

Received : 10 July 2024, Accepted: 05 September 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9i2.69>

EFFECT OF PQ4R STRATEGY ON READING COMPREHENSION OF SLOW LEARNERS' IN ENGLISH SUBJECT AT SECONDARY LEVEL

1. Dr. Muhammad Shuaib dr.shuaib1983@gmail.com
2. Dr. Noor Muhammad noormk72@gmail.com
3. Tehlel tehlelktk68@gmail.com
4. Ehsan Ellahi ehsanqureshi299@gmail.com
5. Rahmat Hussain rahmathussain2016@gmail.com
6. Fehmina Anjum fanjum1989@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

PQ4R is an acronym which stands for Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite and Review. This is a learning strategy both for teachers and students. It also helps old and young as well as slow learners. The main objective of the study was to investigate the effect of PQ4R strategy on slow learners' Reading comprehension. To achieve the above objective null hypothesis was tested. Govt. High School No.1 for boys Tordher Swabi was selected for the experiment through convenient sampling. A sample of 20 slow learners was selected from 9th class students of the sampled school. The instrument developed for the collection of data was Reading comprehension pre and post-tests. Pre-experimental one group pre-test, post-test design was used. The students were pre-tested and then exposed to six weeks treatment. They were taught through PQ4R strategy. After the completion of treatment the students were post-tested. For the analysis of data t-test at 0.05 significance level was used. Data analysis revealed that the experimental group scored significantly better on post-test than pre-test in the areas of reading comprehension, Thus PQ4R strategy proved to be effective in increasing slow learners' reading comprehension. On the basis of findings, it was recommended that English teachers should use PQ4R strategy. For this purpose, English teachers need to be properly trained. It was also recommended that curriculum designer should also consider PQ4R strategy.

Keywords: PQ4R, Reading Comprehension, English language, slow learners.

INTRODUCTION

English is the language of world communities, advance learning and better career opportunities. It should therefore reach to the common people of Pakistan irrespective of their creed, culture and religion for their personal growth, professional and economic advancement, (Govt. of Pakistan, 2006). English language has got the status of global and international

language. It is the lingua franca-a language used by the non-native speakers for communication, (Warschaur, 2000).

Learning any language involves the learning of basics skills of language. The purpose of teaching English is to develop these four main skills that are Reading, writing, listening and speaking. Reading is the basic and most important skill of all academic disciplines (White, 2004).

Reading involves observing the printed or written words or symbols and understanding meaning. Similarly it is the process of drawing information with background information in order to help in comprehension, (Mullis et al. 2011).

According to Gettinger, (2003), Reading is a complex undertaking, it is an interactive process involving interplay of several thought process at the same time making use of our incredibly complex brain.

The students of secondary level have to read extensively to get high achievement. But board result shows that students' achievement in English subjects is lower than other subjects. Achievement in any subject and especially in English subject is mostly based on good reading comprehension (Anmarkrud and Braten, 2009).But majority of English students face difficulties in reading comprehension which effect their overall academic achievement in English subject.

Comprehension is the process by which we construct meaning from incoming information. We may transmit information by various means such as signs, symbols or graphics, we mostly use words (Kintsch, 1994).Similarly comprehension means understanding written text that is extracting the required information.

Reading comprehension is concerned with the proper understanding of the texts. Good reading comprehension skills can enhanced students' achievement,(Szeto,2010). But mostly weak and slow learners are mostly ignored in the class and they failed to show satisfactory performance.

SLOW LEARNERS

Over the years, slow learners have been labelled with different names like dull, poor achievers, underperformer, borderline, mentally handicapped, gray-area children, at-risk, and struggling learners (Kaznowski 2004). Slow learners try to work up to their potential but fail to do so and perform below their colleagues. They have considerable problems in learning. They do not fulfil the criteria to be considered as special students. Slow learners are the students having below average mental abilities that are not handicapped but fail to cope with the normal required academic demands of regular classes. However, slow learners differ from learning disability students (Okey 2007).

