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ENGLISH READING COMPONENTS ATTAINMENT OF IX CLASS STUDENTS IN RELATION TO LOCALITY AT SECONDARY LEVEL KP

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Abstract

Human being is the most complex and dynamic creation of GOD. The current paper is descriptive in nature. Researcher wanted to sort out the status of English reading skills of male and female students at secondary level southern area of KP. There are six districts in southern areas of KP. Each district mainly comprises of three divisions. The study is descriptive in nature and was delimited to class 9 of male female students belonging to urban and rural areas. It was concluded that there is a need to focus on the reading skills of students by giving them practice through multiple techniques and phonological awareness.

Key words: Reading skills, Reading comprehension. Skimming, Scanning

Introduction

The basic aim of education is to shape a state where every individual must have the right to think and act freely. To fulfill these achievements, standards of education must be evaluated from time to time. In classrooms, creative activities must be fostered to solve all the complicated issues regarding education. Today there is a hot talk about how to motivate the students to learn and adopt good reading habit culture. Since 2008 a growing number of developing countries have highlighted the importance of reading skills in early grades students of English language .Bilal ET al (2013). Listening and reading are considered skills of passive nature. In the recent scenario, educationists across the world apprehended that reading is mandatory

component like the other three skills listening, writing and speaking. Reading is not a simple skill but various psychological, physical and social elements are contributing in its understanding. Unluckily our educational institution do not play a practical role in enhancing the reading skills of the learner. This ground reality presents a very dismal picture about the present scenario of educational institution. The 21st century is the century of reading and the world has taken the shape of global village. In this global scenario, in the highly developed means of communication and transport, ideas go faster all over the world. There is severe need of polishing the reading skills of the learners in order to update them with the world knowledge. Importance of reading skills plays the function of a bridge to understand the different nations of the world and this reality cannot be challenged Farooq (2012). Besides all modes of communication, reading has a prominent place in English Language skills. Reading is the mode to comprehend the written messages.

Reading skills:

Reading creates a strong interaction and contact between the mind of writer and reader (Nuttal, 2002). The style how the reader wants to convey the feelings, thoughts and intended messages to the audience. Pang (2003) communicated that reading includes all the printed text material along comprehension. Word recognition and comprehension are two major process of reading skills.

Word recognition is the procedure and practice in which the written text material resembles the spoken language. Effective reading enables the reader to identify the word. This relies on the nature of type of letters, words shape and range of learners' experience. Whereas comprehension depends on

- Mechanical activity which consists of decoding or deciphering the words, sentences and paragraphs on the page. The brain receives signals from the eye. There is a basically visual task on this mechanical level.
- Cognitive task in which the visual information is interpreted, through which the reader seeks to read for meaning and purpose of the writer.

Finally the term reading refers to the immediate as well as instant acknowledgment of several printed symbols. Thus reading is the understanding about all the ideas and information well transferred and grasped. Reader tries to make visual form of information as soon as he interacts with the provided printed written material. Just receiving the text material is not enough, rather understanding the material is important. Klinger (2007).

English language as an Instrument:

In one of the study reflected by Abdul Ghafoor, Sareena, Edutracks, June, (2007) communicated that English Language is truly symbolic means of communication. In modern era, English language is used as an instrument to

communicate and inform the activities .It is a skill oriented activity in schools. The foremost aim of reading English language is to empower the child to comprehend and express the language properly. Following four phases are very important to learn language.

- Semantic phase deals with the understanding aspect of words sentences to construct the sentence.
- Phonetic phase deals with the pronunciation and spelling of words.
- Graphic phase helps in the writing structure of language

Phonetic cum graphic phase helps to modify the literacy and linguistic aspect. Moreover it tells the learner how to read in English language. Tells about the proficiency level. Writing practice is drilled as well as enables the pupil to understand the English language.

Understanding the Print text:

The paramount responsibility of a teacher in the classroom is to impart, instruct and be fluent in the speaking of English language Expert teacher observes the activities of learner that how he pronounces the words correctly by giving him reading passages. Talking about phonetics in teaching English, phonetics knowledge is important to be expert in reading .The learner only learn the English reading only by imitating the pronunciation of teacher or the mode of teacher style Thus phonological awareness is an essential component in reading skills. Rahman (2006) emphasized on polishing reading skills for identification and understanding of the written material. This activity covers thought and awareness both; a reader applies various strategies for understanding contextual and grammatical knowledge and vocabulary. Perfetti, Landi and Oakhill (2005) commented that weak word recognition power always lead to weak grip on comprehension. Dekeyser (2007) reflected that the utilization of the reading techniques are importance to enhance and understand the text.

