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**TEACHING STRATEGIES IN READING OF ENGLISH AND THEIR
IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS IN READING
COMPREHENSION AT HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL IN PAKISTAN**

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Abstract

English, being an international language and main source of international communication, occupies great importance all over the world. In Pakistan, it is being taught as compulsory subject from grade one to graduate class and has got status of official language. This study was designed to explore and analyze the strategies adopted by teachers for teaching reading of English at higher secondary level grade XII and their impact on the performance of the students in reading comprehension in English in Pakistan. The participants of this study were 52 English teachers (male/female) teaching to grade XII. The study was conducted in District Naushahro Feroze one the districts of Sindh Pakistan. In order to collect data questionnaire and interview schedule was used. The data analysis revealed that, teaching strategies adopted by the teachers and performance of the students in reading comprehension of English were strongly co-related. The main strategies adopted by the teachers for reading English were making students read aloud, translation of the text, asking information based and comprehension questions, teaching grammatical patterns, teaching vocabulary, making summaries, asking for filling gaps, looking for specific information from the given text, column matching, assigning reading home work etc.

Introduction

English as an international language has been playing important role in the social, economical and scientific development all around the world. Khan (2007) states that, English is one of the major sources of communication in the world. According to Muhammad (2013) there is number of the countries of the world where English is taught as second or foreign language and Pakistan is also included in the list of such country, however it is official language of Pakistan. The importance of English can be witnessed from the fact that it is being taught as compulsory subject from grade and assumed to be main source of getting employment, higher education and social status in Pakistan. Although serious efforts have been made for teaching English in Pakistan yet it has not reached to its satisfactory level. In this regard Nunan (2003) states that, teaching and learning process of English in Pakistan is not good because grammatical structures, translation of the text in mother tongue and the sentences are produced generally emphasizing reading and writing without meaningful tasks. Hence communicative skills are ignored which results in low confidence of the learners. Mumtaz (2006) rightly observes that teachers fail to recognize the benefits of reading and that is why they neglect or ignore it in the classroom.

According to Warsi (2004), on government level considerable measures have been taken to improve the situation including teachers' professional trainings, refreshers courses, emphasis on the use of information technology, establishment of libraries, provision of English books yet no considerable change has been noticed in this regard. In this connection Warsi (2004) further explains that, although in learning of any language including English four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) need to be equally focused but situation in Pakistan is entirely different because teachers generally focus on reading skills with their main emphasis remains confined to the texts of the prescribed text book.

Reading is the interaction of the reader with the text, the ability of readers to read in appropriate time with reasonable comprehension and the ability to adopt effective reading

strategies to achieve desired goals or purposes for reading any specific text (Alderson, 1996). In Pakistani perspective according to Khan (2011) reading in English is the most emphasized skill yet students perform poorly in different board and competitive examinations because teaching strategies adopted by the teachers for teaching reading are not according to the needs of the students at higher secondary level in particular. Zare (2012) explains that proper teaching reading strategies have got greater impact on performance of the students as well as overall acquisition of language. Shahzada (2012) believes that the overall performance of students in reading of English in Pakistan is not up to the mark because they are not involved by the teachers in creative reading tasks like working in groups, synthesizing, evaluating, précising and paraphrasing while they are still attached to ordinary information based activities. One of the reasons of poor performance of the students in reading with the reference of I2 according to Nunan (2003) is because students are prepared to pass external public examinations rather than developing the language. Lee (2010) asserts that understanding of learners regarding learning strategies can be useful for them to learn more successfully which will eventually lead towards better performance in reading.