PQ4R STRATEGY

PQ4R strategy was proposed by Thomas, E. L., & Robinson, H. A. in 1972 in their book "Improving reading in every class" A sourcebook for teachers .

PQ4R stand for six steps to be involved when you read through preview, question, read, reflect, recite and review. These activities are shaped to enhance the depth to which you possess and transform the information you read (Bernstein, 2008).

PQ4R strategy is a strategy that facilitates students to emphasize on organizing knowledge and making it effective, (Slavin, 1997). Further, Slavin (1997) also states that PQ4R is one of the popular strategies for enabling the students comprehend and retain what they read. Besides, Pehofer and Roy (2003) state that PQ4R strategy is an efficient strategy to facilitate comprehending of texts. It means that students have to give understanding on text that they read.

The basis for study technique such as the PQ4R method which teach readers to ask answer, and reflect on questions during the course of their reading (Dunn, 2006).

PQ4R goes like preview, question, read, reflect, recite and review. PQ4R is process that emphasize on students' meaningful processing and understanding of information and exists in other efficient strategies (Slavin, 2007).

Step 1: PREVIEW

The first step of PQ4R strategy is Preview. It consists of skimming and scanning a text or learns material to get an idea of what the writing is all about and how it is organized. Students conduct this by studying all the main ideas and sub-ideas in the project as well as the review, if there is one. They also look at all, charts, tables, maps, and graphs and read their captions.

This step involves a quick overview which helps to establish intellectual aspects in which readers adjust the text. It requires utilizing time to go through the whole unit before starting to study it in detail, (Butcher, 2002). Seiman (2010) elaborates that: during preview, students require to hurriedly outline the passage and comprehend the main points and information of the whole structure. The students will scan the text book chapters to observe the whole structure, figure out which reading strategy will be effective depends on titles and viewing the overall picture of the lessons or chapters to know them.

STEP 2: QUESTION

Sobkowiaka (2001) says that the second step, "question, assists the reader concentrate on the text or paragraph and make questions about the text.

This step consists of making questions (Wh questions) in which the main headings and sub-headings are converted into questions. It keeps the students focused, motivated and curious. It makes the reader think and gives purpose to his/her reading. The technique of making question and answering lies at the heart of concept formation and comprehension (Squires, 2003).

Step 3: READ

According to Rynolds, (1996) the second step of PQ4R strategy which is reading is central for reading and thinking process. When questions are framed in PQ4R strategy, then the whole material should be read to answer the questions". Boud (1999) is the view that one of the essential skills of effective learning is the skill to read. Johri (2007) suggest that the teacher must teach the students to understand and integrate what they read to the previous knowledge.

During reading step, reader can read the passage extensively and frequently for thorough understanding, remembering and to get an idea of the lesson or chapter. Then concentration should be on key points, main and sub headings, new vocabulary, unusual terms, concepts or idea to understand and clear the concept. The process of reading, rereading and silent and loud, intensive and extensive reading should be repeated both by the teacher and the students (Reynolds, 1996).

Step 4: REFLECT

Reflection is the third step of pq4r strategy which is essential and effective to be used during the process of reading. Reflection is the process of thinking about the material just read. It involves processing new information and linking it the already existing knowledge for proper understanding.

Sobkowiaka (2001) endorsed the statement that “during reading the reader should ponder on the text by involving his personal experiences and past knowledge for the understanding of new knowledge”. Because the main purpose of reflecting is to understand what is reflecting on. Parsons et al., (2001) is also support the idea of thinking about what is being read and relating the new ideas with the existing ideas.

STEP 5: RECITE

According to Kiewra (2002) “The PQ4R is the strategy of learning written passages or texts. Amongst the four R’s is “recite”, which means repetition of information”. And repetition is, actually, a reliable method of getting mastery over the text to be taught (Butcher, 2002). In this process, reader check and control their own understanding by re-examining and reading aloud what they read from the text, (Reynolds, 1996).

