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SPEED READING INTERVENTION ON LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF STUDENTS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN PAKISTAN

Dr. Asghar Ali[1], Dr. Irum Jabeen[*2], Mr. Asad Ur Rehman[3], Dr. Fazal Hakim[4], Dr. Noreen Ayaz[5]

[1]Ph.D (Education) Deputy Controller of Exams, The University of Haripur.
*[*2]Ph.D (Education) Principal Government Girls Higher Secondary School Kangra*
[3]Ph.D Scholar(English) Assistant Director of Affiliation, The University of Haripur.
[4]Ph.D (Education) Lecturer Department of Education, The University of Haripur.
[5]Ph.D (Education) Principal Government Girls Higher Secondary School Dingi Haripur

Corresponding Author: *
Dr. Irum Jabeen
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ABSTRACT

In Experimental study, Pre-test post-test and equivalent group design was used to examine the effect of speed reading intervention on students 'language acquisition in terms of reading skills, reading speed and academic achievement in English at elementary level. Female school from public sector having conducive environment for the experiment was selected as a sample of the study. One hundred and Eighty students of 8th class were randomly selected as participants of this study. On the basis of pre-test scores,80 students were assigned to each experimental and control groups using matched random sampling technique. The experimental group was provided a treatment of speed reading for 14 weeks. The analyzed data revealed that speed reading intervention proved to be effective in enhancing the language acquisition in selected aspects. It has strong implications for language teachers to use speed reading in the classroom.

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

English has become status symbol language. Ghani (2003) concluded that English language enjoys special status in Pakistani society and it has outdone Urdu in this race of superiority. English speaking persons are considered more educated, sophisticated and intellectual than the speakers of native language. Since the independence of Pakistan, English language has been used in our country as an important language. It is considered as the language of educated and cultured people. English is language of science and information technology (Rahman, 1996). Good command over English language is considered as a sign of socially superiority among Urdu speaking majority. And it has become the demand of the day to have good skill in this language to cope with this era of informational technology.

English as an international language has a prominent role in world communities. Being the official language of Pakistan, it enjoys a privileged status. English as a compulsory subject is taught to every Pakistani student from nursery class to B.A level. It is medium of instruction in all private teaching institutions. At higher level English is medium of instruction for all students; whether they previously studied at English medium or government schools. Almost all research papers, government reports, surveys, and documents are published in English language.

There are many reasons for this failure. But the

most prominent cause of failure is our old, out dated and faulty methods of teaching English in class rooms. Our students suffer due to faulty teaching learning process (Warsi, 2004).

Acquisition of English as a second language must be approached in the light of the fact that teaching a second language is a skill. And it needs well planned, well directed and comprehensive approach. According to Salinger (2003), for improving situation of learning at elementary level, we need to provide our students a systematic, direct and explicit reading instruction. Reading is an important and basic skill of learning a foreign language. Their reading quality is far below and as a consequence they are facing problem in all areas of language acquisition. Reading is basic to all learning, and it should receive top priority because this ability is highly useful in practical situation of life. "Teaching reading to students is a complex task" (Ehri et al., 2001, p.394).

Speed reading is a program that use such reading techniques which enable the reader to read with accuracy, speed and comprehension.The common techniques use in speed reading course or program are

- Building up vocabulary
- Chunking(reading blocks of words or phrases)
- Eye control (reducing regression, progression and elimination of distraction)
- Expanding peripheral vision (to see more words at one glance).

Gunning (2004) writes that research studies proved the importance of good mastery over subject related vocabulary is the key factor in reading comprehension .All teachers who teach reading have to face this problem that mostly student lack the subject related vocabulary. Speed reading program give due importance to this key element to improve students comprehension along with speed and accuracy.

IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PAKISTAN

According to Hasman (2000), English as an international language has its distinct place in almost all countries of the world. English serves as an official language in many countries of the world, while it is the language of internet and reservoir of the information of science, electronic mail and other disciplines. Rahman (2003) writes that English was ushered in Sub - Continent with the arrival of East India Company in 19th century. After Pakistan came into being, it retained its value as the most privileged language. In earlier days of Pakistan, Ghani (2003) Concluded That Educated Pakistanis Use English As A Mean Of Communication Instead Of Urdu As National Language. In Pakistan English Is Being Used In All Fields Of Life. It Is The Only Foreign Language Which Has So Pervasive Influence In All Fields Of Life. Its Social And Educational Value Is Beyond Any Doubt. Our Media, Court And Government Officials All Use It Proudly. Rahman (2003) Writes That A Personnel's Of Civil And Armed Forces Prefer English Language For Communication Because They Consider It As Most Modern And Privileged Language As Compared To The National Language.

SITUATION OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN PAKISTAN

Warsi (2004)writes that pakistani students lack almost all the linguistic skills .there are many factors responsible for this situation but the main problem is related with teaching methodologies, although pakistani students get an earlier age exposure to english language but in spite of this fact their listening ,writing, speaking and reading is far from satisfaction .their performance in linguistic skills is far below the standards and the main responsibility of their failure is the methodology through which conducive environment for leaning a language is not provided .the acquisition of english as a second language, needs conscious efforts on the part of teacher as well as the learner.

