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The effectiveness of reading techniques on college students of Rajouri, Darhal and Thannamandi

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the usage of reading methods by first-year undergraduate students and how it influences their reading comprehension capacity. It also investigates the connection between reading methods and reading comprehension. The data were collected from a questionnaire and reading passages. The statistical techniques used were the mean value and standard deviation. The total mean of the pre-test was 26.06, whereas the mean of the post-test was 27.02. There is a discrepancy of 0.96. The pre-test result of Urdu medium students was 22.68, whereas English medium students scored 29.25. There is a 6.57 difference. In the post-test, Urdu medium students had a mean of 23.28, whereas English medium students had 36.75. Again, there is a difference of 13.47.

Keywords: Reading strategies, reading comprehension, English reading, reading processes

Introduction

Students with their poor reading scores need to use various strategies to help them in the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information ^[1, 2]. Therefore, reading strategies are assumed to be important for students reading comprehension and the reading strategies equip the students with the skills of how to handle their reading effectively. Research reveals that good readers are actively involved with the text and they are aware of processes they use to understand while they read. Teachers can help students improve their reading comprehension through reading strategies. Reading strategies are purposeful means of comprehending the author's message ^[3]. They are believed to influence readers in adjusting their reading behaviour to work on text difficulty, task demands and other contextual variables. Adams ^[4] identified the types of reading strategies as follows:

Skimming

Skimming is a reading technique for speed reading. The purpose of skimming is to get an overview of the organization of the text and its main idea from a passage in a book. To skim a passage, the readers read through the passage quickly and skips the details. They read the first sentence of each paragraph. Each paragraph usually contains a topic sentence which states the main idea. McWhorter ^[5] suggests a topic sentence can appear differently within a paragraph. The most common location of a topic sentence appears in the first sentence of the first paragraph. The second most likely place for a topic sentence is the first sentence of the last paragraph.

Scanning

Scanning is a reading skill that allows the reader to locate specific information quickly. With scanning you already know before you begin what sort of information you are searching for. The purpose of scanning is to get specific information. Scanning is especially important for improving your reading. Many students try to read every word when they read, so they read very slowly. Scanning can help the students learn to read and understand faster.

Making Predictions

Hutchinson ^[6] defines prediction as "A matter of using an existing knowledge of a pattern or system in order to anticipate what is likely in a novel situation". Many researches have shown that good readers use their experiences and background knowledge to make predictions and formulate ideas as they read ^[7].

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This strategy also allows students interaction, which increases students' interests and improves their understanding of the text [8]. Making predictions is a strategy in which readers use information from picture, title, to make predictions about the story. The title of a text can operate memories of texts, permitting them to guess the content of a new text. During reading, successful readers can make predictions about what will occur next, or what opinions the writer will offer to support a discussion. Readers try to assess these predictions ceaselessly and change any prediction that is not approved by the reading [9].

Questioning

Questioning helps students monitor their comprehension and stay engaged and interested in their reading. Readers can use the questioning before, during, and after reading. The questioning process requires readers to ask questions of themselves to construct meaning, enhance understanding, find answers, solve problems, find information, and discover new information [10]. In this strategy, the students return to the text throughout the reading process to find the answers to the questions. Questioning helps students to clarify and comprehend what they are reading. In this strategy, asking appropriate questions permits successful readers to concentrate on the most important information of a text [11]. Asking questions while involving in the reading process provides students with an opportunity to think about what are they reading, be active and independent readers, and be able to appropriately reflect on their reading [12].

Literature review

Goodman [13] defines reading as an active process in which readers use effective strategies to extract meaning from a text. In the process of reading, readers need to use reading strategies to understand the meaning from the text. Reading strategies are key elements in developing students' reading comprehension. Several research studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between learners' reading strategies and their reading comprehension skills, Impact of reading strategies increased reading comprehension proficiency, [14, 15, 16]. Students employed with various reading strategies to assist in comprehension of English material showed positive impact on reading strategies [18, 19, 20].

Process

This section includes purpose of the study, the participants, the material, the significant of the study, the instruments, a questionnaire and follow up interviews.

Purpose of the Study

This study, aims at answering the following questions: What are the effects of reading strategies namely: Skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning on Urdu medium and English medium undergraduate students' reading processes?

After being taught reading strategies, are the students able to apply any of these strategies in their reading processes?

Time spent on reading strategies enhance reading skill of undergraduate students?

Participants

So, for the present study first year under graduate students from three different colleges of Rajouri district (Jammu

University) are selected, who all had cleared their 12th examination from Jammu and Kashmir state higher secondary education board, with English as one of the subjects. Total 120 students are selected. Out of them all, 32 students belong to English medium and 88 belong to Urdu medium. There are 29 female students and 91 are male students. Moreover, the mother tongue of all the participants is Urdu.

The Pre-Test and the Post-Test

The pre-test is introduced or conducted at the beginning of the experiment and the post test is conducted after the introduction of the treatment. Five reading comprehensive paragraphs are selected for pre-test and post-test. Each paragraph contains 5 questions of 2 marks. The pre-test is designed to check whether the participants are aware of reading strategies or not and if they are then, they able to apply their knowledge of reading strategies at various stages of reading. The difficulty level of pre-test is easier than the post test. The subject and language of pre-test are also easier than the post test. The pre-test involves the language and subject related to day to day life while post-test involves technical subject and language, keep in mind the syllabus of first year under graduate students.

