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EFFECTIVENESS OF ORAL REPEATED READING WITH AUTISTIC LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Ayhan KAHRAMAN[1]*
Cumhur TEKŞEN[2]

Abstract

The study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of oral repeated reading on children with autism while teaching English. Its findings might serve as a basis for the development of reading instructional materials in English and help English teachers prepare related lesson plans for such impaired students. Every day the number of people with ASD is increasing and what's more, most of them should go on studying with their disabled peers in public schools. The researcher only ventured to study 3 male student respondents enrolled in a Primary School in Turkey who were medically diagnosed with autism with speech disfluencies and learning / reading comprehension problems. The researcher combined Dolch Sight Word Test and the Woodcock – Johnson Test to measure their reading and learning abilities. It was aimed to evaluate students' cognitive processes as well as their reading performance. The results were calculated by the Word Recognition (WR) test formula and displayed on tables. Finally, to determine CWA's reading levels Gickling and Armstrong measuring technique was used. Test results of the study showed that oral repeated reading technique can be effectively used with such children to increase their reading fluency and comprehension of the vocabulary in English and as an intervention to increase overall fluency.

Keywords: CWA, Oral Reading Repetition, Reading Fluency, Language Learning

SÖZLÜ TEKRAR EDEN OKUMALARIN DİL ÖĞRENEN OTİZİMLİ ÇOCUKLARDA ETKİLERİ

Öz

Çalışma, otizmli çocuklara İngilizce öğretirken sözlü tekrarlarla yapılan okumanın onların İngilizce öğrenmedeki faydasını ve bu bulgular sayesinde İngilizce öğretim materyalleri geliştirilerek İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ders planları oluşturabilmesine katkı sağlamak amacıyla yapılmıştır. Her geçen gün Otizm Spektrum Bozukluğu olan kişilerin sayısı artmakta ve dahası, bu bireylerin pek çoğu devlet okullarında normal öğrencilerle okumaya devam etmek durumundadırlar. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de bir ilkokulda okuyan, doktorlar tarafından hafif otizm teşhisi konulmuş ama konuşma – okuma bozukluğu çeken 3 erkek öğrenci ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu öğrenciler çocuk doktoru tarafından hafif-orta derece otizm'li olarak tanılanmış ve yaşları sırasıyla 8, 9 ve 8 şeklindedir. Araştırmacı; Dolch Side Word Testini ve Woodcock – Jonhson testini bu Otizmli öğrencilerin, okuma ve öğrenme becerilerini ölçmek için bir araya getirdi. Burada öğrencilerin okuma performansı ile aynı zamanda bilişsel süreçlerinin değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Sonuçlar Word Recognition (WR) ile formüle edilerek tablolaştırılmıştır. Son olarak Otizmli öğrencilerin, öğrenme düzeylerini tanılamak için Gickling ve Armstrong tanılama tekniği kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları, sözlü tekrarlanan okumaların, otizmli öğrencilere belirli bir metinde İngilizce akıcılık ve kavrama yeteneğini ve İngilizce'de genel akıcılık ve anlama becerisini arttırmada etkili bir yöntem olarak kullanılabileceğini göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Otizmli Çocuklar, Sözlü Okuma Tekrarları, Okumada Akıcılık, Dil Öğrenme

[1] Doç. Dr., Kütahya Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı, ORCID 0000-0002-3410-6351
* **Sorumlu Yazar** (Corresponding Author): ayhank43@gmail.com
[2] Öğretmen, MEB. ORCID 0000-0001-6939-2135
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Introduction

According to the Autism Society of America (ASA) (2006), autism is the fastest growing developmental disability with projected annual growth of 10% to 17%. So, every day we meet a lot of people who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and most of them do not have the chance to have a special education especially to learn English. Autism is one of the fastest growing disabilities in Turkey, too. In 1985 the percentage of autism was one to every 2500 births. In 2013, the percentage of autism was one to every 88 births. In 2016 the percentage of autism was one to every 45 births (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services). In Turkey, researchers believe that there are 1.500.000 people who live with autism and according to seed autism foundation; between the ages 0-18, there are 350.000 students and only 21.000 of them can reach special education and the rest have to go to mainstream schools.