Literature review

English in Pakistan is being taught as compulsory subject and is treated as an official language yet according to Warsi (2004) it has not produced desired results because number of students generally fail in reading tests in different competitive examinations. The teachers and students according to Khan (2007) mainly focus on reading yet students are unable to perform better in reading of English. Ahmed (1979) argues that teachers at higher secondary level have not been able to adopt reading strategies according to the needs and interest of the students. Khand (2004) observes that in Pakistan, in many cases teachers are simply unaware of various reading strategies to be adopted in and outside the classroom. It results in poor performances by the students in reading comprehension. (Kazi & Iqbal, 2011) state that the teachers are unaware of the proper reading strategies in Pakistan while teaching English. Most of the times, the teachers use traditional grammar translation method while target language is used on a very small scale (Aziz, Umar & Mustafa, 2010). Khan (2011) adds that during teaching reading, students are given the reading tasks based on specific information already available in the text hence students do not employ creative activities but just pick available information in the text. He further explains that teachers usually are unable to use different reading strategies in the classroom in order to develop rational skills in the learners. According to Akram & Gani (2012) teachers in Pakistan use pre, while and post reading activities but students are not involved in creative acidities. Specific information based strategies seems the main weapon of the teachers while teaching reading English in Pakistan (Gulzar & Qadir 2010).

Warsi (2004) writes that with the rise of information technology, the use and importance of English in Pakistan have considerably increased. Tariq, Bilal & Iqbal (2013) state that reading in English with particular reference to Pakistan seems to be most emphasized skill within and outside the classroom setting yet according to Aziz, Umar & Mustafa (2015) teachers as well as students feel difficulties in teaching and learning of reading in English. As we know that, there are four basic skills of language learning such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Researchers generally agree that reading is the most important skill to be learned. Reading is the interaction of the reader with the text, the ability of readers to read in appropriate time with reasonable comprehension and the ability to adopt effective reading strategies to achieve desired goals or purposes for reading any specific text (Anderson, 2003). According to Barnett (1989),

reading is meaning extracting process, while the other aspect of the reading is considered as constructing process. Grabe (1991) terms reading very important skill in understanding academic contexts for those who learn any language as their second language. So, researchers believe that, whether it is first or the second language, reading comprehension and reading strategies are of great importance.

According to **Kasi** (2010) with a weak background of English, teachers are unable to equip students with good reading skills so as to help them to become independent learners. In the result according to him students are unable to perform better in reading which is the most emphasized skill in teaching and learning of English in Pakistan. Ornprapat (2015) calls reading strategies as an employment of collaborative approach in reading process through the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies which results in considerable progress in reading development and confidence building of the learners with particular reference to second or foreign language. Kazi and Iqbal (2011) found that in Pakistan the teachers are unaware of the use of effective teaching reading strategies with the reference to English as second or foreign language, hence the learners are not proficient in reading of English, they are unable to perform tasks properly, their performance is not good and their confidence is at lower level. In reading the teachers try to use different cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies for teaching reading in English subject. In Pakistan however according to Khan (2007) social strategies are not used on greater scale that's why desirable results are still awaiting. Molla (2015) gives great importance to social strategies stating that, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies are important in reading process but social strategies are also of greater importance suggesting that social strategies are the way of having social interaction by working together with people to solve reading difficulties and achieve desired results in reading process.

In Pakistan though teaching of English has been top priority on government level yet teachers are unable to adopt meaningful child centered teaching strategies to teach students reading in English as a second language and they focus only on developing the memory of students to prepare them for examinations (Khan, 2011). He further explains that main focus of the teachers is on word recognition, translating passages in mother language, accumulating vocabulary, using words in sentences, identifying just grammatical patterns from longer passages, sometimes finding answers to questions based on mere facts, but they do not think on their own and come up with creative answers which could help them to become independent learners with good language learning skills. Generally, trainings of the teachers, overcrowded classrooms, improper assessment of reading performance, absence of students, lack of commitment on the part of teachers and students are some of the contributors of some of the issues in the reading of English at higher secondary level in Pakistan. According to Ahmed (1979) the learners become better achievers once they become good readers using a bunch of reading, learning strategies.