All students especially those belong to rural areas lack all the four major language skills. Warsi (2004) writes that in pakistan english is taught through grammar translation method and mostly students are bound to translate the text. Oral work is necessary for learning a language but it is neglected altogether. Students are not provided with environment contusive for learning a language. The result is that they show poor performance in all skills of language. It is essential that approach for teaching of english should be different.

Teaching Of English And Its Four Basic Skills

Listening, reading, writing and speaking are four skills of english language. Teaching of english revolves round the learning or mastery of the basics skills. In learning english language, listening, speaking, reading and writing are four skills of language and effective communication. Among these four skills listening and reading are treated as receptive skills that help learners to get information as the input of language, where as speaking and writing are considered as productive skills (wang, 2000). Ghaffar & afridi (2003) describe that listening, reading, speaking and writing are four skills of language learning, and in learning english as a second language students cannot learn these skill automatically in natural environment, but the teachers have to create conducive environment for students to learn these skills and use english language in the class room.

Listening skill

In learning english as a second language listening skill plays an important role. Brown (1994) writes that teaching to learn the listening skill is essential as it is the skill which is used frequently in the class room along with speaking. Rivers (1984) says that the act of listening is not limited to class room but after the class too. So effective teaching for this skill is imperative.

Writing Skill

According to Huddson (1988), writing is a creativity which involves original text creation by using one's own mental and linguistic abilities .Writing is not the process of re-writing other text line by line ,when the learner writes different things using small and long words and different kinds of sentences and use rules of grammar he enhances his acquisition of language. Huddson (1988) says that to learn English as a second language the learner should taught from the very beginning to learn how to write.

Speaking Skill

In learning English as a foreign language the speaking skill is considered as a productive skill. Brown (1994) and Burns & Joyce (1997) write that speaking is an interaction between two people. It is two way process of construction of meanings which involve processing of information through the act of production and reception. Speaking is very important skill as Brown (1994) writes that two most used skill in the class rooms are listening and speaking skills. Grognet (1997) concludes that because of its importance students should be provided time and practice in speaking skill.

READING SKILL

It is a complete skill made up of number of psychological, physical, and social element (Kringelbach, Ellis, Whitney, Holliday and Hansen, 2009). Reading skill is very important for learners in learning English as a foreign language. It plays crucial role in their academic achievements that's why the studies are being carried out to investigate the causes that effect student's performance in comprehending the text (Kamhi-Stein, 2003). According to Ghaffar & Afridi (2003), reading involves three important components that are: recognition (of graphic symbols), correlation (recognition with linguistics) and correlation (recognition and linguistics and meaning).

Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand a written text (Pang et. al., 2003). Additionally, in the reading process, readers use their background knowledge about the text topic and structure along with their linguistic knowledge and reading strategies to achieve their purpose for reading (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001).

SKILLS REQUIRED FOR PROFICIENT READING

Reading skill is essential for learning a language, and this skill requires the acquisition of some sub skills of reading .following are given the sub skills needed for skilled reading.

Print Knowledge

According to adams (1990) justice& ezell (2004), relationship between the forms of words and the purpose of the printed material, is necessary for reading development. Readers' understanding of this concept is called print knowledge. Knowledge about letters, words, and meaning of words come under this heading(justice &ezell(2004).according to klinger ,artiles & barletta (2006), in learning english as a foreign

language print knowledge has great relation with reading skill.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

It is the skill which enable the reader to break the oral language into words then into syllables and then into individual sounds (burns & griffen1998).phonological awareness is essential for readers and its mastery is necessary for success in future reading (adams, 1995).

FLUENCY

Fluency in reading is essential for comprehension. Grabe (2004) and khun & stahl (2003) write that fluency in reading includes automatic and accurate word recognition and use of prosody. So the fluent reader is able to read with speed and accuracy using slight amount of attention. **Vocabulary**

Perfetti, (1985) writes that good knowledge of vocabulary is essential for skilled reading. As automaticity in word recognition is critical for reading with speed and accuracy so development of sufficient recognition of vocabulary is essential.

COMPREHENSION

It is the process of getting the thoughts of the writer through printed material. It is the ability to understand the meaning, concept and theme of the text (Fry, 1965).Students that are slow in decoding and word recognition skills are often unable to comprehend the text. Comprehension is the fundamental objective of reading and is defined as "the act of understanding what is read, heard, or seen" (Norton, 2007, p. 217).

IMPORTANCE OF READING IN LEARNING OTHER LANGUAGE SKILLS

When we teach second language we use reading to teach and grammatical structure, rules and other properties of language and thus learning to read enhance learners command over language. The studies conducted by Hafiz & Tuder (1989) proved that reading skill increases the efficiency of other skills too. The participants of their study showed great improvement in the speaking and writing skills as the result of extensive reading training.

Reading and Listening Skill

Krashen & Terrel (1983) write that when a teacher reads a text to learners, he/she requires them to pay attention to /his/her reading and this provides active training in listening skill. Loud reading by teacher not only provides model for reading but training in active listening too.