Typically developing children are usually considered to be good language learners and do not have any difficulties in acquiring a second language. Yet, Children with Autism (CWA) seem to have barriers, when they are brought into any situation where they will make their own generalizations and reviews about the rule system. They prefer to be given rules and expressions, so they can create their own sentences to express themselves (McLean, 1990). In such patterns, while they are speaking in target language, they always try to monitor their speech. Their replies are not produced naturally because they try to build a sentence by following the grammatical rules putting the words into proper places. They control their speech all the time. It is also difficult to decode words for those children who are learning to read. The process of reading may turn out to be a challenge for them, and thus, may require additional time to be allocated for decoding and result in "labored reading" leaving less time for comprehension (Ruskey, 2011).

However, being able to read effectively means understanding the written words as well as comprehending them while reading. Since, by reading, we aim to decode symbols with the purpose of creating some kind of meaning. Reading and comprehending a text can be much more challenging in teaching English to children with autism (CWA) since they have additional difficulties such as organizing their thoughts in any conversation. It takes time for them to process simple information due to their sensory processes. However, they have the ability to echo the information given to them or repeat immediately. When given a task on reading a material, they can recognize words, but fail to answer comprehensive questions.

All in all, there have been less research focused on the instructional practices of Children with Autism that enhance their academic achievement and very few researches on CWA on the effectiveness of reading practices in teaching English. Hence, this practical research was conducted to understand and identify the effectiveness of **"repeated oral reading"** on fluency and comprehension in teaching English to children with autism. Thus, with some learned interventions, practical demonstration and some reading guidelines, these children have been shown to progress in acquiring and improving their reading proficiency.

1. Literature Review

Acquisition of reading in first as well as second language has been shown to be related to a variety of factors such as phonological awareness (Gough, Ehri & Treiman, 1992), depth and size of the vocabulary among others (Schmidt, 2010). Wider vocabulary size may help develop better text comprehension, and thus eventually leads to automaticity which is closely linked to reading fluency (Segalowitz & Hulstijn, 2005). In his seminar work, Samuel (1979) demonstrated that re-reading helped to improve word recognition and reading fluency because "as reading speed increased, word recognition errors decreased [and] the initial speed of reading each new selection was faster than initial speed on the previous selection."

Having a reading fluency is considered to be a sine-qua-non in characterizing the qualities of a good reader. Readers are usually expected to have the necessary skills and the competencies in reading fluently. As the ultimate goal of special education is to reach normalization and placement in the general education, equipping learners with necessary skills in reading is one of them. To achieve this, teachers may employ a variety of instructional methods and strategies in classroom settings to help CWA, one of which is oral repeated reading. As proven in his previous studies Willcutt (2004) oral repeated reading has been shown to enhance the fluency and comprehension of CWA.

In short, Oral Repeated Reading is an instructional method in English used to developed automaticity in reading. This method is helpful for improving reading fluency because it allows the readers to practice a text over and over until the text becomes more and more familiar, and the readers can decode the text automatically, giving more cognitive capacity for comprehension. Similarly, Therrien (2006) stated also that repeated readings are an "effective and authentic" way to improve reading fluency of English in the classroom as the student keeps reading the text over and over until "a desired goal or criterion is met". It has also been shown that repeated reading cannot only improve reading fluency but it is also effective in improving other facets or reading success (Therrien, 2006).

