



An Analytical Study on Adopted Strategies of English Language Learning To Improve Reading Skills of Middle School Students

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Abstract

From primary school through college, students in India are required to take English classes. It is a mark of prestige since it has been made an official language. All government business is conducted in English, and fluency in the language is a prerequisite for many administrative positions. Research shows that secondary school pupils in India have a hard time reading, speaking, and writing the English language, and that they also tend to get worse scores in these subjects. This study was conceived with the goals of investigating the approaches that secondary school students take to mastering the English language through reading and of gauging the impact of these approaches on their reading comprehension skills. Learning methods are the primary tactics utilised for learning English in India. Students' reading comprehension abilities were measured after a survey was given to determine what methods of study were being employed. Using a stratified random selection method, 359 students from various high schools and junior colleges were chosen to make up the sample. Questionnaires, an interview guide, and a test of reading comprehension were used to compile the study's data. Reading aloud, reading silently, summarising the texts, outlining the grammatical structures and patterns contained in the reading texts, answering simple questions, looking up the meaning of new vocabulary, and translating English texts into the student's mother language were all identified as effective reading learning strategies. In terms of gender, there was no significant difference in usage of methods and effect on their reading performance, whereas students in urban area do better than their peer in rural regions.

Keywords: Students Performance, Learning Strategies, Secondary School, Learning Methods.

Introduction

Students' success, understanding, and command of the English language are all significantly influenced by the reading techniques they use. Reading effectively improves not just comprehension but also critical thinking and academic performance. Key reading methods and their effects on students' achievement are as follows: Previewing: One method is to quickly scan the material for an overview before delving in more deeply. The effect of previewing is that students are better able to understand the text's structure and primary concepts. Method: Making use of highlighting, underlining, and other forms of active text engagement. The effects of active reading on comprehension and memory are substantial. It promotes deeper understanding by getting students involved in the reading process via questions and comments. Questioning: Questions before, during, and after reading is a tactic. The result is that pupils are more likely to engage with the material and think critically about it. It encourages a more in-depth comprehension of the subject matter and aids in the recognition of essential ideas. Visualisation: Technique: Visualise what you're reading by drawing diagrams in your head. Impact: Visualisation helps understanding by making abstract ideas more tangible. For those who learn best visually, this aids retention and comprehension. Summarization: Strategy: Summarising important concepts and crucial information in one's own words. An effect of summarization is improved knowledge synthesis and deeper comprehension. Students who can sum up a text well have shown that they have a deeper understanding of the material.

Inferencing: Method: drawing conclusions from available data and personal experience. Implications: Inferring helps students develop their critical thinking abilities and derive meaningful inferences from the material. It encourages students to think beyond the obvious



and look for hidden significance. Learning New Words: Method: Constantly teaching and practising new words. The ability to read and comprehend difficult materials depends heavily on one's vocabulary. Students that have a wide range of vocabulary are better able to grasp and evaluate course information. Aloud Reading: Method: Reciting the material loudly, either to oneself or to an audience.

Effect: Reading aloud improves cognitive abilities in both the auditory and visual domains. For kids who learn best by hearing, it may enhance their pronunciation, fluency, and general understanding. Maintenance and Modifications: The tactic of monitoring comprehension and modifying reading methods as necessary. Impact: Students who assess their understanding and change their techniques appropriately are more likely to overcome problems. This ability to reflect on one's own learning processes is called metacognition. Reading in Groups: Tactic: Have a conversation or a reading circle with other people. Effect: By bringing together several minds to analyse a text and come up with creative solutions, collaborative reading improves everyone's knowledge. It's a great way to boost your people and talk abilities.

Students' English language abilities and academic performance may benefit greatly from the incorporation of these reading methods into classroom teaching and the promotion of their usage as part of students' independent reading habits. Teachers should also take into account students' unique learning styles and offer a range of instructional approaches to meet the requirements of their students.

Literature Review

The goal of reading strategies is to comprehend the meaning of the given text (Thompson, 1988), and reading strategies are one kind of monitoring system that involves readers' self-reflection, awareness of interaction with text, and relationship between reading strategies and text comprehension. Reading strategies, as described by Suwantharathip (2015), are a team-based method of approaching the reading process that incorporates both cognitive and meta-cognitive techniques. Reading instruction that is both effective and engaging benefits students in other language areas as well, such as writing and spoken communication (Alderson, 2000; Suwantharathip, 2015).

