

## Teachers' perspective on tackling the problem of poor reading skills in students of English at secondary schools of Kohat, Pakistan

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### Abstract:

Reading skill has been observed to be underdeveloped in secondary school students. To address this issue and locate the responsible factor, the stance of the teachers is of no less importance. Unfortunately, while framing educational policies, the policymakers depended less on the input of the teachers, who are well-versed in such problems. To address the underdeveloped English reading skill from the teachers' perspective, a sample of twenty secondary-level teachers was chosen from the population of teachers of English in public and government schools of Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, which were affiliated with the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Islamabad. Forty-six items related to professional, environmental, instructional, and assessment categories were set in the questionnaire and answered on a Likert scale. The researchers concluded that the stunted growth of students' reading skills in English could be attributed to the lack of emphasis on the reading skill in the teachers' training programs, teachers' ignorance about the habit of regression, avoidance of teaching about techniques like previewing and reading in chunks, low participation in professional training, the emphasis over on-spot correction, and lack of knowledge and resources for arranging proper lighting for learners' reading.

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## **1. Introduction**

Based on his long teaching experience, the researchers found most of their Pakistani students from KPK province quite deficient in reading skill of English language. Reading is one of the four basic skills over which the rest of three skills for learning a foreign language in a backward country like Pakistan depend considerably. Apart from leading to an increase in the comprehension of the readers, reading broadens their span of imagination; in addition, it leads not only to their development of analytical competence but also of their communication skills. The habit of reading helps in the accumulation of the readers' vocabulary and in giving an insight to them into the structures of sentences. Resultantly, they perform better than those not used to reading (Ullah & Fatema, 2013). In situation of Pakistan and especially KPK province, direct interaction with the speakers of English language is unavailable and therefore reading assumes a great deal of importance for mastering a foreign language like English. Reading is a skill which most of the students develop themselves without any proper aid from any expert, teacher or tutor. The only thing considered important for getting command over reading is understanding the meaning of difficult words in a passage and then translating the text from the foreign language into the local language in one's mind for understanding it. Negligence in teaching English reading to the learners in initial stages has long lasting effects and the problem persists even in later stages of education.

This study attempts to pinpoint the general factors responsible for it and how much factors like course contents, evaluation system, and personal attributes are responsible for it. Besides, it shows us that to what factors do the teachers of English attribute this problem and how far the present teaching methods, the course contents and the examination system are responsible for adding to the magnitude of the problem. The study delimited itself to District Kohat and conducted the study over teachers of only those high schools of public and federal government that are working under the federal board of intermediate and secondary education, Islamabad. The study also explored the political, cultural, personal and economic dimensions of the issue. It threw searchlight over a plethora of causes leading to poor reading skill, knowing of which can be of great help to policymakers, planners and other teachers to grapple with the issue in a more focused manner and to focus on sub-fields of specialized nature related to the skill of reading for ensuring enhancement in it. This research is expected to pave the way for future researchers in investigating the problem along various other lines, including treating the problem from students' point of view.

## **2. Literature review**

Reading process has been defined differently by different linguists. Goodman (1967) equates reading to a game of guessing which is psychological in nature and which involves the pragmatic, the syntactic and the semantic knowledge of the reader. According to Dechant (1991), from the various definitions, reading process can be classified as interpreting experience or interpreting graphic symbols. According to Shaw, "thinking with the author,

absorbing his ideas is reading,” (Shaw, 1959). Carrell (1988) call it a process of interactive nature, in which the readers are supposed to employ their accumulated experience and their background knowledge so as to deduce meaning from the text in hand. The situation of teaching English language in Pakistan was termed by Warsi (2004) as unsatisfactory and not helpful for learning and by Nunan (1988) as one depending on grammatical patterns and as one suffering from a trend of bookish and formal language. Normally the mode of teaching reading prevalent in Pakistan is teacher-centred, where a teacher dominates by reading a passage aloud to the learners, translates sentences, and explains meanings of the difficult words, without providing activities to the learners for engaging themselves actively in the reading process. The dictation given to them to be followed by their consequent submissiveness demotivates them and their interest in reading process is lost. As a result, their knowledge and progress remain deficient (Ullah & Fatema, 2013).

