

The Impact of Reading Aloud and Shared Reading in Developing Listening Comprehension for Second Grade Students

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of action research in developing students' skills in listening comprehension, through listening comprehension techniques. Listening comprehension enables students to be able to understand what they hear and discuss about what they hear. The paper is based on action research methodology. The research question is: What impact has the listening-comprehension techniques: shared reading and reading aloud in the development of listening comprehension? As action plans in this action research were used techniques from course Literacy Development Skills in the Early Grades, namely listening comprehension techniques: reading aloud and shared reading. For data collection was used subtest 6 of A-EGRA-test (Albanian-Early Grade Reading Assessment) and analyzed with statistical methods. First of all is realized A- EGRA test, then action plans, and the end is realized again test A-EGRA (exactly sub test of listening comprehension). Participants in this research were 12 second-grade students, ages 8 years old. Data analysis has shown that action plans had a positive impact in developing of students' skills in listening comprehension. Listening comprehension techniques offered students the opportunity of understanding of what they hear and discussing on what they hear. Results of this study will serve as a guide for other teachers, parents and educators to enable students in listening-comprehension.

Key words: listening-comprehension, comprehension, shared reading, reading aloud, action research, action plans

1. Introduction

Developing of listening comprehension in early grades is an important factor that enables students to understand and learn in the future. Listening comprehension is students' ability to understand the meaning of the words they hear and to interconnect them in different ways, to discuss what they hear. Nowadays we spend more time listening than talking or writing (Morley, 1991). In schools of our country in many cases listening-comprehension is not regarded as a skill which needs special attention. Many teachers ignore listening comprehension as their work practice when teaching their students because they do not know the proper techniques that can affect listening comprehension. From general number of students who come to school, only a small part of them is able to understand a text they listen and discuss about it. The role of parents will have its

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affect before the arrival of students in school as well as the role of a teacher in the classroom.

Results of the test A-EGRA in Kosovo have shown that students have difficulties in reading comprehension and listening-comprehension (subtest of reading comprehension and listening-comprehension are not satisfactory), though satisfactory results in other components (phonetic awareness, phonetics, fluency and vocabulary).

Initially we conducted a research on reading-comprehension and then it was necessary to conduct a research in listening-comprehension.

As teachers, we worry that students were not able to understand a text they listened and responded to questions, as well as to discuss about the text. The moment when we make questions about the text which is read in class, the number of students who are found to provide answers is small, but much smaller is the number of students who can give correct answers.

Listening is an important communication skills in the development of thinking, reading and speaking. Listening is a skill that children use in everyday life. Listening starts at birth to continue lifelong.

Listening-comprehension allows students to listen a text, to understand, remember discuss and comment it in different ways. It is therefore important that this ability of students should take place in early grades.

Students who have difficulties in listening-comprehension can display difficulties in: the performance of homework, reading comprehension in oral text, answering the questions about the information provided, difficulties in critical thinking, responding to logical questions, and difficulties in finding and researching the meaning of unfamiliar words.

To develop this skill is important to listen actively, that means actively devote ones attention to what they hear. Listening is essential in learning. Many children become familiar with written language by listening to stories that are read. Firstly they begin to understand what the story is, then begin to understand the connection between what they hear and between what they see printed on the page and through this learn the basic concepts of writing (BEP, 2013).

2. Review of the Literature

2.1 Reading and Writing Skills

Kosovo's new curriculum defines six core competencies which should reach all students, one of which is the competence of communication and expression (Kosovo Curriculum Framework, 2011). Reading should be viewed as an essential skill of communication along with writing and speaking. Thus teaching of reading in the context of the New Curriculum is more focused and demanded in specific skills.

The trainning course of development of literacy skills (Basic Education Program, 2013) key competencies for successful readers are: Listening-comprehension, Reading comprehension, Phonemic awareness, Phonetic, Fluency and Vocabulary.

But when dealing with comprehension we should take into consideration reading-comprehension and listening-comprehension, because in early grades students, other than reading they also listen to the texts which are read by the teacher.

