



Investigating the Role of Reading While Listening (RWL) Strategy to Improve Second Language Listening Skill

Dr. Noshaba Younus, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Riphah International University Faisalabad
Dr. Shahid Nawaz, Assistant Professor, Department of English Linguistics, Islamia University Bahawalpur, Pakistan.
Dr. Muhammad Ahsan, Lecturer, Department of English, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan University

Abstract: This study is based on a practical implementation of reading skill to improve and comprehend second language listening skill in Pakistani students. RWL is used to improve reading skill but listening through reading is not as much focused as it should be. This study shows a great impact of RWL to improve Listening comprehension due to the relevancy. The study is conducted in the Cantt High School Bahawalpur with the students of matriculation. The participants responded to the questions given in a simple questionnaire after audio/video material presented to them. Here in Pakistan only two out of four language skills are focused and that are 'Reading' and 'Writing'. The other two 'Speaking' and 'Listening' are not given as much importance or practiced as the previously quoted ones. This study proves that the Pakistani students can improve their listening and comprehension skills through RWL as 'Reading' is their well-practiced skill.

Key Words: RWL (Reading While Listening), Language Learning Skills, Listening Comprehension, Reading Skill, L2 (Second Language)

I. INTRODUCTION:

This article focuses on the study investigating the helping aspect of reading skill to improve the most ignored skill 'Listening' in Pakistani students. To speak well one needs to be a good listener as well. In this perspective, it can be said that Listening skill is required to understand and speak second language. In Pakistan, students are made expert in reading and writing skill but they do not have as much exposure to listening (especially the native L2 speakers) as required to speak English/L2 properly. This is one of the main reasons that most of the Pakistani students do not feel confident enough to communicate in or speak English language. The need is to provide an easy way to such learners for enhancing their listening skill and understanding better that can be helpful in speaking English language in a better way. The hypothesis for this study is 'reading skill can improve listening comprehension in Pakistani students' that arises the question, 'how much can reading be helpful in the process of improving Listening and comprehension skill?'. The objective of the study is 'To find out the effectiveness of reading in the process of listening/receiving and understanding/comprehension of L2'.

It is practiced often that the teachers, instead of teaching listening, use less accessible ways to listening process (Field, 2003). The need is to fill the gap. Pakistani learners are mostly very good at reading. This skill should be integrated with listening to develop this ignored skill. Krashen (1987) is of the view that in order to learn language, can be best provided if: It is understood/comprehensible, interesting, grammatically sequenced and sufficiently integrated. This study is an attempt to fill this gap and bring ease to the listening and understanding of the learners leading them to speak and communicate L2.

II. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW:

Language learning skills and strategies are the important areas for research in the studies of L2 learning. Rigney (1978) discussed Language Learning Strategies as "operations and procedures that students may use to acquire, retain and retrieve different kinds of knowledge and performance" (p. 165). So, these procedures and strategies should be according to the needs of students and the weak sides of their learning should be integrated with their strong ones. Vandergrift (1999) presents the view that strategy development is significant for listening training. O'Malley, et al (1985) worked on Second Language (English) students at high school level. The learners had to go through some training regarding listening with vocabulary and speaking strategies randomly. Their study resulted that strategy training is effective for the tasks such as integrative language. It evokes the use of some strategy to improve the required

knowledge and skills. In this regard, RWL can be used as an effective procedure towards Listening skill development.

Huey (1968) worked on reading comprehension as ‘inner speech’ and Examined RWL as a method to improve reading achievement. Researches have been conducted and theories are made since long that reading skill and listening comprehension share a set of processes or some conceptual framework (Fries, 1963; Goodman, 1966;Gibson & Levin, 1975; Kintsch&Kozminsky, 1977; Goldman, 1976; Berger &Perfetti, 1977;). Such theoretical bases urged the researchers to explore the influence of RWL on different aspect regarding reading skill. But this was not used to improve Listening skill.