Although an examination of related work would reveal that there are not very many relevant studies conducted, it is important to mention basic attempts and approaches to better understand the rationale behind similar studies. For example, the study by Kanner (1943) is one of the initial studies in this field which tries simply to state the characteristics of these children. In this work, he illustrated the characteristics of 11 children whose behaviour epitomized a new syndrome such as autistic disturbance of effective contact. Kanner identified a number of characteristics shared between the 11 children, which included limited socialization, a greater interest in objects than people, instances of echolalia sensitivity to certain sensory stimuli and a desire for sameness and or repetition. These kinds of children have difficulty (a) communicating with speech or with gestures, (b) understanding what others say, (c) starting or continuing a conversation,(d) using his own sentences, and instead, may repeat what others say (referred to as echolalia), lack make-believe or pretend-play skills.

Entienza (1996) studied the intervention program for children with autism especially with respect to eight components namely, 1) referral, 2) assessment, 3) intervention, 4) family involvement, and support services. Finding showed some lack in these areas, and that there is an urgent need to upgrade intervention programs, for these children.

Ying (2003) in her study about "Preferences in Language Development Strategy for Autism Children," stated that it is necessary to provide computer and technological devices to further augment the modes of communication. Moreover, she stated that a sign language and gestural communication training program to be conducted further enhanced the teachers' competencies.

Bullard (2003) studied the process of learning to read between child with autism and his non – autistic twin. The study designed an intervention which subjected the CWA to memorization of sight words using repetition and sequential steps. This was thought to help in the comprehension of the text read as emergent reader. The result is that the CWA comprehended little of the text he read. With non – autistic child, she utilized variety of strategies ranging from word level cues to complex cues, which helped the child, comprehend better. And the result was the non – autistic child was able to gain meaning from the text and transfer his knowledge from familiar to unfamiliar texts.

Willcutt (2004) explored the effectiveness of Oral Repeated Reading on English language learners. Based on the results of her study, the fluent reader program has been proven to be an effective method of reading fluency for readers at the elementary level. The fluent reader program has

shown evidence that it is effective in increasing the number of words students read per minute as well as decreasing total reading time.

Whalon (2004) studied the effects of Reciprocal Questioning intervention on Reading comprehension of CWA. The results of her study showed an increase in the performance on standardized comprehensive measures of CWA. Social validity data also indicated that CWA and their general education peers enjoyed the intervention and parents have perceived a change in their child's language, reading fluency and reading comprehension.

Schmidt (2012) explored the effects of modelling to enhance the social responses of children with special needs. In his study, video self-modelling was found to significantly enhance the social response of these children. She concluded that the level of functioning of the child could also influence the quality of improvement of the child's social responses.

It is known that typical children do not have any barriers for learning their first language, but CWA especially educated at government schools do often have barriers and difficulties while learning a foreign language, and even many of them, losing their hope, and want to give up going to school or learning a foreign language in the school. While comparing the process of learning a foreign language between typical developing students and CWA, neurological, psychomotor, cognitive, and affective considerations should be borne in mind.

This study focused on the difficulties of children with autism with speech dysfluencies and reading comprehension problem in learning English and will come up with an oral repeated reading program for effective management of children with speech dysfluencies and reading comprehension problem.

This study set out with the hypothesis that the use of "oral repeated reading" for teaching a child with autism, as a management tool would improve and enhance their fluency and comprehension in reading in English which was anchored on the theory of S. Jay Samuels (1979) proceeding AIP in Reading (Automatic Information Processing). This model of information processing in reading is said to be transformed through a series of stages linking to visuals. In brief, to able to be fluent, the reader must become automatic at interpreting words in a text.

As stated earlier, there were very few researches on children with autism on the effectiveness of reading practices in teaching English. In 2006, William J. Therrien had a research on fluency and comprehension that advanced as a result of using methods on repeated reading. In his research, he mentioned that repeated reading is an evidenced-based strategy designed to increase children's reading fluency and comprehension. This has also been theorized by La Berge and Samuels (1979) that reading fluency problems routed from readers' poor decoding skills. Additionally, in year 2005, Christy L. Magnuson mentioned that children with autism may be able to learn, purpose efficiently and achieve some notch of individuality given the right early intervention.