Reading ability in a second or foreign language is developed in large part thanks to effective teaching and learning methodologies. Second language (not the reader's native or mother tongue) readers may benefit greatly from frequent exposure to instructional reading skills, as indicated by Mehrdad, Ahghar, and Ahghar (2012) (Duke & Pearson, 2012). In support of these claims, Naeini (2015) found that students who used reading strategies outperformed students who did not use strategies on reading exams, and that students who used meta-cognitive techniques outnumbered those who used cognitive methods among students who used reading strategies.

Many studies have examined the relationship between students' usage of reading methods and their levels of reading comprehension. The connection between reading methods and academic achievement in reading has been the subject of a great deal of research. According to research conducted by Zhang and Seepho (2013), who used a sample of Chinese EFL college students to investigate the relationship between students' academic reading comprehension and their use of meta-cognitive strategies, the two are strongly correlated. Reading comprehension in English was shown to be significantly correlated with the usage of meta-cognitive strategies.

Students' reading practises were shown to have a considerable impact on their performance, as stated by Khezrlou (2022). However, various age and education groups were shown to have varying levels of success with the same tactics. Phakiti (2016) conducted a research to determine the effects of different reading techniques and discovered that although monitoring methods had a direct effect on memory-based strategies, planning strategies did not. Use of reading techniques was also shown to positively correlate with reading



comprehension success in a study of Malaysian English as a Second Language (ESL) students conducted by Zare and Othman (2023). Furthermore, the data showed that male and female students used different reading styles. There was no statistically significant difference in the use of reading strategies between male and female language learners, which Zare (2022) characterised as a strong positive correlation between the use of reading methods and reading and comprehension success.

Researchers Karami and Hashemian (2022) looked at the progress of a group of Iranian female elementary school students who were learning a second language (L2). studied pre-reading, in-reading, and post-reading comprehension in relation to students' familiarity with meta-cognitive learning strategies. They discovered a strong relation- ship between reading comprehension and adoption of meta-cognitive approach by youthful group of respondents (15- 20 years of age). According to Tavakoli (2014), Iranian EFL students' reading comprehension ability is positively correlated with their level of self-reported meta-cognitive awareness of reading methods. The findings also showed that students' familiarity with meta-cognitive reading methods was highly impacted by their English proficiency levels. Two experimental groups that received instruction on meta-cognitive strategies (planning and self-monitoring) outperformed the control group on the reading comprehension test conducted by Tavakoli (2014) to determine the effect of meta-cognitive strategy instruction on the performance and metacognitive awareness of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

In a meta-analysis, Chaury (2015) looked at how teaching students certain strategies affected their EFL readers' comprehension, as well as the impact of moderating factors. The results of the investigation showed that, on average, EFL students who were taught strategies fared better than their peers who had not been taught strategies. While researching probable links between reading strategy usage and reading comprehension, Molla (2015) found no evidence for a positive or negative correlation between the two.

All of the aforementioned evaluations show that students use a variety of reading methods to improve their comprehension, and that these tactics have a substantial effect on second language readers. The results varied significantly among age groups, educational backgrounds, and approaches used. The literature also showed that in India, researchers were interested in learning more about how different pupils in the country approach reading in English. However, there has been no research done in India to determine whether or not reading practises improve reading ability. As a result, an effort was made to address this void.

Research Questions

1. How do students in upper secondary schools approach the task of acquiring English reading?
2. How much do students reading scores improve while using different methods of instruction?
3. When it comes to reading English at the junior and senior high levels, how do students feel about the methods they use to improve their skills?

Methodology

A quantitative and qualitative (concurrent and sequential) explanation Mix Method design was used for the research. A mixed methods research is a technique for gathering, analysing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a sin- gle study to comprehend a research topic. Through a cross-sectional survey, we gathered quantitative data by having students take a reading comprehension test and by having them fill out a researcher-created, Likert-type, closed-questionnaire about the reading strategies they use when learning English. In contrast, the qualitative information was acquired using a semi-structured interview schedule. A subset of students was given the questionnaire first to test



its validity and reliability before the whole group of students was asked to fill it out. Based on the results of the pilot studies, the appropriate adjustments and adjustments were made.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Almost half of all respondents said that they were interested in reading literature written in English and that they valued reading ability above all other language acquisition abilities. When respondents had trouble with reading or comprehending new language, they sought help from their professors, but they seldom discussed what they had learned with their classmates. Reading aloud, translating English texts into respondents' native languages, answering comprehension questions and questions about specific information while reading aloud, summarising English texts while searching for specific information, and so on were all cited by respondents as reading strategies they used when reading texts written in English.

