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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING AND SPELLING ABILITIES AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF PUNJAB

REKHA

KC College of Education, Nawanshahr, Punjab, India

ABSTRACT

Reading and Spellings are two important aspects of Language learning but they are often ignored in our schools. This study examined the relationship between Reading and Spelling Abilities among Elementary school students of Punjab. The sample of study consisted of 300 class fourth students randomly selected from 10 English medium schools of Nawanshahr. The results of the study indicated that the level of word reading, reading comprehension and spellings ability of 4th grade students studying in different schools of Punjab was not up to the mark. Further, the results of the study showed a strong positive correlation between the reading and spelling abilities of 4th grade students.

KEYWORDS: Word Reading, Reading Comprehension and Spellings

INTRODUCTION

Children's knowledge of letter names and sounds is the best predictor of their later reading and spelling abilities (Hammill, 2004). Letter name and letter sound knowledge predict subsequent literacy skills independently of other important predictors including phonological awareness and oral language. The study of spelling is oddly neglected by researchers in the cognitive sciences who devote themselves to reading. Experimentation and theories concerning printed word recognition continue to proliferate. Spelling, by contrast, has received short shrift, at least until fairly recently. It is apparent that in our preoccupation with reading, we have tended to downgrade spelling, passing it by as though it were a low-level skill learned chiefly by rote. However, a look beneath the surface at children's spellings quickly convinces one that the common assumption is false. The ability to spell is an achievement no less deserving of well- directed study than the ability to read. Yet spelling and reading are not quite opposite sides of a coin. Though each is party to a common code, the two skills are not identical. In view of this, it is important to discover how development of the ability to spell words is phased with development of skill in reading them, and to discover how each activity may influence the other.

To account for how word recognition skills develop, some researchers (Ehri, 2005) have made theoretical claims that word recognition skills develop as the quality of spelling knowledge in the orthographic lexicon develops, and these claims have been supported by recent research (Katzir, Kim, & Wolf, 2006). Essentially, English spelling knowledge emerges in two ways: (a) through the ability to recognize and map spelling patterns to corresponding sound patterns at the phoneme, syllable, and word levels; and (b) through repeated exposures to the words. According to Ehri (2005), word recognition fluency emerges as well-formed spelling representations become tightly connected or bonded to corresponding phonological and semantic forms. Once a word's orthographic form or spelling becomes highly familiar, the orthographic form or spelling begins to function much like a graphic unit that can be recognized as a whole without attention to constituent letters. In other words, well-learned word spellings (i.e., sight vocabulary) are established in memory in graphic

form and automatically recalled when they are encountered during reading. Preschool and kindergarten students with poor knowledge of letter names and sounds are more likely to struggle with learning to read and be classified as having reading disabilities (Gallagher, Frith, & Snowling, 2000). These children tend to fall further behind their peers in reading acquisition, leading to gaps in spelling, reading fluency, vocabulary, word recognition and comprehension skills (Torgesen, 2002). Word recognition fluency is a function of spelling knowledge (Berninger et al., 2002). Incomplete or inaccurate spelling representations or knowledge will result in less efficient, and in some cases, less accurate word recognition skills (Burt & Tate, 2002). Studies by Zifcak (1984) and Liberman et ai. (1985) have shown substantial correlations between performance on tests of phoneme segmentation of spoken words and the degree to which all the phonemes are represented in children's spellings. The findings of Rohl and Tunmer (1988) confirm this association.

They compared matched groups of older poor spellers with younger normal ones and found that the poor spellers did significantly less well on a test of phoneme segmentation. Recent researches have also shown that children have exhibited moderate to strong correlations between English word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension (e.g., Berninger et al., 2002; Mehta et al., 2005; Vellutino, Tunmer, & Jaccard, 2007). Other Researchers, however, stress the differences between spelling and reading processes, suggesting two separate mechanisms (Bryant & Bradley, 1980; Frith & Frith, 1980). Frith (1979) claimed that reading occurs by 'eye' and spelling by 'ear', to make the point that spelling is phonologically mediated, but reading is not. Read (1981) also argued that reading and spelling are not symmetrical, because children who attempt to write words or stories often cannot read their own 'invented' spellings. The most cited empirical evidence suggesting separate mechanisms for spelling and reading was provided by Bryant and Bradley (1980). In this paper researcher tried to find the relationship between the reading and spelling abilities of elementary school children.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the level of word reading of 4th grade students
- To study the level of reading comprehension of 4th grade students
- To study the level of spellings of 4th grade students
- To study the relationship between word reading and spelling abilities of 4th grade students
- To study the relationship between reading comprehension and spelling abilities of 4th grade students

Sample

Out of existing English medium schools of Nawanshahr, 10 schools were randomly selected for the purpose of data collection. From each of these schools 30 students of class fourth were selected for data collection. Thus the sample of the study consisted of 300 class fourth students.

