



Enhancing Teacher Competence in Developing Reading Skills

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ABSTRACT

Reading skill is the bedrock of almost all process of learning which necessitates learners not only to acquire language, but also to learn other subjects. It is an indispensable skill every child needs to acquire in primary school before entering secondary school. Unfortunately, majority of our children in primary schools cannot read effectively before proceeding to secondary school. The current piece of research delineates the levels of teacher competencies in developing pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading and total reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender. The sample constitutes Seven hundred (700) teachers working in the Secondary Schools of the State of Telangana. Simple random sampling technique was employed to elicit information from the selected sample. A self-designed questionnaire was developed keeping in view the objectives and hypotheses of the study. It was composed of two parts. Part-A was designed to gather the profile variates of the teacher-respondents in terms of the following personal characteristics: gender; qualification; experience. Part -B appraised the perceptions of the teacher-respondents toward teaching of reading skills. It contained fifty statements which were employed by the teacher-respondents using the Five-point Likert Scale. No significant difference was found between the levels of teacher competencies in developing pre- reading, while-reading, post-reading and total reading skills among Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender. Educational implications were drawn from the findings and also suggestions were made for future research.

Key words: Reading skills; pre- reading, while-reading, post-reading, total reading skills, Secondary School learners.

1.INTRODUCTION

Reading skill is the bedrock of almost all process of learning which necessitates learners not only to acquire language, but also to learn other subjects. It is an indispensable skill every child needs to acquire in primary school before entering secondary school. Unfortunately, majority of our children in primary schools cannot read effectively before proceeding to secondary school. Due to the importance attached to reading, the National Policy on Education, 2020 (21.9) stipulates that 'improving the availability and accessibility of books is essential to inculcating the habit of reading within our communities and educational institutions', but this laudable objective is yet to be achieved. Teaching reading skills is an herculean task of the teacher and teachers are bedeviled with myriad of challenges which makes teaching reading skills cumbersome. Thus, teaching reading skills fundamentally anchors on the teachers competence.

Competencies are the skills and knowledge that enable a teacher to be successful. To maximize student learning, teachers must have expertise in a wide-ranging array of competencies in an especially complex environment where hundreds of critical decisions are required each day (Jackson, 1990). A general definition on competency is that the level of integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Tigelaar et al., 2004).

Reading is a complex process involving multiple linguistic and cognitive challenges. It is clear that the ability to read text effortlessly, quickly, accurately and with expression plays an essential role in becoming a

competent reader. (Linda, 2007). According to Ahuja (2013) reading involves comprehension beyond decoding and literal level interpretation of the printed symbols. Effective reading includes experiencing learning and thinking.

Reading skills facilitate readers' transmission of the form of writing into meaning thereby enhancing independence, comprehension and fluency. The purpose of the use of English language texts is to encourage and augment functional literacy for the students of English language. The habit of reading newspapers and journal articles not only improve the students' reading skills but also updates the knowledge of current issues, strengthens vocabulary and stock of expressions. A good reader naturally tends to become a good speaker. It is quite apparent that people having the habit of reading widely become expert at communication skills also.

Acquiring reading skill will be incomplete, if the skills of comprehension and interpretation are not acquired. Reading with comprehension is related to numerous skills and they are inter-related. The skills are 1) Word recognition 2) Phrase meaning 3) Retention of meaning 4) Sentence meaning 5) Reading the context 6) Paragraph meaning 7) Recognizing the structural clues and comprehending structural patterns 8) Skimming 9) Scanning 10) Reading for organization (Note making and Summarizing) 11) Drawing conclusions, making inferences and reading between the lines 12) Critical reading 13) Reading maps, charts, signs, symbols and graphs 14) Reading to follow directions 15) Reading to answer questions (Emerald V. Dechant 1969 & Gurrey 1970).

Types of Reading Skills to Improve

1. Decoding
2. Fluency
3. Vocabulary
4. Understanding Sentences
5. Using Background Knowledge and Reasoning
5. Paying Attention

Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand what we read, where words have context and texts have meaning. Reading comprehension skills allow us to read proficiently and learn effectively and succeed in life. Without reading comprehension skills, many pupil are left behind. Reading comprehension is the heart and goal of reading, since the purpose of all reading is to gather meaning from the printed page. There are three main reading stages followed in teaching reading viz.,

1. Teaching for the Pre-Reading Stage

The pre-reading stage starts before actual reading of a text begins. It is essential to provide necessary background information to the student to facilitate comprehension, to activate students' interest in the text and motivate them to go through it. It is also necessary for the students to become aware of the purpose and goal of reading a text. At the beginning stage, this can be done by the teacher, but at the advanced level, the purpose can be left to the students.