Studies by various researchers as Chomsky, 1976; Edwards, 1970; Schneeberg, 1977, Carbo, 1981 and Shany&Biemiller, 1995 proved and resulted in positive effects of RWL on reading achievements and comprehension skills at various different academic levels. The common effects were on language fluency, decoding, fluency, confident reading and comprehension. These given effects are vital to listening skills that is why this study focused on the use of RWL to improve listening skill.

Due to the scarcity of literature with children on the effectiveness of extended reading, empirical research done during the 1980s came up with most of the results. Clearest findings of those studies show children having a positive view of books Following a research-based programme that focused on children (aged 8–10) for half an hour per day, good attitudes emerged (Lightbown, 1991). The results of parent questionnaires and interviews indicated that the children enjoyed the activities and the ones who had been part of the programme for three years or more continued to be enthusiastic about it. Positive attitudes were discovered through a small-in only-scale academic year-long reading programme in Spain last year (Carrol, 2008). The RWL students (10- to 11-year-olds) showed a greater preference for learning English via interactive methods than their teacher-led counterparts. In both Canada and Spain, learners could select a class library with graded reading, fiction, and non-fiction, and storybooks of varying levels.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is quantitative and the population consisted of 50 students at 9th and 10th grade in Cantt High School Bahawalpur. The age group of the students was between 14 to 17 years. The questionnaire was designed with five-point Likert scale. First the audio of the novel “The Adventure of Tom Sawyer” by Mark Twain (1876) was played to the students and after playing a time scheduled portion the questionnaire was given to them. They gave their responses about the listening material. Then the audio was played again. This time it was RWL. The text of the novel was also played on the projector along with the audio. The students were listening and reading at the same time. They seemed to be getting the ideas and giving facial expressions according to the story. Then they gave their responses again on the questionnaire about their understanding.

To deal with the data analysis Statistical technique is used as a tool to collect, organize and analyze the facts. These facts are represented in a numerical way. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) is used for the analysis of the data with the tests like ANOVA and T-test.

To find out reliability,Chronbach’s Alpha Coefficient was applied.The comparison and resultantly the difference ratio found between the collected data before and after the RWL implication shows the usefulness of the RWL for students’ enhanced and better development of listening and communication skills in second language(English).

Research Instrument:

Questionnaire is used as the research instrumentto take responses from the participants before and after using reading with listening (RWL).

Analysis:

The collected data was analyzed along with variables. The responses were analyzed by Statistical analysis to compare those responses by the participants. These descriptive statistics are used here to discover the means, standard deviations and frequencies.

Demographic Data

Table1: Frequency and the Percentage of participants’ age (N=50)

Age Group	F	%
14	15	30
15	19	38
16	14	28
17	2	4

Total	50	100
-------	----	-----

Note: In the table, the percentages are rounded to the nearest tenths.

Table 1 shows, the participants were of 4 age groups from 14 to 17 at matriculation level, most of them belonging to 15 years of age.

Table 2: Frequency and the Percentage of participants' class (N=50)

Class level of the participants	F	%
9 th	25	50
10 th	25	50
Total	50	100

Table 2 demonstrates the percentage of the number of participants that is 50% from each class in matriculation 9th and 10th.

Table 3: Frequency and the Percentage of participants' Back ground (N=50)

Back ground (Social)	F	%
Urban	16	32
Rural	34	68
Total	50	100

Note: In the table, the percentages are rounded to the nearest tenths.

Table 3 represents students' social setup or the back ground divided into two categories. 32% of which belong to urban and 68% belong to rural background. Background matters a lot and influences the learning and understanding process of the learner. A large number of students with rural background show that most of the students represent the largest class of Pakistan the Rural one and the study would prove to be more useful if it works good with them.

Table 4: Frequency and the Percentage of participants' Mother tongue (N=50)

Mother Tongue	F	%
Urdu	24	48
Punjabi	08	16
Saraiki	18	36
Total	50	100

Note: In the table, the percentages are rounded to the nearest tenths.

Table 4 shows that the students who participate in this study as respondents belong to different mother tongues but most of them speak Urdu language. This would verify the study in perspective of 2nd language Listening comprehension for the learners belonging to different languages.

