

IMPROVING OF STUDENTS SKILLS IN SECOND GRADE READING

COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

In this study is examined the impact of action research on improving of student skills in reading comprehension, namely the influence of reading - comprehension techniques through operational activities-action plans. Reading comprehension in early grades is important for the development of students' abilities and skills in understanding and learning, essential for students in the following grades. This study is a collaborative action research between two teachers (the authors of the paper) that is focused on examining of the impact of operational activities. As operational activities are used techniques from course Literacy Development Skills in the Early Grades, namely reading comprehension techniques: collaborative reading, visualization, story framework).The study is based on action research methodology. The research question is: What impact did comprehensive - reading techniques have on the improvement of students' skills on reading comprehension? For data collection were used sub- tests of A- EGRA tests, and analyzed with statistical analyze methods. Firstly was carried out A- EGRA test (Reading Assessment in the Early Grades adapted in Albanian), then were carried out operational activities. Finally was carried out another A- EGRA test (respectively comprehensive reading sub- test). The research was conducted with 10 students of second grade, respectively in the class of teacher Arta (co-author of the paper).The analysis of quantitative data showed a significant improvement of students' results on reading comprehension. Results showed that with the implementation of reading comprehension techniques was significantly benefited for the improvement of student's skills in reading comprehension. With collaborative reading students' was offered a better understanding approach of the content presented in the texts, as well as a better way to be discussed. Through the visualization they were allowed to create the logical images of the texts while being read, while with the framework of the story they were allowed to organize elements in the text (to write about the author, the characters, events, problems, ask questions and create files).Findings from this study could be used as a guide for many other teachers who face the same problems in general educational practices.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, visualization, action plans, action research, reading techniques.*

Introduction:

Reading comprehension in early grades is important for the development of students' abilities and skills in understanding and learning, essential for students in the following grades.

The most important think about reading is comprehension. Students read but not everyone understands what they read. "Comprehension open opportunities to a field in which students having the ability to construct comprehension from test engage with big ideas of literature and learn how the world works around them and also make it possible for students to live a better life in which reading is a limitless source of learning"(Pearson, 2011, fq.247).

The ability of a child's relationship with the text should be assessed very early from kindergarten until his arrival at school. Understanding of the message is also affected by the situation in which occurs the reading process. Teachers in the classroom should create an environment in which students are encouraged to read a variety of texts deep and meaningful. Teachers should encourage students to become enthusiastic, autonomous and thoughtful readers not only to read an engaging learning content but also to understand what they read. Knowing that students come from different cultures linguistic, social, ethnic, socio-economic is important for teachers to know which methods are suitable to use with students. "Students should write about things that interest them, for those things that are interesting to them, about the contents and moments of joy. And these are the best ways to put into service the absorption of knowledge and ability to disciplines such as science, social studies, mathematics and literature "(Pearson, 2011, fq.45). Methods that encourage students to think actively about what they read orient them to be more deeply involved in the extraction of the meaning of written material. Interests and attitudes of students in reading are stronger when students have a purpose or a goal for reading, when they have enough knowledge before reading, and when they connect their text to their lives.

To increase, interest in reading, teachers should give students time for reading, ownership of what they read and the opportunity for personal and critical response. When students think critically with one side stand the text, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the ideas the author. "Reading with understanding means understanding, evolution, and use of information and extraction of ideas through interaction of the reader with the author "(Smith, Robinson, 1980). To become fluent reader students should understand that what they read.

The meaningful reading can be defined as "the ability to get a sense of purpose" (Vellutino, 2003). First comprehension is an active process that requires careful interaction between reader and text. Second, understanding is complex cognitive process whereby build reading comprehension, which is a means of language acquisition, communication, exchange of information and ideas. Third, meaningful reading requires that teachers should be well prepared to develop students' reading comprehension by exercising in the use of strategies. To be successful in school, students should have the ability to bring different levels of understanding of the text they read. The more basic knowledge that a student has for the topic better theme will understand through reading that topic. Reading comprehension is more than just giving answers to the questions in the text. When students read they perform conversation between the text. They ask questions, make questions, argue, make connections, draw conclusions to better understand what they read"(Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

Duty of teachers is to create an environment in which students are encouraged to read too deep and meaningful texts and persuade them to express opinions in which ideas and interpretations are reasonable.

The purpose of this research was to find ways and activities to develop student's skills in reading comprehension. As action plans are used techniques from course Literacy Development Skills in the Early Grades, namely reading comprehension techniques: collaborative reading, visualization, story framework.

Aim of study/research:

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of action research to improve students' skills in reading comprehension in second grade.

Research topics:

Research topic of this study was the impact of techniques from course Literacy Development Skills in the Early Grades, on improving students skills in reading comprehension, namely, collaborative reading, visualization, story framework.

Research questions:

What impact do comprehensive - reading techniques have on the improvement of students' skills on reading comprehension?

