**DECLARATION**

I, **PRAVEENKUMAR.N**, do hereby declare that this dissertation **“EFFECTIVENESS OF READING ACTIVITIES ON READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KERALA”** has not been submitted by me for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Title or Recognition before.

Farook Training College, **PRAVEENKUMAR.N**

01.01. 2010

**Dr. K. VIJAYAKUMARI**

**Selection Grade Lecturer**

**Farook Training College**

**Calicut.**

**CERTIFICATE**

I, **Dr. K. VIJAYAKUMARI**., do hereby certify that this dissertation, **“EFFECTIVENESS OF READING ACTIVITIES ON READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KERALA”** is a record of bonafide study and research carried out by **PRAVEENKUMAR.N,** under my supervision and guidance. The report has not been submitted by him for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Title or Recognition before.

Farook Training College, **Dr. K. VIJAYAKUMARI**

01.01. 2010 Supervising Teacher

**Acknowledgement**

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Farook Training College,

01.01.2010 PRAVEENKUMAR.N

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 The necessity for international understanding and world peace is increasing day by day since a single spark from any issue can destroy the whole world. The study of foreign languages is a contribution to international understanding and world peace. It can eradicate the linguistic barriers between countries. It helps us to mould a wide and liberal perspective towards outer world. The foreign language study enlarges our command of English and adds to our knowledge of language, the most ever present thing in life. It aids in developing the powers of mind that mark the truly educated person. In India English continues to be the medium of instruction in higher education and is also the language of administration. For over a century and a half, Indian intellectuals have been studying English and now it has entered the fabric of India’s culture. It plays the role of an official language, a court language, a language for international trade, a library language and a link language. No major Indian language today has the same paying potential as English. English at present is a non-Indian language which is recognized constitutionally as the Associate National Official Language.

 Teaching of English has a pivotal role in the educational scenario of India. In India, the main purpose of teaching English is four-fold, the social, technical, administrative and cultural. English helps us to adjust with modern westernized social surroundings. Proficiency in modern knowledge requires the medium of English language. The teaching of English as a second language is aimed at the development of four skills viz., Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The objectives of teaching English at the school stage are listed below.

* To understand English with ease when spoken at normal conversational speed.
* To speak English correctly and fluently
* To read English with comprehension and at a reasonable speed so as to use it as a library language for gathering information and for enjoying reading
* To write neatly and correctly at a reasonable speed
* To enjoy literature in English
* To acquire knowledge of the elements of English for practical command of the langrage.
* To translate common English words, phrases and sentences into their functional equivalents in mother tongue and vice versa.
* To develop interest in English (Baruah,1991)

Introduction of reading and writing without enough experience in listening and speaking lead to lopsided development in the mastery of skills. In Kerala, English education started as early as the first half of the Nineteenth century. The educational curriculum of the state gives great importance to the study of English language. The present curriculum sees language arts as active, interdependent processes linked to experience of the learner integration of language arts strands the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in every lesson, not in separate units. Hence it is the duty of the teacher to facilitate activities necessary for the development of these four skills. Language teaching basically helps the learner to get a reasonably good command over the four important language skills.

Of all the skills, Reading holds the pivotal position. Reading expands the horizons of our experience; it trains our minds and broadens our outlook. In any language teaching programme developing the ability to read is the primary objective. Teaching of reading is important because reading indicates towards knowing of the language. It helps in knowing world news, important information through newspapers, journals, books etc. It gives the learner a full control over the words and patterns which they come across during the process of speaking. Reading is considered as the stepping stone of developing the skill of writing. Of the above listed objectives, about five are attainable only when the individual develops the skill of reading comprehension. Learning a language depends completely on its understanding and comprehension, other wise it would be a waste of time. The goal of all reading is the comprehension of meaning. It is the deliberate transfer of the core idea to the reader. The degree of transfer depends upon the receptive ability of the reader.

**NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE**

Francis Bacon said “Reading maketh a full man”. Emphasizing the importance of the knowledge of English, University Education Commission observed “English is a language which is rich in literature-humanistic, scientific and technical. If, under sentimental urges we should give up English, we would cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge.”

It becomes clear that English helps us keep in touch with the world’s ever increasing advancement, which is an important factor of a developing country like India. English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world.

In India, English has continued to maintain its status as a library language. Hence it is the necessity of the time to inculcate the habit of independent reading at the earliest possible. As it has been recommended by the Official Language Commission, English is to be taught in our schools primarily as a language of comprehension. The commission advocates that it should be offered as a medium of comprehension to enable students to use it as a window to the higher studies of their subject.

The National Reading Panel (2000) states that reading comprehension is critically important to the development of children’s reading skills and therefore to the ability to obtain an education. Reading is often referred to as the most important of the four language skills for EFL learners as it enables students to gain exposure to the target language and receive valuable linguistic input to build up language proficiency. Lado (1961) points out that reading in a foreign language consist of grasping meaning in that language through its written representation. Reading is a meaning searching and meaning-constructing process that requires effort on the readers’ part if they want to understand written texts.

For developing the capacity of comprehending writing it is desirable to teach English as a language of comprehension. The capacities for expression though only to a limited extent will acquire along with the capacity for comprehension. Comprehending English is mainly a matter of understanding the basic grammar and structure of language and widening the vocabulary. When we say ‘English as library language’ it does not imply that students would not be taught the skill of speaking and writing. It only implies that the skill of reading would be paid much more attention than others. In almost all the competitive examinations both in public and private sectors reading comprehension is an integral part.

