

## An Investigation to Improve Reading Skills through Newspapers among Intermediate Students

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**Abstract**

English is a language that has won the international significance in every field of life from teaching and learning to business world. The current paper aimed to improve reading skills through different sources among students, explore the difference between students' reading habits in control and experimental groups, and investigate the difference in the performance between regular and irregular newspaper readers. The study was experimental with control and experimental design randomly selected intermediate students from Public Sector College, in Bahawalpur City. The control group used traditional text book reading method. The experimental group was allotted different assignments of reading newspapers. The students used to read newspaper daily one hour during college time. After six weeks' reading, the test named, Reading Assessment Skills Checklist (RASC) was applied. The t-test results show that experimental group students have higher performance than that of control group students. The intermediate students who used to read the newspapers regularly performed better in the test as compared with the students who read the newspapers irregularly. It is suggested that newspaper reading should be encouraged among students to improve their reading habits.

**Keywords:** Newspaper Reading, Performance of Students, Reading Proficiency

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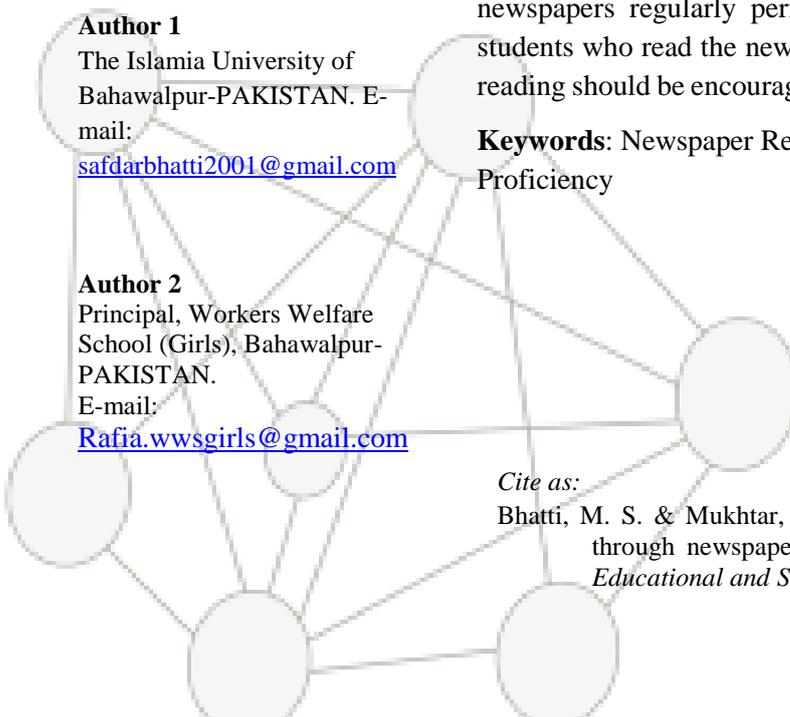
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## INTRODUCTION

In developing countries like Pakistan, the literacy rate is still disappointing even after many decades of independence. The rural areas are more effected regarding such situation. The intermediate level students are unable to speak correct English Language (Kannan, 2009). The grammar responsiveness, background knowledge, words' vocabulary, and textual experiences are essential in understanding written texts. There are so many factors which affect the performance of students towards English Reading skills. Students just study to pass the exams and most of them prepare specific areas of syllabus so that they can solve the quantity of questions in paper.

Moreover, English reading is the most neglected part of the English language learning because it has no marks in exams and teachers never bother to have reading test from students. Mostly teachers are not well qualified in their specific subject and it directly effects on learning of students. Teachers get a job through high marks in degrees rather than experience of teaching in particular subject. Reading skills have vital role for the success of students at school (Jarvis & Pastuszka, 2008). To calculate, students who can do extremely well in schools are those who have better reading and receiving reassurance (Yubune, Kanda, & Tabuchi, 2007). Jose and Raja (2011) recommend that reading have immense importance for children in secondary schools. A sad thing is that schools offer the chances in improving reading skills (Bangs, 2011). The current studies in language teaching may be enhanced through print media at secondary level (Bax, 2011). It is observed that most of teachers in rural areas are unable to pronounce many English words so their students also faced problem to read efficiently.