1. The four reading techniques includes the concerns i.e. how to skim the material, in what way the material will be scan, where to practice loud and silent reading . These questions are important in order to develop fluency in reading the text. A proficient reader co-ordinate a number of skills. The teacher must read fluently with command on the subject matter. To attain this purpose the learner is practiced the following five types of reading: Skimming is done to get the central idea of the text. Aslam (2008) commented that a reader frames an overall impression of the text during the process of skimming and theme of the text is derived. Skimming is very useful practice. Reading quickly to get an overall idea of the subject matter is called skimming. Procedure to skim the text is to Preview, Overview and survey the printed text.
2. Scanning involves looking particular information. Keep in mind the specific information to be located. Move your eyes as quickly as possible down the page to find the clues. This procedure trains the student to think of clues.

Dekeyser (2007) concluded that scanning is carried out by the reader to get specific information; an answer is searched out of a known question. Nahrwold (2005) talked that intensive reading is done for accuracy. This process involves a deep and thorough understanding of a text whereas extensive reading is done for fluency and usually longer texts are considered for reading purpose.

3. Comprehensive Reading helps the learner to understand the vocabulary, sentence comprehension, paragraph analysis.
4. Critical Reading is the best reading. It enables the reader to distinguish facts from opinion and draw inferences from what is presented.
5. SQ3R Formula: This practice is used by the teacher while dealing long passages. The formula stands for; S----- survey, Q-----Question, 3R----- Reading, Review ,Recall

Teaching of Reading elements:

Pinnel (2008) commented that reading process covers five basic components i.e. phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. The phoneme is a slightest unit of speech of sound which a word carries and there are 44 phonemes in English language which a reader should know. Rauth & Staurt (2008) talking on phoneme awareness that every word has some distinct sound e.g. fan is made up of three sounds i.e. /f.a.n/. Pinnel (2008) talks in this regard that phonics is the study of the relationship between a specific letter and its sounds and every language presents a systematic relation between the text and spoken symbols. Phonics makes the reader capable of identifying sounds of every letter and associates it with its symbols and this active reading process takes place. Fluency is the accurate, rapid oral reading expression of language and a reader with strong fluency power can read a text easily and effectively (Pilkulski and Chard (2005)).The vocabulary is one of the strong components of reading and it is the knowledge of word and its meaning and one can say that it is the soul of language and ineffective communication occurs if the vocabulary is not updated and enriched. A man with strong knowledge of words, his communication will be more effective (Diamond, Linda and Gutlohn, 2006). Pressley ET all (2001) focuses on comprehension for effective communication and he calls it interaction of a reader with the text. Elliott (2010) that competency is needed for academic achievement and competent readers are expected to question, calculate, solve problems and think critically. Wong (2007) defined competency that it is the skill of a reader to pronounce correctly and express well and it is the major skill that is desired for completion of the task.

Developing the Reading Skills:

Reading skill becomes complex with the passage of time, much of the early reading work may be done with the help of simple material and techniques. Simple material needs to be provided to the children at early stage in order to understand it easily. The child may be given the reading material with the familiar words and acquainted sentence pattern. Children should not be made confuse by giving them the unknown words with complicated sentence structure. Let the child gain confidence by learning to read those words and sentences whose meaning he already knows. “The work of associating written forms with their corresponding spoken forms and so with their meaning is quite enough for the present. This is essential first step towards fluent reading with understanding”. Danielson (2003)

Their spoken language needs to be wide enough to cover many of the common words and ideas which they will meet later in a printed form. Without such a background of spoken language there is the chance that the printed symbols will have only an artificial meaning for some pupils? The printed word must ‘tell something to the child’; it must unfold information that he wants to hear that provides pleasure and incentive for him.

Foundation of Reading:

In this stage, teacher begins by teaching structures and vocabulary till the foundation for reading. Moore (2003) stated that variety of techniques and aids can be provided so that situation develops which demand the use of language. Here are some techniques which plays an important role to enhance the reading skills.

- Flash card which includes word cards, sentence cards, pictures card. The reading cards may be word cards or sentence cards. The cards should contain only those simple words and sentences that the children have learnt in their lessons of speech. The card may be displayed on the black board or on the table or on the flannel board or on the walls. The card may be used thus. Two cards are taken. On one card is written the word to be read or taught, on the other appears the picture of the object for which the word stands.
- Picture captions the use of picture books and picture with simple captions will do much to mould the initial stages of an understanding attitude towards books. Educated and good parents can produce most amazing vocabulary development in their children in such environment.
- Language experience Approach: This is one of the most effective ways of introducing pupils to reading situation is through the interest of drawing and painting. If a child is not good at drawing and painting, he can incorporate the learning of writing with the learning of reading.
- Use of blackboard: The blackboard can be used to enhance the reading skills. Teacher writes different words on the board like Pen, Chair, and Bag etcand makes a reading model for learners. The children repeats the words after the

reading of teacher so that the children should have association with the words. Repetition helps children in fixing these words in the memory of learner.