Nurjanah (2018) spotted the issues encountered by students during reading. The identified problems included weak knowledge of vocabulary, poor reading habits, and lack of interest in the reading comprehension course. To address these problems, it was recommended that the teaching methods should be made more interactive by including games and audio-visual aids like multi-media in them, for enhancing reading comprehension. Warsi (2004) considers the use of modern methods essential for making progress in the learning of a second or foreign language and believes that the vision of teaching English via modern methods has not been materialized in Pakistan till date, because here the teachers are not equipped with modern methods. Continuous dependence on translation method and overlooking of students’ and teachers’ needs in programs of language teaching, are serious problems encountered in the teaching of English. The subject specialist teachers, having done their masters in their respective subjects, teach at the intermediate level only, as reported by National Education Policy (1998-2010). However, students of class ninth and tenth do not enjoy this facility and are taught commonly by teachers who have no special training in their subjects (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

Reading process is a very complex one and, therefore, reading skill is very hard to be developed to the degree of perfect proficiency (Grabe, 1991). According to Dreyer and Nel (2003), although excellence in reading is either ignored or taken for granted, yet the reality is that majority of those entering the higher education are not qualified to meet the reading demands expected from them. Learning of English is encountered by obstacles like absence of requisite facilities, over-crowdedness in classrooms, teaching through traditional methods alone, and deficient evaluation system. Worthwhile contribution made by the research carried out with respect to reading strategies and skills is that it is possible that students with poor reading comprehension and poor reading skills can also develop those strategies and skills in reading that are manifested by good readers (Barnett, 1988; Carrell, 1989).

In order to address the problem of poor reading skill, it is necessary to survey many of the approaches that teachers adopt for teaching reading to learners. All these different approaches

share some elements that are found common amongst them. According to (Jayanti, 2016) most of reading programs have particular approaches and theories underlying them. The understanding of those endorsing the global approach to reading is that reading can be learnt excellently when it starts with the processing of meaningful and natural texts in aural and visual manner and then by learning them by heart through sight. Analytical approach is one which, in the view of Halvorson (1992), begins reading with a word which is further analysed and broken up into parts. Those who subscribe to this approach stress starting teaching to read with words and then breaking each word into its constituent parts for teaching that word. According to Gudschinsky (1973), if we begin with meaningful words then the readers would be able to locate the relationship that exists between the language being learnt and the learners' own language. Those who believe in synthetic approach prefer beginning the teaching of reading with letters and sounds and then combining them to form syllable and words.

Synthetic approach to reading, working in unison sometimes with analytic or phonic approach, begins, according to Halvorson (1992), with smallest units like letters and sounds and synthesizes them into syllables and words. Phonic approach to reading, according to Halvorson (1992), emphasizes teaching the association of letters to the sounds represented by them i.e., the relationship existing between the graphemes and their corresponding phonemes. Sight word approach is based on learning fresh vocabulary by seeing it written along with picture cues. Sight word approach according to Aukerman (1984) is based on meaning or whole word and according to Halvorson (1992) on word as the basic unit of reading. Syllable based approach is a reading approach in which the learning of syllables is considered a pre-requisite for the learning of words and texts. According to Halvorson (1992) decoding of a word is initiated through recognition of its constituent syllables. Halvorson (1992) views eclectic approach as the combination of approaches like analytic, global and synthetic as per the convenience of the reader. Summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting are four techniques used by Palinscar and Brown (1984) for improving reading comprehension skills.

Hulstijn believes that majority of readers do not learn to read as children, some require extra support from others to become good readers, and some other readers learn reading a second or a foreign language, with or without learning to read in their mother tongue. He adds that while giving reading instruction, the instructor has to keep in mind the difference existing between different types of learners and difference existing between their different types of needs (Hulstijn, 1991). Teacher must understand that every type of learner will necessitate a change in the materials and methods to be used for teaching to them. Ensuring provision of proper lighting for learners' reading is essential for their better performance. Johnson (2011) reveals that the performance of the students is negatively affected if they study in a room the windows and lighting system of which are not properly managed and controlled. He adds that students coming from classes of poor lighting suffer from redness in eyes after reading, feel uncomfortable, fidget while reading, and skip phrases and words during reading and writing. Erwine and Hescong (2002) state that a combination of artificial lighting with the natural daylight is the best possible arrangement for reading. According to John and Timothy (2005)

insufficient lighting has a telling upon the environment and also upon the health of learners in the form of eyestrain, reduction in attention span, increase in body temperature, along with a decrease in performance both on the part of learners as well as the teachers.

