CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introductory

Reading when considered in a broader sense, effects the entire personality of a person. Events encountered on printed page many a times, shape a reader's attitude towards life. To the young child, in a school successful and happy experiences with reading will determine in a great measure his feelings about himself and his social environment. The happy experiences with reading means comprehending what is read by the reader. Comprehension depends in a large measure upon the extent to which there is a real purpose of reading. Some reading material is so inherently interesting and fascinating to children that to pick up a book and start reading generates sufficient purpose for sustained interest and good comprehension.

Without comprehension and critical reaction it might reasonably be questioned that one is really reading. Researches are presented to show that teaching should use every opportunity to help children relate their reading to their own lives and experiences. Such teaching produces deeper and broader comprehension and makes it easier for children to react critically.

Four tentative conclusions reached by Gray as early

as 1925 still provide important guidelines for those interested in the improvement of reading comprehension. He concluded on the basis of his own research and that of others in the area of comprehension development:

"(1) that the ability to interpret simple passages accurately increases rapidly in the lower grades and may reach a very high level by the end of grade three;

(2) that the speed with which the reader can interpret simple passages improves rapidly and somewhat steadily through the grades;

(3) that depth of interpretation increases steadily throughout the elementary and high school grades; and

(4) that ability to pronounce words usually exceeds ability to interpret meaning by the time pupils reach the third grade."

Several important implications for education seem to arise from these conclusions, although Gray classified them as tentative and although little research has occurred since 1925 that would either support or negate Gray's findings.

Conclusion number one focuses attention on the need for making provisions to cultivate the attitude of looking for meanings in all reading experience.
With respect to conclusion number two, it may be noted that particular attention should be given to speed of comprehension in the higher grades.

Depth of interpretation not only increases steadily but there is also evidence that there is steady growth in reading for various purposes.

1.1 Concept of Reading

Reading is an ability of abilities, viz., perception, recognition, understanding, interpretation, judgement and making use of the material read. As David Russel puts it, "The soul of Reading is to read with understanding. Reading = Perception+recognition+ Understanding + Judgement + Use."²

1.2 Importance of Reading

In order to understand, our own people, our own land, our own cultural heritage, our old literature and in order to form our own and independent system of education, reading is a must. The Concept of Reading when put to practice in actual teaching, helps the learner in developing his perceptions and quick recognition and understanding the matter

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being read quickly and correctly. It makes the reading meaningful and develops the comprehension, which is very much required in learning various subjects. Thus importance of reading is, in any teaching programme.

Reading is not a separate discipline, it is rather an interdisciplinary subject applicable to the teaching of various school subjects.

Reading can make the learner a quick reader, grasping quickly the substance of the material that he reads. This adds to his joy of reading. It folds his power of interpreting the things and forming his independent opinion about them.

Reading has been misconceived by many people. There are some who think that reading is synonymous with words calling. This means if you can pronounce the words correctly, you are reading even when you have no idea what the author has said, but in fact reading is different from this. "Reading is a name for a number of abilities specially acquired and comprehension is a convenient title given to mental reaction to the printed material."3 When a text-book is read both mechanical and intellectual processes of vision, recognition and reproduction, intellectual processes of

recalling, remembering, judging, appreciating, evaluating etc., go on. The product of mechanical process is the technique and that of the intellectual processes is the comprehension. Hence it is right to say that where there is no comprehension, there is no reading.

Therefore, reading involves a reader in reacting and acting. When a man reads a particular passage, his feelings get stimulated, mildly or intensely. He agrees or disagrees with, gets disturbed or feels reassured. Therefore, feelings are interwoven with reading. Reading of this kind is not an easy achievement. It involves many kinds of components. John J. DeBoer has enlisted them as:

- ability to find main idea,
- ability to select significant details,
- ability to answer questions,
- ability to summarize and organize idea,
- ability to arrive at generalization,
- ability to predict the out-comes or draw inferences,
- ability to find out sequence of events,
- ability to critically reacting to what is read,
- ability to follow directions, and
A reader cannot acquire a complete comprehension all at once. It is a gradual process. It needs a lot of time and a persistent effort on the part of the reader. The comprehension is achieved by four levels as stated here,

i. It is level of identification. Here the reader is mainly concerned with recognizing the word accurately.

ii. At this stage the reader gets the almost rough idea or a sort of casual impression about the material read. It is not necessary that the information is always correct.

iii. It is a stage of 'literal' comprehension. Here the reader is able to get the main idea of the paragraph or a story. There is a conscious effort on the part of the reader to get the main idea or the details.

iv. The last comes the interpretative level. Here the reader goes beyond the facts and gives his own interpretation in the light of his own experience. The interpretative reading is of two kinds - critical

and creative,

(a) it is the critical reading when the reader is judging, setting a standard of norms or checking to see whether it tallies with the sense of values and so on. The reader is free to accept or reject the relevance of the material.