Nawab (2012) states that, while teaching English the role of English teachers is very important in Pakistan. To him, if teachers are able to adopt proper teaching reading strategies with particular reference to English as L2 it will have great positive impact on their performance of the students in reading of English. Rashid (2010) states that reading strategies adopted by the teachers on higher secondary level in particular have a great importance and impact on the performance of the students in reading of English. To him, if they are used properly they can result in desirable achievement of the tasks related to reading comprehension. Khan (2011) puts

great importance on reading strategies stating that application of reading strategies by the teachers help the learners find specific information from the text, can relate different clues to gain insight into the problem. Al-Tamimi (2006) argues that the strategies of the teachers and students in teaching and learning, reading are the basis for better understanding of the text they work on. Use of effective reading strategies by the teachers through meaningful tasks help readers not only to develop their reading capacity, but have a positive influence on learning of other reading skills including listening, speaking and writing (Devine, 1988).

Many studies have been conducted to determine the impact of reading strategies adopted by teachers on the performance of students in reading of English. In this regard Khezrlou (2012) conducted a study and found significant relationship between reading strategies and performance of the students. The use of strategies and their impact was found to be different for different age groups and their level of education. Zhang & Seepho (2013) in a study found that the performance of the students in reading comprehension of English and meta-cognitive reading strategies were closely related. The results indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between meta-cognitive strategy use and English reading achievement. Phakiti (2006) in a study determining the impact of various reading strategies found that planning strategies did not have any direct impact on reading strategies of the learners, however, the monitoring strategies had direct impact on memory based strategies of the learners. Zare (2013) conducted a study and found that reading strategies adopted by the teachers had a strong positive correlation with reading comprehension achievement, but the results also showed no significant difference in the use of reading strategies between male and female language learners. Tavakoli (2014) reported a strong positive correlation between metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, and reading comprehension achievement of Iranian EFL learners. Molla (2015) in an attempt to find out possible relationships between reading strategy use and reading comprehension reported no significant relationship (positive or negative) between use of reading strategies and reading comprehension.

From above definitions, we can conclude that reading strategies are the processes which include understanding what is written, using one's intelligence to solve his/her problem. It also involves having overall view and understanding of the reading text, getting specific information from longer passage, improving self- knowledge, and predicting about future prospects.

Research questions

1. What are teaching strategies adopted by teachers in teaching of reading in English at higher secondary school level in Pakistan?
2. To what extent do the teaching strategies affect the performance of students in reading comprehension of English at higher secondary level in Pakistan?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant impact of teachers' adopted teaching strategies on students' reading comprehension/ performance at Higher Secondary School level grade XII.
2. There is no significant difference of impact of male and female teachers' teaching strategies on higher secondary level grade XII students' performance in reading comprehension of English.

3. There is no significant difference of impact of teaching strategies of experienced and inexperienced teachers on grade XII students' performance in reading comprehension of English at Higher Secondary School level.

Methodology

Survey method has been adopted for this study. The data was collected through questionnaire and interview. Sample (Participants) of the study were 52 teachers (male/female) teaching English to grade XII from higher secondary schools and degree colleges (male/female) of district Naushahro Feroze Sindh Pakistan. The sample of 52 teachers includes 38 male and 15 female. The questionnaire comprising 34 items regarding the reading strategies adopted by them for learning reading in English was administered by the researcher himself. After that, interview was conducted from ten selected teachers to gain more insight regarding teaching reading strategies adopted by the teachers to teach English at higher secondary level grade XII. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, pilot study was conducted and expert views were sought from senior local professors of English. The data was analyzed through SPSS.

