

Enhancing The 21st Century Reading Comprehension Skills Through Use Of Picture Among 3rd Graders: An Experimental Research

Nadia Ali¹, Ms. Shumaila Dad², Dr. Ayesha Rehman³, Dr. Ijaz Ahmad Tatlah⁴

¹Lecturer, IER, University of Balochistan, Pakistan Nadia_barat786@yahoo.com

²Lecturer, IER, University of Balochistan, Pakistan

³IPFP Fellow, Lahore College for Women University, Pakistan ayesharehman12@gmail.com

⁴Associate Professor of Education, University of Education College Road Township Lahore, Pakistan tatlah@ue.edu.pk

Abstract

The importance of English language cannot be denied in 21st Century where English is used all over the world for communication and considered as an important skill of 21st century. Nowadays the role of English language is very important as it is spoken and written all over the world for communication in the field of research, education and development. This study is intended to find out the effectiveness of uses of pictures for improving English reading comprehension skills of 3rd graders. The study used the experimental research design and design was? The participants for the experiment were taken from 3rd grade enrolled in a public school of Quetta. For experiment, two sections were formed consisting of students who were selected randomly. Section A was treated as control section while the section B was as the treatment section. Section A was taught reading comprehension in a tradition way while the section B was taught comprehension combined with the uses of pictures. The differences between the two sections were gauged by using reading comprehension test and rubric.

The data for the study was collected at two points that is before and after the experiment through pre-testing and post-testing results to gauge the differences between the sections A and B were considered as before and after the experiment. The data was analysed by using SPSS. The results revealed that the average score for the section A (control) the average score was 5.3 in the pre-testing and the average score for section B (treatment) was 5 in the pre-testing. But the results of the post-testing revealed the average score for the section A (control) was 6.1 in the post-testing and the average score for section B (treatment) was 13.3 in the post-testing. The results showed the effectiveness of pictures uses for enhancing comprehension skills in the section B (treatment). On the other hand no enhancement was observed in the overall average scores of section A. In the light of results, it can be concluded that the uses of pictures is good in enhancing reading comprehension skills among 3rd graders. The results can be productive for curriculum developers and teachers.

KeyWords: 21st Century Reading Skills, Comprehension.

Introduction

“We must prepare young people for living in a world of powerful images, words and sounds.”
UNESCO, 1982

To be succeeded in life and career a number of skills are crucial for students in 21st century. A great deal of research is conducted over a long period of time, to refine and validate these skills in rapid changing and demanding world. These skills have been categorized with

different themes as “life skills, general capacities, working skills or 21st Century Skills.”

Studies over time suggest that the students of 21st century will be demanded to acquire more than subject matter knowledge. (Bruniges 2012). A shift may be seen in demands of 21st century skills which are quite different from the 20th century. Because 21st century is presenting a more complex, knowledge and technology has driven society and economy (Great School Partnership, 2014).

A research conducted by Suto (2013) about 21st Century skills and it presented the very same concern over the growing competition and collaboration among nations due to fast communication and information technology for the last three decades. It was revealed that the 21st century skills have been debated and recognized by the educationists which is not a new notion.

The importance of English language cannot be denied in 21st Century where English is used all over the world for communication and considered as an important skills of 21st century. There is crucial need to learn this language among the masses. In Pakistan, this need is realized and therefore, it is taught at all levels of education as compulsory subject (Akram, M., & Mahmood, A. 2007).

The prevalent necessity for learning English as a second but in Pakistan it may be most of times third language because majority of children learn Urdu as second language in school. Learning a foreign language poses a substantial pressure for the teachers to produce and provide teaching resources to improve English language. According to Tarigan (1973) cited in Asrul, N., Silitonga, D. J., Tarigan, M. O., & Barus, A. (2021) that reading is the basic skill that can enhance the other skills that is listening, writing and speaking among students. Moreover, the reading skills also enhance the intellectual abilities as well.

Reading is process of multifaceted process of cognition by decoding the meaning for extracting the meaning (comprehension). In the process of reading written text or pattern, retina of eye receives the text which is further processed by the primary visual cortex, and interpreted in Wernicke’s area. (Grellet, 1982 cited in Hidayati, R. 2019). Grabe and Stoller (2013) asserted that the vital goal of reading is the Comprehension. It is the skill of understanding the text. Thus, the enhancement of comprehension is the core element of overall reading instruction.