However, as far as we searched, this area is not well studied in Turkish context and the findings might be very important for the field and serve a basis for the authorities, language teachers, and material developers and especially for such children and their families. Therefore, this case study intended to determine the effects of oral repeated reading on fluency of children with autism. Basically, it tried to answer the following questions:

1- Does the oral repeated reading enhance Turkish CWA students' foreign language reading fluency?

2- Does oral repeated reading improve CWA students' foreign language comprehension?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The researcher only ventured to conduct the study with three students who were medically diagnosed with autism with speech dysfluencies and reading comprehension problems in English. The students were at ages 8, 9, and 8 and their grades were 2, 3 and 2, respectively and enrolled in the mainstream education program at a Primary School in Kütahya. The respondents in this study were selected on the basis of their ability to understand and follow simple instructions. They were able to communicate and express themselves and were free from seizures.

2.2. Data Collection

The study began in March 2015 and ended in June 2015 (the duration was nearly 12 weeks). The students who participated in the study were from Kütahya Şehitler Primary School for Non - Special Education. The study was conducted for two lessons hours (40 + 40 = 80 minutes) each day unless a meeting or a similar gathering required the session to be cancelled. The practice was three or four times a week. It is worth noting that this period of time was when students had a choice of selecting literacy activities such as practice reading, writing, or word work activities. In reality, the researcher could work with the children only three weeks in a month. The first weeks of the months were designed for the first reading (i.e. reading the target vocabulary selected from the CWA's English course book units), the second weeks of the months were evaluated as second reading, and third weeks were designed and evaluated for the third readings.

The content of the English course books of the children included ten units. Due to conditions of the participants and the limitations, it was not possible and not intended to use all the units of the English Course-books and just the first three units were included. The selection of the three first units was at random; however, the main criteria was to see whether these children had learned the needed vocabulary and are they able to recognise them in the same way as their peers do.

2.3. Instrumentation

This study especially aimed to discover the improvement in recognition of the target vocabulary of CWA students in English language using the Oral Repetition Technique. Therefore, first of all, the researcher needed a test measuring the reading ability of the CWA. In the USA, EU member countries and Israel there were some specific tests to measure learning and reading abilities in their mother tongue of the students; however in the literature and especially in Turkey there were no such tests to measure CWA students' foreign language vocabulary recognition. For that reason the researcher combined 2 tests to measure learning and reading abilities of CWA: a) the Dolch Sight Word Test (will be also called as Word Recognition Test abbreviated as WR Test) and b) the Woodcock – Johnson Test.

In year 1977, Woodcock – Johnson created this test to measure cognitive abilities of children and in year 2014, Woodcock-Johnson test IV called latest version of it and the test was to measure oral skills and overall cognitive skills of any aged from 2 to elder adults.

The Dolch Sight Word Test is the second assessment tool that evaluates learning the words and the reading ability of students. That is, it determines students' cognitive processes as well as their reading performance. It is an informal measurement technique that can assess the students' comprehension, vocabulary and word identification [recognition] skills in English.

Another assessment tool used in this study is Gickling and Armstrong measuring technique. By Gickling and Armstrong (1978) the reading skills in general is divided into three parts; if a reader has 80 to 90% of recognition percentage then it is called as frustration reading level; 91 to 97% of recognition percentage as instructional reading level and 98 to 100% of recognition percentage as independent level.

The study was divided into five main parts which included the preparation phase, pre-administration phase, intervention procedures, post-administration phase and analysis of the data.

In the preparation phase, firstly, the researcher has obtained the necessary permits for the research to be carried out.

In the pre-administration phase, the researcher prepared a special place for the kids and explained them what they will do in the lesson.

In intervention procedures, the researcher prepared around 20 flash cards for the students which should be recognised.

