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**A Study of the Relationship Between Critical Reading
and Empirical Inquiry in Undergraduate Classrooms in
Pakistan**

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Abstract

Using Reading Research Activity Method, this paper investigates the presence or absence of a positive relationship between research skill and critical reading.

On the basis of data collected during three consecutive semesters -- a pilot study for two semesters and a proper study in the third semester -- of undergraduate classrooms at the department of Management Sciences of a university in Islamabad, Pakistan, this paper analyzes the works of a group of participants consisting of 53 students.

This investigation had presumed that critical reading has close relationship with empirical inquiry and that analysis of reading texts in a multilingual environment facilitates the generation of interlinking ideas and creation of new knowledge.

The participants during the study went through a number of Critical Reading phases like finding the main thesis of the Reading Text, finding the arguments of the author of the text, identifying the missing links between the arguments and the main thesis of the author and forming an alternative hypothesis. The research reported here used texts relating to current affairs in Pakistan as the background.

This study clearly shows a positive relationship between critical reading and research skill in the undergraduate students of business administration. There is large scope for further qualitative and quantitative investigation into the relationship between reading texts and generation of new ideas, which usually is the basis of all empirical studies.

Introduction

Research orientation for students and faculty has been a crucial issue in the recent times with respect to the universities of Pakistan. Different organizations like Higher Education Commission of Pakistan have been spending huge amount of money to carry out capacity development projects both for students and faculty.

The most important debate presently taking place in the context of Pakistani universities is on the curricula and methods of instruction, which reinforce the perception of unidimensionality of reality, lack of analytical skill, deficiency of language and communication skill and plagiarisation of research papers.

According to a well-known academician, Pervaiz Hoodboy (2005), the alarming phenomena in the universities of Pakistan are “cheating in exams, plagiarisation of

research papers, multiple publication of slightly different versions of the same paper, fabricating scientific data.” Hoodboy (2005) further elaborates the point by saying that “students in Pakistan have not learned how to think, they cannot speak or write any language well and cannot formulate a coherent argument or manage any significant creative expression.”

This phenomenon is even more conspicuous in the universities offering professional courses. The academics are now worried that if this phenomenon continues, the students after completing their professional degrees will not be able to work in a diverse global market mostly dependent on the creative input of young professionals.

The Reasons for Plagiarism in Pakistani Universities

According to the observations of this investigator, plagiarism in Pakistani universities is largely due to lack of confidence in students to develop their own research questions and to generate their own ideas. Moreover, they also feel handicapped as far as the basic skills of research and reporting their findings are concerned. Critical thinking and analytical skill is almost completely non-existent in the academic environment of the institutes of higher learning in Pakistan.

All these factors depend upon the instructional quality inside the university classrooms. Critical reading, in this regard, can help a lot to provide the students with motivation for generating new ideas and learning the basic skills of research and reporting.

The Role of English

Almost all universities of Pakistan offer English language and communication courses for the undergraduate students. The language courses for undergraduate courses include Text Reading along with skill development in writing language coherently.

The purpose of the inclusion of Reading Text in these courses is to enhance comprehension skill and the skill of précis, which are taught to them in the earlier classes also.

The Present Study – Language Reading Has Close Relationship With Research Skill

The present study was conceived to relate text reading with analytical skill, generation of interlinking ideas, debating arguments, forming an alternative hypothesis and preparing research design along with the language skills of condensing a text, debating within groups, speaking within and to an audience and writing coherent lengthy reports. It was presumed in this study that language reading has close relationship with research skill because of the fact that language and thought are closely related.

Relationship Between Language and Thought

The final position paper of NCERT National Focus Group on Indian languages (NCERT March 2005) has candidly summarized the researches conducted and the debates held regarding the relationship between language and thought in the recent past because this relationship is thought to have been the focus of attention among linguists, cognitive psychologists and anthropologists for a long time now.

Referring to Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, NCERT final position paper is of the opinion that “the cognitive, social and cultural patterns that govern our perception of the world are largely shaped, formulated and even dictated by the structures of the language we speak”(p.12). The NCERT final position paper further elaborating the point says, “If language, on the one hand, structures our thought processes, it liberates us and takes us into unexplored territories of knowledge and imagination”(p.13).