2. Teaching for While Reading Stage

This is the stage of teaching of reading in which the students should know different aspects of the text. They should read silently in order to answer the questions based on the text. The student should read the text quickly and completely or several paragraphs to understand generally what is going on, unknown words are to be checked with the help of dictionary only when confused.

3 Teaching for the Post-Reading Stage

During the post-reading activities, students' comprehension should be checked and students should be taught to analyse the text. It is important to link the text with the real world of the students and it helps them to use the background knowledge they already know. The activities of this stage include discussion of the text; summarizing the text, preparing oral and written questions and answers.

Most of the researches undertaken in recent years around the world have demonstrated explicitly the importance of enhancing reading with pre-reading, while-reading and post reading activities is emphasized. The existing body of literature certainly speaks volumes about teacher competence but a few studies could speak about

enhancing reading skills using of teacher competence. Further, this is the unknown territory for most of the researchers. Moreover, the students in the State of Telangana using English as a foreign (third) language has the main problem in mastering reading skills in English. Keeping in view the need of the hour, it is determined to assess the teacher competence in relation to enhance reading skills among secondary school learners. The main focus of this study is to get some point about the teacher competence in developing reading skills in the secondary level students. Hence, the present study is titled as: ***“Enhancing Teacher Competence in Developing Reading Skills”***

Objectives of the study

- 1.To delineate the levels of teacher competencies in developing pre- reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender.
- 2.To appraise the levels of teacher competencies in developing while-reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender.
- 3.To evaluate the levels of teacher competencies in developing post-reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender.
- 4.To determine the levels of teacher competencies in developing total reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender.

Delimitations of the study

1. This study is confined to schools located in Rangareddy and Hyderabad districts in the State of Telangana.
2. The investigation takes into its ambit the levels of teacher competence in enhancing reading skills among secondary school learners in the selected districts of Telangana State with special reference to skills like pre-reading, while-reading ;post-reading and total reading skills.
- 3.The study is restricted to probe the levels of teacher competence in enhancing reading skills among secondary school learners in the selected districts of Telangana State with regard to gender,

2.Review of Literature

Ethel de Leon-Abao (2014) studied how the teachers’ instructional competence influences students’ comprehension skills as well as their critical thinking skills; de Leon-Abao, E. (2014) assessed teachers’ instructional competence influences the intermediate students’ comprehension skills; Umer Farooque, S. L. P.(2015) evaluated the students’ achievement in English and English language competence of teachers; Maingi Josephine M (2015) investigated language teachers perceptions about teaching the use of reading strategies; Ramlah (2019) made an analysis of Teacher’s Pedagogical Competence of teachers; Raja Sekhar, I (2019) investigated the impact of strategy instruction; Shobikah N (2020) discusses competences the students must be taught and trained English language; Ahmad, Zakia. (2020) focused on the attitude of teachers towards teaching English reading; H.H.S.U. Samarakoon, K.R.W.K.H. Abeywickrama (2021) studied to which extent the ESL teacher-trainees achieve the expected reading and writing skills; Fitri Nurdianingsih (2021) discussed teacher’s strategies in teaching reading comprehension to students; Ivanova, Rimma; Ivanov, Andrey (2021) assessed reading skills utilized in English proficiency tests ; Jōgi, Anna-Liisa et al (2022) studied the effect of reading skills and social competence; Maulidifi Ajrin Karimata, Dwi Fita Heriyawati, Junaidi Mistar (2022) conducted a correlation study on students’ perception of pre-service teachers' competence and their reading achievement; Clarinda C. Galiza (2022) examined the reading competency and academic performance of students; Barry Lee Reynolds and Melissa H. Yu, Mo Li (2022) aimed at investigating teaching practice in a teaching reading..

3. Methodology

The universe of the present study consists of State of Telangana. The sample constitutes Seven hundred (700) teachers working in the Secondary Schools of the State of Telangana. Simple random sampling technique was employed to elicit information from the selected sample.

A self-designed questionnaire was developed keeping in view the objectives and hypotheses of the study. It was composed of two parts. Part- A was designed to gather the profile variates of the teacher-respondents

in terms of the following personal characteristics: gender; qualification; experience. Part -B appraised the perceptions of the teacher-respondents toward teaching of reading skills. It contained fifty statements which were employed by the teacher-respondents using the Five-point Likert Scale.

The tool was administered to the selected sample. Suitable statistical techniques like t.-test; Chi-square, along with SPSS was used for analysis.

4.Results and discussion

HO₁ : There is no statistically significant difference between the levels of teacher competencies in developing pre- reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their **gender**.

Table showing pre-reading skill levels and gender

			Prereading skills levels			Total
			Average	High	Low	
Gender	Male	Count	203	105	18	326
		% within Gender	62.3%	32.2%	5.5%	100.0%
Female	Count	229	115	30	374	
	% within Gender	61.2%	30.7%	8.0%	100.0%	
Total	Count	432	220	48	700	
	% within Gender	61.7%	31.4%	6.9%	100.0%	

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.736 ^a	2	.420
Likelihood Ratio	1.759	2	.415
N of Valid Cases	700		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 22.35.