The present English curriculum at secondary level of Kerala state is giving emphasis on the development of the four major skills viz., listening, speaking, reading and writing. But unfortunately in our Malayalam medium schools, the level of English teaching is not giving much emphasis on the four skills especially on reading comprehension. In English medium schools students are getting opportunities to use English. An average teacher in Malayalam medium schools just makes the students aware of the content, and is not providing any training to develop these skills. National Curriculum Framework (2005) points out that teachers lack pedagogical skills like understanding where the learner is, explaining, and asking appropriate questions. The teachers lack classroom management skills and they tend to focus on errors rather than on imaginative input and articulation. The Pre-service training does not give the teacher adequate preparation in reading pedagogy and neither does in-service training address the issue. Moreover the textbooks are in an ad-hoc fashion with no attempt to follow a coherent strategy of reading instruction.

In research, seeking to understand the process that contributes to reading comprehension, considerable attention has been focused on the use of reading strategy. Ruffin (2009) in his article on reading strategies for improving the reading comprehension skill of secondary level English language learners with learning disabilities, points out that there is an urgent need for reading strategies for improving reading comprehension. Reading strategies are defined as techniques, principles, or rules that enable a student to increase his reading comprehension. Studies focusing on second language readers also identify a close relation between use of reading strategy and reading achievement (Erten and Karakas 2007)

The most common reading techniques are Extensive and Intensive reading. The former involves reading of longer texts for pleasure and, not necessarily, for minute details. It is an activity of fluency in which the students can read on their own. The latter involves approaching a text under the close guidance of a teacher, or through a task that forces the student to pay attention to the text. It involves a profound and detailed understanding of the text. Along with these techniques several other techniques can be used for improving reading comprehension in English.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

 The study is titled as, “Effectiveness of Reading Activities on Reading Comprehension in English of Secondary School Students in Kerala”

**DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

 The definition of key terms used in the statement of the problem is given below.

**Effectiveness**

 It is defined as the adequacy to accomplish a purpose or the capacity to produce the intended result (Webster, 1996)

**Reading Activities**

 Reading activities can be defined as those activities which enable a learner to read effectively.

**Reading Comprehension**

 Reading comprehension refers to the ability to perceive meaning from printed words. (Comprehensive Dictionary of Education, 2008)

**Secondary School Students**

 The term refers to students in 8th, 9th and 10th standards of the recognised schools.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study were the following.

1. To find out whether Experimental and Control groups differ significantly in their post-test mean scores.
2. To find out whether the Experimental group differ significantly in their pre-test and post-test mean scores.
3. To find out whether the Control group differ significantly in their pre-test and post-test mean scores.
4. To find out whether the Experimental and Control groups differ significantly in their mean gain scores.
5. To find out whether boys and girls in the Experimental group differ significantly in their mean gain scores.

**HYPOTHESES**

 The following hypotheses were set for the study.

1. There will not be any significant difference in the post-test mean scores of Experimental and Control groups.
2. There will be significant difference in the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the Experimental group
3. There will be significant difference in the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the Control group
4. There will not be any significant difference in the mean gain scores of
Experimental and Control groups.
5. There will not be any significant difference in the mean gain scores of boys and girls in the Experimental group.

**VARIABLES**

In an experimental study mainly two types of variables are involved viz, independent variable and dependent variable.

**Independent Variable**

The independent variable or the treatment variable in the study was the method of teaching in English. The existing method of teaching English and the Reading Activities for Reading Comprehension were the two levels of the treatment variable.

**Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in the study was the Skill of Reading Comprehension in English.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Design**

 The design used in the present study was the Pre-test- Post-test Equivalent Group Design. The Experimental group was taught through reading activities and control group was taught through the existing method of teaching English.

**Participants**

 The participants in the study consist of 33 pupils each in the Experimental group and Control group. The participants for the groups were drawn from a rural Malayalam medium high school, Nirmala Higher Secondary School, Chemperi, Kannur District.

**Tools Used for the Collection of Data**

The tools used for the study are

1. Instructional designs based on Reading Activities
2. Instructional designs based on Existing Method of Teaching
3. Test of Reading Comprehension in English

**Statistical Techniques Used**

 The following statistical techniques were used for analysing the data.

1. Test of significance of difference between mean scores for large independent samples.
2. Test of significance of difference between mean scores for large dependent samples
3. Test of significance of difference between mean scores for small independent samples.

**SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study was to find out the effectiveness of Reading Activities on Reading Comprehension in English of Secondary School students.

 The participants for the experiment were the students of two divisions of standard IX. The investigator himself taught the two groups to control the teacher variable. The content was the same for the two groups. The Experimental group was taught through Reading Activities and the Control group was taught through Existing Method of teaching English. Instructional designs for both groups were prepared.

 The investigator hopes that the results obtained from the present study may help the English teachers to reform the existing classroom teaching. It may also be helpful for the curriculum planners, parents and the student community.

 Even though many precautions have been taken to make the study as accurate and valid as possible, certain limitations have crept into the study. The noted limitations are listed below.

* The sample for the study was confined to the pupils of two division of standard IX.
* The participants the study were from the same school
* Only one aided school, from rural area was selected for the study.
* The study was limited to the skill of Reading Comprehension in English only.
* A total of only 14 periods were spent for each group.

**OGRANISATION OF THE REPORT**

 The report has been divided into five chapters.

 Chapter I deals with introduction, the need and significance of the study, statement of the problem, definition of key terms, objectives, hypotheses, methodology, scope and limitation of the study and organization of the report.