(b) Hence a book or a passage can be read and understood with varying degrees of understanding. There may be a student who reads it without any sort of understanding and there may be another who reads it with full understanding. "The amount of comprehension depends the readers purpose, but there are other important factors that have an equally, bearing on the comprehension of a passage. The physical condition of the reader, his interest in the material and the linguistic difficulty of the material, his culture, his locality where he stays, his sex and SES of family etc., are have major part to play in the comprehension process".

1.3 Reading and its Impact on Achievement

A number of studies have been conducted on factors affecting school achievement. These factors include I.Q.,

Physical health, Socio-economic status of family, sex, caste, distance of school from home, leisure time activities, study habits, attitude of the pupils towards school, different aspects of their personality etc., which point out importance of different variables in school achievement. So it would be worthwhile to investigate how far reading influence the achievement of the students.

Number of factors have been considered in different studies but hardly any attention has been paid towards reading, particularly reading comprehension, to find out its effect on the academic achievement of the students. In the present investigation the investigator has made an attempt to study the impact of reading on the achievement of pupils in different school subjects, taking various factors into consideration. The effect of language ability on achievement has been the concern of this study.

"Comprehension carries the understanding of a word or a phrase beyond recognition to the understanding of the meaning intended by the author." It becomes more important for the investigator when she tries to find out the impact of reading in mother-tongue as before joining the school, child is expected to achieve the capacity to converse freely, naturally and confidently about objects, people and happenings with the child's environment.

Thus mother-tongue and its importance were constantly and repeatedly emphasized by all the syllabii during the last fifty years. The value of mother-tongue can best be realized and appreciated if one has a clear picture of the aims and objectives of the primary education wherein mother-tongue occupies a key position.

1.4 The Problem

The problem is:

"The Study of the Impact of Reading on the Achievement of Pupils of Class VII in different school subjects". It is very essential on the part of the investigator to make precise, the connotation and the meaning of the terms involved in the statement of the problem, and in order to make the research more exact and reliable. It is essential on the part of the investigator to define certain important terms used in the wording of the Problem. The terms have been defined in the Chapter IV on Plan and Procedure of the study.

Here the word 'reading' is always taken as reading with comprehension because without comprehension reading has no sense. Impact has to be seen on the achievement of the pupils in different school subjects; whether reading comprehension affects the achievement in different school subjects or not. Standard seventh was considered because of many
obvious reasons. It is a terminal point in Gujarat State where child finishes his primary education and enters the secondary school and he has to proceed from objectivity to discription. Here the investigator found it necessary to find out the effect of comprehension on their achievement.

1.5 The Scope of the Problem

In India, although attempts have been made to develop some psychological tests and achievement tests in certain school subjects, due attention has not been paid to the development of tests in the field of reading, except a few persons who have attempted to construct test in this field on a small scale. It was essential to develop a tool in Gujarati to study the impact of reading comprehension on achievement. Therefore there seems to be a vast scope for the tool as well as the present study in the field to see the impact of reading comprehension on achievement of pupils in different school subjects. "Reading ability tests are of immense importance to teachers. They help the teachers to know their pupils' reading comprehension ability and how it affects the achievement of students; afterward they can have remedial programmes also. The test would also tell them about the level of the pupils in relation to the norms of a large number that took the test being a standardized test. The test would also be useful to classify pupils on the basis of the scores as excellent at reading comprehension.
average readers or poor readers. So keeping in view the scope of the present study investigator laid down certain objectives as mentioned in detail in Chapter IV on Plan and Procedure.

1.6 The Limitations of Problem

All the words in the present study have their own limitations beyond that they cannot cross the limits.

(a) In this study the investigator has to experiment the impact of different independent variables on the product variable of reading. Hence consideration has to be given to the following points in the present study:

i. The effect of different variables like socio-economic status of the parents, area, sex etc., on academic achievement.

ii. Impact is to be studied only on the subjects taught through mother-tongue (Gujarati).

iii. The schools with Gujarati as medium of instruction are to be considered.

