



International Journal of Home Science

ISSN: 2395-7476

IJHS 2022; 8(3): 80-82

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www.homesciencejournal.com

Received: 06-06-2022

Accepted: 09-07-2022

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Implementation of structured reading programme among primary school children and assessment of its efficacy

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Abstract

The study was conducted with an aim to conduct intervention programme and to compare the reading competency of chosen primary school students (Classes 1 and 2) before and after the intervention programme in order to check for improvement in their knowledge in reading skills. The sample consisted of 18 primary school children studying in Union L.P.S Thrikkannarvattom, Ernakulam. They were selected through purposive sampling method. Prior to and after the intervention programme they underwent assessments to check how much their reading proficiency had improved. A structured Reading Programme Manual was used to intervene the sample. SRP manual was formulated in two parts with an aim to make the students more proficient and knowledgeable readers which would ease their journey of language acquisition. The method used to assess the students' reading abilities was a modified version of the Ekwall and Shankar Reading Inventory (ESRI). The findings revealed a significant difference between the reading abilities of children before and after the intervention programme in terms of rhyme production, rhyme recognition, initial sound recognition, consonant blends and digraphs, sight word reading, and print concept ($p = 0.000$, $p 0.05$ is highly significant).

Keywords: Reading, reading competency, structured reading programme, reading components, intervention programme, efficacy

Introduction

Reading is a vital measure of academic life and is significant beyond the school. The success of a child in school depends on his/her reading skills. Early reading instruction is essential for encouraging reading development. Later grades' acquisition of more complex abilities is dependent on the knowledge base established in earlier grades. It is crucial to build phonological awareness throughout early childhood and primary school. It has direct correlation with future spelling and reading success. Children who struggle to pick up these abilities may have trouble learning more sophisticated reading techniques. Reading is an integral part of an individual's academic affairs and equally important outside the academic contexts. School outcomes depend on a child's ability to read. Learning to read during early years is crucial in promoting learning to read. More advanced skills acquired in later grades depend on the foundation of knowledge laid in early school years. Phonological awareness is an important set of skills to develop throughout early childhood and primary school. It is strongly linked to later reading and spelling success. Children who could not acquire these skills may struggle to acquire advanced skills of reading. Research shows that children who lag behind in the development of reading and writing during encounter considerable difficulties in following education later on; as texts get longer and more complicated (Myrberg, 2007). Taking into account the enhanced abilities of young children to learn languages and to help break the current divide between the economic elite and the rest of the country, in addition to teaching languages native to India, English must also be taught in a high quality manner at all government and non government schools. The emphasis should be on functionality and fluency. (Draft National Educational Policy, 2019). Functionality of English language can be attained only if they are taught in the right manner.

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Objectives

- To develop a Structured Reading Programme (SRP) manual with modules on Word recognition and Comprehension.
- To implement the Structured Reading Program (SRP) for the chosen standard 1 and 2 students who need intervention which would enhance reading.
- To compare the Reading Competency after the implementation of Structured Reading Program (SRP) among the intervened standard 1 and 2 students.

Methodology

The area selected for the study was Ernakulam. The sample comprised of 18 primary School students studying in class 1 and 2 in Union LPS Thrikkanarvattom, Ernakulam. They were selected through purposive sampling. To impart knowledge on Reading Competency to students, a Structured Reading Programme (SRP) which included modules on Word Recognition and Comprehension was formulated in two parts. Intervention programme was conducted using this SRP Manual. The respondents were assessed before and after the intervention programme to check the level of improvement in their reading competency. A modified version of Ekwall and Shankar Reading Inventory (ESRI) was the tool used to assess a wide range of students' reading competencies. Paired t test was the statistical test employed to test the difference.

Results and discussion

Section 1: Preparation of the Structured Reading Programme Manuals

A Structured Reading Programme Manual was developed in two parts for students. First part of the book was to do with phonological acquisition. The student is guided through consonant digraphs and initial and ending blends after learning the fundamentals of vowels and consonants' letter-

sound correspondence. This is carried out gradually to incorporate all potential combinations required to create 44 phonemes from the English language's 26 letters. The section also includes spelling rules and sight words. The second part of the book dealt with spelling rules, prefixes, suffixes, compound words, parts of speech, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunction, interjection and comprehension passages. Structured reading programme manual was prepared with an aim to strengthen the reading skills and reading ability of the children and thereby smoothening their journey towards language acquisition.