 Chapter II gives the theoretical overview of development of Reading Comprehension in English and studies related to reading comprehension.

 Chapter III describes the methodology followed in the study. It gives details regarding the design, the tool used, the sample selected, procedure of data collection and statistical techniques used.

 Chapter IV deals with the analysis of data, major findings of the study and tenability of hypotheses.

 Chapter V includes study in retrospect, conclusion of the study, educational implications and suggestions for further research in the area.

**REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES**

Review of related literature is an integral part of any investigation, where the researcher makes a thorough survey of related studies before planning and carrying out the study. It eliminates duplication of research by familiarizing the researcher with what is already known and what is still unknown and untested. A proper study of the related literature would enable the investigator to locate and go deep into the problem.

The literature reviewed by the investigator is presented in this chapter under two heads, viz,

Theoretical overview of development of reading comprehension and studies related to reading comprehension.

**THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION**

Teaching and learning of any language focuses on the development of mainly four skills viz, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teaching of English is also centered around these four skills. So far only the oral approach to the teaching of English has been stressed. It can help the pupil to learn the language code, i.e., the fundamental of the language. But learning the code and using it for effective communication are two very different things. Hence learning the language through the printed word became prominent.

 Use of code, i.e., the different language skills, such as, listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc, can be mastered only by exercising the particular skill in actual communication situations. But the pupils rarely get the opportunity to practice the skills of listening and speaking in actual communication situations. But it is not so in the case of reading and writing, the pupils can always be exposed to written communication situations where these two skills are used naturally. Therefore, by reading good English we can develop such insight into the working of the language that we can even hope to surpass the native speaker so far as these two skills are concerned.

The skill of reading involves several sub skills they are:-

* Read silently at varying speed depending on the purpose of reading.
* Adopt different reading strategies for different types of text
* Anticipate and predict events
* Read extensively for pleasure
* Use one’s own knowledge of the outside world
* Read and understand the meaning and implication of grammatical structures.
* Extract specific information for summary and note-taking.
* Scan to locate specific details
* Make use of non-text information ( Baruah,1991)

Baruah (1991) states that the process of reading may be broadly divided into three stages viz., recognition stage, structuring stage and interpretation stage

**Figure1. Stages of Reading**

 The first stage may be called ‘recognition stage’. At this stage the learner simply recognizes the graphic counterparts of the phonological items.

The second stage may be called ‘structuring stage’. At this stage the learner sees the syntactic relationships of the items and thereby understands the structural meaning of the syntactic units.

The third stage is called ‘interpretation stage’. This is the highest level in the process of reading. At this stage the learner comprehends the significance (not merely the meaning) of a word, a phrase or a sentence in the over all context of entire discourse.

Reading Comprehension is one of the most complex forms of cognition in which people routinely engage. It is the result of information from visual, auditory, semantic, conceptual and linguistic sources combining instantly to provide a rendition of each sentence or fragment. This meaning must be combined with background and inferential information and coordinated with the context and meaning of the whole passage.

The language difficulties that a student has in reading a foreign language are substantially the same as he has in understanding it aurally, with three chief differences. In reading he is able to proceed at his own speed and go back to re-read what he may not have grasped at once, while in auditing he must adjust to the speed of the speaker.

Another difference between reading and auditing results from the difference in style between the language used in speaking and the language used in writing. The vocabulary met in reading is of a far greater range than the vocabulary ordinarily used in speaking and the length of the utterances that are found in reading is greater than the length of utterances heard in conversations, lecture and speeches.

 In addition to language difficulties in reading, the student will have difficulties caused by the system of graphic representation of the language. It can be the result of the kind of units represented, the actual symbols used, and the direction in which the symbols are written.

**STUDIES RELATED TO READING COMPREHENSION**

Agarwal (1981) examined the role of some of the personal, cognitive and non-cognitive factors in reading ability. The results revealed that males and females different significantly in reading ability. Arts and science students among males and females differed significantly interms of their frequencies on high and low reading ability scores.

Dass (1984) in his study on reading comprehension in English, examined sex difference in reading comprehension and also examined reading comprehension in the context of SES. Findings showed that the mean score of girls was higher than that of boys and students with high SES preformed well in reading comprehension test.

Schirmer and Woolsey (1997) examined the effect of comprehension questions that require analysis, synthesis and evaluation on the reading comprehension of deaf children. Findings showed that the participants could analyse, synthesis and evaluate narrative text.

Gardill *et al.*,(1999) investigated the effectiveness of direct instruction of an advanced story map procedure on the reading comprehension performance of six middle school students with learning disabilities. Results indicated an increase in story grammar and basal comprehension performance by all six students from base line to the independent phase condition of the intervention. In addition, generalization to a novel passage and maintenance of strategy effects were observed for all students on the story grammar tests and for four students on basal comprehension tests.

Vollands, *et al*., (1999) conducted a quasi-experimental action research to study the effectiveness of a program for computerized self assessment of reading comprehension – The Accelerated Reader in socio – economically disadvantaged areas. The results suggested that the program has brought improvement for the learners.

Johnson and Howard (2003) Investigated the effect of Accelerated Reader (AR) program on the reading achievement and vocabulary development of 755 third, fourth and fifth graders from a low socio-economic, urban environment. Students categorized as high AR users gained significantly more on reading comprehension than those students categorized us average and /or low users.

 Pani (2004) conducted a study to ascertain the impact of early vs late phonological intervention for reading competence among kindergarten and standard one children. The findings showed that phonological sensitivity increased steadily as the age of the children increased.