- The use of word building and sentence building cards is a good technique to improve the reading of students. Different words are written on card e.g. Table –Lamp, Playing, Walking. These cards are mixed together and placed on the table. The teacher writes a word on the board and read it loudly for the student. The student repeats the word and select the word building card from the table where the cards are mixed.
- Substitution tables is a good device for the visual reinforcement. Simple substitution tables using the known content words and structures can be prepared by the teacher and the student is asked to read sentences in groups from the table.
- Reading games Multiple games like Bingo, Letter game, humorous situation can play effective role in creating interest towards reading.

Teaching Reading Comprehension:

Reader who has enriched vocabulary, strong conceptual knowledge, reading habits of multiple texts enables the reader to understand the written material. Multiple strategies can be adopted by the teacher to make the learner able to understand the print material. Brown (2000) was of the view that if we want to make the reading process active following strategies must be adopted as well as applied in classroom.

Recognizing the Purpose of Reading

- Use of graphemes guidelines and patterns
- Efficient use of reading techniques
- Skim the prominent idea in print text provided
- Scan the text to conclude some specific information
- Practice of semantic mapping
- Guess the meaning and grammatical relationship

Principles of Teaching Reading:

The principles of reading cannot be applied to all children. Some children are well prepared to receive the printed material in English While others are to be prepared for the task. The English teacher has an important and prominent place in society. His role is as an initiator. He should keep in mind the individual differences both psychological and social. Linguists are of the opinion that beginning to read is nothing but a transfer stage from auditory signs to visual signs.

In the words of Richards and Renandya (2002), strong reading comprehension skills assist the learners in all modes of life. To decrease difficulties in studying English, an English teacher must apply multiple activities like doing, role play,

playing guess, using group work, singing a song, laughing with the learners and many more activities. Stimulating task can be applied by the teacher to try out language by using fluency exercises, assignments regarding outdoors, debates and materials to try out the language. Need to build the self-confidence level of learner is main factor which influences the success of a student. Promotion of cooperative learning is essential to enhance the reading skills. Students should be encouraged by doing rapid free writing, reading passages, extracting the main idea from the text.

Objectives of the study:

- To compare the attainment of male learner and female learner English reading skill in urban areas of Southern Districts.
- To compare the attainment of male learner and female learner English reading skills located in rural areas of Southern Districts.
- To explore the learner performance in English reading skill of English across the divisions.

Hypotheses

- There is no statistical significant difference between urban male and female students' performance towards reading skill of English.
- There is no statistical significant difference between rural male and female students performance about reading skill of English.
- There is no statistical significant difference among students performance about reading skill of English in respect of their divisions.

Methodology

Researcher in this particular paper wanted to sort out the status of reading English skills by constructing a comparative study of male and female learners studying in 9th class level in southern regions located at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The paper is descriptive in nature. The Southern area of KP is divided into three divisions. Each division mainly comprises of two districts. The chief focus of the research paper was to measure the competency level of male & female students in English reading skills from Urban & rural schoolchildren reading at secondary level in three divisions of southern area. Correspondingly, the performance of students across the division in their reading skill of English was also compared. An intended sample size of 379 male and female participants from three divisions of secondary school were randomly selected. Reading test was developed by the researcher for the current paper. Furthermore, Cronbach alpha the utmost apposite reliability index was used to measure the internal consistency of the items. The researcher collected primary data itself by using a valid and reliable reading test. Students Reading skill of English across the locality and divisions were tested through running independent sample t-test and ANOVA.

Table 1 **Variation in Male urban and female urban pupil’s achievements in Reading Skill of English**

Divisions	Urban	N	Mean	Sd	df	t-value	Sig
Division I	Male	32	13.1	1.47	62	-2.42	.018
	Female	32	13.9	1.53			
Division II	Male	32	10.4	.837	62	3.44	.001
	Female	32	9.5	1.18			
Division III	Male	32	11.8	1.25	62	2.28	.026
	Female	32	11.0	1.34			

Table 1 shows the comparison of urban male and female students towards reading skill of English across the divisions. All three divisions’ male and female students’ shows statistical significant variation in their reading score as p value .018, .001 and .026 respectively which are less than alpha value 0.05.