Results

	Items	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Undecided %	Agree %	Strongly agree %
1	You emphasize reading skill compared to other skills (listening, speaking and writing).	5.8	9.6	9.6	40.2	34.6
2	You make students read loudly daily.	5.8	15.4	15.4	32.7	30.8
3	You provide students equal chances of reading in the classroom.	11.5	17.3	11.5	55.8	3.8
4	You encourage students to read loudly.	5.8	15.4	15.4	42.3	21.2
5	You read for students loudly.	1.9	26.9	15.3	26.9	28.9
6	You use pre- reading activities (relevant questions, discussion about topic etc) before actual reading.	1.9	9.6	32.7	38.5	17.3
7	You teach students' unfamiliar words before the reading.	-	9.6	34.6	36.5	19.2
8	You teach students' grammatical structures during reading.	-	3.8	32.7	34.6	28.8
9	You correct the students during reading.	-	9.6	19.2	34.6	36.5
10	You teach students how to pronounce the words.	-	3.8	26.9	40.4	28.8
11	You ask students comprehension questions during loud reading.	-	7.7	38.5	42.3	11.5
12	You translate English text in their mother tongue.	-	1.9	9.6	50.0	38.5
13	You make students' read the text silently.	-	9.6	9.6	42.3	38.5

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14	You assign students any task (any exercise or finding any specific information) during silent reading.	3.8	11.5	26.9	48.1	9.6
15	You teach students' how to guess meaning of new vocabulary.	3.8	1.9	38.5	34.6	21.1
16	You try to relate students' existing knowledge with text.	48.1	5.8	9.6	28.8	7.7
17	You teach students how to give title to any passage.	40.4	11.5	1.9	36.5	9.6
18	You teach students to summarize any long texts.	3.8	19.2	19.2	42.3	15.4
19	You teach students how to infer meaning of the text.	34.6	19.2	9.6	30.8	5.8
20	You teach students to precise longer texts.	1.9	19.2	26.9	42.3	9.6
21	You teach students how to analyze/evaluate longer texts.	1.9	48.1	28.8	15.4	5.8
22	You teach students how to get main idea of the text.	19.2	1.9	23	26.9	28.8
23	You teach students how to paraphrase the text.	40.3	11.5	9.6	26.9	11.5
24	You teach dictionary skills for improving reading.	1.9	1.9	26.9	42.3	26.9
25	You teach students' how to locate specific information from the text.	15.4	5.8	13.5	61.5	7.7
26	You prepare any reading plan (written form) in advance.	26.9	25	3.8	40.3	3.8
27	You suggest students any English grammar books.	9.6	19.2	19.2	48.1	3.8
28	You suggest students to read English newspapers.	23.1	36.5	3.8	34.6	1.9
29	You suggest students to read English stories.	19.2	7.7	17.3	34.6	21.2
30	You test students' reading skill in the classroom.	1.9	51.9	1.9	30.8	13.5
31	You solve students' reading difficulties.	36.5	1.9	7.7	36.5	17.3
32	Interest of students in loud reading	19.3	3.8	23.1	23	30.8
33	Your students are fluent in reading of English text	1.9	5.8	28.8	38.5	25.0
34	You guide students in reading of English text	-	11.5	32.7	38.5	17.3

First Hypothesis – There is no significant impact of teachers’ adopted teaching strategies on students’ reading comprehension/performance at higher secondary level grade XII.

Table 1: testing of Hypothesis one

	Model summary		Sig.	F value	Sig.	t-test value	Sig.
	R	R ²					
Significant	.919	.845	.000	272.886	.000	16.519	.000

Analysis

The results obtained through statistical calculations show that there is a very strong positive correlation ($p=000$, $r=.919$) between teachers’ teaching strategies and students’ performance in reading of English at higher secondary level. Additionally, teaching strategies variable is a strong predictor of performance of the learners as it shows R value.919 that has accounted for 84.5% of variance ($R^2=84.5\%$) in the performance of learners and the value of F ($p = 000$, $F = 272.886$) which is significant at 0.05 level of significance, showing that the regression model developed for the prediction of the impact of teaching strategies of teacher’s on the performance of students in reading English is significant. It shows that the model can significantly predict the performance of the students in the reading of English by adopting effective teaching strategies by the teachers. Similarly, the significant value of t ($p=000$, $t = 16.519$), indicates that the changes in the value of performance of learners in reading of English are significant due to the changes obtained in the values of predictor variables.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and research hypothesis is accepted. Data reveals that two variables, namely teaching strategies of the teachers (independent variable) and performance of students in reading of English (dependent variable) are very strongly positively correlated. Hence it is safe to say that proper adoption of teaching strategies will result in significant improvement in students’ performance in reading of English at least with this sample of students.