Shobana(2004) conducted a study on the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching on reading comprehension in English of secondary school students of Kerala. The findings suggest that reciprocal teaching is effective in developing reading comprehension in English.

Siji (2004) in a comparative study of the reading comprehension in English of secondary school English medium students in Kerala following central and state syllabi revealed that the students who follow central syllabi were advantageous over the students who follow state syllabi in reading comprehension in English.

Tozcu and Coady (2004) investigated the effect of direct vocabulary learning using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) on vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and speed of word recognition. The experimental group, which used Computer Assisted Language Learning, showed greater improvement in vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and speed of word recognition than control group.

Saenz *et al.,* (2005) assessed the effects of Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) on the reading performance of native Spanish speaking students with learning disabilities. The results revealed that Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies are effective.

Fujinaga (2006) in this study tried to find out the effect of oral and silent reading modes on reading comprehension of Japanese University students. The analysis yielded no significant main effect for reading modes and proficiency. The findings suggest that there is no major difference in reading comprehension performance between oral and silent reading.

Takala (2006) in an experimental study tried to find out the effect of reciprocal teaching on reading comprehension. Four cognitive strategies were used to enhance pupils’ reading comprehension skills. The results revealed that the intervention proved to be beneficial.

 Akhulut (2007) investigated immediate and delayed effects of different hypermedia glosses in incidental vocabulary learning and reading comprehension of advanced foreign language learners. The 69 participants were randomly assigned to three types of annotation viz; definition of word, definition coupled with associated pictures and definitions coupled with associated short videos. Results showed that the groups that had access to definitions along with both types of visuals had significantly higher vocabulary scores while there is no differences observed on the reading comprehension test.

Bang and Zhao (2007) conducted a study to examine the reading strategies used by advanced Korean and Chinese ESL learners when reading academic texts. Through oral recall, structured interviews and questionnaires of reading strategies the investigators found that Korean ESL learners tend to rely on phonological strategies while Chinese learners rely on visual orthographic strategies.

Erten and Karakas (2007), in their study on the effectiveness of different reading activities on reading comprehension of short stories showed that the experimental group, given with a set of activities like comprising, previewing, predicting, key words, scanning, skimming, clarifying and summarizing out performed the control group on literal comprehension while the control group which was given activities like brain storming, predicting, surveying, reciprocal teaching, inferring, summarising etc. did better on evaluation questions.

Kieffer and Lesaux (2007) in their study examined the relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension in English among Spanish-speaking English language learners followed from fourth through fifth grade. The relationship between morphological awareness and reading comprehension was found to strengthen between fourth and fifth grade, and in fifth grade, morphological awareness was found to be a significant predictor of reading comprehension.

 Lee (2007) in a quasi-experimental study on the effect of textual enhancement and topic familiarity on reading comprehension and learning of passive from revealed that textual enhancement aided the learning of the target forms while having unfavourable effects on meaning comprehension. Topic familiarity, by contrast, aided the students’ comprehension but was ineffective interms of their learning of form.

Tanaka and Stapleton (2007) investigated the effect of a quasi-extensive reading programme on Japanese high school EFL learners reading comprehension, reading speed and their perceptions of the programme. Results revealed that the experimental group scored significantly higher in reading speed and comprehension than the control group.

Tilfarlioglu and Basaran (2007) conducted an experimental study on the effect of Task-based writing activities on reading comprehension. The results showed that the experimental group which is taught through Task-based writing activities has got better achievement than the control group which is taught through traditional methods in English.

Zhang (2007) explained ESL learners’ understanding of reading and their willingness to be engaged in strategic reading in participatory classroom activities. The result showed that the teachers strategy-based instructional intervention brought improvement in comprehension.

Fender (2008) examined the relationship between spelling knowledge and reading skills among a group of Arab learners of English and ESL learners. The results indicated that the Arab and non-Arab ESL students were not significantly different in listening comprehension and Arab students scored significantly lower on the spelling test and the reading comprehension test.

He (2008) explored the effects of achievement goals on college students’ reading strategy use and reading comprehension. The results indicated that students with profiles characterized by strong mastery and strong performance goals used intra-paragraph, interparagraph, intra-sentential and evaluating strategies more frequently than their counterparts.

Nakamoto *et al*., (2008) investigated the associations of oral language and reading skills with a sample of 282 Spanish speaking English language learners. The findings showed that the decoding and oral language factors were both significant predictors of reading comprehension in both languages.

Wigfield *et al.,* (2008) Compared how Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI), strategy instruction and traditional instruction in fourth – grade class rooms differentially influenced students’ reading comprehension, strategy use and engagement in reading. Students experienced CORI were significantly higher in reading comprehension, reading strategies and reading engagement.

Zhang (2008) explored the effects of formal schemata on reading comprehension in English. The findings suggest that formal schemata has a significant effect on written communication.

Erten and Razi (2009) in their study investigated whether cultural familiarity influences comprehension of short stories and whether nativizing the story or using reading activity can compensate for the lack of such familiarity. The findings showed that nativized stories and activities enhanced reading comprehension.

Webb (2009) investigated the effects of pre-learning vocabulary on reading comprehension and writing. The findings suggested that pre-learning vocabulary is an effective method of improving reading comprehension and writing and it has significant effect on learner’s ability to use or understand a word.