Tools

The following tools were used for the study

- Reading test (RRT) by Gupta (2008)
- Diagnostic spelling test (DST) (2005)by Gupta and Narang

Procedure for Data Collection

Permission from Principals of the selected schools was sought for data collection. Then the purpose of the study was explained to participating students in detail. Investigators tried to clear all their doubts about what so-ever regarding the hard work and interest they would have to put. All the students agreed to co-operate heartedly. Then Reading test (RRT) by Gupta (2008) and Diagnostic spelling test (DST) (2005)by Gupta and Narang were administered on them.

Analysis

Objective wise analysis is as under

- **Scores of Students in Word Reading Test are as under**

Table 1: Scores of Students in the WRT

Sl. No	Scores	Number of Students	Percentages
1	Less than 18	20	6.67
2	18------25	125	41.66
3	26-----40	100	33.33
4	41------45	40	13.33
5	46 and above	15	5

The results of the study indicated that the level of word reading of 4th grade students was not up to the mark. Only 13.33% and 5% of students scored between 40—45 and 46 and above respectively. It was further found that maximum %age i.e 41.66 of students scored between 18-25. This indicates that level of word reading of the students is not up to the mark.

- **Scores of Students in Reading Comprehension Test are as under**

Table 2: Scores of Students in the RCT

Sl. No	Scores	Number of Students	Percentages
1	0	56	18.66
2	1-2	113	37.66
3	2-5	82	27.33
4	5-7	36	12
5	7-10	13	4.33

The results of the study indicated that the students were not able to comprehend. 18.66% scored zero in the RCT test, where as maximum percentage i.e 37.66% of students scored between 1-2. Only 4.33% of students could able to score 7 or more in the RCT. This indicates that the level of reading Comprehension of the students is not up to the mark.

- **Scores of Students in Diagnostic Spelling Test are as under**

Table 3: Scores of Students in the DST

Sl. No	Scores	Number of Students	Percentages
1	0	5	1.66
2	1-15	47	15.66
3	16-20	117	39
4	21-30	105	35
5	31-35	26	8.66

The results of the study indicated that the spelling ability of students was not up to the mark. Only 8.66% of students scored between 31—35. It was further found that maximum %age i.e 39% of students scored between 16-20 This indicates that the level of spellings of the students is not up to the mark.

- **Relationship between Word Reading and Spelling Abilities of 4th Grade Students**

The data related to this objective was analysed with the help of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Pearson's Correlation was calculated between scores of Word Reading and Spelling abilities of 4th grade students. It was found that the coefficient of correlation between Student's spelling ability and Student's word reading ability is 0.78, which is significant at 0.01 levels. In this context, the null hypothesis, namely, "There is no significant relationship between the word reading and spelling abilities of 4th grade students." is rejected. The results indicated that there was a strong positive correlation between the word reading and spelling abilities of 4th grade students.

- **Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Spelling Abilities of 4th Grade Students**

The data related to this objective was analysed with the help of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Pearson's Correlation was calculated between scores of Reading Comprehension and Spelling abilities of 4th grade students. It was found that the coefficient of correlation between Student's spelling ability and Student's reading comprehension ability is 0.81, which is significant at 0.01 levels. In this context, the null hypothesis, namely, "There is no significant relationship between the reading comprehension and spelling abilities of 4th grade students." is rejected. The results indicated that there was a strong positive correlation between the reading comprehension and spelling abilities of 4th grade students.

RESULTS

- The level of word reading of 4th grade students was not up to the mark.
- The 4th grade students were not able to comprehend properly
- The spelling ability of 4th grade students was not up to the mark.
- There was a strong positive correlation between the word reading and spelling abilities of 4th grade students.
- There was a strong positive correlation between the reading comprehension and spelling abilities of 4th grade students.

DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study showed a strong positive correlation between the reading and spelling abilities of 4th grade students. These results are consistent with the previous findings of **Zifcak (1984), Liberman et. al. (1985), Berninger et al. (2002), Mehta et al., (2005) and Vellutino et. al (2007)**. It was due to the fact that reading results in the establishment of graphical forms of words in the memory, which results in production of correct spellings. Similarly well-learned word spellings help in improving reading ability of students. Hence those students who could not read the word properly can not able to spell the same word.

IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study indicated that the level of word reading, reading comprehension and spellings ability of

4th grade students studying in different schools of Punjab was not up to the mark. This is due to the fact that proper attention is not paid on reading and writing abilities of student in the schools of Punjab. Thus the study has lot of implications for students, teachers, teacher educators and administrators.

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