Reading and speaking

Reading sessions improve the speaking skills too. According to Nuttall (1982), during last few years reading strategies have involved the discussion session at the end of reading which increase the speaking skill of students.

Reading and Writing

Reading skill influences the students writing skills. According to Harmer (1998), reading material such as stories, essays, articles novel etc are examples of reading text those provide model for writing, students who read more and more books their writing is more logically expressive.

READING PROBLEMS

Students at elementary and secondary level face different types of problems in reading. According to Archer et al (2003) struggling readers at elementary and secondary level lack skills in almost all areas of reading, such as, decoding, vocabulary, rate, fluency and comprehension. Some students are unable to decode the written symbols automatically

Phonemic Awareness

Some students struggle in the phonemic awareness skill. They are hardly able to make words of spoken sounds or to blend spoken parts of the word into one word. McCulloch (2001) writes that phonemic awareness is the relation between sounds and symbols of a language. And it is important to learn it not only for reading but for writing and speaking too.

Vocabulary

Large numbers of readers are in short of vocabulary that is a great hurdle in fluent reading. Hirsch (2003) says that various factors are responsible for students' problem in knowledge, of vocabulary, and students who struggle with reading have two problems related to vocabulary development. First, they have low

experience of knowing new words and secondly they have very little exposure to type of vocabulary they needed for efficient reading and overall progress in school.

Decoding

It is the process of using letter-sound correspondences to recognize words. The critical problem student's face is in decoding skill. Stanovich (1995) writes that the fundamental process for reading is word recognition. And it has strong relation with knowledge of vocabulary and comprehension. Students, who fail to decode words, fail to read a text clearly and accurately. These students make number of mistakes in reading correct English.

Fluency

Fluency refers to the ability to read smoothly and efficiently. Blum and Koskin (1991) describe fluency as a smooth, natural, accurate and expressive reading. Those students who struggle with fluency are unable to read the passage with automatic ability to read the words in connected text. **Comprehension**

Understanding the text is imperative. The final and the most critical problem in reading is the inability of the reader to understand the written text meanings. Cormer (1970) found that weakness of comprehension is mainly caused by faulty methods of processing the text. Chunking material or text presented in phrases or blocks of words when presented to poor readers, proved very effective in improving their comprehension.

Rate

One of the major problems of student reading is the slow speed of reading. Almost all students who struggle with reading tend to develop very slow pace. Hamp-Lyons (1983) says that in learning English as a foreign language or as a second language, the most common problem faced by students is slow speed of reading. According to Brown & Hurst (1983) that those students who are slow in reading, process the information slowly and due to inability to provide enough details of text their memory fail to comprehend the material.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK OF SPEED READING

Speed reading aims to develop the reading speed, accuracy and comprehension by using different techniques. It emphasizes that speed increases the learner's comprehension too. Its concept is rooted in automaticity theory, verbal efficiency theory, chunking or segmentation theory and expanding vision.

AUTOMATICITY THEORY

According to benjafield (1997 automaticity and verbal theories are based on the concept that the attention resources capacity that readers can allocate at one time is limited. Automaticity, as defined by the grabe (1991), is the ability which enables the reader to perform a task without conscious efforts and using minimum processing capacity. As the reading process involves two processes at lower level, one is the word recognition which is performed along with basic phonic and phonemic awareness abilities. At the top is the comprehension of sentences and whole text. Only when the word recognition process is fast and automatic and with minimum use of intentional resources, then with maximum use of attention resources, better comprehension can be achieved.

VERBAL EFFICIENCY THEORY

This theory, presented by perfetti (1985, 1988) is also based on automaticity in decoding process. Walyzyk (2000) writes that automaticity theory is limited to decoding ability while this theory goes further from decoding process. According to this theory at bottom process involves at first the letter identification then the words identification .it refers to speed and accuracy, by which the lower level process is performed. This theory extends automaticity from pre lexical to post-lexical process. It involves word recognition at pre-lexical phase and then the automaticity in phrasing and sentences at post-lexical phases. According to samuels (2002), it is found that adult students who are struggling in readings need to develop automaticity to become fluent reader.

CHUNKING OR SEGMENTATION THEORY

better comprehension is achieved when reader use block of words or chunking as unit of reading than single words. advocating the use of chunking in learning a second language, grabe & stoller (2002) write that along with the fast and accurate word recognition, automated phrasing

at the post lexical process is very important in achieving reading comprehension. weakness in comprehension is greatly caused by the faulty method of processing the printed material .cormer (1970) found that chunking material or text presented in blocks of words when presented, to poor readers, proved very effective in improving their comprehension.

EXPANDING EYE VISION

Cutler (1970) writes that reader' eyes move across the line of print and make two or three stops per line. Reading rate is determined by the number of stops a reader eyes make. (the fewer the stops, the faster the rates).the notion behind speed reading is the expanding the eye vision. Eyes fix on second or third word of the line and a reader can choose where to stop his eyes. Speed reading uses this concept for improving students speed by expanding the eye vision by making fewer stops per line. Fowler et al (1995) writes that proper eyes fixation is necessary because the human brain works on the information only when the eyes are still on the print. During the eyes movement, the brain cannot take in the information.