**Conclusion**

 From the literature reviewed the investigator found that a few studies are conducted in the area of Reading Comprehension in Kerala especially among Malayalam medium students. The other studies reviewed were conducted outside Kerala and abroad and these studies provide both positive and negative results. Hence the investigator decided to conduct a study in the area of Reading Comprehension. Therefore investigator decided to conduct the present study “Effectiveness of Reading Activities on Reading Comprehension in English of Secondary School Students in Kerala”.

**METHODOLOGY**

 Methodology of a study refers to the general strategy followed by the researcher in collecting and analyzing the data necessary for solving the problem.

 The methodology of the present study is explained under the following headings.

* Objectives
* Hypotheses
* Design
* Variables
* Participants
* Tools used
* Data collection procedure
* Statistical techniques used for analysis of data

**OBJECTIVES**

 The objectives of the study were the following.

1. To find out whether Experimental and Control groups differ significantly in their post-test mean scores.
2. To find out whether the Experimental group differ significantly in their pre-test and post-test mean scores.
3. To find out whether the Control group differ significantly in their pre-test and post-test mean scores.
4. To find out whether the Experimental and Control groups differ significantly in their mean gain scores.
5. To find out whether boys and girls in the Experimental group differ significantly in their mean gain scores.

**HYPOTHESES**

 The following hypotheses were set for the study.

1. There will not be any significant difference in the post-test mean scores of Experimental and Control groups.
2. There will be significant difference in the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the Experimental group
3. There will be significant difference in the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the Control group
4. There will not be any significant difference in the mean gain scores of
Experimental and Control groups.
5. There will not be any significant difference in the mean gain scores of boys and girls in the Experimental group.

**DESIGN**

The study being an experimental one, pre-test- post-test Equivalent group Design was used. In this design pre-test is administered for both experimental and control groups before the application of the treatment and a post-test at the end of the treatment period. The design of the study is as follows.

O1 X O2 ; O3 C O4

O1, O3 = Pre-Tests

O2,O4= Post-Tests

In the above design ‘X’ and ‘C’ are the applications of Experimental and Control treatment respectively and O is the test administered.

The investigator selected randomly two divisions of standard IX of a Government Aided Malayalam medium school in the rural area in Kannur district. One division (1XA) was taken as the Control group and the other one (1XD) as the Experimental group. The two groups were equal in number and before implementing the treatment, a pre-test ‘Test of Reading Comprehension in English’ was administered. The mean scores were compared and found that the two groups do not differ significantly in their mean pre-test score. (Details of the test of significance of the mean pre-test scores are presented in chapter IV)

Two divisions of the same school were selected as Experimental and Control group in order to avoid the influence of school related variables. The Experimental group was taught through Reading Activities to develop Reading Comprehension in English and the Control group was taught through the existing method of teaching English.

The Experimental and Control groups were taught the same content selected from the Source Book of English for standard IX and some additional topics of the same type were selected from the web http://www.world-engligh.org/stories.htm. Both groups were dealt with the respective methods for fourteen periods of forty minutes duration. At the end of the treatment, the Test of Reading Comprehension in English was again administered to both the groups on the same day.

**VARIABLES**

In an experimental study mainly two types of variables are involved viz, Independent variable and dependent variable.

**Independent Variable**

The independent variable or the treatment variable in the study was the method of teaching in English. The existing method of teaching English and the Reading Activities for Reading Comprehension were the two levels of the treatment variable.

**Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in the study was the Skill of Reading Comprehension in English.

**PARTICIPANTS**

The population for the present study was secondary school pupils of Kerala. For the study the experimental and control groups were taken from a rural Malayalam medium high school, Nirmala Higher Secondary School, Chemperi in Kannur district. It was assumed that the school selected will be a true representative of the Malayalam medium schools in Kerala.

**TOOLS USED**

The tools used for study were the following

1. Instructional design for reading activities
2. Instructional design for the existing method of teaching English
3. Test of Reading Comprehension in English

A brief description of the tools are given below

* 1. **Instructional Design based on Reading Activities**

The reading activities are broadly classified into three, viz; pre-reading activities, while reading activities and post-reading activities. For the present study the investigator prepared an instructional design based on some specific reading activities. They are briefly explained below.

**Pre-reading Activities**

**Previewing**

It is the explanation about the setting and time of the story or a background knowledge about a passage.

**While reading activities**

**Key word**

Key words provide essential meaning of the given passage. It helps the students to comprehend the passage easily.

**Scanning**

It involves scanning the text, gives title to each section, find adjectives used for the characters (in a story)or find out the difficult terms etc.

**Skimming**

 It involves finding of important points. Factual questions are asked in this activity.

**Predicting**

This activity involves the prediction of future events

**Outlining**

Make out line of the passage by using key words.

**Clarifying**

It involves clarifying doubts, add further information etc….

**Post-reading activities**

**Question and answer**

In this activity factual questions can be asked and elicit proper answers.

**Drawing conclusions**

During this stage analytical question, to arrive at comments on the passage are asked.

**Summarising**

 It involves writing of the gist of the passage without overlooking main points.

To practice these steps the investigator selected content, especially paragraphs and short stories from course book of Std IX and from the web http://www.world-englidh.org/stories.

Instructional designs were prepared based on the Reading Activities. A sample design is given as Appendix I.

* 1. **Instructional design based on the Existing Method of teaching English.**

To teach the Control group, the investigator selected the same content which was given for the Experimental group. The content was taught through the existing method of teaching English. A sample instructional design is given as Appendix II

* 1. **Test of Reading Comprehension in English**

The investigator prepared a Test of Reading Comprehension in English. The same test was administered before the treatment (Pre-test) and after the treatment (Post-test) for both groups.