When the readers read the heading and sub-heading and thoroughly go through the text silently, ten they should read the text aloud in their own words and try to answer the questions. The text is read time and again because repetition keeps the information alive. If students failed to answer the question already formulated then they should reread. The important information is retained by using recitation and recalling both in writings and orally reading, (Mangal, 2005).

STEP 6: REVIEW

The students mostly forget the learning materials within 24 hours, the students should review the content what they studied, (Reynolds, 1996). During review the answer of all the questions are given. The review consists of scanning the main and sub headings again reading loudly answer the questions. If questions are not answered the material should be read again. Frequently reviewing the material performs better on tests. Review is a crucial element during reading, as it focuses to enhance cognitive awareness of the procedures, the material and the response of the readers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The achievement of students in English subject at secondary level is mostly poor. The reason of poor achievement may be poor reading comprehension. Most of the English teachers use traditional and teacher centered methods to teach English at secondary level which cannot improve reading comprehension of the students in general and slow learners in particular. Therefore PQ4R strategy was used to investigate its effect on slow learners’ reading comprehension.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to investigate the effect of PQ4R strategy on slow learners’ Reading comprehension.

To achieve the above objective null hypothesis was tested. .

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of the study will have significant effects on the teaching strategies being adopted by the classroom teachers and curriculum planners. This may also help the English subject teachers to plan individualized learning techniques to improve the academic performance of slow learners in English subject.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The Effect of PQ4R strategy on reading Comprehension of slow learners in English at secondary level” was an experimental study. The pre-experimental one group pre-test and post-test research design was used in this study.

Population

The population of the study was all the 398,124 male students of government secondary schools in KPK, working under the provincial directorate of education KPK,(EMIS, 2015).

Sample

A Sample of 20 slow learners of 9th class studying English in Government High school No.1 Tordher Swabi were selected as subjects of the study. The sampled students were selected on the basis of their academic achievement of their last three years score in English subject.

Research Instrument and procedure

In order to construct a valid and reliable teacher made test, the researcher studied thoroughly the first two lessons of “English” of 9th grade. For assessing the academic achievement in the area of reading comprehension of the sample students, the researcher constructed pre-test and post-test in order to measure students reading comprehension before the treatment and after the treatment. Pre-test and post-test were based on the first and second lessons of the prescribed English textbook of 9th class. These two lessons were “The life of the holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W)” and “Three Days to see.”

The researcher thoroughly studied literatures, books and visited different websites for the development of test items. Further, valuable consultation was taken from honorable supervisor, supervisory committee and five English subject specialists for the construction of both pre and post reading comprehension test. The nature and steps of the PQ4R strategy were also considered during development of both the tests.

Both the tests consisted of 40 items. Both the tests included short answer questions, Multiple choice questions, True and false (Alternative response items) and fill in the blanks items (Completion form). Both the tests were properly validated by five English subject specialists and items difficulties were found out. The pretest and post-test were pilot tested on 10 students and were found reliable.

Pretest and Post-test were the same in terms of numbers of items, difficulty level, time of the test and level of comprehension measured, but items were not the same.

Validity

Both the pre and post reading comprehension tests were validated by the supervisory committee and five English subject specialists. Content validity of both the tests was measured and approved by the supervisory committee and English subject specialists. The items of both the tests were found according to the content of the prescribed two lessons of English textbook class 9th.

Reliability of Pre-test and Post-test

In order to develop the reliable tests, the reliability of the pre-test and post-test was determined by using split-half method. In split-half method a single test is taken and then the test is divided into two equal halves for scoring purposes. The tests were divided on the basis of odd and even questions. Odd questions were considered as test A and even questions were considered as Test B. The test was administered to ten students of class 9th (section D) in GHS No1 Tordher Swabi who did not form sample of the study. The researcher used Pearson 'r' formula to calculate reliability for the whole test.