Table 5: Pre RWL Practice Mean Score along with Std. Deviation and the Frequency Category

Item No	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Frequency category*
1	I can Understand the audio played	50	2.66	.933	Medium
2	English is an easy Language	50	2.76	1.144	Medium
3	English is a difficult language	50	3.57	1.045	High
4	I like listening to English language	50	2.43	.954	Medium
5	I understand the whole vocabulary used in the audio	50	2.47	.997	Medium
6	I can repeat the audio material	50	2.51	.796	Medium
7	I enjoy listening to the stories in English	50	2.57	.985	Medium
8	Listening can improve my English language learning	50	2.64	.983	Medium
9	Such listening practice can improve my speaking of English	50	2.88	1.030	Medium
10	I can describe the listening material in my own words	50	2.92	1.048	Medium

Note. * High is equal to the High- range of responses by the participants whereas; Medium is equal to Medium- range of responses and the Low is equal to Low range of responses

Table 05 presents the statistical analysis of the collected data as mean score with the standard deviation and the frequency of the 10 statements that were used to get responses in the pre-RWL practice. Medium range of responses show that the participants did not show enough comprehension towards the listening material and their responses do not represent their interest in English language listening. Their responses depict their ideas as they feel that English is a difficult language and they cannot understand and repeat the audio material played to them. They think that such listening practices cannot help improve their Speaking of L2 or use English vocabulary in an appropriate way. That is a common way of response by most of the Pakistani students they always feel it difficult to comprehend English language Audio spoken by the native English/American speakers.

Table 6: Post RWL Practice Mean Score along with Std. Deviation and the Frequency Category

Item No	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Frequency category*
1	I can Understand the audio played.	50	3.93	.851	high
2	English is an easy Language	50	3.94	.761	high
3	English is a difficult language	50	2.59	.981	Medium
4	I like listening to English language	50	4.29	.762	high
5	I understand the whole vocabulary used in the audio	50	4.02	.746	high
6	I can repeat the audio material	50	4.33	.731	high
7	I enjoy listening to the stories in English	50	4.21	.866	high
8	Listening can improve my English language learning	50	4.54	.625	high
9	Such listening practice can improve my speaking of English	50	4.28	.712	high
10	I can describe the listening material in my own words	50	3.80	1.001	High

Note. * High is equal to the High- range of responses by the participants whereas; Medium is equal to Medium- range of responses and the Low is equal to Low range of responses

Table 6 shows the statistical analysis of the collected data as mean score with the standard deviation and the frequency of the 10 statements used to be responded by the students for the post-RWL practice. High frequency of responses shows that they understood the listening material when they read it as well. High degree of frequency shows their positive responses towards comprehending and deciphering the English language. After RWL practice most of the students felt that they can understand the vocabulary and they can use it. They also felt that they can speak in the way they listened in the audio played for them. Their responses show their high level of interest as well.

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

On the basis of above given variables, data and responses, this analysis verifies the questions raised for this research. The analysis provides a positive result that justifies the hypothesis especially the aspect that RWL is useful to develop the listening/comprehension skill and understanding level of the Pakistani learners regarding L2. The Pre-RWL responses show that the participants are of the view that English language is difficult and they cannot understand the native English speakers properly that is why they do not feel audio practices useful for their listening skill or of their interest. After the Post-RWL practice there was significant change in their responses the statements were the same but the responses were very different as compared to the Pre-RWL practice. The response on the statement “English is a difficult language” was changed from positive to negative. It means their understanding level made them think so. They integrated their reading skill with the listening and it became comprehensible to them. They started to enjoy the story not only by their reading but they focused on the listening as well. They listened with interest and responded that they can also speak English language.

Pakistani students are good with reading skill. This is an easy way to improve listening skill by using reading skill. One skill (reading) integrated with another can improve the other(listening) skill and enhance their knowledge of L2 and its usage.

The study should be conducted in Pakistani classrooms so that the learners may enhance their listening skill in an easy way. This can be a simple method to make the learners speak and communicate well in L2.