The test was of one hour duration and the maximum mark obtainable is twenty five. The test consists of four different paragraphs in English with almost same complexity. The learners were asked to answer the questions given under the paragraph. Each paragraph is followed by four questions and the marks allocated for reach type are given in Table 1

**TABLE 1**

**Weigtage given to each**

**Paragraph in the Test of Reading Comprehension**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | No of questions | Total marks |
| Paragraph I | 4 | 7 |
| Paragraph II | 4 | 6 |
| Paragraph III | 4 | 6 |
| Paragraph IV | 4 | 6 |

**Form of questions**

The following forms of questions were included in the test.

1. **Word comprehension**

In this type of questions, a word or words will be given and the learner has to find out another word of the same meaning from the paragraph.

Example: Pick out the word from the passage which means ‘dried out land’

1. **Analytical question**

This type of question requires the learner to describe the answer in their own words.

Example: Why did the author love rivers?

1. **Factual question**

In this type of question, the learner can directly find the answer from the paragraph.

Example: Which is the most memorable river for the author?

The weightage given to each type of question in the test is given in Table 2

**TABLE 2**

**Weightage given to each**

**type of question in the Test of Reading Comprehension**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Type of question | No. of questions | Marks |
| Word comprehension | 4 | 8 |
| Analytical question | 4 | 10 |
| Factual question | 4 | 7 |

The test of reading comprehension in English is given as appendix III

 **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The investigator sought permission from the Head Master of the school and selected two divisions of standard IX randomly. The number of students were thirty three each. The details of the groups selected are given in Table.3

**TABLE 3**

**Details of the**

 **Experimental and Control groups under study**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Groups  | Standard | Boys | Girls | Total no. of students | Average Age |
| Experimental Group | IX D | 16 | 17 | 33 | 14+ |
| Control Group | IXA | 17 | 16 | 33 | 14+ |

Before the treatment variables are introduced, the investigator administered Test of Reading Comprehension in English for the Experimental and Control groups to know the entry behaviour of the groups.

The treatment variables were introduced through two sets of instructional designs based on the Reading Activities and the Existing Method of teaching English to the Experimental group and Control group respectively. The two groups Experimental and Control groups have been undergone the treatment for fourteen days. The investigator himself engaged the groups for these fourteen days. Details of the time schedule are given as Appendix IV.

 As the final step the Test of Reading Comprehension in English was again administered. The same test was administered on both groups and the scores in the test were put to statistical analysis.

**STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED FOR ANALYSIS OF DATA**

The following statistical techniques were used for analysis of data.

Test of Significance of Difference between Means for Large Independent Samples.

The formula used is



Where,

 =Mean of Experimental sample

 =Mean of Control sample

*N1*=Number of cases in Experimental sample

*N2* ­= Number of cases in Control sample

 = Variance of Experimental sample

 = Variance of Control sample (Best & Kahn,2008)

Test of Significance of Difference between Mean scores for Large Dependent Samples

The formula used is



Where,

 =Mean of Experimental sample

 =Mean of Control sample

*N*1 =Number of cases in Experimental sample

*N2* ­= Number of cases in Control sample

 = Variance of Experimental sample

 = Variance of Control sample (Best & Kahn,2008)

Test of Significance of Difference between Mean Scores for Small Independent Samples

The formula used is



Where,

 =Mean of Experimental sample

 =Mean of Control sample

*N1*=Number of cases in Experimental sample

*N2* ­= Number of cases in Control sample

 = Variance of Experimental sample

 = Variance of Control sample (Best & Kahn, 2008)

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This chapter provides a summary of the procedure adopted for the study along with educational implications of the study and suggestions for further research

**STUDY IN RETROSPECT**

The present study entitled as “**EFFECTIVENESS OF READING ACTIVITIES ON READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KERALA**”

**Variables**

In an experimental study mainly two types of variables are involved viz, Independent variable and dependent variable.

**Independent variable**

The independent variable or the treatment variable in the study was the method of teaching in English. The existing method of teaching English and the Reading Activities for Reading Comprehension were the two levels of the treatment variable.

**Dependent variable**

The dependent variable in the study was the Skill of Reading Comprehension in English.

**Objectives**

 The objectives of the study were the following.

1. To find out whether Experimental and Control groups differ significantly in their post-test mean scores.
2. To find out whether the Experimental group differ significantly in their pre-test and post-test mean scores.
3. To find out whether the Control group differ significantly in their pre-test and post-test mean scores.
4. To find out whether the Experimental and Control groups differ significantly in their mean gain scores.
5. To find out whether boys and girls in the Experimental group differ significantly in their mean gain scores.

**Hypotheses**

 The following hypotheses were set for the study.

1. There will not be any significant difference in the post-test mean scores of Experimental and Control groups.
2. There will be significant difference in the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the Experimental group
3. There will be significant difference in the mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the Control group
4. There will not be any significant difference in the mean gain scores of
Experimental and Control groups.
5. There will not be any significant difference in the mean gain scores of boys and girls in the Experimental group.

**Methodology**

**Design**

The study being an experimental one, pre-test- post-test Equivalent group Design was used. In this design pre-test is administered for both experimental and control groups before the application of the treatment and a post-test at the end of the treatment period. The design of the study is as follows.

O1 X O2 ; O3 C O4

O1, O3= Pre-Tests

O2,O4= Post-Tests

In the above design ‘X’ and ‘C’ are the applications of Experimental and Control treatment respectively and O is the test administered.