The correlation coefficient for Pre-test was found as 0.74 and for post-test 0.78 respectively. According to (Gay, 2010), a test is considered highly reliable if its correlation coefficient is found close to 1.00, so both the tests were found reliable.

Procedure

After the selection of sample, all the twenty sampled slow learners were placed in experimental group. All the students were pretested in reading comprehension. The experimental group was exposed to treatment and was taught through PQ4R strategy. The detail of the procedures adopted by the researcher are given below.

Selection of the Content

The first and second lessons from English textbook class 9th were selected as the content which was taught through PQ4R during experiment. The title of the first lesson was The Life of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) and the second lesson was "Three days to see. Both the lessons were consisted of twelve paragraphs each which made the total paragraphs twenty four.

Lesson Planning

Proper lesson plans were made for each class according the steps of PQ4R strategy. Separate lesson plans were made for each chapter.

Training in PQ4R

The experimental group and the teacher who were to teach them were given four days training before the experiment. The purpose of the training was to make the students and teacher familiar with this new strategy and prepare them for the experiment. On first day of the training the students were given an introduction to PQ4R strategy and its six steps. The nature, activities and purpose of each step were properly explained to them. On day 2nd and 3rd the students were taught one paragraph each day by applying PQ4R strategy. On day 4th and last day of the training the students were assessed in all the steps of PQ4R in order to find out whether the students had learned all the steps or not. The result showed that all the students learnt all the steps up to satisfactory level. The training started on 1st January and ended on 4th January 2015. Now the students were ready for the treatment.

Duration of the Treatment

The total duration of the treatment was six weeks. The treatment was started on 5th January 2015 and ended on 13th February 2015. Classes were arranged four days a week from Monday to Thursday. The duration of the class was 50 minutes. The total time duration of the treatment was 20 hours.

Procedure of Treatment

A separate classroom was arranged in which the class was held each day during experiment. For group activities during experiment all the 20 sampled students were divided into five groups, each group consisted of four students. The groups and their members were changed after each week. Each and every group was assigned new tasks/ activities as required in different

steps during experiment. Activities were arranged according to the nature and steps of PQ4R strategy

Data Analysis

The collected data were fed into the “*statistical package for social sciences*” (SPSS 16 version) program. For this purpose, data analysis was done by applying Paired sample one-way t-test.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Paired sampled t-test was used for the analysis of the data obtained about students reading comprehension through pre-test and post-test. Detail of the complete analysis is hereby given.

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean score of experimental group on pre-test and post-test with respect to Reading Comprehension

Table: Reading Comprehension

Group	Observations/ Tests	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value		p-value	
						Table value	Calculated value	Sig Value	Calculated value
Experimental	PRETEST	20	12.75	2.552	19	1.729	7.266	0.05	0.00
	POSTTEST	20	18.05	5.605					

Significance level = 0.05

As the above table shows that the calculated t value was found to be 7.266 which was higher than the table value at 0.05 level therefore Ho1 is rejected and alternative is accepted. The result was further verified by p-value, where p significance value (0.00) was found to be less than the p tabulated value. In this way PQ4R strategy was proved be effective with respect to reading comprehension.

DISCUSSION

When the experimental group was analyzed with respect to achievement in reading comprehension on pre-test and post-test, there was significant difference found between the mean score at (0.05). That’s why the null hypothesis (H01) was rejected. PQ4R strategy was found to be effective in improving reading comprehension of the students.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were made on the basis of statistical analysis and findings of this study:

It was concluded that slow learners taught through PQ4R strategy showed better score on reading comprehension post-test than the pre-test which proved PQ4R strategy effective in increasing slow learners reading comprehension.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The below recommendations have been made on the basis of conclusions and discussion:

The results of the study proved PQ4R strategy to be effective in improving slow learners' reading comprehension. It is therefore recommended for the English teachers to use this strategy for increasing students' achievement in English subjects. Keeping in view the effectiveness of PQ4R strategy it is recommended to curriculum Developers consider this strategy while designing the curriculum for English subject at secondary level. PQ4R strategy should be recommended for the English teachers and in-service training should be given to English teachers in PQ4R through the institutions like DCTE, PITE and RITE.

