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## Improving Reading Comprehension Skills among English Language Students with Learning Disabilities According to Some Variables

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# Improving Reading Comprehension Skills among English Language Students with Learning Disabilities According to Some Variables

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**Abstract:** This study explored the effect of developing reading comprehension among English language students with learning disabilities using the reading speed strategy, identifying the effect of both gender, and teaching method on developing reading comprehension. To achieve the aim of the study, a test was prepared to measure reading comprehension after ensuring its validity and reliability. The study population consisted of all (200) students studying English language in the schools of the Directorate of Education for the Second Irbid Region for the second semester of the academic year 2020/2021. The study was applied to a sample of (80) male and female students, who were selected in the simple method. The participants were distributed into two experimental groups, which received the training, and another two control groups, which studied the same educational material in the traditional method. The test was applied to the study groups before starting the implementation of the study to ensure the equality of groups. The results showed clear differences in the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of the control group students, and in favor of the experimental group. The results also showed that there were no differences between the mean scores of the students' scores attributed to gender.

**Key words:** reading comprehension, English language, learning disabilities, reading speed

*Abstrak:* Ketelibatan American Jews in industry film Hollywood lebih dari sekedar cerita sukses kaum immigrant di Amerika. Datang dalam jumlah yang besar umumnya dari Eropa Timur, bangsa Yahudi Azkenazic ini ,kemudian berkontribusi membangun Hollywood dan

manjadikannya sebagai ikon film dunia. Meski cukup dominan, bangsa Yahudi cukup hati-hati dalam industry ini. Anti-Semitism, Perang Dunia hingga Great Depression adalah hal-hal yang membuat mereka tidak nyaman berada dalam sorotan kamera ataupun berbicara tentang identitas mereka di antara mayoritas Kristen yang merupakan penonton utama Industri Hollywood. Namun demikian kondisi ini berubah setelah Perang dunia kedua dan gerakan masyarakat sipil di tahun 1960. Yahudi dan Judaism kemudian muncul dalam berbagai macam representasi, yang tidak hanya merubah image mereka di Hollywood, namun juga penerimaan masyarakat Amerika secara lebih luas. Fokus pada tiga film, Ben Hur: A Tale of Christ, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bagaimana bangsa Yahudi merepresentasikan diri mereka lewat film-film yang diproduksi khususnya lewat film-film yang bertemakan religious, hingga perubahan-perubahan yang dilakukan sebagai bagian dari Yahudi Amerika. Menggunakan teori Politik Representasi oleh Stuart Hall serta analisis wacana kritis dari Fairclough dan Leuween sebagai pendekatan, riset ini focus pada analisis teks dan gambar sebagai tanda yang merepresentasikan Yahudi dan Judaisme dalam film-film tersebut. Terkait pada film sebagai konstruksi, para pembuat film ini kemudian mampu merekonstruksi Yahudi dalam wajah yang berbeda di film-film yang diproduksi. Representasi ini berupa konstruksi image sebagai respon dari stereotype yang selama ini berkembang di masyarakat khususnya terhadap hubungan Yahudi-Kristen. Politik representasi ini juga memungkinkan mereka menyampaikan berbagai pesan pada audience tentang identitas mereka sebagai sebuah tradisi budaya dan agama.

**Kata kunci:** Yahudi Amerika, Film Hollywood, politik representasi, wacana

## INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is the heart of the reading process. The educational system, with all its categories, seeks to provide students with this skill to help them increase the level of awareness and to be owners of basic reading skills that enable them to understand vocabulary. Reading comprehension also helps students to perceive the different meanings of the read text, and the ability to analyze and evaluate. Reading comprehension skills are very important in determining the success or failure of the student in academic life. The development of reading speed skills for students is important in the basic stages, as the student in these stages is expected to be

able to read quickly, and they are expected to read to benefit from new information (Elizabeth, Juliana & Bloom, 2010). Students who read slowly due to their lack of speed in reading will not develop reading speed as other students who read quickly (Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding, 2010).

Because reading speed is so important to students, they should be trained to acquire this skill to achieve understanding. The faster the comprehension increases, the faster students can access important information, or obtain quick facts. There is no doubt that every student needs this kind of reading to keep pace with the rapid developments in this era (Bani Issa, 2010). Because of using traditional methods in schools to teach reading, a generation appeared that had reading difficulties, and many skills that students must master in reading are missing. Reading disability, if not addressed early, prevent students' progress and continued with them into other grades (Khasawneh, 2021).

Reading comprehension is a product of conscious reading that broadens and develops students' experiences, activates their intellectual skills, and provides students with the necessary information to solve many personal problems, to identify tendencies and increase them in breadth and depth, and develop a sense of self and the selves of others. It is appropriate for them, and pushes the mind to curiosity, reflection, and thinking, raises the level of understanding in social issues, raises the spirit of criticism for books, magazines, and newspapers, and makes the individual feel a sense of belonging to culture (Raslan, 2015). Students face many difficulties in reading in English language, which constitutes an obstacle to their education and limits their activities and tendencies towards learning. Therefore, it is important to find more effective methods through the use of methods that attract their attention and excite them, and to eliminate the problems that they may face in learning to read (Rahimi & Babaei, 2021).