Scientific methods:

Planning of this research is based on action research methodology. Action research methodology in many studies has shown positive results in improving the performance of students and the teaching practices and professional development of teachers (Stringer, 2004; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

Initially, were conducted sub-tests from A-EGRA test, exactly sub- test of reading comprehension and listening comprehension, then continued action plan and finally realized again sub-tests from A-EGRA test, reading comprehension and listening comprehension. To ensure the validity of research has been used cooperation with "critique friends", which were two teachers from the school where research was conducted.

Participants of the research were 10 students, 7-8 years year old of elementary school "Yll Morina"

Research planning- Action plans

As action plans are used the techniques of the course on Literacy Development Skills in the Early Grades, namely reading comprehension techniques: collaborative reading, visualization, story framework.

The research was realized in a period of two months.

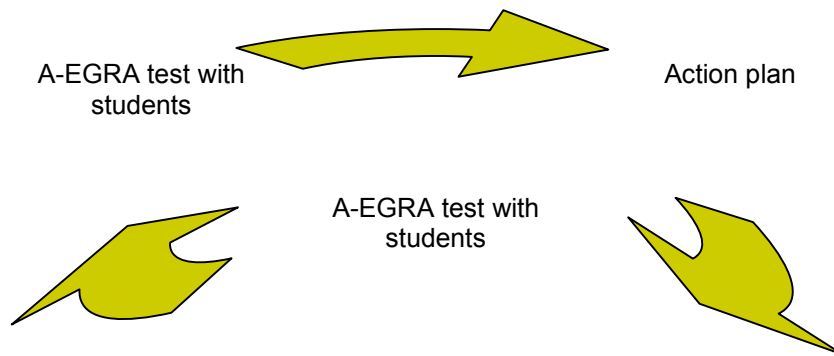


Figure 1 Research plan

Data analysis:

For data collection were used sub-tests from A-EGRA test, namely sub-test of reading comprehension and listening comprehension.

A-EGRA is reading assessment test in the early grades, which test is adapted from Kosovo Basic Education Program¹ and for this reason is called A (Albanian)- EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment).

These subtests were realized twice, at the beginning and end of the research.

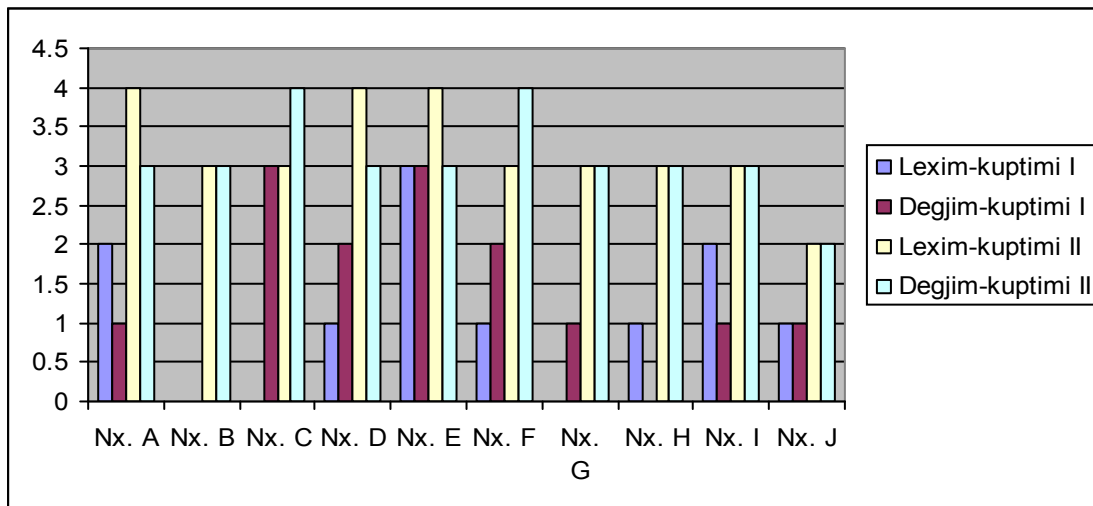


Figure 2 Results from tests (reading comprehension and listening comprehension)

Graph presents student scores on both tests, from which we see that the student result has been increased after impact of action plan.

¹ The Basic Education Program is jointly funded by USAID and the Government of Kosovo. It aims to improve the capacity of Kosovo’s schools to provide relevant skills for its students.

Eg. 1 student in the first test gave two correct answers to the reading comprehension test and one correct answer to the listening comprehension test, while in the second test of reading comprehension gave 4 correct answers and 3 correct answers in listening comprehension test.

Findings:

Findings of this research showed the improvement of students' skills in reading comprehension. The results have provided answers to the research questions: What impact did comprehensive - reading techniques have on the improvement of students' skills on reading comprehension?

Implementation of reading comprehension techniques, namely visualization, the story framework and collaborative reading have given positive results in improving student skills in this point.

With collaborative reading students' was offered a better understanding approach of the content presented in the texts, as well as a better way to be discussed. Through the visualization they were allowed to create the logical images of the texts while being read, while with the framework of the story they were allowed to organize elements in the text (to write about the author, the characters, events, problems, ask questions and create files).