NEED FOR SPEED READING INTERVENTION

Speed reading intervention is needed in our schools because reading is a basic skill but for the last few years teachers are facing problems because of students who are weak in this skill and have not been well (Hock &Deshler (2003) maintain that teachers are facing problems due to these students who have difficulties in reading. As they are far below from their peers, they cannot keep a pace with them and the class room instruction does not prove helpful for them. They need reading intervention to overcome their problems.

According to Khand (2004), we are surrounded by the huge load of information especially in printed form .In this reading world it is very difficult to manage without the efficient reading skill. But the fact is that the proficiency of Pakistani students is very low in reading especially in English language and the syllabus and the methods of teaching are not catering for this problem.

In National Education Policies 1998 and 2009 the problem of reading deficiency has been considered important, and to improve the level of reading at elementary level, it was recommended to provide ample opportunities for reading and production of supplementary readers for students. This is all because of the faulty teaching methods. At elementary stage the students do not have a clear idea of the importance of learning English but when they are getting secondary level education and then the college education later on, they realize the importance of education in their personal career and in society in general (Ghani, 1999).When they are required to answer any question .they are hardly able to read these questions.

SPEED READING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Following are different types of speed reading strategies used by researchers to improve reading speed and comprehension.

Stretch

"Stretch" as a speed reading program includes the techniques of flash cards, sight reading and increasing the size and difficulty level of reading unit.Latorre & Kaulen (1985) say that stretch program uses variety of text and as it is based on sight reading and flash cards technique it presents the text on flash cards and improved reading speed and comprehension.

Repeated Reading

Taguchi, Takayasu, Mooch and Gorsuch (2004) favored the use of repeated reading strategy for improving reading rate of students. It was developed by Samuels (1979) to use with beginning readers. This method provides beginning readers with an opportunity to practice a very basic skill (word recognition) and helps them move from the non-accurate stage to the accurate stage and eventually to the automatic level. According to Hudson (2006), repeated reading helps the students to increase their reading speed, accuracy and reading with expression.

Repeated Oral Reading

Repeated oral reading refers to when learners read the same text many times orally until they become familiar with all the vocabulary and grammatical constructions**.** A report of the

National Reading Panel (NRP; 2000) concluded that drill and practice is essential for developing reading fluency, and two strategies that are very helpful are repeated oral reading and independent reading. Gunning (2004) stated that choral reading is a "nonthreatening way for struggling readers to practice their skills" (p. 225).

Assisted Repeated Reading and Partner Repeated Reading

Assisted repeated reading is similar with repeated reading as it shares the characteristics of rehearsal and practice. Students practice reading the same passages with partner over and over again, and thereby gaining reading speed, fluency and automaticity in reading. Partner Reading, Paired reading or peer tutoring is proved very effective not only for students with reading difficulties but for other students too (Routman, 2003). According to Norton (2007), students at elementary level are required to read with fellow students to increase reading experiences .Peer tutoring is also a type of partner reading that has shown to be highly effective. It is good, not only for the struggling reader, but for the peer student as well.

Guided Reading

According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), guided reading is a speed reading strategy in which a teacher works with the learners in small groups to enable them read the text with speed and comprehension .Guidance of teacher provided in small groups enables the students to learn according to their specific needs.

Graded Readers

Graded readers are a way of enhancing reading speed by reading extensively great amount of easy text. It has been proved as an effective strategy in developing reading fluency and acquisition of language. When students read a huge quantity of written material, they found the same language structure, vocabulary, pattern of language and combination of letters and words etc. This enables the learner to develop reading speed and comprehension (Day & Bamford, 1998).

Sight Vocabulary and Large Text Quantity

Sight vocabulary refers to those words that readers are able to recognize automatically. However, as Stanovich (1992) writes, good skill in word recognition is necessary but many other things are needed for comprehension. Grabe (2004) writes that by developing the knowledge of sight vocabulary and background knowledge readers learning rate is improved

Readers Theater

Reading Theater is an effective strategy of developing reading fluency. Norton (2007) reported that for developing fluent reading, Readers Theater has proved very much successful. In reading theater strategy, students select their role by listening the taped instruction and read in many pairs or individually. Wayne (2008) writes that struggling readers develop interest in reading as they find opportunities to work with peers in reading theater.

Text-to-Speech Software

Some researchers suggest that speech synthesizer technology may increase the reading rate of slow readers, which can ultimately aid in reading comprehension (Elkind et al., 1996). While computer programs offer different features, many highlighted texts on the monitor while the text is spoken. Users scan texts and select the speed and voice pitch at which the document is spoken. Additionally, users can choose the read text by page, paragraph, sentence, or word (Elkind et al, 1996).

Timed Reading

It involves students reading under time pressure, the purpose of which is to improve reading speed to an optimal rate that supports comprehension rather than only developing speedy readers (Walyzyk, Kelly, Meche, & Braud, 1999).

Many studies have shown that increasing the reading rate will improve reading comprehension .There are several terms used to refer the ways of helping learners to increase their reading speed. These include paced reading (Cushing-Weigle & Jensen, 1996), accelerated reading (Breznitz &Share, 1992), and class- and self-paced reading (Anderson, 1999). These all involve students reading under some degree of time pressure.