The problem of weakness in reading speed is one of the biggest problems that students face, especially in the basic education stages. This creates negative effects represented in the weak level of comprehension among students. Addressing this problem still needs more action to be take, Several studies tackled such an issue in a different context, but few Arabic studies have been conducted on developing reading speed skills. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop an experimental program to improve reading speed skills for students with learning disabilities to present results on which educational applications are based to raise the level of students in reading speed and then raising their level of understanding and

comprehension. Therefore, it is hoped that the current study will contribute to filling a gap in this area (Quinn, Wagner, Petscher, Roberts, Menzel, & Schatschneider, 2020).

This study aims to identify the effect of using the reading speed strategy on developing the reading comprehension of students with learning disabilities in English language compared to the traditional methods. This study is considered one of the experimental studies concerned with investigating the effect of using reading speed strategy on developing reading comprehension. Therefore, this study will work on designing a program to develop the skills of comprehension and speed in reading speed to be applied to students to improve their skills. The results of this study could help in improving students' level of reading speed and the subsequent increase in their level of comprehension. The results of this study are limited by the size of the study sample. The study was applied to students with learning disabilities. The age of students included in the study was (8-11) years old. The study is also limited to Irbid city in Jordan and the academic year 2020-2021.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading comprehension should elevate students to the level of awareness and cognition so that they become readers who possess reading skills that enable them to comprehend the linguistic units at advanced levels. It also helps students to raise their ability to accurately comprehend the reading, understand the vocabulary, the perception of the surface and deep meaning, and the ability to understand the aim and significance of the writer to make objective judgments about the text. Abu Riach (2009) defined reading comprehension as the process by which previous experiences and features of the reader are used to form meaningful meanings for each reader in a specific context, and that process includes selecting specific ideas and understanding them in one sentence.

Fadlallah (2015) stated that comprehending the reading material, especially in educational situations, is a guarantee of upgrading the learner's language, providing him with rich ideas, being familiar with useful information, acquiring the skills of criticism, and accustoming him to expressing opinions and passing judgments, and helping him to pursue everything new. Jad (2013) defined reading comprehension as a complex process that goes on at different levels, requires mental capabilities and

abilities, and needs a lot of practice, training, interpretation, analysis, balance, and criticism.

It is clear from the above that reading comprehension is important for students, and that it is the main goal of the reading process. Indeed, some educators regard reading and comprehension as one thing. Therefore, reading comprehension skills must be present in the curriculum and the classroom due to the importance of comprehension in language communication, and understanding the linguistic message between the writer and the reader (Harthi, 2020).

Several studies have been conducted to investigate reading comprehension among students, and these studies have come up with different results. Bani Issa (2010) conducted a study aimed at identifying the effect of Paul Skelly's method of reading speed and reading comprehension among outstanding students in the elementary stage in Jordan. The study sample consisted of (60) students. The results of the study showed differences in reading comprehension skills and differences in reading speed skills on the two tests due to Paul Skelly's method and in favor of the experimental group.

Randy, Andrea, Christine, & Emily (2011) conducted a study aimed at accelerating the reading ability of children with slow reading ability. Reading was the first element among all groups, as children with low reading ability showed low goals in speed compared to their children's counterparts, and it indicated that the speed component was negatively associated with adult age.

Babayigit (2019) examined the speed of reading texts students in the primary stage. The study used the survey of quantitative research methods. The sample of the study included 732 students. The study collected data from three primary schools in the areas of Yozgat province during 2018. The instrument of the study depended on measuring the number of words a student can reads in a minute. The results indicated the presence of clear difference in the reading rates of the text, especially between lower cased and upper cases letters. The results revealed that reading lowercase letters text was 13% higher than reading capital letters. The results also showed that secondary school students scored higher in reading aloud better than primary school students did.

Durukan (2020) investigated the effectiveness of a training based on fast reading on comprehension skills among secondary school students. The study was applied to a sample of 40 students from the 8th grade in Trabzon city. The study was based on the experimental approach, for which a pretest-

posttest method was applied to one group. Before applying the study, the reading speed and comprehension levels of the students were identified. The participants received 20 hours of speed-reading training every other day for 5 days. The results of the study indicated significant improvement in the level of students after the implementation of the study.

Deniz and Yavuz (2020) investigated the types of reading error and reading speeds among students with special learning difficulties. The study used the case study model and was applied to a sample of 34 students from Grades 3–8. These students were identified as students with LDs in Konya in the 2019–2020 academic year. The results of the study revealed different types of errors students with LDs have shown. These errors included misreading, hesitating while reading, repeating, omitting a word or skipping a line, substituting a sound/syllable or a word, pausing while reading, correction and reversing sounds.

## METHOD

### A. Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all students of the fifth grade of primary school in government schools in the Second Irbid District. The sample of the study was (80) male and female students. Table (1) shows the demographic information of the study sample.