The data for the study was collected at two points that is before and after the experiment through pre-testing and post-testing results to gauge the differences between the sections A and B were considered as before and after the experiment. The data was analysed by using SPSS. The results revealed that the average score for the section A (control) the average score was 5.3 in the pre-testing and the average score for section B (treatment) was 5 in the pre-testing. But the results of the post-testing revealed the average score for the section A (control) was 6.1 in the post-testing and the average score for section B (treatment) was 13.3 in the post-testing. The results showed the effectiveness of pictures uses for enhancing comprehension skills in the section B (treatment). On the other hand no enhancement was observed in the overall average scores of section A. In the light of results, it can be concluded that the uses of pictures is good in enhancing reading comprehension skills among 3rd graders. The results can be productive for curriculum developers and teachers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To measure 21st Century English Reading Comprehension Skills level of 3rd Graders.
2. To evaluate the effects of Picture uses in improving the 21st Century Reading

Comprehension Skills of 3rd graders.

Significance of the Study

- The first beneficiary may be the English teacher who are striving to enhance the reading comprehension skills of students at primary level by introducing innovation. The study may provide a motivation to implement the use of picture as teaching technique to improve the reading comprehension skills as well quality of instruction in teaching English.
- The second beneficiary may be the teacher education institutes who are responsible to develop the pre-service and in-service teachers' professional skills in different languages. This study would inform them about the effectiveness of picture uses in teaching reading at primary level.
- The study would inform the curriculum developers to inculcate the use of pictures in designing the reading curriculum at all levels to enhance the reading comprehension skills among students.

Literature Review

There is long debate and history on defining the term of reading for years, as defined by Nuttall (2000:2) cited in Bo, Z. (2006) that reading is an interaction between the mind of writer and the mind of reader. Through this interaction the reader grasp the meaning and understand the message as intended by writer in his mind. Likewise, the term Reading is elaborated by Harmer (1991) cited in Manurung, K. (2015) as an exercise that is subjugated with eyes in support of the brain. In this exercise the message is received by the eyes and the meaning of the message is worked out by extracting its significance with the help of brain. But the simplest definition of reading is presented by Grabe and Stoller (2002).

According to them reading is the skill to extract meaning from the printed text.

Westwood, (2008) defined the reading comprehension as the ability of reading the printed text with complete understanding by drawing the author view based on his/her contextual experience, overall information, vocabulary and words cognizance.

Almasi, Janice F. & Susan King Fullerton (2012) designates the reading comprehension as a constructive procedure when a reader construct meaning out of the printed text by aligning it with prior understanding and then creating meaning of the particular setting that text illustrated. In this procedure the reader not only view the text in the form of letters but it requires the mindful process at the end of reader.

Ellis, Sue dan Elspeth McCartney (2011) argues that when a child enters a school, he/she must count on comprehending the text in order to learn in any subject or course of studies. In case of poor comprehension abilities, the child has to struggle hard what they read to learn. This struggle may lead to bad educational consequences. So with the help of visualizing activities, the struggling readers may turned into skilled readers as these activities help in turning a concept into a actual picture in the readers mind.

Taylor, M. J. (1978) shed light on how to teach struggling reader the comprehension skills, he argued that he found the stimulus of picture stronger affect as compare to stimulus of printed text. Leavitt 1968 in his writing as cited in Taylor, M. J. (1978) wrote that use of picture is effective in teaching writing because the use of picture engages the students in thinking and the power of thinking developed through images, transfer to power of writing. Taylor, M. J. (1978) asserted that likewise writing, reading comprehension can be enhanced with the help of picture as it enhances thinking because the use of photo enhances the students experience and thinking skills which in

turn support the students in developing comprehension skills.

Zwiers, J. (2004) asserted in his book on "Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6" for supporting the struggling readers. He presented an innovative toolkit that was based on research for improving comprehension skills among readers. In his book he presented about six practices of comprehension which are easy to apply as follows;

1. Consolidate the text to draw the author's key idea and then use the key ideas to create a summary of the text.
2. Link the text with prior experience to create a picture of the context in mind.
3. Create the inferences and connections between the events and predict on the basis of facts about the events.
4. Create overt and hidden questions that the author want the reader to ask and answer the question before, during and after the reading.
5. Use context and sentence structures to understand the meanings of words.
6. Monitor his/her own reading comprehension skills by adapting the reading style that fit the reader.