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading proved very helpful for increasing reading rate of students. During extensive reading program, students are provided a large number of reading material according to grade level and sometimes above grade level. According to Nation (2009), extensive reading use text which includes known vocabulary for the readers and they read it for pleasure. Set amount of time is given to reader to read the selected text. According to Powell (2005), the important characteristic of extensive reading is fast and fluent reading by the reader of huge amount of material which is easy and has known vocabulary. Readers are allowed to choose written material according to their capabilities to improve reading speed and comprehension

Chunking

For improving reading skills, especially reading rate, accuracy and comprehension, researchers used chunking or" segmentation of the text" technique and it proved very successful in bringing the desired changing. According to Samuels (2002), fluency in reading is possible only when the reader is able to group words into meaningful blocks or chunks. The meaningful and grammatical chunking unit play important role in reading speed and accuracy.

Speed Reading Course

A speed reading course usually consists of selected text passages with a set of questions given at the end of each passage for the assessment of comprehension. These passages have restricted vocabulary and fixed length. Chung and Nation (2006 p.198) recommended that "a speed reading course should be included in every reading class." Some researchers used speed reading courses for the development of reading skills, especially rate of reading. And these courses proved very successful in improving the reading skills of the readers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Objectives Of The Study Were:

i) To examine the effect of speed-reading intervention on reading skills.

ii) To investigate the effect of speed-reading intervention on talented students and slow learners in terms of academic achievement in the English subject.

iii) To find out the effect of speed-reading intervention on the attitude of students towards English language.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted to examine the effect of speed reading intervention on language acquisition of students at elementary level. The first step to conduct this experiment was the selection of research design. A strong experimental research design is one that has internal validity. In most experimental research designs the most effective way to achieve internal validity and eliminate rival hypotheses is to include one or more of the control techniques. One of the many control techniques that are available for the researcher is random assignment and the other is inclusion of control group. In all strong experimental groups there are at least two comparison groups: an experimental group and a control group. The researchers postulated a number of factors that affect the external and internal validity of experimental research designs. Shadish, Cook and Cambell (2002) point out eight factors which are threat to internal and external validity of research designs: history, maturation, testing, and instrumentation, and statistical regression, selection of the subjects, experimental morality and selection maturation interaction. If these factors are not controlled, they affect the research negatively. Considering these factors the pre-test ,post-test equivalent groups design was selected as Shadish, Cook and Cambell (2002) considered an strong experimental research design as it is effective in controlling the most of the threats of above mentioned factors.

R	E	=	O_1	T	O_2	E = Experimental group
R	C	=	O_3	~	O_4	

Where

R = randomly selected

C = Control group

O = Observation

T = Experimental treatment to which a group is exposed i.e. independent variable

Independent variables of the study was the treatment provided to experimental group only (speed reading intervention in the form of learning new techniques) and the dependent variable of the study was the responses of the participants (students' performance in reading skills, academic achievement and attitude towards the subject of English.)

POPULATION

The aim of the present study was to examine the effect of speed reading intervention on students' acquisition of language skills at elementary level. The population of this study was comprised of all the students at elementary level studying in public schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

SAMPLE

Female Secondary/Elementary schools of Hazara region were surveyed for feasibility of experiment. Government Girls Higher Secondary School Haripur, having condition conducive for the proposed experiment, was selected as a sample of the study. One hundred students of 8th class were randomly selected as participants of this study. On the basis of pre-test scores, 80 students were assigned to each experimental and control groups using matched random sampling technique.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

For collecting data in this study, four measuring instruments (test for reading skills (Appendix-ii), achievement test in English and attitude scale towards English were prepared by the researcher herself after extensive study of the literature under the guidance of experts. Urdu version of attitude scale was administered among the students for data collection before and after the treatment while other two instruments (reading skill test and achievement tests) were administered in English. Word correct per minute (WCPM) measure was used as a measure for reading speed of the students. This technique was used and recommended by Deno & Mirkin's (1977) and Good & Kaminski (2002). Many researchers (Mirkin, & Chiang, 1982; Espin & Foegen, 1996; Fuchs & Deno 1991; Fuchs, Fuchs, and Maxwell, 1988; Hintze, Shapiro, Conte, & Basile, 1997) considered WCPM as a reliable, and valid (having concurrent face and content validity) measure for reading speed development.

For pilot-testing, the research instruments were administrated among the students of 8th class other section of students than the selected sample. The research instruments were refined in the light from feedback of pilot testing

Content Validity

The reliability and validity of the other three instruments (reading skill test, achievement test and attitude scale) was ensured by using judgmental validation.by committee of experts

Reliability

The split-half method (odd-even items) was used to test the reliability of the tests given to sample students. The coefficient of reliability was determined through the use of spearman-brown prophecy formula, estimating reliability from the comparable halves of the pretest, which was 0.788 for reading skill test 0.738 for achievement test .For attitude scale (Cron bach s Alpha) was calculated and its value was found to be (0.731).These reliability coefficients measures were quite reasonable.