Second Hypothesis – There is no significant difference of impact of male and female teachers’ teaching strategies on higher secondary level grade XII students’ performance in reading comprehension of English.

Table 2. Testing of second hypothesis

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Performance of students in reading comprehension	Equal variances assumed	2.933	50	.005	11.389	3.882
	Equal variances not assumed	2.709	22.238	.013	11.389	4.205

Above table indicates that there is a significant difference of impact of teaching strategies adopted by male and female teachers on performance of students in reading comprehension in English at higher secondary level as it shows ($p = .005 \leq 0.05$, $t = 2.933$). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The results reveal that teaching strategies adopted by male and female teachers for teaching reading comprehension are not equally effective for the students of higher secondary level. Strategies adopted by male teachers appear to be more effective than the strategies adopted by female teachers.

Third Hypothesis – There is no significant difference of impact of teaching strategies of experienced and inexperienced teachers on grade XII students’ performance in reading comprehension of English at Higher Secondary School level.

Table: 3. testing of third hypothesis

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Performance of students in reading comprehension	Equal variances assumed	-9.777	50	.000	-21.669	2.247
	Equal variances not assumed	-10.408	45.200	.000	-21.629	2.111

Above table indicates that there is significant difference in impact of teaching strategies of more experienced and less experienced teachers on performance of students in reading comprehension in English at higher secondary level as it shows ($p = .000 \leq 0.05$, $t = -9.77$). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The data reveals that teaching strategies adopted by experienced teachers are more effective as compared to the strategies adopted by less experienced teachers for teaching reading to the students at higher secondary level.

Findings

- Majority of the teachers involve students in reading compared to other skills
- The teacher make students read aloud giving them equal opportunities of reading and they themselves read aloud too.
- The teachers encourage students for reading
- Majority of the teachers teach unfamiliar words and grammar structures to the students
- The teachers correct students during reading
- Students are taught by teachers to pronounce the words
- Majority of the teachers ask comprehension questions from students during reading process
- Teachers generally translate text in mother tongue of the students
- Students are made to read silently assigning them different tasks
- Majority of the teachers don’t teach students to relate existing knowledge with the text
- Teachers don’t teach students to give titles to the texts
- Students are not taught by the teachers to infer meaning from the given text
- Teacher teach students how to precise the longer texts

- Students are not taught to analyze longer texts
- Teachers don't teach paraphrasing
- Teachers teach dictionary skills and the skills to locate for specific information
- The majority of the teachers don't prepare any reading plan in advance
- Students are asked to read English newspapers and story books
- Reading skill of the students is not tested in the classroom
- Teaching strategies of the teachers (independent variable) and performance of students in reading of English (dependent variable) are very strongly positively correlated.
- Strategies adopted by male teachers appear to be more effective than the strategies adopted by female teachers
- Teaching strategies adopted by experienced teachers are more effective as compared to the strategies adopted by less experienced teachers for teaching reading to the students at higher secondary level.