(b) The term 'impact' is used in a restricted sense. It does not include the influence on the whole personality of the child, but it is limited to the influence on the achievement of pupils in
school subjects. Hence it is determined on the basis of a definite criteria fixed for the study.

(c) For the purpose of finding the impact, the reading comprehension test in Gujarati has been developed on the basis of the content of their expected vocabulary and textbooks.

(d) Books written by the authors of the areas, where the test was to be administered, were considered to select the testing material with a view to giving due consideration to dialectical effect of those areas.

(e) The present experiment is confined to the primary schools within the districts of Central Gujarat viz., Ahmedabad, Kaira and Baroda Districts.

1.7 The Scheme for the Presentation of the Report

The procedure of constructing different tests in the field of mental measurement more or less resemble with each other. The test generally has items based upon investigator's definition or concept of the ability or abilities to be measured. Therefore, one must be very clear about the definition of the terms used in the study. In order to be clear about the study, the investigator has to study them from different books, journals and encyclopaedias together.
with the study of past literature in the field in which she is proposing to study. The same procedure has been followed for the present investigation. The report of the study has been divided into seven chapters.

The first chapter deals with the importance of problem, the need of the study, concept of reading, importance of reading, levels of reading etc. The investigator has attempted to study all these things with the final aim of studying the impact of reading on the achievement of the pupils in different school subjects in this chapter. Scope and limitations also have been stated in the chapter.

In the second chapter, the investigator encompasses a discussion of the theoretical perspective of reading. Under this heading psychological and physiological aspects of reading and different views and definitions of reading are discussed with a view to arriving at the definition of reading. The terms like reading comprehension, silent reading, reading speed, accuracy of reading and effects of reading etc., have been explained.

The third chapter is devoted to the review of past literature which helped the investigator in understanding the present problem. At the same time, some well known tests were studied with a view to adding to the definition formulated through the theoretical discussion.
The fourth chapter is devoted to the Plan and Procedure of the study. The research plan is divided into two parts:

i. Development of the Silent Reading Comprehension Test, and

ii. Studies on the Impact of Silent Reading Comprehension on the Achievement.

The detailed outline of test construction and standardization as well as the factorial design has been presented in the chapter. The objectives, hypotheses and the methodology have been stated in the chapter.

The fifth chapter deals with the construction and standardization of the test of reading comprehension, Plan and Procedure, Components of Reading Comprehension, Determination of weightage, Selection of grade, Selection of reading material, Preparation of the test items, Determination of the length of the test, arrangement of the test items, arrangement of the test items, sub-tests and description are discussed in part I of the Chapter.

In the second part, construction of the test-items is explained. Under this heading number of items for try-out form, pre-try-out, tryout, surplus items, item-analysis, item-validity, selection of items, arrangement of sub-tests in present test and observation are discussed.

The third part of the chapter is devoted to the final run of the test and establishment of norms. Under this,
time allowance, sampling, administration of the test, scoring of the test, establishment of norms, comparison of histogram with best fitting normal curve, assigning letter grades.

The sixth chapter deals with the impact of reading comprehension on the achievement of pupils in different school subjects. In this chapter, the investigator adopted ANOVA statistical treatment was given to the factorial design, in which the product-variable reading has independent variables like area, sex, and socio-economic status. That has been presented through different factorial designs according to needs. This chapter being the heart of the whole study, every possible statistical treatment has been given. The technique of analysis of variance using F-test on data involving one or more factors in varieties of experimental designs have been used. Suitable hypotheses have been formulated and tested along with.

Correlation matrix has been prepared to study the relationship of the subjects in the achievement.

Seventh chapter deals with the Retrospect and Prospect of the whole study. Here the investigator relates the observations made during the development of the test and conducting studies on the impact of reading. The observations in the first part are based on construction and standardization, wherein results about the sex differences, area
In the second part, observations on the impact of reading on academic achievement of the pupils have been made. The suggestions for teachers, headmasters, parents, guidance and counselling officers, administrators, policy makers, syllabus framers and research workers have been offered.

In brief, the body of the thesis encompasses tables, graphs at appropriate places and adequate appendices with exhaustive list of bibliography at the end.

It includes the full details and discussions of all the necessary steps for the test construction and standardization of a good reliable and valid tool for measuring reading comprehension and the achievement is measured according to the results of that tool.

After the introductory chapter, the investigator has stated the Theoretical Perspective of the study in the next chapter.