SPEED READING INTERVENTION

The researcher made an extensive review of literature on techniques used for speed reading intervention program. The researcher followed techniques presented by Cutler (1985) and Zorn (1994) translated by Kazmi (1999) in their respective books. But the researcher did not use texts which are presented in these books as they were more difficult for the grade level of students. Instead, the researcher used authentic text of text books for 8th and 9th classes. Only those techniques that are specially used for oral reading are used by the researcher along with some supplementary techniques (repeated reading and guided oral reading).

As students were divided in two equivalent groups (experimental and control group)the experimental group was provided with speed reading intervention for 50 minutes instruction per day. Speed reading intervention uses special techniques for improving speed and accuracy along comprehension of the text. Following

techniques were used by the researcher.

- Control on eye movement (window card technique along with hand technique was used by the readers to control the movements of eyes. Participant was trained to use the card along the line of written material and the eyes were made to follow the card similarly hand was use to read the sentences and the eyes followed the movement of hand. These techniques were used to control the wasteful movements of eyes such as distraction, regression and progression. Continues movements of eyes hinder the process of reading. Students were trained to focus on the written material and make fewer stops per line of the text.
- Expanding eye vision (students were trained to read more words in one glance of eyes by developing the habit of focusing on the larger area of the text. Students were trained to see more words per line and eliminate the habit of word by word reading.
- Blocks of words or chunking (the students of the experimental group were provided with the study material in daily lesson plan consisting upon the passages taken from their textbook. In the beginning passages were presented in the style that whole text was written in two words per line. Than the next passages were presented in three words per line .Next passages were presented in four words per line. Last few passages were presented in five words per line. Each passage was repeated in number of lesson plans, until the students were able to learn to read it in one glance of eye. Students were trained to eliminate the habit of word by word reading, and used the chunks or blocks of words as a unit of reading. However it was dependent upon the text, that, how much words per line could be read by the students as a unit of reading.
- Knowledge of vocabulary (vocabulary is essential for comprehension of the written material. During this study the students of experimental group were provided with list of words related to text passages. Students were provided practice to learn new words prior to learning new technique of speed reading in daily lesson plans.
- Reading rate (students of the experimental group were trained to read under time pressure. Reading rate is determined by the number of stops human eyes made per line .Students were trained to read by making few stops per line. Actual reading is done when human eyes are still. By using combination of above mentioned techniques students were trained to read with speed, accuracy and comprehension.
- These techniques were used along with the supplementary repeated reading and guided oral reading techniques for providing opportunities for students to practice new skills.

The researcher herself taught the experimental group. The students of experimental group were provided an intervention of speed reading for 14 weeks, while the students of both experimental and control group were kept studying English as a subject in their usual classes. The intervention was consisted on learning new techniques of reading for improving reading rate, accuracy and comprehension of written material.Daily lesson plans covering a variety of speed reading techniques and activities were used for teaching how to improve reading skills.

- Time 10 to 15 minutes were allocated for vocabulary practice on daily basis using word lists (of text related words).Students practiced these words before taking part in next activity.
- Time 20 to 25 minutes were allocated for learning new techniques of reading (control on eyes, reading blocks of words and expanding eye vision).Students were provided with written material papers for learning to read in new way.
- Daily teaching intervention to experimental group included model reading by the teacher, then practice by the students, reading by accelerated reader and group reading, finally 5 to 10 minute reading using time pressure. Speed reading intervention was provided to the students of experimental group while the students of control group were not provided with speed reading intervention.

DATA COLLECTION

Before starting the experiment, all the four research instruments (attitude scale, academic achievement test and reading skills test) along with WCPM were administered among sample students. After an intervention of 14 weeks, the same research instruments were again administered to the sample of study. The scores of students in both groups provided data for the study.

Scoring Procedure

For measuring students attitude towards the subject of English Likert scale was used. This scale had 30 items. It was five point scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. No judging gap was involved in this method. Each statement was assigned a numerical score ranging from 1 to 5.

The score given for each response was depended on whether the statement was positive or negative. The student who "strongly agreed "with a positive statement got the maximum score (5), and one who "strongly disagreed" with the positive response got the minimum score (1).For the attitude scale which was used in this study the scoring was as follows for positive statements: strongly agreed=5, agreed=4, disinterested=3, disagree=2 and strongly disagreed=1

The student who "strongly disagreed "with a negative statement got the maximum score (5)and the student who was "strongly agreed "with the negative statement got the minimum score(1).Scoring was as follows for the negative statements: strongly disagreed=5, disagreed=4, disinterested=3, agreed=2 and strongly agreed=1.

In this five point scale the scoring ranged from a low of 30(30*1=30) to a high of 150(30*5=150). Reading skill test was consisted upon 40 items .Each correct response is given 1 score. Total score of this test was 40.

Achievement tests include both objective and subjective type items .Total score for Achievement test was 100.

WCPM measure was scored by measuring the reading speed of the students under time pressure. Words correct per minute read by student were counted. Written material from the text books of class 8th and class 9th were taken and students were asked to read under time pressure, mistakes made by students were ticked and at the end of allocated time, correct words read by students were counted by the researcher.