Discussions

From the data analysis, it was found that, generally the teachers in Pakistan focus on reading skill, they make students read aloud and translate English text in mother tongue of the students. This study corresponds to study of Mumtaz (2006) & Warsi (2004) who also reported similar results indicating that teachers emphasize reading involving students in reading aloud and translating the text during teaching English as a second language. This study also finds that teachers involve students into activities like finding meaning of the words and finding specific meaning from the given text. Hence these findings are in line with the findings of Akram & Gani (2012), (Khan, 2012) & Bajwa (2007) who reported that teachers generally ask students to look for specific information from given text and find meaning of different words giving emphasis on given on dictionary skills. The study also revealed that, some of the main strategies of the teachers during teaching reading in English were involving students in summarizing the text, answering the questions based on specific information, suggesting reading grammar and story books, column matching, filling gaps, underlining different ideas guiding students in case of any reading difficulty and teaching grammatical structures. These findings of this study are inconsistent with the findings of Khan (2011) & Rashid (2010) who reported similar results indicating that teachers in Pakistan do involve students in summarizing longer passages of English text, answering specific questions, filling gaps, underlining different ideas and learn vocabulary. Khan (2011) further explains that this does not add to the creation of the students because the information which is asked for is already present in the text and they simply have to find out the information contained in the reading text.

The finding of this study also substantiates the results of Khand (2004); Akram & Gani (2012) & Rashid (2010) who reported that teachers in Pakistan keep students busy in silent reading but meaningful tasks are not given during the process rather they are just keeping busy with specific tasks. According to some very important findings of this study majority of the teachers do not adopt strategies like teaching précising, paraphrasing, and analyzing, inferring meaning, giving titles, predicting content of the text and using background knowledge of the students to understand the given text. These findings corroborate to the findings of Warsi (2004), Aziz, Umar & Mustafa (2010) Khan (2011) & Mumtaz (2006) who have reported that teachers in Pakistan do not generally teach paraphrasing, précising, analyzing, using background knowledge, inferring, giving titles while they just rely on simple comprehension questions,

filling, gaps, and underlining of grammatical patterns. According other findings of the study the teachers do not conduct reading text of the students and do not prepare any reading lesson plan in advance. These findings are in line with findings of Khan (2007) and Khand (2004) who found that, teachers in Pakistan take things as granted and generally do not prepare any plan and do not conduct formal reading tests.

The results of hypotheses reveal that, teaching strategies of the teachers (independent variable) and the performance of the students (dependent variable) in reading comprehension of English were very strongly correlated. In this regard the study of Khezrlou (2012) is in line with the findings of this study who found that, there was significant correlation between teaching reading strategies and performance of the students. The findings of this study reveal that there is significant difference of impact of strategies of male/female and experienced/inexperienced teachers' teaching reading strategies on the performance of the students in reading of English. This study also confirms the findings of the study of Tavakolli (2014) who found the similar results.

Conclusion

It is concluded that, reading is most emphasized skill of the teachers in Pakistan while teaching English as second or foreign language. They involve students in aloud reading, silent reading, performing different tasks like answering simple information based questions, filling gaps, column matching, teaching grammatical patterns, looking for specific meaning from the given text. The teachers also translate English text in mother tongue of the learners and ask students to do so. Moreover, they ask students to summarize the text, read English story books perform homework properly. The teachers do not conduct reading test based on creative tasks. They do not prepare any reading plan in advance; they do not teach paraphrasing, analyzing synthesizing, giving titles to the texts, predicting content of the text and inferring meaning form given text. The teachers do not relate students existing knowledge with the text they read. There is strong positive correlation and impact of the teaching strategies of the teachers on the reading comprehension performance of the students. There is also difference of impact of the teaching strategies of male/female and experienced/inexperienced teachers teaching strategies on the reading comprehension performance of the students.

Suggestions

On the basis of findings of the study it is suggested that!

1. Teachers need to involve students in creative reading activities according to their level and interest. The teachers should monitor the students during their work within the class while parents should guide them at their home.
2. The teachers should be professionally trained in order to teach English and reading in particular. For this the administration should have regular check and balance.
3. Necessary materials including audio-visual aids, English story books and English newspapers should be provided and students should work under the guidance of teachers while using these sources.

4. Teachers should adopt strategies involving students in the shape of pairs and groups promoting student to student interaction where students should be encouraged to ask and share with each other, ask for the help of their peers and teachers if needed.
5. Male/female and experienced/inexperienced teachers should adopt identical reading strategies so that, students are equally taught for getting equal results in reading comprehension of English.

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