**Participants**

The population for the present study was secondary school pupils of Kerala. For the study the experimental and control groups were taken from a rural Malayalam medium high school, Nirmala Higher Secondary School, Chemperi in Kannur district. It was assumed that the school selected will be a true representative of the Malayalam medium schools in Kerala.

**Tools used**

The tools used for study were the following

1. Instructional design for reading activities
2. Instructional design for the existing method of teaching English
3. Test of Reading Comprehension in English

**Statistical techniques used**

The following statistical techniques were used for analysis of data.

1. Test of Significance of Difference between Means for Large Independent Samples.

2. Test of Significance of Difference between Mean scores for Large Dependent Samples

3. Test of Significance of Difference between Mean Scores for Small Independent Samples

**MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

1. When the post-test mean scores of the Experimental and Control groups were compared the following result was obtained.

There is a significant difference in the post-test scores between Experimental and Control group (P≤.01)

1. When the pre-test and the post test mean scores of the Experimental group were compared the following result was obtained.

There is a significant difference in the pre-test and the post-test mean scores of the Experimental group (P≤.01)

1. When pre-test and post-test mean scores of the Control group were compared the following result was obtained.

There is no significant difference in the pre-test and the post-test mean scores of the Control group (P>.05)

1. When the mean gain scores of the Experimental and Control groups were compared, the following result was obtained.

There is a significant difference in the mean gain scores between Experimental and Control group. (P≤.01)

1. When the mean gain scores of boys and girls in the Experimental group were compared the following result was obtained.

There is no significant difference in the mean gain scores between boys and girls in the experimental group.

**CONCLUSION**

Major findings of the study helped the investigator to arrive at the following conclusions.

Reading Activities are found more effective than the existing method of teaching English in developing the skill of Reading Comprehension in English. This conclusion was drawn from the result of comparison of post test mean scores of Experimental and Control groups.

The comparison of pre-test and post test mean scores of Experimental group revealed that the treatment given to the group was effective since there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post–test mean scores of Experimental group. The result of the Control group indicated that the treatment programme given to the group was not effective in developing reading comprehension in English.

There is a significant difference in the mean gain scores of Experimental group. This result supported the early finding that the treatment programme given to the Experimental group was effective.

Finally when the mean gain scores of boys and girls in the Experimental group compared it is revealed that there is no significant difference between boys and girls in their mean gain scores. That is, the strategy ‘Reading Activities’ is equally effective for boys and girls in developing Reading Comprehension

**EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

 The present study was to find out the effectiveness of Reading Activities on Reading Comprehension in English of Secondary School Students in Kerala. The findings of the study and conclusions helped the investigator to suggest the following.

 The major finding of the study is that Reading Activities are advantageous over the existing method of teaching English in developing Reading Comprehension. More over the existing method of teaching was found to be not at all effective in developing Reading Comprehension. Hence there is a need for restructuring of English teaching-learning process in order to attain the curricular objectives.

 While teaching English, emphasis should be laid on developing Reading Comprehension together with listening, speaking and writing skills. For this, normal classroom teachers can incorporate Reading Activities in their usual classroom teaching. In English medium schools students are getting more opportunities to develop the skill of Reading Comprehension while the Malayalam medium students lack the opportunity. So English teachers in Malayalam medium schools must practice these activities in their classroom so that the learners can develop the skill of Reading Comprehension which will help them in the future learning

 Reading activities are suitable in developing the skill of Reading Comprehension for both boys and girls .Therefore this method is applicable for single –sex institutions as well as co-education institutions.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

 The findings of the study provides a light on further research

1. The effectiveness of Reading Activities on developing Reading Comprehension can be studied by taking control variables like intelligence, SES, parental involvement etc.
2. The study can be replicated for Upper Primary School students.
3. The study can be replicated by taking more Experiential and Control groups from different schools.
4. Effectiveness of other techniques to develop the skill of Reading Comprehension can be studied
5. The study can be replicated by considering the overall performance of the learner in English together with Reading Comprehension.

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**APPENDIX IV**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Period****1** | **Period****2** | **Period****3** | **Period****4** | **Period****5** | **Period****6** | **Period****7** |
| **Monday** |  |  | IX D |  | IX A |  |  |
| **Tuesday** | IX A |  |  | IX D |  |  |  |
| **Wednesday** |  |  | IX A |  |  | IX D |  |
| **Thursday** |  | IX D |  |  | IX A |  |  |
| **Friday** |  |  | IX A |  |  | IX D |  |

**TIME SCHEDULE FOR THE TREATMENT PROGRAMME**

 **APPENDIX I**

**INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON READING ACTIVITIES**

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of the teacher : Praveenkumar.N Std. IX D****Name of the school : Nirmala Higher Secondary School Duration: 40 minutes****Subject : English Strength: 33****Topic : Reading comprehension Average age: 14+** **(Key word) Date: 20/07/2009****Curricular objectives**Read the given storyFind out the key words in the storyFind out the meanings of the key wordsFrame simple sentences by using these key words**Learning material** The Wooden Bowl (a story) |
| **PROCESS** | **RESPONSE** |
| Area: Reading Comprehension**Warming up**Teacher asks a few informal questions to warm up the pupils |  |
| **PROCESS** | **RESPONSE** |
| **Activity-1**Teacher provides a short story ‘The wooden Bowl’ to every student.Teacher divides the class into six groups.Teacher asks the students to read the story silently**Activity -2**Teacher asks the students to read the story once again and find out the keywords in the storyTeacher shows an example of a key word**Activity -3**Teacher asks the students to compare their keywords with other groupsTeacher helps the students to correct their mistakes.**Activity-4**Teacher asks the students to find out the contextual meaning of the keywordsTeacher asks the students to list out the keywords and their meanings.**Activity -5**Teacher asks the students to frame sentences by using the keywords**Assignment**Teacher provides another short story to the learners and asks them to find out the key words and their meanings |  |
|  |