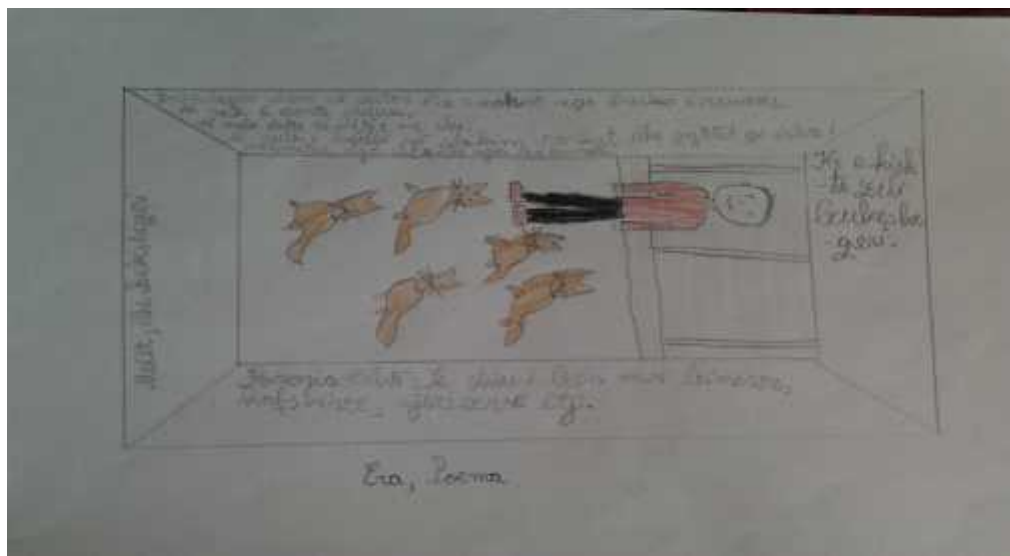


Figure 3 Story framework

This figure represents a student's paper (Story framework) where after reading the text the student has been able to show the characters, story, text message and ask questions about the text.

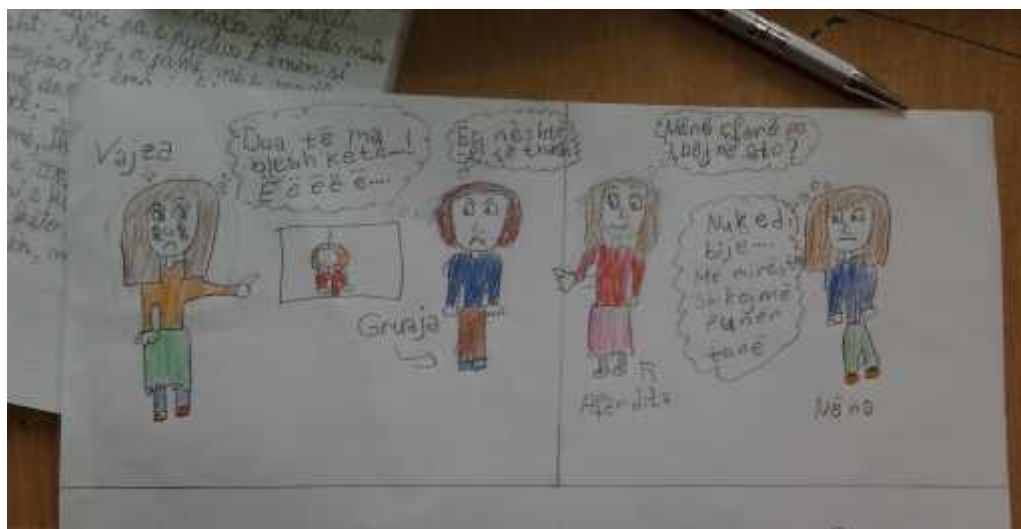


Figure 4 Visualization

In this paper, noticed that the student has achieved visually (Visualization) to present the text. Reading comprehension techniques helped students to understand the text they read, to clarify ideas, to understand messages of text and to think for more information about that what they read.

Findings from this study could be used as a guide for many other teachers who face the same problems in general educational practices.

Conclusions:

The use of action research is an effective way to improve the student's skills in reading comprehension, through the implementation of action plans- applying the techniques of reading-comprehension.

This research has brought some conclusions:

- Identifying the reading comprehension student's skills is very important to identify the difficulties in the right time and getting the ways for eliminating those difficulties.
- Planning activities and lessons through techniques from course Literacy Development Skills in the Early Grades, namely story framework, collaborative reading and visualization affects in improving students skills in reading comprehension.
- Use of action research can improve student's skills and teachers practice.
- Development of various reading comprehension techniques is very important and teacher's planning should include lessons with different reading comprehension techniques.

Recommendations:

From this research the following recommendations are derived:

- Assess students reading in the early grades, use the A-EGRA tests to identify student difficulties.

- Teachers must attend various courses and trainings that enable the implementation and the new techniques and strategies in their classrooms.
- To provide an opportunity for teachers to follow the course of the Literacy Development of Skills in the Early Grades.
- Enable students to various techniques that develop the reading comprehension skills.
- Use techniques: visualization, the story framework and collaborative reading.
- Use on action research as an opportunity for teachers to improve classroom practices.
- School texts and books must provide opportunities for students to better understand texts.

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