In the post-administration phase, the researcher carried out the Word Recognition Test by using the Oral Repeated Reading Technique: First reading (pre-test), the second reading and the third reading (post-test) stages. To see whether CWAs have recognised the words / vocabulary and made any progress by using oral repeated reading.

Finally after gathering the data, the results were displayed and discussed.

2.4. Interview

The researcher conducted an interview with the parents, special education teachers, and administrators who had direct contact with the students. The interview provided the researcher with the insight of the reading process that could not be directly observed in the study.

2.5. The Phases of Oral Repeated Reading Technique

2.5.1. First Reading (pre-test)

- The procedures were explained to the student,
- The student was asked to begin reading the selected words on the flash cards aloud,
- Whenever the child could not pronounce or recognise the word(s), s/he continued reading without stopping or intervention of the researcher. It means the researcher did not give or provide any help; the reading continued.
- The researcher's job was just to keep track of time and to fill in the table of word recognition as to whether the word had been recognised or not.

2.5.2. Second Reading

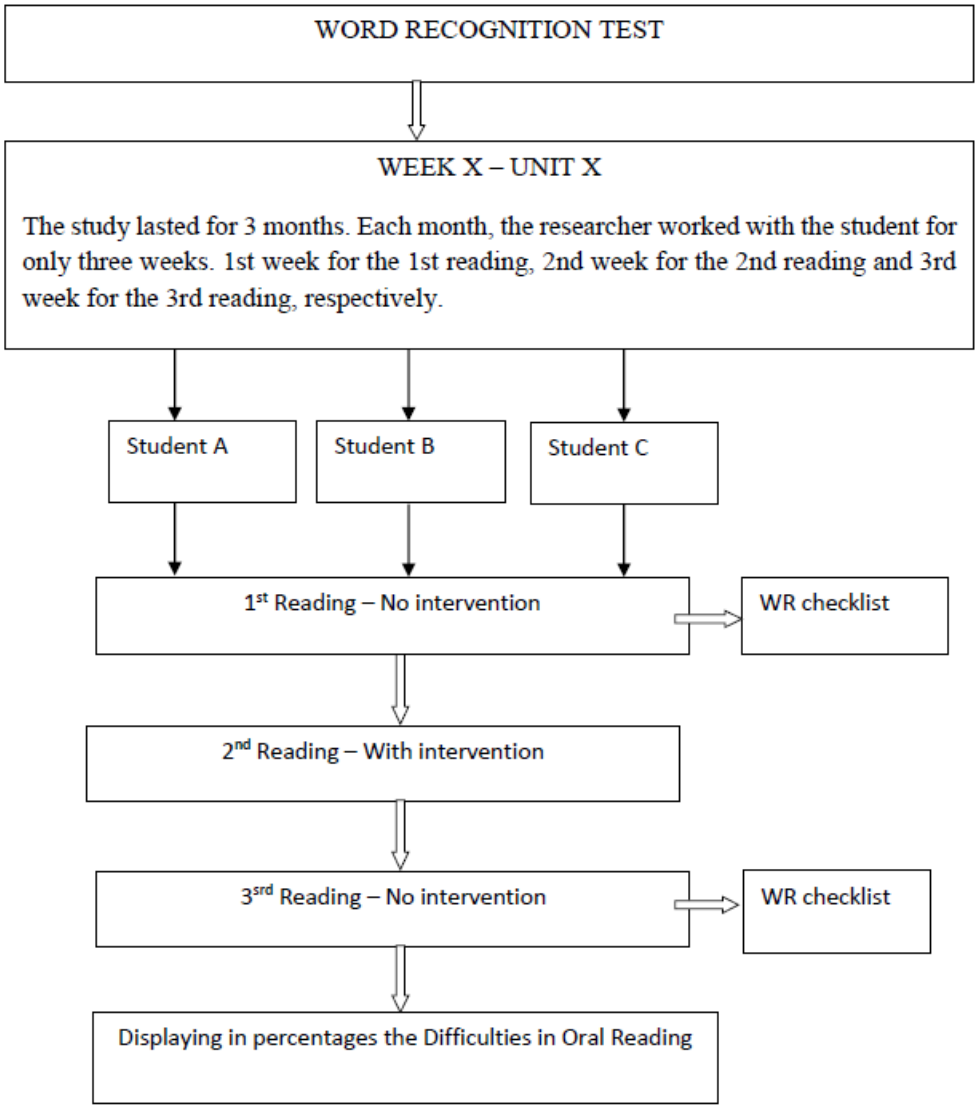
One week later, the same process as in the first reading was repeated again. However, if the student had any recognition and/or pronunciation problems this time the teacher provided feedback by repeating the word or words. That is an explicit feedback which has been given by an oral repetition until the student can utter the word correctly. The aim is also to find out whether the child recognises the meaning of the word, as well. Therefore some ccomprehension questions follows after this phase to check whether the student learned the meaning of the words or not.