Teevno and Raisani (2017) studied the children of low-income families and found their performance on reading tests poorer than those coming from wealthy families. The study indicated it also that parents of children such indigent families spend lesser time for helping their children in dispensing their homework than the parents from wealthy families helping theirs. It also found that children from financially poorer families wield lesser command over language skill. Teachers must also have the knowledge and experience of the reading readiness before giving instruction on reading. Reading readiness, defined variously by various theorists, is the specific appropriate moment to start teaching reading to the learner or it is the point at which reading instruction can be assimilated very effectively and can prove highly fruitful (Dechant, 1991). Scores of learners on reading comprehension tasks reflected that performance of those students who used dictionaries differed significantly from performance of those who did not use them (Tono, 2011). Fraser's (1999) study reveals that as compared to inferring, students comprehend better if they consult dictionaries and that if the use of dictionaries is combined with inferring, then it leads to improvement in the retention of vocabulary. Knight (1994) arrived at results which indicated that, with respect to reading comprehension, the group that used dictionary scored significantly higher than the group that did not use dictionary (Knight, 1994, p. 293).

Reading of students gets a fillip on the basis of interest and intrinsic motivation, and they in a subtle way undergo interaction with the text to get bigger amounts of aesthetic experience and knowledge (Schiefele, 1999). Research has confirmed it that motivation assists not only in ensuring achievement at reading but also holds an array of societal and personal benefits (Mazzoni *et al.*, 1999). With respect to reading, Fareed *et al.* (2018) mentioned the problems faced by the teachers when they taught to students who were less motivated, less interested and with under-developed reading concentration and reading comprehension skills. It is not wise to criticize or correct a learner during the act of reading, because it demotivates them. Bruner (1966) argues that when learners are compelled or dictated then they may fall short of keeping up their normal curiosity and zeal to pursue reading. Similarly, according to Chapman and Tunmer (1995), when students start thinking reading as difficult, they most possibly develop negative feelings towards it and start shunning reading.

Strategies employed by the teachers for the teaching of the English language to their students included reading aloud of the text, lesson translation, furnishing the central idea and the summary of the lesson, and putting down the meaning of the vocabulary during instruction. Reading, an involved activity comprising both thought and perception, is a skill that needs to be taught through training. To have a cursory exploratory glance over what the reader is going to read before starting the actual reading gives orientation to the reader by giving them a general picture of the text and prepares them mentally in advance about the information that

they are going to assimilate. Similarly, before the students actually embark upon reading the text, their teachers might, to the maximum profit of their learners, let them see the organization of the text, let them guess about the central theme of the reading passage, familiarize them with the new vocabulary and concepts to be covered by them, and apprise them with the purpose for carrying out the reading (Brassell & Rasinski, 2008). Some measures taken in advance are very beneficial for facilitating reading comprehension and getting maximum benefit from reading; they include doing three things, namely reading, reciting and reviewing, commonly known as 3R technique.

A research study, trying to explore which of the study techniques proved more effective than others, was conducted, in which three different sets of readers were made to read some long and technical entries of encyclopaedia (McDaniel *et al.*, 2009). The difference between the three groups was the difference in the manner and method of their reading; one group made use of the 3R technique in their reading of the entries, the second one just gave a reading twice, whereas the third group read the entries only once but coupled it with the activity of taking notes. When the same test was taken by the students again after a week, it transpired that the group that had used 3Q technique outperformed the other groups that had used other techniques. As a result of subjecting students to reading aloud, the less motivated or hesitant students might get a spur to participate in reading, the readers get access to literature that is beyond their reading competence, they get used to listening complex sentence patterns, on the basis of which they can predict such structures in coming experiences, the repertoire of their vocabulary increases in size and their listening understanding is enhanced (Shoop, 1987).

Reading in chunks is a reading strategy for increasing reading speed and comprehension, by grouping words of a sentence into meaningful phrases, comprising four or five words, and reading these units of words together, instead of reading the words of sentences individually. Chunking copes with the problem of lack of comprehension because by the time readers reach the end of relatively longer sentences, they have forgotten the earlier part of the sentence (Casteel, 1988). It has been established by studies that reading in chunks of meaningful and related words leads to increase in the comprehension of some readers, especially the ones who are grouped as dull readers or readers of low competence (Casteel, 1989). The goal of instruction should not only be to enhance reading skills and strategies but also to add to the learner's knowledge with the help of authentic texts.