2.2 Comprehension

The most important thing about reading is comprehension. If we say that a student is "good understanding" means that the student reads correctly and efficiently, in order to obtain the maximum information from a text. According to Swan (1992) he is able to show a new meaning by expressing context of the text, e.g., writing

sentences or paragraphs in response to the questions or summarizing the text.

To be successful in school, students should have the ability to provide different levels of understanding of the text they read. The more elementary knowledge student have about the theme the better will understand that topic while reading.

Snow et al. (2002) suggest that the comprehension is composed of nine cognitive components: fluency, vocabulary, knowledge of the world, knowledge of lectures, language skills, motivation, cognitive purpose, cognitive strategies and integration of information from outside the text. Good reading-comprehension is complex and multifaceted, so because of this students cannot develop the ability to understand the texts quickly and easily. There is a growing consensus about the kinds of experiences that are needed for children in order to develop their reading-comprehension, according to teaching models that support this and a range of strategies that can be useful.

2.3 Listening-comprehension

Listening-comprehension is simpler than listening to sounds or voices. According to Morley (1991) listening comprehension can also be defined broadly as human processing which mediates between the sound and the reconstruction of meaning. So, once people hear voices they try to make sense of what they heard. Saricoban (1999) noted that listening comprehension is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying.

Listening is a complex skill that students should engage all kinds of knowledge to interpret the meaning. When listeners know the context of a text, the process is facilitated considerably because listeners can activate prior knowledge and make the appropriate inferences essential to comprehending the message (Byrnes, 1984).

2.4 Reading Aloud

Reading aloud supports and builds children's listening, speaking skills and increases entire development of their language (Barrentine, 1996; SIPE, 2000). Reading aloud the content is a very important activity for building the knowledge of students for a successful reading, and a very good way to engage students in the process of reading. Students see and hear through reading aloud. Another benefit of this strategy is the interactive component that allows students to get engaged in their learning, helping them to make conclusions, and encourages higher-level thinking. While teachers provide opportunities to better understand whether students understand the content or not. Fountas & Pinell (2006) pointed out that reading aloud in class for students includes thinking and interactive elements, focused on the meaning of the text.

Among many benefits of voice reading, Rog (2001) listed the following:

- Building Vocabulary,
- Understanding of content,
- Encourages understanding of a higher level,
- Motivating students to read.

Reading aloud texts start with creating an environment which fosters a willingness to listen and then to read. Moss (2005) states that during the sessions of reading aloud to children, they enter the world of storytelling and spontaneously share personal responsibilities and experience. They are also invited to return after their experience to explore objectively the literary text, engage them in reflection, analysis and interpretation. This means that every day they have to listen to the teacher reading aloud selected parts, creating a pleasant atmosphere with the quality of the reading, which makes students attentive and pulls them to eyeing it as a qualitative example while trying to emulate. This is a practice which is applied in the first class, even when students have not learned to read

yet to continue in subsequent classes with escalating demands. It is preferred for reading aloud in class, but also for groups of selected short excerpts from different genres: short stories, novels, poems, biographies, essays, plays, diaries, tales, fables, etc. increasingly sharing with them the joy and pleasure of reading, including the class discussions, different opinions, criticisms, questions and so on.

Just reading out aloud is not enough to develop listening comprehension. The way that students read books of great importance. Although students have the desire to read books, they will not develop their reading skills if they are just passive recipients. Students must actively listen, to reflect the content, make questions and connection to develop them.

2.5 Shared Reading

Another very effective technique which helps understanding the process of listening, to students is common reading because it gives them a pleasure and interest in reading. According to (Stahl, 2012) explicit learning of the text structure, text characteristics, vocabulary and understanding are provided through the revisions of the lessons. This form of reading is an interactive experience that students join a part of it while reading a book or other texts guided and support by a teacher.

Manning (2006) is concerned that the new guidelines and policies have forced teachers to eliminate practices such as shared reading. It is quite disturbing because common reading builds students' knowledges of words and in this way makes reading to run fluently, as well allows students to enjoy the material that they are not able to read by themselves and makes them feel successful. Shared reading is a collaborative learning activity. The main goal is to provide students a pleasant experience, introduce a wide variety of authors and illustrative texts to encourage them to become readers. The text is usually read by the teacher but becomes apparent for students too (BEP, 2013).