2.5.3. Third Reading (post-test)

The first reading process was repeated again, however, again without any intervention. This time the researcher just showed the flash cards but did not give any comments on mispronunciation and misrecognition. That is, in this phase the researcher assessed the whole process and did not try to intervene to correct mispronunciation and/or teach the meaning of the words. He just filled the word recognition test table to check whether there was any progress in the treatment phases.

When the third reading phase was completed, the results of the three readings were calculated in percentages and graphed called as the Degree of Reading Difficulties Table (see table 1).

Figure 1: *Data Gathering Procedure*



3. Findings

Student A was an 8 years old male. This student was diagnosed by a Developmental Psychologist and Speech pathologist as having a mild autism, co-morbid with Selective Mutism; with this kind of disability, the student had difficulties in understanding questions, following instructions and using appropriate words. That is, the student had an information processing disorder.

Based on the anecdotal report of the reading teacher, Student A was a loner; he preferred to stay alone and made some sketches rather than to hold a book. Once the teacher asked questions regarding the flash cards, he could answer but showed nervousness and started to suffer. He showed passiveness in class and remained silent and talked/answered only if he wanted to do so.

As observed by the reading teacher and researcher as the pre-assessment test was conducted in March 2015 student A's reading fluency was choppy. He added the word "a' in front of his word when he reads (for example 'dislike' was read as 'a dislike'). Although student A did not have difficulty in reading and recognising the colours in English, he had specific problems with other lexical items like verbs or demonstrative adjectives.

His teacher added that student A has also heavy reading difficulties in class hours and stated that he struggles with math story problems or any kinds of directions and needs assistance to read them so he would understand what is expected. He was unable to comprehend printed symbols to a reasonable degree and was inadequate in dealing with the reading matter.

As seen in Table 1 below, the present reading level of Student A is improved from frustration level to instructional level. During the Pre-tests, the student was inadequate in dealing with the reading matter and recognized in total 82% of the words in the Word Lists and scored 50% in comprehension questions. However, the post-test results indicates a progression and showed that this student reached the instructional level by recognizing 93% of the words in the Word lists and scored 75% in the comprehension questions.

Additionally, the special educator and the school administrator gave some information about the participants. Especially the special educator said that: 'When I saw student A for the first time, I thought that he is deaf and dumb because he never spoke or listened to me, however, his classmates told to her that within this treatment process he spoke with the researcher.' This information was very surprising for the special educator since this child was not deaf and dumb and not just improved himself in language learning but also socialized in his school.

Student B is a 9 years old male. He is different from the other autistic students since he is a third grade student and began learning English in the second grade as the other students having their first encounter with a foreign language.

Based on the result of the psychological assessment of Student B, he has shown difficulty in generalizing and comprehending simple information which proves a child with intellectual disability significantly sub-average intellectual functioning and had deficit in his adaptive behaviour. He was diagnosed with moderate intellectual disability with mild autism. He manifests communication problem and cannot express himself.