Many teachers are unaware by reading techniques and could not help their students to teach perfectly. ESL students of rural areas cannot pronounce the words accurately, unaware how to pronounce vowels and consonants rightly. It is observed that they feel shy while reading English rather than Urdu. Reading problems are lack of self-esteem, lack of phonological awareness, lack of knowledge of orthographic and sight words (Kilpatrick, 2015). Phonemic responsiveness is tough for ELLs as they have enough experiences with English language (Irujo, 2007). ESL students at intermediate level in rural areas of Pakistan have lack of accuracy, fluency, phonological awareness, and sight words problems while reading English Language from book and no one bother to resolve this problem in future because there is no check and balance for reading skill in exams. In the present day world, a large number of people around the globe preferred to learn English language increasingly (Schramma & Srinivasan, 2015).

By learning English language which is the lingua franca of the world, the people of developing countries like Pakistan are trying their best to become the part of the developed world, (House, 2003; Jenkins, 2013). However, among the four language skills, reading is the most neglected and difficult skills in Pakistani context (Haider, 2012). Newspapers are the best source of learning. They have their educational benefits. Readers of inspiring newspapers are clever, dynamic and preferred educated among researchers. Newspapers help in improving knowledge, awareness and reading habits. Newspaper readers become the part of good study habits in a specialized area (Kumar, Singh, & Siddiqui, 2011). Newspapers help us in spreading beautiful ideas and future understanding. Reading NEWS papers may help us gather great deal of vocabulary

and increase our reading aptitudes. Asokan and Dhanavandan (2013) showed that professionals used the newspapers for improving their general knowledge.

### **Review of Literature Review**

Reading is an amazing activity for human interaction. According to Akanda, Hoq, and Hasan (2013), it is admitted fact that language reading is an unchallenged way of mental exercise. Reading of newspaper is a familiar to influence readers in exploring of knowledge (Majumder & Hasan, 2013). It is a decent source of learning and vocabulary. English is dialect which is utilized as a part of our language classrooms. Presently the inquiries emerge that how we can enhance English dialect in learning and teaching. The students who read the English newspapers daily had higher level of reading and confidence (Nagashetti & Kenchakkanavar, 2015). The fundamental answer is that through reading abilities. It is appropriately said that books and newspapers are the best wellspring of learning. Newspaper is the social action to speak with others. It shapes our character. Reflects social esteems, physical condition and culture of a general public and makes the collaboration simple and conceivable.

Daily papers are apparatus for instructive and individual strengthening. Daily papers are the best hotspots for the data and advancement in each field. Daily papers need to wind up noticeably more free, more practical translator of data. It helps for the advancement of aptitudes for the scholarly and individual strengthening. In the 21st century daily papers have more critical on the grounds that they give worldwide data to each individual whether he/she is businessperson, government official, retailer, educator and understudy. Daily papers are one of only a handful couple of wellsprings of data that are thorough, interconnected, and offered in one configuration. Daily papers assume a basic part in battling the issue of specialization of data introduction for the instructive advancement; daily paper is the primary hotspots for the improvement of understudies and additionally educator. It is likewise useful to the educator for powerful instructing. The students should have the capacity to foresee patterns to create proper methodologies for proficient improvement, professional determination, particular work, and monetary arranging and endeavor.

Daily papers in the classroom advance basic considering. Basic intuition capacities must be produced if students are presented to fortifying data about which testing inquiries. Reading daily newspapers help students to create vocabulary and access to verbatim transcripts. Daily papers give utilization of the data reading, basic considering, logical abilities, and amalgamation aptitudes required for understanding. Daily papers assist students with making associations among various fields, subjects, points, issues, and occasions, and henceforth enable them to ask the correct inquiries. Daily papers must empower understudies, proclamations, practices, and hands-on issues of competitors, and give literal transcripts. It likewise empower to understudies for reading the writings of essential addresses, official statements, articulations, and reports so they can reach their own inferences (Denish, 2009).