REFERENCES:

1. Askildson, L. R. (2011). Theory and Pedagogy of Reading While Listening: Phonological
2. Recoding for L2 Reading Development. *Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching Volume 2*.
<http://sites.google.com/site/linguisticsandlanguageteaching/home-1/volume-2-2011-issue-2/volume-2-2011-issue-2---article-askildson> (Last retrieved on March 26, 2012)
3. Berger, N. S., & Perfetti, C. A. (1977). Reading skill and memory for spoken and written discourse. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 9(1), 7-16.
4. Bloomfield, L. (1942). *Outline guide for the practical study of foreign languages*. Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America.
5. Brown G & Yule, G. *Teaching the spoken language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1983).
6. Carbo, M. (1981). Making books talk to children. *The Reading Teacher*, 35, 186–189.
7. Carrell, P. (1988). SLA and Classroom Instruction: Reading. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 9, 223-242. doi:10.1017/S026719050000091X
8. Chomsky, C. (1976). After decoding: What? *Language Arts*, 53, 288–296.
9. Edwards, R. (1970). *A comparison between standardized and listening-reading administrations of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills*. Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Iowa.
10. Field, J. (2003). Promoting perception: lexical segmentation in L2 listening. *ELT Journal* 57/4, 325–34.
11. Fries, C. (1963). *Linguistics and reading*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
12. Gibson, E., & Levin, H. (1975). *The psychology of reading*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
13. Goldman, S. R. (1976). Reading skill and the minimum distance principle: A comparison of listening and reading comprehension. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 22(1), 123-142.
14. Goodman, K. (1966). A Psycholinguistic view of Reading Comprehension. In G. Schick & M. Mays (Eds.), *The 15th Yearbook of the National Reading Conference*. Milwaukee, WI:
15. National Reading Conference.
16. Carrol, J. B. (1972). *Defining language comprehension*. In R. D. Freedle and J. B. Rodgers 'Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching', second edition, 2001, UK, CUP, P.19
17. Chomsky, N. (1966). *Linguistic Theory*, Reprinted in J. P. B. Allen and P. Van Buren (eds.), *Chomsky: Selected Readings*, pp. 153. London: Oxford University Press.
18. Crystal, D (1987). *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of language*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
19. Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The Psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
20. Feyten, C. M, (1991). The Power of Listening Ability: An Overlooked Dimension in Language Acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal* 75:173-80. Group UK Limited.
21. Halliday, M. A. K. (1973). *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold.
22. Huey, E. B. (1968). *The psychology and pedagogy of reading*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
23. Krashen, S. D. (1996). The case for Narrow Listening. *System* 24, 97-100.
24. Krashen, S. D. (1987). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Prentice-
25. Hall
26. Kintsch, W., & Kozminsky, E. (1977) Summarizing stories after reading and listening. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 69, 491-499.
27. Lightbown, P.M. (1991). Getting quality input in the second/foreign language classroom. In C. Kramsch & S. McConnell-Ginet (Eds.), *Text and context: Crossdisciplinary perspectives on language study* (pp. 187–197). Lexington, MA: DC Heath.
28. Nunan, D. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teachers*. New York: Prentice-Hall.
29. O'Malley, J., Chamot, A., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Russo, R. P., & Kupper, L. (1985). Learning Strategy Applications with Students of English as Second Language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 557-584.
30. O'Malley, J., & Chamot, A. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
31. Rigney, J. W (1978). Learning Strategies: A Theoretical Perspective. In O'Neil, H. F. Jr. (Ed.) *Learning Strategies*. New York: Academic Press.
32. Shany, M., & Biemiller, A. (1995). Assisted reading practice: Effects on performance for poor readers in grades 3 and 4. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(3), 382-395.
33. Schneeberg, H. (1977). Listening while reading: A four year study. *Reading Teacher*, 30(6), 629-635.
34. Spolsky, B. (1989). *Conditions for Second Language Learning* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

35. Twain. M. (1876). *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. University of Michigan. <https://americanenglish.state.gov>
36. Vandergrift, L. (1999). Facilitating Second Language Listening Comprehension: Acquiring Successful Strategies. *ELT Journal*, 53(3), 168-176.