The result s of the pre-test on the reading level, Student B belonged to the frustration level (80%) characterized by having inadequate background level for a topic and/or could not meet criteria for instructional assistance from a teacher. What's more, the post-test results for this student were very interesting. He is older than the other participants, that is, he is a third grade student and has been studying English for two years but could not show the desired progress in the treatment phase as it was expected and remained with 83% in the frustration level.

Student C is an 8 year old male. This student was also diagnosed having a mild autism, co-morbid with Selective Mutism; with this kind of disability, the student had difficulties in understanding questions, following instructions and using appropriate words. Additionally, he was diagnosed with specific health problem, called as dyslexia. We know this from the report by Language Development Psychologist and Speech Pathologist. As revealed in the medical record of Student C who had severe impairment in his social skills especially in following requests, jointly working at tasks and taking the role of another person, this justified that his health problem affected his spatial relationship and memory.

The significant progress was made by the student C. In Word Recognition Test, he lacked rhythm, had no regard for punctuations and showed signs of high anxiety but could improve himself and reached the instructional level (from 82% to 94%).

4. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data basically required a qualitative analysis. Frequent recording was done to keep track of the progress of the child in reading. Patterns of fluency and comprehension were established. For the reading levels and comprehension scores the frequency of a response and errors were recorded then computed. And, for criterion purposes the participants performed the

predetermined level of fluency before they moved on to the next reading level. The researcher used the formula given below to measure CWA reading levels:

$$\text{Word Recognition (WR)}: \frac{\text{No. of errors (E) x 100}}{\text{No. of words (N)}} = \%\ \text{of E} \quad (1)$$

Summary of the Degree of Reading Difficulties shows the overall (also total) degree of reading difficulties of the three students with autism in the first and the third reading as rated and displayed in Table1 below.

Table 1: *Summary of the Degree of Reading Difficulties*

Difficulties in Oral Reading	Student A 1st Reading Pre-test	Last Reading Post-test	Student B 1st Reading Pre-test	Last Reading Post-test	Student C 1st Reading Pre-test	Last Reading Post-test
Word by word reading	84%	94%	78%	81%	83%	94%
Addition	85%	95%	80%	83%	84%	95%
Omission	84%	94%	81%	85%	84%	95%
Repetition	80%	92%	78%	81%	81%	93%
Mispronunciation	76%	91%	80%	83%	78%	91%
Substitution	84%	94%	80%	83%	83%	94%
Total	**82%**	**93%**	**80%**	**83%**	**82%**	**94%**

According to data analysis and classroom observations, during the Pre-test, **student A** was inadequate in dealing with the reading matter and recognized 82% of the words in selected Word List and scored 50% in comprehension questions. However, the Post-test results showed a highly significant improvement in his performance. He was able to anticipate meaning and finger pointing, and he was able to recognize 93% of the words in the Word lists and scored 75% in the comprehension questions. That is, there was an improvement by the student A during the treatment phase (see Table 1 above). We should not forget that the instructional reading level is the highest level at which a reader is not independent, but has adequate background knowledge for a topic, and can access text quickly and with no or few errors.

The present reading level of Student B was remained in the frustration level and there was only few changes observed. Observations showed us that he had no regard for punctuation marks, lack of rhythm while reading, and therefore recognized **80%** of the words in the Word Lists and 47% was the score he got in comprehension questions (see Table 1). The post-test results were very surprising. Since student B failed to recognize 17 % of the words of the Word Recognition Test and scored 83% which indicated a very limited sight vocabulary. This might be also due to the fact that frustration reading levels include vocabulary for which a reader does not have adequate background level and/or cannot meet criteria for instructional levels of accuracy and rate.