According to Bernhardt (1993), to arrive at the meaning of the written text, the readers have to employ their background information, certain strategies, their experience, their knowledge about grammar, and the vocabulary in their possession, to the text in hand. Besides, prior to developing material for the teaching of reading to learners, it is essential that the teacher should have an understanding of the different types of approaches of reading. Each reading approach bears the impact of the reading program, and each program is based on an underpinning approach or theory to teaching reading (Jayanti, 2016). Certain approaches are in use for teaching reading, like the analytic approach, phonic approach, global approach, syllable

approach, synthetic approach, sight word approach and eclectic approach. Iqbal *et al.* (2015) found teachers negligent of or deficient in improving their students' reading comprehension skills through the employment of loud reading, silent reading, intensive reading and extensive reading. To make up for the loss sustained in the reading skill, the researchers suggested the use of various techniques such as previewing, scanning, skimming, reading in chunks, anticipating, and predicting. This finding was also shared by them that reading skill is quite helpful in the development of other linguistic skills.

### **3. Research methodology**

In order to attain the purpose of the research, survey method was selected. Survey method is one in which first the data is collected and then it is analysed and interpreted. This research is basically of descriptive nature in which opinions of different respondents were sought for achieving the objectives of the study. Literature related to the study was studied and examined and a questionnaire based on it was formed. As the research was related to the educated segment of the society, and answers had to be given after much deliberation, with a room for negative feedback, and with a guarantee not to disclose the identity of the respondents, therefore, questionnaire was chosen as the tool for data collection. Besides being economical, and convenient in conducting, easy to code and analyse, the questionnaire was deemed to be the most appropriate tool for the study. The questionnaire chosen was formed on Likert scale comprising five points. Forty-six items related to professional, environmental, instructional (Teaching Methodology), and assessment categories were included in the questionnaire were to be answered on the basis of Likert scale.

A population was specified for the study initially, and then a sample was taken out of it. The population comprised of those Public and Government schools of District Kohat that were affiliated with the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Islamabad and all their English teachers. On the basis of random sampling technique, a sample including the following schools was chosen; The Educators; FG STC Girls High School Kohat Cantonment, Kohat; both the male and female sections of Army Public School Kohat Cantonment; both the male and female sections of Fazaia Inter College, Kohat; both the male and female sections of FG Public High School, Kohat Cantonment, and FG Boys High School OTS Road, Kohat and out of all the English teachers of these schools, only 20 were chosen for research. Out of each school or its male or female section at least two senior English teachers were selected under purposive sampling. The seniority and experience of the teachers was used as the criteria for the selection of the teachers from these schools. The questionnaires were distributed among twenty teachers of the sample. Data was collected and tabulated and then was further subjected to a rigorous analysis with the help of statistical techniques. The techniques used were deriving percentage, average and the mean. By keeping the research objectives in consideration, an analysis of the data was carried out. Further, descriptive statistics was applied to the given data. The F statistics and the p values were found out in order to assess the variations among the responses of the respondents.

#### 4. Findings and discussion

For analysis of the responses of teachers at SSC level, the table-1 throws light over the teachers' professionalism. The Average Mean Score comes out to be 3.57, which indicates that the statements carry significance. The teachers are qualified highly enough to suit their calling and do justice to their profession. The score tells us about the satisfaction and contentment of the teachers over their profession of teaching. The responses of teachers show that they do not get fewer training opportunities to improve their teaching skill and keep themselves abreast with the latest updates and advancement in the field of pedagogy. However, their level of participation in such event trainings and courses is relatively lower. It might be that due to household responsibility they shun participation in such activities. Their responses regarding the courses and training in connection with the teaching of reading reflect that there is some room for improvement in the teachers' training courses in terms of incorporating more contents in them for the development of reading skill. To check the variations in response of the respondents' analysis of variance test was performed which show significant variations in results with  $p < 0.0001$  as show from  $p$  and  $F$  value at the end of table. The  $F$  statistics and the  $p$  value are in inverse relationship and is quite obvious from the greater value of  $F$  (150+ crossing the critical value of 3), the  $p$  value is very much less than 0.05. This is an indication of the variant responses of the participants and the clustered orientations of the respondents. The participants have mostly opted at the left extreme of the Likert scale, which shows that majority of the participants are either agreed or strongly agreed with the given statements.