Pre-reading

The purpose of pre-reading was to assist the students to get the most out of what they were going to read. This was done by providing the students with pre-reading questions to activate students to think and to relate their relevant background to the text, to preview important points, and to set a purpose for reading.

While-reading

The while-reading phase was to help the students develop the skills of eliciting from what they read. Students needed to use bottom up processes to analyze words, phrases and sentences in texts to verify their anticipation from the reading phase and to understand the details of the text [23].

Post-reading

The purpose of follow up was to help the students develop the information gained from what they learned. It enabled students not only to review or conclude what they have read from the text but also to integrate the textual information into their own experiences.

In the pre-reading phase, the teacher asked the students to look at the picture, read the title and try to predict what the story was about. In while-reading phase, the students were asked to read the text to check their predictions. In the post-reading step students were asked to discuss the key concepts, review and summarize what they had read and integrate the textual information with their knowledge of the world.

Significant of the Study

The present study is significant in that it can provide notable insights into the effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension.

Research Instruments

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension i.e. skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning, a questionnaire, reading tasks

and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data (see Table I).

Questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire focused on the participants' gender and length of English learning experience. The second part was used to obtain students' reading strategies awareness focused on the above-mentioned reading strategies. The questionnaire was used to obtain students' reactions towards using skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning in the pre-reading and while-reading phase. This study was conducted during the first semester in the academic year 2019.

Findings

To analyze the reading tasks, the steps were as follows:

The full score of each task was specified as 50 points. The tasks were scored and results recorded in a table with frequency distribution. The arithmetic means of the scores from each task was calculated.

The data from reading tasks that the students did in the while-reading phase were administered. Then the mean-value was calculated for each task. The results are presented in Table 1-3.

Table: Mean Difference of Pre-Test and Post-Test in Respect to Medium

Table 1: 4.6 Pre -Test (Medium).

Medium	No	Mean	Standard deviation
Urdu	88	22.68	10.79
English	32	29.25	9.71

Table 2: 4.7 Post- Test (Medium).

Medium	No	Mean	Standard deviation
Urdu	88	23.28	10.11
English	32	36.75	6.61

Again, the correlation analysis of pre-test and post-test score was conducted. The correlation between pre-test and post-test was 0.55. The correlation was between 0 to 9 and so it revealed that the pre-test and post-test were correlated.

Table 3: Correlation

Test	N	R
Pre-test	120	0.095
Post-test	120	

This study aimed to investigate the usage of reading methods by first-year undergraduate students and how it influences their reading comprehension capacity. It also investigates the connection between reading methods and reading comprehension. Along with this, it investigates the various relevant elements that may influence first-year undergraduate students' usage of reading methods and reading skills.

The data was gathered using the one-group experimental approach. The data was acquired in pre-test and post-test scores by administering a reading comprehension test to 120 first-year undergraduate students from colleges of Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir. The study's findings demonstrate the following facts about the research questions goals provided in the first chapter.

Do the pupils understand the reading strategies?

The current study discovered that, while students are aware of reading techniques, they know how to apply and employ these methods when they encounter reading challenges in comprehending the text.

Is it necessary to make students aware of reading strategies?

Yes, it is vital to make them aware because many of them are unaware of it and lack the expertise to use it. It has also been shown that people may have utilized reading methods during the test but were unaware of it.

Is there a link between reading capabilities and reading strategies?

The current study's findings indicate that reading skills and techniques are beneficial.

Can reading methods be used to improve one's reading skills?

The current study's findings indicate that it is feasible to strengthen, sharpen, and increase reading skills by utilizing reading techniques. The total mean of the pre-test was 26.06, whereas the mean of the post-test was 27.02. There is a discrepancy of 0.96.

Is there a function for medium in the development of reading abilities through reading strategies?

Yes, medium influences the student's reading methods and reading comprehension. The pre-test result of Urdu medium students was 22.68, whereas English medium students scored 29.25. There is a 6.57 difference. In the post-test, Urdu medium students had a mean of 23.28, whereas English medium students had 36.75. Again, there is a difference of 13.47.

Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that reading strategies have a great impact on the students' reading comprehension ability. Students have revealed that skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning strategies have helped the students' reading comprehension. The students had positive attitudes towards these strategies. Students needed to be trained or guide on the use of different reading strategies so that they would know how to apply these strategies for successful comprehension of academic materials. Teachers will require the skills in order to teach reading strategies that will assist students in understanding and applying the appropriate strategies to become skilled readers. Reading strategies based on skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning helped the students to better understanding of the function of reading strategies in improving the reading abilities of first-year undergraduate students. The study's findings include the following facts. (1) It appears that first-year undergraduate students' reading skills are connected to their usage and implementation of reading methods. The more reading methods are applied, the greater the reading comprehension capacity. (2) The usage of reading techniques is mostly determined by personal preference and in line with individual characteristics. However, because this study has limitations, the findings should be interpreted with caution. The study's finding is more uncertain than definitive. However, it will undoubtedly contribute to the advancement of reading skills and reading strategies research and the teaching and learning environment of first-year undergraduate students. In this manner, it will find its significance.

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