DATA ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF TREATMENT ON READING SKILL

The researcher used Reading skill test for the assessment of reading skill before and after the treatment. Pre- test scores and the effect of treatment on reading skill (post test) was analyzed and interpreted in the following tables.

t-test between the means of reading skills score of experimental group and control group on pre-test

Group			N	Mean	SD	t-value	P
Control	80	23.4	5.8				
Experimental			80	23.5	5.1	0.454*	>.05

*df =158

Table above shows that calculated value of t (0.454) is less than critical value of t at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there was no significant difference between mean score of experimental group (23.5) and mean score of control group (23.4) in reading skill on pre-test. Thus students of both the experimental and control groups were almost at the same level of reading skill before the treatment.

t-test between means reading skills scores of students of experimental group and control group on post-test

Groups	N	Mean score	SD	t- value	P
Experimental	80	31.22	5.38	5.05*	< .05
Control	80	24.5	6.47		

*df =158

Table shows that the calculated value of t (5.05) is much greater than the critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there is significant difference between the mean score of students of experimental group (31.22) and mean score of students of control group (24.5) in reading skill on post- test. Thus students of experimental group outdid students of control group in reading skill test after treatment.

EFFECT OF TREATMENT ON READING SPEED

The researcher used word correct per minute (WCPM) measure for the assessment of reading speed before and after the treatment. Two types of texts were used by the researcher. First is grade level (8th class) text and second text is above grade level (9th class) text .Students' reading speed at both texts was measured before and after treatment. Pre-test scores and the effect of treatment on students' increase in reading speed for" grade level text" above grade level text" and overall reading speed(post-test) is analyzed and interpreted in the following tables.

t-test between the mean reading speed scores of students of experimental group and control group on the pre-test

Groups	No	Mean score			SD	t-value	P
		Text one	Text two	Total			
Experimental	80	75.4	57.2	66.3	21.8	0.414*	>.05
Control	80	78.9	55.9	67.4	22.9		

*df =158

Table above shows that calculated value of t (0.414) is less than critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there was no significant difference between mean scores of experimental group (66.3) and mean scores of control group (67.4) in reading speed on pre-test. Thus students of both the experimental and control groups were almost at the same level of reading speed before treatment.

t-test between mean reading speed score of students of control group and experimental group after treatment

Group	No	Mean score			SD	t-value	P
		Text one	Text two	Total			
Experimental	80	141.14	101.90	121.52	24.8	4.8613*	<.05
Control	80	84.4	65.4	74.9	29.8		

*df= 158

Table above shows that the calculated value of t (4.8613) is much greater than the critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there is significant difference between the mean reading speed scores of students of experimental group (121.52) and mean reading speed scores of students of control group (74.9) on post test. The students of experimental group did much better than students of control group in reading speed after treatment. Thus null hypothesis No 1 is rejected.

EFFECT OF TREATMENT ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The researcher used achievement test for the assessment of academic achievement of students' before and after the treatment. Pre-test scores and the effect of treatment on students' academic achievement(post-test) has been analyzed and interpreted in underlying tables.

t-test between the mean academic achievement scores of students of experimental group

and control group on pre-test

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P
Experimental	80	16.6	10.4	0.413*	> .05
Control	80	16.9	11.		

*df =158

Table shows that calculated value of t (0.413) is less than critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there was no significant difference between mean academic achievement score of experimental group (16.6) and mean academic achievement score of control group (16.9) on pre-test. Thus students of both experimental and control groups were almost at the same level of academic achievement before treatment.

t-test between mean academic achievement scores of students of control group and experimental group on posttest

Group	N	Mean scores	SD	t- value	P
Experimental	80	45.1	10.5	9.260*	< .05
Control	80	23.15	10.7		

*df=158

Table above shows that the calculated value of t (9.260) is greater than the critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there is significant difference between the mean academic achievement scores of students of experimental group (45.1) and mean academic scores of students of control group (23.15 on post-test. The null hypothesis No 2 is rejected. Thus students of experimental group out performed students of control group in academic achievement after treatment.

TREATMENT EFFECT ON ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

The researcher used three tests (achievement test, reading skill test and WCPM measure) for the assessment of students' achievement level before and after the treatment. Pre-test scores and the effect of treatment on low achievers' high achievers and average students' achievement level was analyzed and interpreted in underlying tables.

t-test of means achievement scores of students of control group and experimental group on pre-test

Group	No	Mean	SD	t- value	P
Control	80	107.775	32.775		
Experimental	80	106.025	31.11	0.2442	>.05

*df=158

Table above shows that calculated value of t (0.2442) is less than critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there was no significant difference between mean achievement level scores of experimental group (107.775) and mean achievement level scores of control group (106.025) on pre-test. Thus students of both the experimental and control groups were almost at the same level of reading skill before treatment.

t-test of mean achievement score of students of control group and experimental group on

post test

Group	No	Mean	SD	t- value	P
Control	80	122.57	38.72		
Experimental	80	197.85	32.48	6.6849	<.05

*df=158

Table above shows that calculated value of t (6.6849) is much greater than critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there was significant difference between mean achievement level score of experimental group (197.85) and mean achievement level score of control group (122.57) on post-test. Thus students of experimental group outperformed the students of control group in achievement level after treatment.