Table-1: Professional qualifications of teachers

S.No.	Statements	N	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1	I feel contented with my job as a teacher.	20	13	7	0	0	0
2	I am a certified English teacher.	20	6	13	0	0	1
3	I studied English literature and English language both during my higher studies.	20	8	10	1	1	0
4	I keep myself informed regarding theories of reading and methods of instruction.	20	6	9	1	4	0
5	I enhance my English teaching skills by studying relevant books and related professional journals.	20	6	11	1	2	0
6	I develop teaching material only while I am at home.	20	4	15	0	1	0
7	The material read by me at home is often meant for leisure and enjoyment.	20	9	10	0	1	0
8	I get ample number of opportunities for participating in teachers training programs	20	13	7	0	0	0
9	I spare time to participate in teachers training programs and language conferences.	20	6	4	2	4	2
10	I am taught amply about the reading skill in my professional courses and trainings.	20	4	4	4	5	2
	Variance	0	10.7	12.9	1.7	3.5	0.72
	ANOVA Result	$F$	113	$P$ -value		2.3E-27	
	Grand Mean Score					3.57	

Table-2 enlightens us over the types of environments confronted by the teachers of English particularly in their classrooms and generally in their school. First statement given in the table indicates through its mean score that the teachers remain undecided about their students' reading level, whereas the second one, through its mean score, shows the significance of the statement by referring to the overcrowded nature of the classes. It is also indicated that the teachers avail various other types of facilities in the shape of books, reading specialists and libraries etc. Although regression is a very serious and common negative reading habit that hampers reading speed and comprehension, yet teachers do not have sufficient information and understanding about it. Unless teachers know the reasons of regression, its symptoms and its remedial measures they cannot cope with this negative habit of their students.

Table-2: Environmental factors

S. No	Statements	N	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1	Majority of my students are avid readers.	20	4	6	1	7	2
2	My English classes are normally overcrowded.	20	3	10	1	4	2
3	Reading instruction has special provision in the classroom.	20	2	7	7	4	0
4	While instructing reading, I supplement textbook with additional resources like newspapers and magazines.	20	4	9	0	6	1
5	I send my class students to library.	20	6	9	1	4	0
6	My students lend library books for home reading.	20	5	10	1	4	0
7	I have access to services of reading specialist and speech therapist to treat my students with reading difficulty.	20	5	4	2	6	3
8	I know about the reading disease called "regression" and can identify it in my students.	20	3	5	0	8	4
9	I have learnt how to remove reading regression.	20	3	5	0	6	6
10	I keep myself updated regarding the home environment of each student and the type of facilities available in it, in order to assign them reading tasks accordingly.	20	7	6	3	3	1
11	I praise weak readers for encouraging them and removing their inferiority complex.	20	11	5	2	1	1
12	I never mock weak readers and make other students understand never to mock them.	20	12	6	0	2	0
13	I ensure appropriate lighting for my students during their reading exercises and ask students to ensure it at their homes too.	20	4	3	3	7	3
14	I recommend standard dictionary to my students and guide them how to use it.	20	9	6	2	3	0
15	I enhance my students' reading capability by recommending to them interesting stories and novels for reading.	20	7	8	4	1	0
	Variance	0	9	5	4	5	3.27
	ANOVA Result	<i>F</i>	165.30	<i>P-value</i>	6.29E-42		
	Grand Mean Score	3.44					

Teachers' response show they are well aware of the fact that students come from environments of various nature, and they differ in financial positions and availability of facilities. They give reading assignments in accordance with the facilities available to their students. Teachers' responses show that teachers motivate their students in one way or another like praising them in front of the whole class, so as to remove their hesitation, to encourage them, and to explore their latent capabilities. At the same time, they avoid all those things like mocking and shaming students, which can demotivate students and lower their morale. It comes out that the teachers are less concerned about and probably know little about the importance of appropriate lighting for reading. The reason may be the country-wise poor load-shedding condition which is beyond their sphere of action and authority. Most of the teachers know the importance of using standard dictionaries and interesting stories for reading purposes and they recommend and encourage their usage by the students to improve their reading. The variations in response of respondents were found significant at  $p < 0.000001$  as show by analysis of variance results (ANOVA). The same significance again shows the variant responses of the respondents. It indicates that majority of the Secondary school teachers are quite satisfied from the environmental conditions and Eco-social boundaries of their classes. The extremely higher value of F also reinforces the impacts of the p value.