2.6 Questions

Asking questions activates understanding and attention. Asking questions especially of those of a higher level is particularly useful (Guning, 1996). In AEDP (1998, pp. 98–99) where is said that questions provided by teachers give students the opportunities to connect what they know with that one they have to examine and reflect then about their thinking. In order to engage all students in the class to participate in discussions and think about what is most important in a learning content, teachers should use a variety of questions that according Guning (1996) should be carefully planned. Often teachers in their professional practice student-run low-level questions, not adjusting them according to their level and skills.

If we want our class to have an effective dialogue in relation to the students then must have a mutual interaction between them. One of the ways to promote hearing-sense is good questioning, questions that require more than simply reproducing a fact. Questioning should be done before, during and after reading (BEP, 2013).

3. Methodology

Planning of this research is based on action research methodology. Action research methodology in many studies has shown positive results in improving the performance of students and the teaching practices and professional development of teachers (Stringer, 2004; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

3.1 Research Planning

Research was realized in period of three months.

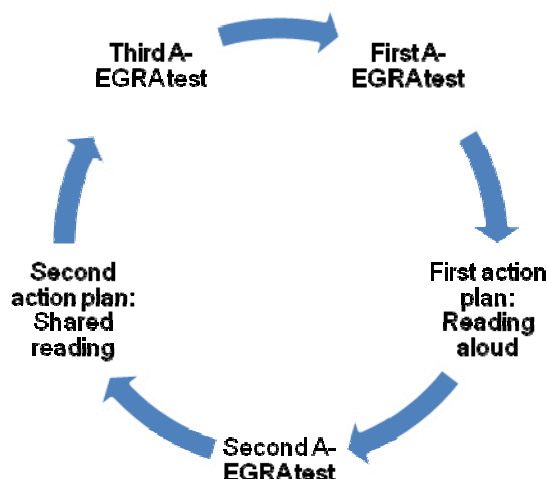


Figure 1 Research Planning

3.2 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of the research is to find appropriate activities to enable second grade students in listening comprehension.

3.2.1 Research Question

What impact has the meaning listening techniques: shared reading and reading aloud in the development of listening-comprehension of second grade students?

3.3 School Context and Participants

This research is carried out with second grade students, in “Yll Morina” elementary school in Gjakova, exactly with 12 students 8 years old. “Yll Morina” elementary school in Gjakova is a public school in urban environment.

“Yll Morina” elementary school in Gjakova is one of the most distinguished schools in Gjakova for successes and achievements of students, participation and performance of students in different competitions and organizing extracurricular activities.

4. Results

For data collection were used sub-tests from A-EGRA test, namely sub-test (6) of listening comprehension.

A-EGRA is reading assessment test in the early grades, which test is adapted from Kosovo Basic Education Program¹ and for this reason is called A (Albanian)-EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment). These subtests were realized three times, at the beginning, after the first action plan and in the end of this research.

¹ The Basic Education Program is jointly funded by USAID and the Government of Kosovo. It aims to improve the capacity of Kosovo’s schools to provide relevant skills for its students.