Table 2 **Variation performance in Rural Male and Rural Female learners about Reading skill of English.**

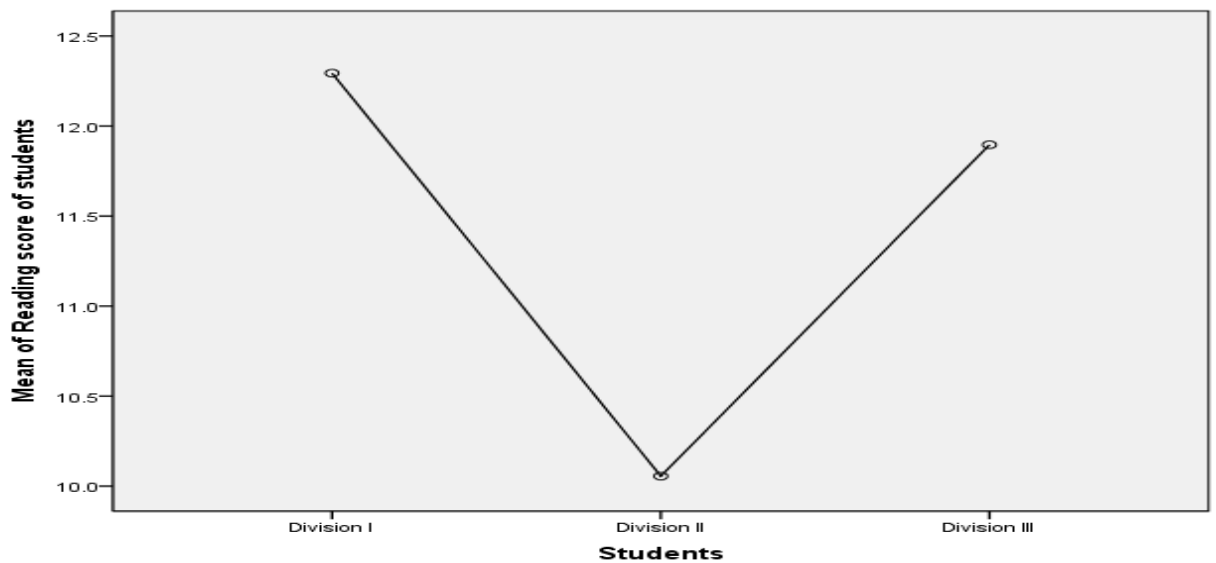
Divisions	Rural	N	Mean	Sd	df	t-value	Sig
Division I	Male	32	10.7	1.36	61	-2.04	.045
	Female	31	11.3	1.08			

Division II	Male	31	10.6	1.36	60	2.86	.006
	Female	31	9.6	1.35			
Division III	Male	31	13.0	1.65	60	-2.90	.005
	Female	31	11.7	1.76			

Table 2 indicates the comparison of rural male and female students towards reading skill of English across the divisions. All three divisions' male and female students' shows statistical significant variation in their reading score as p value .045, .006 and .005 respectively which are less than alpha value 0.05.

Table 3 Male and Female students Performance difference in Reading Skill of English across the Divisions

	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between Groups	359.05	2	179.52		
Within Groups	952.39	377	2.54	70.49	.00
Total	1311.44	379			



It is observed from the table 3 that p value less than alpha value 0.05, so we can conclude that there is statistical significant difference among divisions. The above graph shows that the division I and III students are performing better in their reading

skill than division II students. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

Miller (2007) reflected in his study that the term gender denotes the social roles and characteristics of males and females. It has been observed in research studies that gender learning identity highpoints the intellectual activities. The feature present in males and females offer a healthier interpreter in motivating the reading skills. Conversely contradictory research findings are found in male and female learners. The reports of Alexandar & Jelton 2000 supports our study that females are better in reading comprehension as compared to males. Division I female performance in reading skills is good than males. Current study supports and are in accordance with Miller (1997) that reading activity is better in females as compared to males. Furthermore Meece 2006 concluded in her studies that males are active in mathematics, physics, engineering and other science subjects as compared to girls. This finding supports our study that in our division I female learner are better than division II & III. The study corroborate with the reports reflected by Pajarees and Valiante (2001) that substantial gender differences in reading performance of motivation can be more found in reviewing the orientation session on gender. Females are better in reading skills as compared to males Marinak (2010).

Conclusion

It is concluded that urban female students of division I showing better interest in their reading score than male students while the urban male students of divisions II and III are putting their best potential in their reading skill than female students. Similarly the same case is happening in the rural areas of three divisions. The female students of division I are performing better in their reading skill of English in rural area while the male students of divisions II and III are showing high interest than female students in their reading skill of English. Further concluded that, across the divisions the division I and III students are putting their best potential in their reading skill of English while the division II students are showing less interest in their reading skill of English than I and III divisions' students. Researcher observed the low performance of female students in divisions II and III is due to gender discrimination because there is strict environment for female students in these two divisions. Therefore it is highly recommended that proper seminar and symposium on gender discrimination may be organized to aware the parents that equal opportunity should be given to female students in these two divisions.

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