Table-3 pertains to statements regarding teaching methodology. The statements come out to be significant as the average mean score given in the table refers to agreement. Teachers are found engaging their students in reading activities daily with a proper portion of time reserved for reading activities. They not only read out lessons to their whole class themselves but rather ensure that some students also do so in front of the whole class. Reading activities are given to groups formed for reading purposes and weaker ones find opportunity to be supported by their competent peers of the group. Students are given reading assignments as homework also. Previewing, reviewing, and reading in chunks are some techniques that matter a great deal in reading comprehension and speed. However, teachers' responses show that they know well the importance of reviewing after the reading session, recommend it to their students and let them do it, however, regarding the techniques of previewing and reading in chunks, they train them less, probably because they know less about them or their importance. Words can mean different in different contexts and the teachers know and instruct their students to be mindful of it while reading. English language is scientific and mechanical in nature and, as compared to paragraphs of other languages, its paragraphs are systematically structured and designed and its topical sentence is very important in understanding guessing or recapitulating the meaning of the whole paragraph. Teachers know well about its worth and instruct their students about it. To check the variations in response of the respondents Analysis of variance test was performed which show significant variations in results with  $p < 0.0001$  as show from p and F value at the end of table. As it's quite obvious from the given values of F and P (124 and 2.9E-37 respectively), there exists greater variations among the responses of the respondents. It shows that majority of the instructors either agree or strongly agree with the instructional factors and the techniques and teaching methodologies that they apply while teaching English is quite up to the mark.

Table-3: Instructional factors (teaching methodology)

S. No.	Statements	N	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1	I allot specific duration to the instruction of reading in my class.	20	5	14	0	1	0
2	I let my students from any stage of reading to cover the same material with the same pace.	20	2	6	1	9	2
3	I involve my students in reading activities on daily basis.	20	7	11	1	1	0
4	I organize my students into groups for participating in reading activities.	20	4	14	1	1	0
5	During my reading instruction I raise my voice to be listened to by the whole class.	20	8	11	1	0	0
6	I also let a student for reading aloud before the whole class.	20	6	12	1	1	0
7	I let my students undergo the practice of self-reading in a silent mode.	20	6	9	2	1	2
8	I give reading assignments also as homework to my students.	20	5	9	2	4	0
9	I let students with weak reading skill to be helped by students with high reading skill.	20	4	9	3	3	1
10	I let my students to have a preview of text before starting to read the text in detail.	20	5	3	0	8	4
11	After finishing reading something I recommend having a review of the text to recapitulate what has been read after they finish a reading passage.	20	4	7	1	6	2
12	I encourage my students to guess the meaning of certain words from the context if they do not know the exact dictionary meaning of those words.	20	12	6	0	3	1
13	I teach to my students that the same word can mean different things on the basis of difference in contexts.	20	13	5	2	0	0
14	I encourage my students to read in chunks instead of individual words.	20	3	3	2	11	2
15	I teach my student the worth of topical sentence and I train them how and where to locate it in a paragraph.	20	5	7	3	3	2
	Variance	0	9	13	1	12	1.5
	ANOVA Result	<i>F</i>	124	<i>P-value</i>		2.9 E-37	
	Grand Mean Score				3.47		

Table-4 concerns evaluation of students on their reading tasks. Average mean score of 4.26 highlights the significance of the statements made regarding their achievement. Statements achievement statements related to of students on performance and achievement. The very first statement made refers to the proper evaluation carried out by the teachers regarding their students' achievement. The next statement shows that students are made to read loudly by their teachers for appraising their performance at reading. The teachers also ensure updating students' parents over their children's progress in reading, by holding meetings with them and discussing their performance. Expert opinion and feedback to students on their reading assignment, at a later stage, is very important for their reading skill development. Becoming

conscious of one's mistakes, leads to one's better performance and avoidance of those mistakes in future. The teachers were found cognizant of its importance and therefore they practiced this with their students. The teachers' responses show that they dominated classroom activities and engaged their students less by giving them active roles in assessing one another's reading performance. Peer group evaluation is a technique, which not only improves the analytic power of students, leads to an environment of healthy competition, and develops responsible attitude among them, but also makes the class more student-centred and ensures students' maximum participation in activities in a light, play-way manner.