**APPENDIX II**

**INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON EXISTING METHOD OF TEACHING ENGLISH**

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of the teacher : Praveenkumar.N Std. IX A****Name of the school : Nirmala Higher Secondary School Duration: 40 minutes****Subject : English Strength: 33****Topic : Reading Comprehension Average age: 14+** **(The Wooden Bowl) Date: 20/07/09** |
| **Curricular objectives**Read the given storyFind out the key words in the storyFind out the meanings of the key wordsFrame simple sentences by using these key words**Pre-requisites of learners**Students knew how to read prose**Learning materials**The Wooden Bowl (a story) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PROCESS** |  **RESPONSE** |
| **Motivation**Teacher comes to the class and asks some informal questions to the studentsTeacher asks the students about their grand parentsTeacher says “Today we are going to study a story ‘The Wooden Bowl’”**Reading by the Teacher**Teacher reads the story with proper pronunciation**Reading by the pupils**Teacher asks the pupils to read the story silently**Removing Difficulties**Teacher asks the students to stop reading.Teacher introduces new words**Bowl-** a deep round dish with a wide open top(Teacher shows a bowl to pupils)**Frail**- Physically weak and thin(Teacher shows a picture of an old man)**Trembled**- to shake in a way that you cannot control(Teacher demonstrated the meaning)**Irritated**- to annoy somebody**Activity 1**Teacher asks the students to find out difficult words and asks them to find out the meaning with the help of dictionary. Teacher divides the class into six groups.**Activity-2**Teacher provides some questions based on the story and asks them to write the answerTeacher asks the group leaders to present the answers.**Questions**1. Why did the son and daughter in-law get irritated?
2. Describe the behaviour of son and daughter in –law towards their father?
3. What was the boy making?
4. What is the message conveyed through the story?

**Assignment**Learners are provided with another story. They are asked to read the story and answer the questions. |  |

**APPENDIX III**

**TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH**

**Time : 1 Hour**

 **Marks : 25**

1. Read the paragraph carefully and answer the questions given below

 I love rivers. I was born on the banks of the Thames and, like my father before me; I had spent a great deal of time both on it and in it. I enjoy visiting their sources. For me, the most memorable river of all was the Ganges. Through this desiccated landscape the Ganges flowed, not more than a couple of hundred yards wide. It was a disagreeable shade of green and in it floated imperfectly cremated corpses and an occasional crocodile.

1. Why did the author love rivers? 1
2. Which is the most memorable river for the author? 1
3. Describe the scene that the author saw in Ganges. 3
4. Pick out the word from the passage which means ‘dried out land’ 2

II Read the paragraph carefully and answer the questions given below.

 India became free in 1947. That was a memorable event in our history. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India called upon the people to face the challenges of our times. He reminded us that the source of all evils is illiteracy and poverty. He said that people had been living in peace since antiquity. The progress of India depends on the progress of the peasants living in remote areas, he thought.

1. What was the memorable event in the history of India? 1
2. What did Nehru tell to the people? 2
3. According to Nehru, what are the sources of all evils? 1
4. Pick out the word from the passage which means ‘far away’. 2

III Read the paragraph carefully and answer the questions given below.

 Let me introduce myself. I’m Royal Bengal Tiger. In India I’m also called Sher or Baag. I’m three meters in length and my tail is about 35 inches long. I weigh about 240kg.

 Dear friends, we are the longest of the big cats and we need about 40 kilos of meat at every feeding. We are really strong. Our roar can be heard as far as two miles away. Our sense of sight and hearing are also very keen. We have powerful jaws, sharp pointed teeth and claws. There are about 2500 Bengal tigers in India. Our home is being destroyed by humans. They kill us for our skin, bones, claws and teeth. We are also killed for preparing certain medicines.

1. What is the Bengal tiger called in India? 2
2. How many Bengal tigers are now found in India? 1
3. Why do the humans kill tigers? 1
4. Pick out the word from the passage which means ‘sharp’ 2

IV Read the paragraph carefully and answer the questions given below.

 Billions of them once filled the American skies, blocking the sun for hours. Then men and boys attacked the Passenger Pigeons with nets, guns and clubs, sent barrels of their carcasses to eastern markets. Meanwhile, farmers and timbermen destroyed the beech and oak forest where the wild pigeons nested and fed. By 1914 they had become the rarest birds in the world.

 Like the pigeons, all of the North America’s birds once lived in a wilderness as vide as the continent, a region of the fertile lands blanketed by deep green forests.

 Following the arrival of Europeans, however, this green land would have to support millions more humans than the scattered bands of native people who had lived here in simple harmony with their environment. Forests, prairies, and wetlands were in the way, and people would eventually replace these habitats with towns, cities, highways, shopping centres, reservoirs, and chemically-treated land.

* 1. How did men attack passenger pigeons? 2
	2. Where did the North American birds once live? 1
	3. Who had lived in simple harmony with nature? 1
	4. Pick out the word from the passage which means ‘a place where a particular type of animal is normally found’ 2