An ability is learnt and fortified in a way acknowledged for each situation naturally (Blaah & Bennett, 1993). The abilities are continued till the proficiency level was acquired (Aksaçlıoğlu, 2005). When reading, which is the fundamental way of intellect is changed into reading propensity. The propensity for reading is the demonstration of reading being done all through life in a steady,

general and basic way because it is a personal need and source of joy (Yılmaz, 1993). The propensity for reading is the premise of long lasting learning. It is vital for the demonstration of reading to be led consistently all through life (Odabaş, Odabaş&Polat, 2008). The college which is the most extreme phase of formal training is a period when youngsters complete the demonstration of reading the most regularly and essentially. This period is a beneficial period for the securing of getting a charge out of, mindfulness and cognizance in reading (Yılmaz, Köse,&Korkut, 2009). College youth are the young individuals matured between 17-25, who are accepting an extraordinary youth culture, and will be pioneers of society. The way that they are proficient, head and chief applicants without boundaries, is the most essential emblem that makes college youth particular from others (Yazıcı, 2003).

The nature of the enthusiasm for reading and propensity for reading of instructor competitors among college students is a basic criticalness (Saracaloğlu, et al., 2003). The teachers regularly train the youngsters with the propensity for reading. In every aspect of instruction, around there it is the teachers who are role model, establishing frameworks, and formalizing the students. Students went familiar for past as well as future through reading the newspapers that investigate, interpret, question and can think fundamentally. Their reading abilities end up noticeably critical in students obtaining and building up these abilities. In the realm of today, where information is quickly expanding and science and innovation have made changes in human life be important, it can be watched that it has turned out to be mandatory for people to ceaselessly enhance themselves in both their expert and social lives. In the age, where training and "long lasting learning" have turned into an unquestionable requirement for expert and profession improvement after formal instruction and particularly adjusting to transform, it is normal that college understudies have the propensity for reading, which is among the criteria of social and individual advancement, at an abnormal state. In this manner, the assurance of reading propensities for instructor competitors and people getting training in the field of history, among college students, in zones they require and enhancing themselves for the duration of their lives has been thought to be vital.

The idea "proficiency" has been characterized in different courses until today. The assortment in needs and the variety in conditions have prompted these distinctive definitions (Güneş, 1994). Regular proficiency approach concentrates on fundamental reading and composing aptitudes, for example, the information of letter set (single letters) and phonetic mindfulness (Flewitt, 2008). This prompts the discernment that in expansive terms education is tied in with composing and reading the composed writings (Reinking, 1994). Proficiency is essentially characterized as "the capacity to peruse and state" (Thomas, 1994).

Reading is one's mental practice towards subject matter. Reading implies breaking down the content made out of letters and try to translate it. It is a procedure through which one consumes what he reads and makes its use in real life situation. Reading is the best learning motivation through which an individual can enhance basic understanding about the world. Reading is characterized as a procedure of seeing printed and composed words through intellect structures, interpreting and grasping them, in an informative way with printed and composed images, collection, clarification, and response process comprising of some perceptual and subjective exercises (Yagcıoğlu&Deger, 2002). Daily newspapers are storage facility of learning. General learning is most important piece of instruction. Reading of daily newspaper is valuable forever support to create reading behavior, procuring information, refreshing current news and familiarity

with social interaction. They have an imperative part in students' life and education. Reading of daily paper familiarized the readers' storage facility of learning on consistently premise (Majumder & Hasan, 2013). A propensity for reading daily paper is most basic fundamental ability. It isn't just builds our insight, but also changes our life styles and communication. Asokan and Dhanavandan (2013) reading is an amazing action for person on the globe. Akanda, Hoq, and Hasan (2013) illustrate reading is considered as vital for changing general attitude of a person. The greater part of respondents routinely read daily papers. Majumder and Hasan (2013) discover in their investigation a large portion of respondents from the males supported reading newspapers. Respondents are most favored best medium of printed material is games and amusement news.