The teachers' responses show that they are more inclined towards correcting their students' reading while they are engaged in reading activity. Modern developments in pedagogic research show that stopping students during reading activity to correct them, there and then, over minor mistakes, reflects an attitude of over-correction, which ultimately proves counter-productive and hampers learners' progress. To check the variations in response of the respondents, analysis of variance test was performed which show significant variations in results with  $p < 0.0001$  as show from  $p$  and  $F$  value at the end of table. The  $F$  statistics and its value in the given category (Evaluation) is comparatively less than the previous values, which shows lesser variations though strongly significant. The  $p$  value ( $3.45E-13$ ) is again quite less than  $0.05$ , which shows that the given slot statistically is very significant, and variations do occur among the responses of the participants. It reflects clearly that an enormous number of the instructors among the given participants are satisfied from the way they assess and evaluate the students. Further, it also shows that they have also been equipped with the necessary luggage required for evaluating the students.

Table-4: Assessment of students' achievements in reading

S. No.	Statements	N	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1	I evaluate my students through tests for what they have read.	20	10	9	1	0	0
2	I let my students to carry out loud reading so that I can evaluate their reading performance.	20	11	8	0	1	0
3	To inform about my students' reading performance, I apprise their parents and consult them closely.	20	8	7	1	3	1
4	During assessment I collect the most common mistakes made by students while reading and then later on teach them how to avoid them.	20	9	6	1	2	2
5	I form groups and involve my students to evaluate one another's reading in a play way method.	20	2	2	2	7	7
6	While assessing, I let my students continue reading without stopping them short at every mistake and correct them later in an implicit manner.	20	4	3	2	5	6
	Variance	0	12.7	7.8	0.6	6.8	9.5
	ANOVA Result	F	46.1	<i>P-value</i>		3.45 E-13	
	Grand Mean Score			4.26			

## 5. Conclusion

The study made interesting contributions in pinpointing loopholes in the teaching of reading, which lead to the poor performance of students on reading skill in district Kohat of KPK. The teachers were found trained, financially and mentally satisfied, well-informed, and up-to-date enough to be suitable to their calling and do justice to their profession. It was found that there is higher and ample number of opportunities available to the English teachers for improving their skill in the teaching of reading to their students, but majority of teachers avoid participation in them and, therefore, as a result, the students bear the loss in the shape of remaining deficient in developing their reading skill. Unless participation in such trainings is made binding on them and their move-over is made conditional upon participation in such courses; the senior teachers would keep avoiding participation in such trainings and would keep sending the younger teachers in their place. The trainings also assume reading skill as very simple and are unaware of the complexities involved in it, due to which they give lesser importance to its development as compared to the other skills like speaking and writing. Although the classes of English teachers are over-crowded, yet the interest level of students in reading activity is not more than their disinterestedness in it. Teachers utilize additional resources other than the textbooks, although the reading of English does not have some special provision in the classroom. Availing the library is encouraged by the teachers and students lend books from the library. Reading specialists and speech therapists are not adequately available to help teachers in identifying students' reading problems and in recommending their rectification.

Besides, they know little about the negative reading disease or habit of regression, from which a great deal of students suffers and if this habit is not identified and rectified in the initial stages, then it casts devastating effects on the student's reading performance. It is recommended that specialist knowledge about reading diseases and habits and their treatment should be made part of the curriculum of teachers' trainings and refresher courses. However, they neglect the provision of proper lighting for their students during their reading, because they probably know less about the ideal lighting conditions for reading and probably because it is difficult for individual teachers to make alternate arrangements for lighting during frequent and long sessions of load-shedding in our country. It is encouraging that the teachers stress the use of standard dictionary, teach reading to their students and assign reading interesting reading tasks like stories and novels to them in keeping with the facilities available in their homes and encourage their students by praising them and avoid mocking them publicly.

The results of the ANOVA test (F statistics) give us a clue of understanding and evaluating the variation among the responses of the participants. The overall significant value of p and the F statistics makes the readers understand about the clustering of the respondents at one extreme (Agreed side). It contributes that majority of the teachers were quite satisfied from their professional aptitudes, the learning environment and from the tools that they are using for the evaluation of the students. Individual differences are taken care of, teacher's voice reaches out

to all, students are made to practice self-reading besides making them read aloud before the class, homework is assigned and peer-group activity and mutual help among students are ensured. Teachers were found giving importance to the technique of reviewing after reading, to the fact that the meaning of a word changes upon the change of context, that context helps us to guess the meaning of unknown words, that topical sentence is importance in understanding and summing up the meaning of the whole paragraph, but most of the teachers were found deficient in knowing the worth of reading in chunks for improving reading speed and comprehension, and in knowing the importance of having preview before actual starting and therefore shunned using it as a strategy.