Zwiers, J. (2004) writes further about the use of images for teaching reading comprehension by inferring and predicting. The students' minds can be trained by using images that can help the students to build meaning with help of evidence and logical inferences.

Usman, H. (2016) concluded his study that the use of picture strategy improves reading comprehension skills for the reason that it implicates the pupils' comprehension reading skills. According to him use of picture was used because it is considered the most interactive strategy in learning reading comprehension. As

it prompts the students to read with comprehension.

Fiqrie, M. (2011) conducted an experimental study and concluded effectiveness of picture in improving the reading comprehension skills of students.

The study by Ayu (2010) concluded that the use of picture not only enhance the reading skills but the writing skills as well. Moreover, the findings of Zainuddin (2011) also confirmed the effectiveness of picture use in enhancing writing and reading skills.

Research Methodology

The study used the experimental design. Design that is Pre-test and posttest approach. According to Creswell (2008), experimental research is quantitative in nature in which the difference is determined by the researcher after an activity or treatment is applied to specific group. The participants for the experiment were taken from 3rd grade enrolled in public a school of Quetta. For experiment two sections were formed consisting of 31 in section A (Control) and 32 in section B (Experimental) students. In each section, the students were selected randomly. Section A was treated as control section while the section B was as the treatment section. Section A was taught reading comprehension in a tradition way while the section B was taught comprehension with the use of picture. The differences between the two sections were gauged by using reading comprehension test. The test was a teacher made test and developed from the English Text-book board for 3rd graders. Moreover, a rubric was used to assess and score the reading comprehension skills of students. For study, the rubric was developed by Schools, B. P. (2017) and adapted for the study for assessing the 21st century reading comprehension skills. Rubrics are good to assess the reading comprehension skills among students in variety of ways. At first, it helps the student to be familiar with learning objectives. Secondly, the students and teachers are cognizant with the next level of

performance in learning (Hafner & Hafner, 2004) as cited in Reddy, Y. M., & Andrade, H. (2010).. The rubric had the dimension based on

“Identifies theme or message and supporting details, summarizes with evidence, Makes inferences and Interprets vocabulary”.

Table 1 Bourne High School 21st Century Learning Expectation: (1) Reading Comprehension Rubric Effective Users of Skills and Strategies

Criteria	Advance Level (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Below Basic (1)
Identifies theme or message and supporting details	Explains theme or message in own words, acknowledging different interpretations, and offering supportive evidence	Restates understanding of theme or message and identifies supporting details	Identifies theme or message inconsistently	Identifies theme or message with guidance
Summarizes with evidence	Summarizes in own words by identifying three main points and elaborating with evidence using correct form	Summarizes in own words by identifying three or more main points from text	Attempts to summarize in own words, but lacks one or more main points or includes unnecessary details	Recognizes a summary statement, but lacks ability to write a summary independently/Retells selection randomly
Makes inferences	Recognizes subtle clues in selection and consistently makes valid inferences	Makes independent inferences based on numerous ideas in the selection	Makes inferences when coached or given obvious clues from selection	Works with others to understand inferences when explained
Interprets vocabulary	Applies word structure, origin, and context clues to interpret meanings of unfamiliar words	Interprets meanings of unfamiliar words	Decodes unfamiliar words but is not always able to interpret meaning from context	Attempts to decode unfamiliar words in text, but does not independently interpret meaning

Schools, B. P. (2017). Reading comprehension rubric. 21st Century Learning Expectation.

The data for the study was collected at two points that is before and after the experiment through pre-testing and post-testing to gauge the differences between the sections A

and B as well as before and after the experiment. The data was analyzed using SPSS. The following results are drawn

Table 2 Dimension-wise Average Scores and percentages before and after experiment between Section A and Section B

Dimensions	Level-wise Scores and Percentages (Before Experiment)		Level-wise Score and Percentages (After Experiment)	
	Section A	Section B	Section A	Section B

Identifies theme or message and supporting details (4)	1.9	1.8	2	3.1
Summarizes with evidence (4)	1.2	1.3	2.1	3.2
Makes inferences (4)	1.4	1.1	1	3.3
Interprets vocabulary (4)	0.8	0.8	1	3.7

The table 2 shows the Dimension and level-wise Average Scores and percentages before and after the experiment between Section A and Section B.