Methods like using dictionaries and English grammar books to pick up new grammatical structures and patterns were among those suggested by the respondents. Only a tiny fraction of respondents, however, agreed with comments suggesting that they do not use the internet, read newspapers, or read any tale books in English when asked if they did so. It's possible they just don't have the resources to use them.

The vast majority of students denied using prior knowledge to help with reading comprehension, speed reading of English texts to get the gist of the text, silent reading, reading English texts, titling untitled texts, guessing the meanings of new and familiar words, paraphrasing texts, inferring meaning, and predicting content, and so on.

The students were of the view that on their request their instructors conduct the loud reading for them and translate English text in mother tongue, emphasizing to summarise the content, teach grammatical structures and patterns while reading. On the other hand, they disagreed with the claims that reading is a required class, that students are taught to paraphrase and anticipate text content, and that instructors use pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities. Most respondents felt their instructors didn't give pupils a fair opportunity to read, didn't keep tabs on what their students were reading, and didn't administer reading comprehension examinations.

Results of Testing

Since the learning techniques variable has a R value of 0.910 and has explained $R^2 = 82.8\%$ of the variation in students' performance, it is a significant predictor of student success. In addition, a high F value shows that the regression model is well-fit and can reliably predict student outcomes. Similarly, if the t value is high, it means that the changes in the value of the dependent variable, which measures student performance, are statistically significant. Hence, null hypothesis is rejected, stating that effective adoption of learning techniques would lead towards considerable improvement in students' performance in reading of English.

Table 1
T-test for Equality of means

	T	df.	Significance level
Performance of students in reading	1.547	357	0.357

Analysis

Table 1 shows that the two-tailed significance level is larger than 0.05, hence it can be inferred that male and female students do not significantly vary in their English reading comprehension abilities. The results support the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in reading comprehension scores between male and female pupils.

Discussion

The research shows that students do use a variety of tactics, but they do not do so consistently or with any particular goal in mind. Simple techniques like summarising, reading aloud, and translating into native tongues were often used. Activities like as gap filling, underlining, column matching, text translation, summarising, and defining new terminology are completed by the



pupils. Textbooks and grammar guides are the primary reading materials they employ. Therefore, they did not read enough to build a large enough vocabulary or to learn the skills necessary for becoming independent readers, such as predicting texts, anticipating the substance of the text, paraphrasing, and skimming. This was because students relied on their instructors for everything from interpreting the chapter to getting aid with new terminology and pronouncing unfamiliar phrases correctly. It is consistent with the results of the vast majority of studies that have revealed comparable findings showing pupils' reading comprehension improves when they adopt certain reading strategies.

The researchers found a strong correlation between the young respondents' reading comprehension and their use of meta-cognitive strategy across all three phases of the reading process (pre-reading, during reading, and after reading). There were some intriguing results from the research. On the one hand, the results showed that urban kids performed higher on reading comprehension tests than their rural counterparts. This conclusion may be explained by the greater accessibility of high-quality reading materials and personnel in metropolitan centres. The findings showed no statistically significant difference between the academic accomplishments of male and female pupils.

Conclusion

The most important takeaway from this research is that students' reading comprehension improves significantly when they use the methods they learn. Students used a variety of reading methods, including question answering, summarising, reading aloud, studying grammatical patterns, translating material into mother tongue, checking up the meaning of words, and learning spellings, but these were the only strategies really utilised. Predicting lengthy readings, paraphrasing and skimming to obtain the core of the material, and giving a reading passage or piece an appropriate title were all areas where students struggled. To remedy this, educators must provide kids with reading instruction tailored to help them strengthen weak parts of their literacy repertoire. Researchers found that kids in urban and rural regions had very different reading comprehension. Pupils in urban regions performed better than those in rural areas, and there was no difference between male and female students reading performance, suggesting that the impact of reading methods is similar for both sexes.

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