Students were directed to practice loud reading so that their teachers could identify and cure their reading problems. Teachers informed and consulted the students' parents about students' progress and spotted to students their mistakes so as to be rectified by them. However, the teachers were found deficient in placing confidence over their students and engaging them in assessing one another's reading performance. As a result, the students feel overpowered and demotivated, and remain under-developed, unengaged, dependent, and under-confident. When the students are busy reading out a passage loud in front of the class, their mistakes are spotted, and they are corrected on spot, in front of their fellow-students, which breaks their tempo, shatters their confidence, and hampers their progress in reading.

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**Appendix – I: Questionnaire for teachers of the secondary schools in District Kohat**

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Designation: \_\_\_\_\_ Age (in years): \_\_\_\_\_  
 BPS: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_ Professional Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gender (M/F): \_\_\_\_\_ Total experience (in years): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Locality of school (urban/rural): \_\_\_\_\_ Nature of appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Causes of poor reading skill at the secondary school level Questionnaire**

<b>As teacher</b>	
S. No.	Statements
<b>A. Professional Qualifications</b>	
1	I feel contented with my job as a teacher.
2	I am a certified English teacher.
3	I studied English literature and English language both during my higher studies.
4	I keep myself informed regarding theories of reading and methods of instruction.
5	I enhance my English teaching skills by studying relevant books and related professional journals.
6	I develop teaching material only while I am at home.
7	The material read by me at home is often meant for leisure and enjoyment.
8	I get ample number of opportunities for participating in teachers training programs.
9	I spare time to participate in voluntary teachers training programs and language conferences.
10	I am taught amply about the reading skill in my professional courses and trainings.
<b>B Environmental Factors</b>	
1	Majority of my students are avid readers.
2	My English classes are normally overcrowded.
3	Reading instruction has special provision in the classroom.
4	While instructing reading, I supplement textbook with additional resources like newspapers and magazines.
5	I send my class students to library.
6	My students lend library books for home reading.
7	I possess services of reading specialist and speech therapist to treat my students with reading difficulty.
8	I know about the reading disease called "regression" and can identify it in my students.
9	I have learnt how to remove the regression.
10	I keep myself updated regarding the home environment of each student and the type of facilities available in it, in order to assign them reading tasks accordingly.
11	I praise weak readers for encouraging them and removing their inferiority complex.
12	I never mock weak readers and make other students understand never to mock them.
13	I ensure appropriate lighting for my students during their reading exercises and ask students to ensure it at their homes too.
14	I recommend standard dictionary to my students and guide them how to use it.
15	I enhance my students' reading capability by recommending to them interesting stories and novels for reading.
<b>C Instructional Factors</b>	
1	I allot specific duration to the instruction of reading in my class.
2	I let my students from any stage of reading to cover the same material with the same pace.
3	I involve my students in reading activities on daily basis.

4	I organize my students into groups for participating in reading activities.
5	During my reading instruction I raise my voice to be listened to by the whole class.
6	I also let a student for reading aloud before the whole class.
7	I let my students undergo the practice of self-reading in a silent mode.
8	I give reading assignments also as homework to my students.
9	I let students with weak reading skill to be helped by students with high reading skill.
10	I let my students to have a preview of text before starting to read the text in detail.
11	After finishing reading something I recommend having a review of the text to recapitulate what has been read after they finish a reading passage.
12	I encourage my students to guess the meaning of certain words from the context if they do not know the exact dictionary meaning of those words.
13	I teach to my students that the same word can mean different things on the basis of difference in contexts.
14	I encourage my students to read in chunks instead of individual words.
15	I teach my student the worth of topical sentence and I train them how and where to locate it in a paragraph.
<b>D</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
1	I evaluate my students through tests for what they have read.
2	I let my students to carry out loud reading so that I can evaluate their reading performance.
3	To inform about my students' reading performance, I apprise their parents and consult them closely.
4	During assessment I collect the most common mistakes made by students while reading and then later on teach them how to avoid them.
5	I form groups and involve my students to evaluate one another's reading in a play way method.
6	While assessing, I let my students continue reading without stopping them short at every mistake and correct them later in an implicit manner.

SA (Strongly Agree)  
DA (Disagree)

A (Agree)  
SDA (Strongly Disagree)

UD (Undecided)