The most vital motivation behind daily paper reading is to enhance general information of respondents. Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014) clarified reading propensities among students and its impact on academic performance and reading ability. At long last the examination suggests that guardians should help their youngsters' to enhance the reading abilities when they are youthful, in light of the fact that it serves to life. Reading skill can be explained as "a cognitive ability which enables a human being to use while interacting with texts" (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). Reading is a means of language acquisition, communication, and of sharing information and ideas (Wikipedia, 2018). Reading is the development of interpretation written symbols to make meaning or to have new information. Reading drills more on our sense of reasoning which enables us to interpret and understand what we have read.

Learning a second language is a meaningful comprehensive process (Straus, 2015). The students' find difficulty in reading ambiguous and difficult words. Sometime they lose interest of reading the text for high vocabulary associated with the tests (Azikiwe, 2007, Straus, 2015). Children having difficulty in reading the ambiguous words are guided always by their teachers who clarifies English language words.

The study of Rasinki, (2017) revealed that children with short and precise text use mental expression to understand young children vocabulary (Azikiwe, 2007). Reading skills is the capability of a person to read, understand and grasp written words on a page of an article or any other reading material. The possession of a good reading skill will enable the individual to be able to assimilate a written work within a short period while reading. Developing a reading skill for a human being is everlasting. And while reading at any given time the individual is expected to also think critically on the particular topic or subject to understand the point of the writer. A person, who desired to develop reading skill, has to do continuous reading. Pakistani ESL students engage to sharpen reading strategies with thought-provoking activities such as graphic organizers, reading booklets, fill-ins, multiple choice exercises, creative expression, mixed reviews, and more.

### **Sub-Skills of Reading**

A student who reads smoothly and with confidence may be unable to summarize the plot. According to Margaret (2017), an ESL student who had worked over each word may ask insightful questions. Whereas motivation of an individual, backdrop experiences, vocabularies and home support all influence reading success, precise teaching of specific skills can close the gap between high achieving readers and those who effort, and facilitate every student to get better

(Margaret,2017).Manoj (2018), described the difference between skimming and scanning precisely as:

<b>Skimming</b>	<b>Scanning</b>
Fast reading.	Grasping a specific word from the given list.
Search out main idea.	Rapid way to locate specific information.
Usually done with unrecognized materials.	Usually done with materials you know something about.
Title, subtitles, subheading and illustrations important.	Searching for key words or ideas
Readers frequently read first and last paragraph vigilantly	Often requires to go back to the scanned documents again
Works well to find dates, names, places and review graphs, tables and charts	Works well when we look for bold italics or colored texts

Manojand Judy (2018) differentiates intensive and extensive reading precisely as:

<b>Intensive reading</b>	<b>Extensive reading</b>
Reading a shorter text books	Reading a longer text books
Reading for comprehension, grammar and syntax.	Reading for pleasure and general understanding.
Emphasis on detailed information	Emphasis on overall meaning
Speed of reading is slow and translating the words.	Speed of reading is fast and fluent-understanding the gist.
Teacher is an assessor.	Teacher is a role model.

## Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were:

1. To improve reading skills through different sources among students.
2. To explore the difference between students' reading habits in control and experimental groups.
3. To investigate the difference in the performance between regular and irregular newspaper readers.

## Research Questions

Following research questions were made to conduct the study:

RQ1: How do students improve reading skills through different sources?

RQ2: Is there exists any significant difference between students' reading habits in control and experimental groups?

RQ3: Is there any significant difference in the performance between regular and irregular newspaper readers?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study was experimental in nature. Quantitative research method was used to conduct the study.

### Research Participants

The population of the study comprised of all the intermediate level students studying in Bahawalpur City. Two groups were selected randomly on the basis of their achievement scores in the class test. They were arranged in controlled and experimental groups. Eighty intermediate students were selected on the basis of results. The controlled group was taught through traditional book reading method. The experimental group was trained through reading newspapers daily. They spent one hour daily in reading newspaper. After one hour practice of reading the newspaper, the participants were assessed in reading skills made by the researchers on the basis of reading activities. The results were recorded. The experiment continued for six weeks. After completing six weeks experiment, the comprehensive test was taken by the students of both groups.