REFERENCES

- Anmarkund and Braton, (2008).*Learning and individual differences, Article for Motivation*. London, Willson press,
- Butcher, P.A. (2002) "*Reading and Study Skills*", New York, McGraw Hill,
- Bernstein A. (2008), "*Exploring psychology*" USA Houghtin mifflin Company,
- Boud, D. (1999). "*Reflection: Turning experience into Learning*", New York Nichols Publishing,
- Dunn, S. Dana. (2006). "*Best Practices for Teaching Introduction to psychology*", Francis: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates,
- EMIS. (2014). "*Annual Statistical Report of Government Schools*", Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Elementary & Secondary Education Department.
- Gay, L.R. (2010), "*Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Application*", (6th ed.) NJ, Prentice Hall inc. Pearson Education. pp. 234-236.
- Gettinger, T. (2003), "*Contributions of Study Skills to academic Competence*", School Psychology Review,
- Govt. of Pakistan, (2006) "*National Curriculum for English Grade I to XII*", Islamabad Ministry of education.
- Johri, P.K. (2007), "*Educational Psychology*", New Delhi, India SBS Publishers, .
- Kaznowski, K. (2004), "*Slow learners: Are educators leaving them behind?*", National Association of Secondary School Principals, NASSP Bulletin.
- Kiewra, K.A. (2002) "*How classroom teachers can help students learn and teach them how to learn, theory into practice, Becoming a self regulated learner*", Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Taylor and Francis Group,
- Kintsch, (1994). *Text comprehension, memory and Learning*", American Psychologist Willson Press.
- Mangal, S.K. (2005) "*Advanced Educational Psychology*. New Delhi, Prentice Hall.
- Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M. O., Ruddock, G. J., O'Sullivan, C. Y., and Preuschoff. C. (2011). TIMSS 2011 Assessment Frameworks. *Chestnut Hill, Boston*.
- Okey, A. (2007) "*Educating Children with Learning Disabilities in Africa. Learning Disabilities Research Practice*", M.J Publisher.

Parsons, R. D., Lewis, S. H. & Sardo, D. B. (2001), "*Educational Psychology A Practitioner Researcher Model of Teaching*" Australia, Wadsworth press.

Pehofer, Johan and RoyWilliam.,(2003) "*New Media and Teacher Education*", ITE Conference New York

Rayan,K., "*Those who can teach,*" Boston, Houghton Mifflin, , "Boston (10th ed),(2004).

Reddy, M. "*Educational Psychology*", New Delhi Maxford Books (2006).

Reynolds,J.A.(1996), "*College Success Study Strategies and Skills*", Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

Seimon,L.A.(2010)., "*Strategies for Improving Comprehension among College Students. Department of Educational Psychology*", *University of Nevada, Las Vegas.*

Slavin,R.E(1997). "*Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice*", Fifth Edition. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon Publisher,

Sobkowiaka,W.(2001) "*Application of Computer Assisted Language Learning in theDevelopment of Reading Comprehension Skills*", Retrieved Aug. 30, 2010.

Squires,G.,(2003). "*Managing your Learning; Teaching and learning*", Routledge London,

Szeto,J., (2010). "*How to Improve vocabulary and Comprehension with Reading, Share Teachers And students Actualized A achievement*", Taylor & Francis Group,

Thomas, E. L., & Robinson, H. A. (1972). "*Improving reading in every class: A sourcebook for teachers*", Boston, Allyn & Bacon,

Warschaur M.(2000), "*Introduction: Theory and Practice of Network-based language teaching*", Cambridge University Press.

White,(2004), "*Teaching Of English Skills,*" McGraw Hills.