TREATMENT EFFECT ON ATTITUDE LEVEL

The researcher used attitude scale for the assessment of students' attitude towards subject of English before and after the treatment. Effect of treatment on students' attitude is analyzed and interpreted in following tables.

t-test between the mean attitude level scores of students of experimental group and control group on pre- test

Group	No	Mean	SD	t- value	P
Experimental	80	85.05	11.49	0.762	>.05
Control	80	87.52	16.99		

*df=158

Table above shows that calculated value of t (0.762) is less than critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there is no significant difference between the mean attitude score of students of experimental group (85.05) and mean attitude scores of students of control group (87.52) on pre test. Thus students of both the groups, experimental and control, were of the same attitude level before treatment

t-test between mean attitude level scores of students of experimental group and control group on post-test

Group	No	Mean	SD	t- value	P
Experimental	80	116.7	18.0		
Control	80	94.6	13.39	6.20	<.05

*df=158

Table above shows that calculated value of t (6.20) is much greater than critical value of t(1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there was significant difference between mean attitude score of students of experimental group (116.7) and mean attitude score of students of control group (94.6) on post-test. Thus students of experimental group showed much better performance than the average students of control group in attitude level after treatment.

DISCUSSION

Both the experimental and control groups were compared on the variable of achievement on pre-test. The results obtained from the statistical analysis showed that no significant difference existed between the two groups with respect to achievement in pre-test (reading skill test, word correct per minute (WCPM) measure, achievement test and attitude scale), as t-value obtained was not statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence the students of both experimental and control groups were at the same level before the treatment.

The performance of the experimental group was significantly better than that of the control group performance on post-test (reading skill test). The difference between the two means was statistically significant at 0.05 levels. The

experimental group was significantly better in reading rate too. The difference between two means is statistically significant.Thus, the null hypothesis " there is no significant difference between the mean reading skill scores of students of experimental and control after treatment" was rejected at 0.05 levels in favour of experimental group. Findings related to reading skill proficiency are in line with Lai (1993) and Masuhara et al (1996) in which students after using extensive reading as speed reading strategy improved their reading skill proficiency and reading rate. So far as the reading rate is concerned, present study

findings are in line with earlier studies conducted by Kadota, Yoshida and Yoshida (1999) and Macalister (2008) in which students after using segmentation technique of speed reading improved their reading rate much more than those who did not use it.

Experimental group outperformed the control group in academic achievement at the post-test (achievement test) after treatment .The difference between the mean scores of groups was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance . Thus, the null hypothesis that "there is no significant difference between the mean academic achievement scores of students in experimental and control group, after treatment" is rejected at 0.05 levels of significance in favour of experimental group. The findings of present study are in line with earlier studies. Bell (2001) and Iwahori (2008) conducted their studies using extensive reading technique. These previous studies showed that after receiving treatment in speed reading students improved their reading rate as well as general language proficiency.

The performance of the experimental group was significantly better than that of the control group on post-test (attitude scale) after treatment. The difference between two mean scores of groups was statistically significant at 0.05 levels of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between the mean attitude level scores of students in experimental and control group, after treatment is rejected at 0.05 level of significance in favor of experimental group. The finding of the present study is in line with the finding of earlier studies conducted by Elley & Mangubhai (1981) and Cho & Karashan (1994).Both of these studies used extensive reading strategy for improving reading rate and general language proficiency. These studies proved that after treatment students not only improve their language proficiency but develop positive attitude towards reading in English language.

To examine the effect of treatment on achievement level of the students, (is referred here where overall performance of high achievers of experimental group on post-test ((reading skill test word correct per minute (WCPM) measure and achievement test) was significantly better than that of control group .The difference between two mean achievement scores of talented students of experimental and control group was significant at 0.05 levels of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis that, "there is no significant difference between the mean academic achievements scores of talented students in experimental and control group, after treatment" is rejected at 0.05 level of significance in favor of experimental groups. The findings of present study are in line with earlier study conducted by Cromer(1970) where high achiever showed marked improvement in their performance in reading rate ,comprehension and less regression after treatment (speed reading technique named block of words or segmentation).

In case of low achievers, the difference between the means achievement score of two groups on post-test was significant. Thus, the null hypothesis that, "there is no significant difference between the mean academic achievements score of low achievers in experimental and control group, after treatment" is rejected at 0.05 levels of significance in favor of experimental groups. The findings of present study are in line with the findings of earlier studies conducted by Kadota (1982) and Taguchi (1997) where after using speed reading technique (chunking) in first study and repeated reading in second study low achievers improved their performance in reading rate and comprehension.

The overall results of the study indicate that speed reading intervention program enhanced the process of language acquisition of students at elementary level and improved students' achievement in reading in the subject of English at elementary level with higher achievement

gains for the high achievers and low achievers in experimental group. The results of the study were mostly in line with those of previous researches carried out in other cultures such as Hill (1981) and Richard (1982). The results of the present study in reading speed are in line with the findings of Macalister (2008)which showed that students " increase" in speed on grade level text transferred to above grade level text too. When students used techniques to read fast this helped them to read other text with speed too.

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