**Table 1:**  
**Demographic distribution of the study sample**

Group	Males	Females	Total
Experimental	20	20	40
Control	20	20	40
Total	40	40	80

### B. Research Instrument

The reading comprehension test consisted of 20 items of a multiple-choice type and each item was assigned one mark. The test time was

determined to be 40 minutes, and the pre-test was used to ensure the equivalence of the study groups. The same test was used after the completion of the implementation of the work plan.

### C. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the correlation coefficient was calculated. The correlation coefficients are shown in Table (2) below.

**Table 2:**  
**The correlation coefficients of the study instrument**

Item No.	Correlation Coefficient	Item No.	Correlation Coefficient
1.	**0.637	17.	**0.908
2.	**0.736	18.	**0.824
3.	**0.725	19.	**0.899
4.	**0.648	20.	**0.876
5.	**0.832	21.	**0.617
6.	**0.694	22.	**0.705
7.	**0.816	23.	**0.661
8.	**0.836	24.	**0.633
9.	**0.820	25.	**0.730
10.	**0.747	26.	**0.790
11.	**0.887	27.	**0.825
12.	**0.754	28.	**0.763
13.	**0.814	29.	**0.779
14.	**0.811	30.	**0.852
15.	**0.542		
16.	**0.887	Overall	**0.822



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To answer the questions of the study, the mean scores and standard deviations of the sample's marks were calculated on the Reading Comprehension Test as shown in Table (3).

**Table 3:**  
**The mean scores and standard deviations of the sample's scores in the post-test according to the study variables**

Gender	Group			
	Experimental		Control	
	Means score	Standard deviation	Means score	Standard deviation
Males	19.81	3.56	14.39	4.00
Females	20.90	3.08	14.28	4.47
Total	20.35	3.32	14.33	4.24

It is evident from Table 3 that the mean score of the experimental group of male students was 19.81 with a standard deviation 3.56. The mean score of the female from the experimental group was 20.90 with a standard deviation 3.08. On the other hand, the mean score of the control group of male students was 14.39 with a standard deviation 4.00, and the mean score of the control group of females was 14.28 with a standard deviation 4.47

The experimental group of males and females reached 20.35 with a standard deviation 3.32, while the total sum of the mean score of the control group was 14.33 with a standard deviation 4.24. It is noticed that there are apparent differences between the mean scores of the groups of the study. To verify the statistical significance of these differences, the Two-way ANOVA analysis was used as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:**  
**Results of the Two-Way ANOVA analysis for the post-test according to the  
study variables**

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Freedom value	Mean square	F-value	Sig.
Method	1236,405	1	1236,405	93,657	* 0,000
Gender	5,438	1	5,438	0,412	0,522
Interaction between method and gender	14,741	1	14,741	1,11	0,292
Error	1821,805	139	13,201		
Total	3378,280	142			

It is clear from Table 4 that the results were as follows:

#### **A. Results of the First Question**

It is evident from Table 4 that the calculated F-value was 93.657 with a level of significance 0,000. This indicates the existence of statistically significant differences at  $\alpha = 0.05$  on the reading comprehension test attributable to the teaching method (speed reading, traditional method) in favor of the experimental group that studied using speed reading strategy.

The reason for this result is that the use of speed-reading in teaching is considered a different method from the usual ways in which students learn to read. The change in the method of teaching led to great activity, suspense among students, and a tendency towards learning to read. Perhaps the reason for this result is that the speed-reading program is characterized by providing the student with the opportunity to participate in the learning and teaching process, being self-reliant and increasing self-confidence, which in turn increases motivation, interaction, and participation in the learning process.

#### **B. Results of the Second Question**

It is evident from Table 4 that there are no statistically significant differences due to the gender of students, as the calculated F-value was 0.412 and its level of significance was 0.522, which is not statistically significant at  $\alpha$

= 0.05. The reason for this may be that the speed-reading strategy included educational units from the Arabic language book for the sixth grade, prepared by the Ministry, and intended to be taught to students, whether males or females.

This result can also be attributed to the fact that the speed-reading action plan is designed to suit both genders. It provides elements of excitement for male and female students, and it attracts the attention and involvement of the student in the learning process through exercises that are suitable for students of the basic sixth grade of both genders. This strategy also increases their motivation towards learning, as the speed-reading action plan is concerned with developing reading skills for all students, male and female, and it did not target a specific group of students, but rather viewed the student as an educated individual with abilities and skills seeking to develop and improve them.

The reason for this result can be attributed to the tendency of students of both genders to get rid of the routine method and shift to modern methods, which makes them serious in their dealing with the speed-reading strategy. It helps students realize that they are facing a method that increases their activity and level of motivation and opens horizons of knowledge for them.

## CONCLUSION

Considering the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the diversification of teaching methods to be suitable with the educational position, with a focus on the method of speed-reading, which the study revealed its positive effect. The study also recommends paying more attention and focus on helping students to develop their attitudes towards speed-reading, from teachers and parents, by encouraging students to speed-reading, and increasing their demand for it, as this has a positive impact on their reading comprehension.

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