### Research Tool

The self-developed Questionnaire, reading proficiency test (RPT) was used by the researchers. In addition, the students' current knowledge test sheet was used. The factors that were kept in mind while making the research questionnaire in the form of factors. They were reading habits, understanding, confidence increased, drawing meanings and interest in reading ability.

## Data Analysis

The SPSS version 23 was used to analyze the data. The mean distribution was calculated by using frequency table and standard deviation. The following table showed the different sources that were used by the participants for improving reading skills.

### RQ1: How do students improve reading skills through different sources?

**Table 1.** *Mean and Standard Deviation of Reading Sources*

Descriptive	Newspapers	Book Reading	E. Media
Mean	3.97	3.90	3.10
SD	.89	.71	.68

The Table 1 showed that the students used newspapers at their first priority to improve the reading ability. The second most important source of enhancing the reading ability was book reading. Some students also used electronic media but it was their third priority.

### RQ2: Is there exists any significant difference between students' reading habits in control and experimental groups?

**Table 2.** *Comparison of Reading Habits between Control and Experimental Group*

Indicator	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Reading	Control	40	3.12	.70	3.709	.002**
Habits	Experimental	40	3.80	1.06		

\*\*p<0.01

The t-test result in Table 2 applied to investigate the difference between control and experimental intermediate students reading habits of the newspapers. There exists a significant difference between controlled and experimental groups of students in reading the newspapers. The intermediate students in experimental group performed better in the test as compared with the students who participated in controlled group. The mean score of experimental group students (M=3.80, sd=1.06) and control group students (M=3.12, sd=.70), t=78(3.709). The significant value is p<0.01. The mean achievement score showed that the experimental group students have higher performance than that of control group students. They read the newspaper to improve their performance.

### RQ3: Is there any significant difference in the performance between regular and irregular newspaper readers?

**Table 3.** Comparison of Achievement between Regular and Irregular newspaper Readers

Readers	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Regular	40	3.80	.50	1.390	.004**
Irregular	40	3.50	2.19		

\*\*p<0.01

The t-test result in table 3 investigated the difference between regular and irregular intermediate students' achievement while reading the newspapers. There exists a significant difference between regular and irregular users of newspapers. The intermediate students who used to read the newspapers regularly performed better in the test as compared with the students who read the newspapers irregularly. The mean score of regular students (M=3.80, sd .50) and irregular students (M=3.50, sd=2.19),  $t=78(1.390)$ . The significant value is  $p<0.01$ . The mean achievement score showed that the regular students have higher performance than that of irregular students. They read the newspaper to improve their performance.

## FINDINGS

Experimental group students showed interest in reading newspapers better than that of controlled group students. Regular newspaper readers performed better than that of irregular newspaper readers. Regular students learnt their lessons quickly as they have trained in reading the subject matter. Most of the students told that newspapers are unique and interesting way of learning. They participated without any hesitation in classroom discussion and communication process. They themselves took part in the study. As they have learnt how to select the content for reading and make assignments. The majority of students read daily newspapers in English language. The dominant part of time spent perusing daily newspapers is one to two hours day by day. Most of the students read daily newspapers to get data and enhance their general information. The students like to read article segments, trailed by games and legislative issues. The current study supported the results of (Nagashetti & Kenchakkanavar, 2015).

## Suggestions and Recommendations

Time may be increased for reading newspapers. The students should be encouraged to participate in reading activities. Medium of instructions should be in English so that they may practice the reading skills in their everyday life situations. Parents and teachers role towards the use of reading newspapers is significant. They should encourage their kids and students to read the newspapers regularly to keep themselves abreast of what is happening around them. Reading training courses

may be arranged for improving reading habits of students. Daily papers are in charge of making and producing reading abilities among college students. Daily papers are basic for college students because of the marvelous use of data distributed as daily papers in various languages specifically at the national and international levels. There ought to be sufficient daily papers to quicken reading tendencies. This research empowers administrators to comprehend the significance of reading daily newspapers and enhances the students' communication abilities.

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