Section 2: Comparison of the knowledge of the respondents in components of reading before and after the intervention programme

The level of knowledge of the respondents in components of reading was tested prior to and after the intervention programme and the obtained data was statistically analyzed using paired 't' test to find if there was any significant difference in the knowledge of the respondents. The obtained results are given below:

Assessment of the level of knowledge in rhyme production and rhyme recognition

The figure given below shows the results of the assessment of the level of knowledge in rhyme production and rhyme recognition. It can be found that there is significant difference in the knowledge of the respondents in rhyme production and rhyme recognition before and after the intervention programme. The difference is highly significant at 0.000 level ($p < 0.05$ is highly significant). Based on this finding the null hypothesis stating that there will be no difference in the knowledge level of respondents before and after the educational programme is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

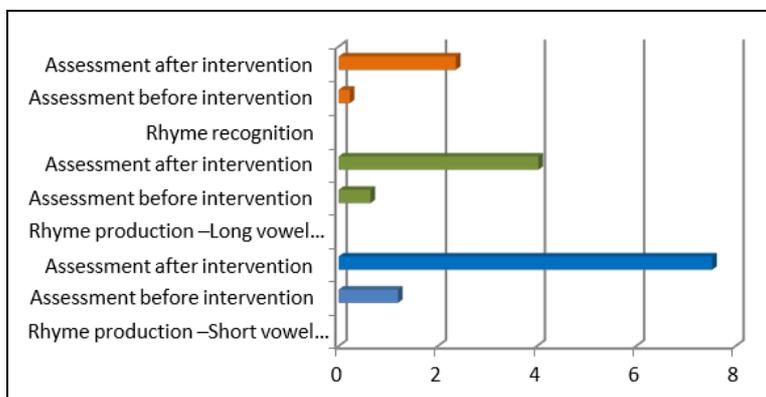


Fig 1: Assessment of the level of improvement in rhyme production and rhyme recognition

Assessment of the level of knowledge in rhyme production and rhyme recognition

The assessment of the level of knowledge in initial sound, consonant digraph and blends recognition is represented in the table below. Before and after the intervention session, there was a noticeable difference in the respondents' ability to recognize initial sounds, consonant digraphs and blends. At

the 0.000 level, the difference is extremely significant ($p < 0.05$ is highly significant). Based on these findings, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis, which predicted there, would be no difference in respondents' knowledge levels before and after the educational programme, is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Table 1: Assessment of respondent's ability to recognize initial sounds, consonant digraphs and blends.

Sl. No	Pairs	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	df	'p' value
1.	Initial sound recognition					
a)	Pre test	0.000	0.000	-15.306	17	0.000
b)	Post test	7.000	1.9403			
2.	Consonant digraphs and blends recognition					

a)	Pre test	0.000	0.000	-10.981	17	0.000
b)	Post test	6.167	2.3825			

** Difference is significant at 0.000 levels.

Assessment of the level of ability to blend, segment and substitute phonemes

The figure below shows the assessment of the respondents' ability to blend, segment, and substitute phonemes. The ability of the respondents to blend, segment, and substitute phonemes showed significant differences. The difference is highly significant ($p < 0.05$ is highly significant) at the 0.000 level. These results demonstrate the falsity of the null

hypothesis, which leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. Research has shown that instruction in phonological awareness should begin in preschool to enable children learn that written words represent spoken words, a process known as decoding involving breaking a word into separate sounds, a process known as decoding involving breaking word into separate sounds (Strategic Marketing and Research, 2013).

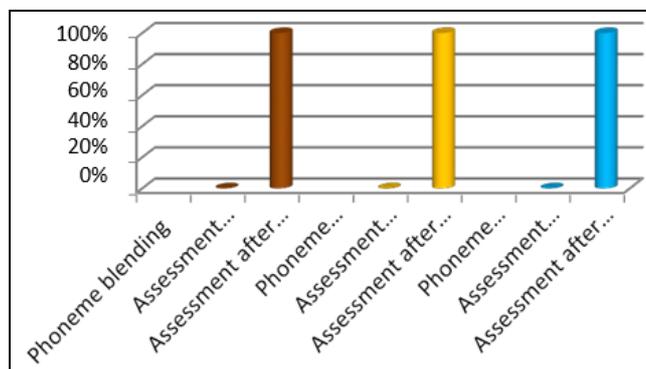


Fig 2: Assessment of the level of ability to blend, segment and substitute phonemes.

Assessment of the level knowledge of respondents' about sight words reading and concept about print

Understanding how print works is referred to as "concept of print." This includes understanding of the nature of books,

print, and written language as well as how they work. The table below shows the result of the assessment of the level knowledge of respondents' about sight words reading and concept about print.

Table 2: The level knowledge of respondents' about sight words reading and concept about print.

Sl. No	Pairs	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	df	'p' value
1.	Sight words reading					
c)	Pre test	0.611	1.2433	-9.412	17	0.000
d)	Post test	6.111	2.4227			
2.	Sight word phrases reading					
c)	Pre test	0.000	0.000	-9.004	17	0.000
d)	Post test	8.056	3.7959			
3.	Concept about print					
e)	Pre test	4.333	1.5339	-4.960	17	0.000
f)	Post test	7.611	2.8109			

From the above table it is clear that there is significant difference in the knowledge of the respondents in sight word reading and concept about print before and after the intervention programme. Here significant difference is at 0.000 levels ($p < 0.05$ is highly significant). Hence the falsity of the null hypothesis is proved and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion

The ability of the respondents to produce and recognize rhyming words, initial sound, consonant digraph and blends, segment, blend and substitute phonemes and sight words and phrases has significantly improved prior to and after the assessments. Their understanding of the concept of print has also considerably increased. The difference is significant at 0.000levels ($p < 0.05$ is highly significant).

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