It can be inferred from the chi-square test, the calculated p-value is insignificant at 5.% level of significance (.420), with regard to teaching competence levels in pre-reading skills and gender. It is demonstrated that almost an equal number of respondents (62.3%) males and (61.2%) females possessed 'average levels' of pre-reading teacher competence with respect to gender. Hence, the hypothesis formulated is **accepted**.

HO₂ : There is no statistically significant difference between the levels of teacher competencies in developing while-reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their **gender**.

Table showing while-reading skill levels and gender

		Crosstab			Total	
		While reading Levels				
		Average	High	Low		
Gender	Male	Count	268	51	7	326
		% within Gender	82.2%	15.6%	2.1%	100.0%
Female	Count	308	63	3	374	
		% within Gender	82.4%	16.8%	0.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	576	114	10	700	
		% within Gender	82.3%	16.3%	1.4%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.361 ^a	2	.307
Likelihood Ratio	2.397	2	.302
N of Valid Cases	700		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.66.

It can be inferred from the chi-square test, the calculated p-value is insignificant at 5.% level of significance (.307), with regard to teaching competence levels in while-reading skills and gender. It is demonstrated that almost an equal number of respondents (82.4%) females and (82.2%) males possessed 'average levels' of while-reading teacher competence with respect to gender. Hence, the hypothesis formulated is **accepted**.

HO₃ : There is no statistically significant difference between the levels of teacher competencies in developing post-reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their **gender**.

Table showing post-reading skill levels and gender

		Crosstab			Total	
		Post Reading Levels				
		Average	High	Low		
Gender	Male	Count	235	88	3	326
		% within Gender	72.1%	27.0%	0.9%	100.0%
Female	Count	273	99	2	374	
		% within Gender	73.0%	26.5%	0.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	508	187	5	700	
		% within Gender	72.6%	26.7%	0.7%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.400 ^a	2	.819
Likelihood Ratio	.400	2	.819
N of Valid Cases	700		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.33.

It can be inferred from the chi-square test, the calculated p-value is insignificant at 5.% level of significance (.819), with regard to teaching competence levels in post-reading skills and gender. It is demonstrated that almost an equal number of respondents (73.0%) females and (72.1%) males possessed 'average levels' of post-reading teacher competence with respect to gender. Hence, the hypothesis formulated is **accepted**.

HO₄ : There is no statistically significant difference between the levels of teacher competencies in developing reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their **gender**.

Table showing reading skill levels and gender

Crosstab

		Total Skill Level			Total	
		Average	High	Low		
Gender	Male	Count	314	4	8	326
		% within Gender	96.3%	1.2%	2.5%	100.0%
Female		Count	354	11	9	374
		% within Gender	94.7%	2.9%	2.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	668	15	17	700
		% within Gender	95.4%	2.1%	2.4%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.441 ^a	2	.295
Likelihood Ratio	2.558	2	.278
N of Valid Cases	700		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.99.

It can be inferred from the chi-square test, the calculated p-value is insignificant at 5.% level of significance (.295), with regard to teaching competence levels in total reading skills and gender. It is indicated that almost an equal number of respondents (96.3%) males and (94.7%) males possessed 'average levels' of total reading teacher competence with respect to gender. Hence, the hypothesis formulated is **accepted**.

Major findings

1. The results of the study demonstrated that there is no statistically significant difference between the levels of teacher competencies in developing pre- reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender.
2. The results indicated that no significant difference between the levels of teacher competencies in developing while- reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender.
3. It was also found that no significant difference between the levels of teacher competencies in developing while-reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender.
4. Further no significant difference was found between the levels of teacher competencies in developing total reading skills of Secondary school learners in the State of Telangana with special reference to their gender.

Educational Implications

The educational implications from the results of this study cannot be understated. The findings of the present study are of practical as well as theoretical importance to teachers, as well as to the policy makers.

The findings of this research provide insight to *teachers* seeking to develop their competence in developing pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading as well as total reading skills.

The results holds some implications even for *students*. They should be able to perceive the various themes involved in developing reading skills – pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading and total reading skills.

The *policy makers* should also take into consideration of teachers as well as students' needs and prepare curricular adaptations which are viable to enhance teacher competence in developing reading skills among students.

Suggestions for further Research

1. A similar study can be conducted with a larger group of respondents to have in- depth knowledge on enhancing teacher competence in developing reading skills.
2. There is a need to explore the utility of various teaching strategies other than the investigated strategies in this research.
3. An explorative study can be taken up on the perceptions of students on the deficiencies they face during reading comprehension process.

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