidence in reading, particularly for early-level learning students or struggling literacy learners (Darwish, 2017; Rahayu & Kusumaningrum, 2024).

What is the optimal strategy for integrating the drill method with digital technology in reading learning?

Based on a review of 38 articles, the drill process can be maximized by selecting the appropriate type of drill, combining it with new pedagogic methods, and employing digital media to enhance learning. Three broad categories of drills can be utilized in reading instruction: traditional, repetition, and incremental. Traditional drill is a classical repetition method in which students repeat reading texts time and again until they achieve a satisfactory level of understanding. The method effectively raises reading speed and cultivates a consistent reading habit (Mulé et al., 2018). Repetition drill emphasizes more on repetition in certain situations, such as phonetic drills, word pronunciation, or understanding texts. This process accumulates reading ability step by step and helps students memorize words and sentence patterns (Rahmatulanisa et al., 2025). Incremental drill, however, accumulates reading ability gradually, from letters, syllables, and words to more complicated sentences. This process is highly effective for beginners or foreign language students, as it facilitates incremental and progressive learning (Fransiska & Jurianto, 2016).

In addition to selecting the appropriate type of drill, optimization is also achieved through the integration of this method with other innovative teaching methods. For instance, the equipped approach brings together drills with appropriate learning materials to enhance the efficiency of reading practice (Lailiza & Maisaroh, 2023). Repeated exercises may also be practiced through standardizing drill practice within a daily regimen, helping learners develop appropriate reading habits (Laily & Febrianingrum, 2023). Moreover, the PAKEM learning method can also improve the drill technique to be more interactive and engaging to students (Pramesti & Nelisa, 2018).

The drill method can also be integrated with the 3P Method (Presentation, Practice, and Production) (Erdoðan & Kasranoðlu, 2018). In this integration, drills are applied in the practice stage after students are provided with material in the presentation stage. They then apply the reading skills they practiced in the production stage. Integration with various cooperative learning models also proves to be an effective strategy, such as Think-Pair-Share and Jigsaw, which allow students to work in groups to practice reading skills together (Hasibuan & Jundi, 2024; Rofi'ah et al., 2020). Additionally, using songs or song drills can help students memorize vocabulary and sentence patterns in a more enjoyable and easily memorable way (Lolita, 2018; Sullivan et al., 2013).

With digital times, however, the drill method's success can also be maximized using various interactive media (Mansyur et al., 2023). Examples of these include flashcards and worksheets as media, which serve as learning tools for acquiring new words and improving reading better (Albers & Hoffman, 2012; Joseph

et al., 2012; Mulé et al., 2018; Volpe et al., 2011). Interactive multimedia can also involve students in more interactive visual and audio elements when delivering reading exercises, thus enhancing students' learning motivation (Abdulah & Wangid, 2021). Moreover, the drill method can be combined with computer games and quizzes, such as Wondershare Quiz, to enhance learning competitiveness and enjoyment (Muchlisin, 2014).

■ CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion provided earlier, certain conclusions can be made. For one, the drill method has proven to be effective in improving reading skills, with the establishment of automation, the acceleration of word recognition, and the reinforcement of students' recall of words. Second, using the drill method in reading instruction contributes to increased reading speed, text comprehension, phonetic skills, and students' confidence in reading various texts. Third, optimizing the drill method can be achieved by selecting appropriate drill types, such as traditional drill, repetition drill, and incremental drill, each has advantages in systematically developing reading skills. Fourth, the effectiveness of the drill method increases when combined with innovative teaching strategies, such as the equipped method, routine tasks, PAKEM, the 3P Method, cooperative learning models, and the use of songs in reading practice. Finally, integrating the drill method with digital technology, including interactive media such as flashcards, worksheets, multimedia, and digital games and quizzes, makes reading instruction more engaging, adaptive, and suited to the needs of the digital era.

This study has implications for developing more effective reading instruction strategies by optimizing technology-based drill methods, such as AI, gamification, and interactive platforms. These findings can also serve as a foundation for educators, policymakers, and future research in adapting the drill method to remain relevant in the era of digital disruption.

The limitations of this study include the fact that the data scope is restricted to articles published between 2010 and 2025 and only in internationally recognized languages, meaning that relevant research in other languages may not have been accommodated. Furthermore, this study does not explicitly examine the impact of the drill method on students with special needs or in particular educational settings, presenting an opportunity for further research.

Some recommendations based on the study's findings and limitations include the following. Future researchers should expand data coverage by incorporating studies in various languages, particularly those relevant to local educational contexts, to understand better the drill method's application in improving reading skills. Additionally, further studies should explore the implementation of the drill method in various educational environments, such as digital-based schools, rural areas with limited technology access, or hybrid learning models, to assess the method's effectiveness in different contexts.

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