Student C's initial reading level was similar to student A. During the Pre-test, he had comprehension difficulties, could not recognize ideas through sequencing, unable to understand step-by-step procedures and needed detailed prompting. In oral reading test, he lacked rhythm, no

regard for punctuations, had high pitched voice, stuttering, reversals and withdrawals from the reading situation by no eye-voice span; he showed signs of high anxiety and tensions and recognized **82%** of the words in the Word List and had a score of 45% in comprehension questions. During the Post test, however, the student could profitably be instructed and there were unnecessary head movements and he was able to recognize **94%** of the words in the Word Lists and got the score of 70% in the comprehension questions.

Based on the results, the weakness of each student with Autism in terms of Oral Repeated Reading has been identified and showed us that we as teachers should give more focus and attention to the mentioned weaknesses when using any kind of instructional materials since such students are not regular, typical developing students.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Revisiting the theory, students with autism face unique challenges in recognising written words and learning to read them but with targeted interventions and accommodations in reading instruction and assessment, these students can become proficient readers.

Considering the total results of the study, data showed that during the pre-tests, students A and C had the same difficulty levels in oral reading but student B had a bit lower scores. However, it should be noted that student B is a third grade student while student A and C were grade two. That is, he had an advantage over the other two since student B had English lessons in second grade and now he takes grade three English courses. It was expected that student B would perform better scores in these achievement tests. However, the results in table above are disparate. Student A and C reached the instructional reading level, but student B remained in frustration reading level.

According to Roundy & Roundy (2009), the diversity of academic ability, socio-economic status, and race and ethnic background, may dampen the positive influence of repeated reading on fluency. Therefore, before recommending the implementation of the repeated reading method, it is necessary to examine whether the method indeed produces increased fluency in classrooms composed of diverse learners. However, these factors do seem to have any influence on our participants.

Dizon (2000) in a similar line said that there is a need in the highly structured approaches in teaching children with autism. Structure is needed as physical setting or learning environment to minimize distraction. By designing specific work areas of the classroom, learning may be facilitated. In our case, such regulations were established for these children and findings show us that these facilitated and improved the learning process in some way.

Revisiting S. Jay Samuels (1979) ideas, we could also propose that while reading speed increases, word recognition error decreases. As the students continue to use this technique, the initial speed of reading each new selection is faster than initial speed on the previous selection as proven also with this study. This proved that CWA characteristics have a huge influence in the reading abilities as the results of the work of Samuels (1979) and others as stated in the literature review of this study.

Finally, based on the findings of this study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

Oral repeated reading can be used effectively with students with autism to increase reading fluency and comprehension in English on a particular vocabulary list or passage and as an intervention to increase overall fluency and comprehension ability in English.

The researcher believed that the most significant success in the English fluency strategy was all children with autism were able to read and master vocabulary lists and experience success and fun in reading them fluently. They were able to hear themselves read fluently and understand how it sounds and feels.

It is important that a full range of instructional approaches be considered within the variety of contexts that address developmental differences in how children best learn to comprehend.

Oral repeated reading is more effective in improving reading rate in the short term when a high amount of overlapping words is present. If stories have few shared words, it is not more effective than an equivalent amount of non-repetitive reading.

6. Recommendations

Based from the findings and conclusion revealed in this study, the researcher would like to recommend the following:

Children with autism spectrum disorders can be well educated given the proper supports.

The teacher involved in the reading process must first identify the level and reading needs of each student, before recommending any reading materials for students with ASD.

The researchers also recommend that classroom teachers should intentionally conduct intervention or small group instruction to improve fluency using repeated reading. The data gathered confirmed that reading, accuracy and speed in English all increase with the use of this method.

A child who is deficient in the comprehension of written words, and with poor or very limited sight vocabulary in English may be given a help by using remedial reading.

It would be very easy to implement this type of practice not only in the regular classroom but also in the special education environment. Thus, the researcher was convinced that repeated reading is a successful strategy to improve reading fluency in English especially for CWA.

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