1. The average score of section A & B in first dimension that is “**Identifies theme or message and supporting details**”, reveals that both sections scored equally before the experiment that is 1.9 and 1.8 respectively. 1.9 and 1.8 comes under the level 2. This level 2 denotes that the students are able to identify theme or message inconsistently. but the difference is found in the scores of Section A and Section B after experiment As it shows that the reading comprehension skills in the first dimension of Section A is remained same but in the experimental Section B, the reading comprehension skills are enhanced up to level 3.1. This level 3 denotes that the students are able to restate understanding of theme or message and identify supporting details.
2. The average score of section A & B in second dimension that is “**Summarizes with evidence**”, reveals that both sections scored equally that is level 1.2 and 1.3 before the experiment. According to this 1.2 and 1.3 the students are able to recognize a summary statement, but lacks ability to write a summary independently/ retell selection randomly. But the difference is found in the scores of Section A and Section B after experiment. Further, it shows that the reading comprehension skills in the second dimension of Section A is also enhanced up to average score of 2.1. This score comes under the level 2. The level 2 of second dimension denotes that the students can attempt to summarize in

own words, but lack one or more main points or include unnecessary details but in the experimental Section B, the reading comprehension skills are enhanced up to average score of 3.2. This score comes under the level 3. The level 3 that is the proficient level of reading comprehension of second dimension denotes that the students can summarize in own words by identifying three or more main points from text.

3. The average score of section A & B in third dimension that is “**Makes inferences**”, reveals that both sections scored slight equally that the average score is 1.4 and 1.1 respectively before the experiment. This score comes under the level 1. According to this level 1 of third dimension, the students are able to Work with others to understand inferences when explained. But the difference is found in the scores of Section A and Section B after experiment. Further, it shows that the reading comprehension skills in the second dimension of Section A is remained same 1.4. According to this level 1 the students are able to Work with others to understand inferences when explained.) but in the experimental Section B, the reading comprehension skills are enhanced up to average score of 3.3. This score comes under the level 3. This level 3 denotes that is the proficient level of reading comprehension of third dimension. According to which the students are able to make independent inferences based on numerous ideas in the selection
4. The average score of section A & B in fourth dimension that is “**Interprets vocabulary**”, reveals that both sections scored equally that the average score is 0.8

before the experiment. This score comes under the level 1. According to this level 1 the students are able to attempt to decode unfamiliar words in text, but does not independently interpret meaning. But the difference is found in the scores of Section A and Section B after experiment. Further, it shows that the reading comprehension skills in the second dimension of Section A is remained same that is 25% (level 1) but in the experimental Section B, the reading comprehension skills are enhanced up to an average score of 3.7. This score comes under the level 4. This level 4 denotes that is the advanced level of reading comprehension of fourth dimension. According to which the students are able to apply word structure, origin, and context clues to interpret meanings of unfamiliar words

Conclusion and Discussion

The data for the study was collected at two points that is before and after the experiment through pre-testing and post-testing results to gauge the differences between the sections A and B were considered as before and after the experiment. The data was analysed by using SPSS. The results revealed that the average score for the section A (control) the average score was 5.3 in the pre-testing and the average score for section B (treatment) was 5 in the pre-testing. But the results of the post-testing revealed the average score for the section A (control) was 6.1 in the post-testing and the average score for section B (treatment) was 13.3 in the post-testing. The results showed the effectiveness of pictures uses for enhancing comprehension skills in the section B (treatment). On the other hand no enhancement was observed in the overall average scores of section A. In the light of results, it can be concluded that the uses of pictures is good in enhancing reading comprehension skills among 3rd graders. The results can be productive for curriculum developers and teachers.

The results are aligned with the study results by Usman, H. (2016) who concluded his study that the use of picture strategy improves reading comprehension skills for the reason that it implicates the pupils' comprehension reading skills. According to him use of picture was used because it is considered the most interactive strategy in learning reading comprehension. As it prompts the students to read with comprehension.

The present study results are also confirmed by Fiqrie, M. (2011) who conducted an experimental study and concluded effectiveness of picture in improving the reading comprehension skills of students.

The results of the study are also line up with the following studies. The study by Ayu (2010) concluded that the use of picture not only enhance the reading skills but the writing skills as well. Moreover the findings of Zainuddin, N., Sahrir, M. S., Idrus, R. M., & Jaffar, M. N. (2018)) also confirmed the effectiveness of picture use in enhancing writing and reading skills.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study it can be recommended

- The teacher may use picture as medium and technique to enhance the students 21st reading comprehension skills.
- The curriculum developers and text-book writer may inculcate more pictures in the text

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