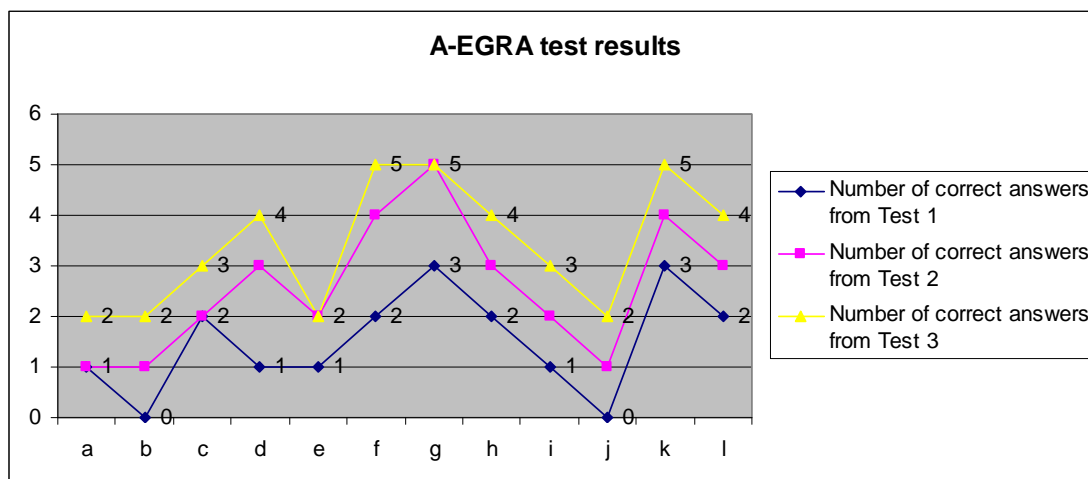


Figure 2 A-EGRA Test Results

Results from the first test conducted with students indicated that students have significant difficulties in listening comprehension. Students were asked to answer some questions about text after reading it by the teacher. The maximum number of correct answers was 5. From 12 students tested for the first time, none of them got to achieve 5 correct answers. Only 2 students gave 3 correct answers, but there were students who could not respond to none of the answers correctly. The average was 1:33 (20% correct answers). While the results of the second test (after realization of the first action plan) showed a slight increase results.

There were no students with incorrect answers, 2 students with 4 correct answers and 1 student with 5 correct answers. The average accuracy was 2.42 (36% correct answers).

Final test results indicate that action plans have developed listening-comprehension skills among students. The average of correct answers was 3 (44% correct answers).

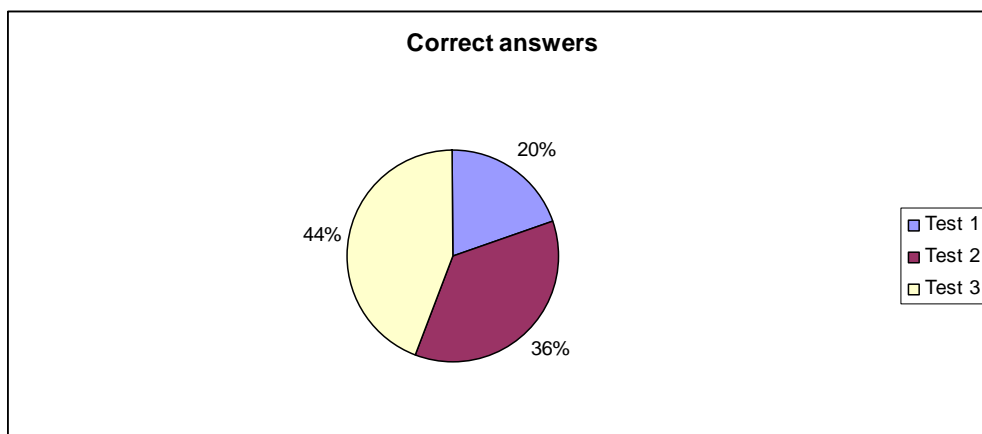


Figure 3 Corret Answers from Tests

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on action research methodology we have achieved enough positive results in improving students in listening-comprehension. At the same time we have noticed that techniques: Reading aloud and Shared reading are highly efficient and help the process of listening-comprehension to students. From this action carried out with

second graders we have reached the following conclusions:

Finding in the early age of the lack of this skill at students is very important to take the necessary steps for an action that will bring results in this direction.

Application of techniques: reading aloud and shared reading have been very effective for developing students' skills in listening comprehension as well as the development of their deep thinking.

To improve teachers' professional practice, and make it to become a part of students' skill, as a very useful technique.

It is necessary that teachers during their work with students should plan these techniques in order to improve the students' abilities in listening-comprehension.

From this research can bring these recommendations:

- It is very important to develop listening-comprehension skill to students
- Teachers should apply reading a loud in class with their students
- Teacher should practice shared reading techniques.
- To encourage the students as much in discussions using high-level thinking questions.

To enable teachers' participation in trainings especially in trainings in which is expected the application of techniques and strategies of listening comprehension.

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