The present work is counting on this hypothesis to explore the relationship between language text and the generation of new ideas.

The Necessity for Non-traditional Pedagogy – Reading Research Activity Method in Bahria University in Pakistan

It is necessary to absorb and internalize the existing level of ideas before embarking upon generating new ideas. Research skill can be taught through critical reading by adopting a non-traditional pedagogical methodology that must be interactive and participatory. This methodology can be carried out in all subjects especially in social sciences.

This methodology was called Reading Research Activity Method by this investigator (see details below). It was first conceived in the fall semester 2004 and was carried out in the spring semester 2005 as a pilot project and a proper study was conducted in the fall semester 2005 with the undergraduate students of Business Administration at Bahria University, Islamabad.

The hall mark of this method is a consistent stress on the relationship between critical reading, analytical skill, development of research questions, development of alternative hypothesis and the development of a research design along with the language skill of speaking and writing coherently to formulate arguments and defend one’s thesis objectively.

Methodology

The methodology, which was adopted in this study, is called as **Reading Research Activity Method** by this investigator. The method seeks to understand the patterns of productivity of critical reading with respect to orientation towards empirical enquiry. The processes-mental as well as physical are to be understood before we reach a conclusion regarding the relationship between critical reading and research orientation.

It is also a matter of substantial interest for the academics to see as to what can constitute a sustainable culture of research and empirical enquiry in the institutes of higher learning in Pakistan.

Research Questions

Reading Research Activity Method has been devised in this perspective to find answers to the following questions.

1. Does critical reading have positive relationship with generation of ideas, research questions and a habit of empirical enquiry?
2. Does multilingual discussion in the analysis of reading text has more positive relationship with research skill?

Finding answers to these questions is of immense importance as far as the development of a research culture in the universities of Pakistan is concerned, especially for the universities, which offer professional courses.

Hypothesis

It has been presumed in this study that critical reading has positive relationship with the generation of researchable questions and hence with empirical enquiry. It has also been assumed that analysis of texts in a multilingual environment brings about more orientation towards critical enquiry, which is usually the basis of every research project.

Participants

The participants of this study were the undergraduate students of Business Administration at Bahria University Islamabad. The consent of these students for participating in the study was taken right before the initial phase of the study. The number of students in the previous two semesters, which was taken as a pilot study, was 110 and 91 respectively, while for the present study the number of students taken as participants, was 53.

Among them 40% of students had done their higher secondary school from the Cambridge University Board (A Levels) while 60% students had done their higher secondary education (FA or FSc) from local boards. 70% students among them were the permanent residents of the metropolitan twin cities of Islamabad/Rawalpindi while 30% students belonged to the four provinces of Pakistan—N.W.F.P, Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab.

According to the information collected through the questionnaire (see appendix-I), 45% of students were Urdu speaking, 29.16% Punjabi speaking, 14.58% Pushto speaking, 2.08% were Sindhi speaking and 8.33% were the students who spoke other languages like Seraiki, Hindko and English.

This distribution of language speaking students forms an ideal environment of a multilingual classroom. Moreover, 58.33% of students said translation from English to their mother tongue facilitated their comprehension of an English text. 52.08% students felt carrying out research project a difficult task for them while 83.34% students said they had never carried out a research project before.

The participants had gone through the basic principles of composing texts in English prose such as word classes, basic structure of sentence, mechanics of language and punctuation before embarking on the Reading Research Activity Method.

Procedure

During this study, which stretched over three consecutive semesters, first a pilot study was conducted during the first two semesters in which general observations were recorded with respect to the development of research skills through critical reading.

During the first two semesters, different phases of critical reading were practiced while in the third semester a structured study was conducted. The number of students in the third semester was reduced to 53 to make a close interaction and objective data collection possible.

In the third semester, the students were informed about the research project and their voluntary consent was obtained. They were then administered questionnaires with the options of 'yes' and 'no' (see questionnaire in appendix-I) to understand their present skill and orientation towards research according to their own perception. The second pretest activity was the collection of samples of their compositions by asking them to write at least 250 words about their dreams and plans for future.

During the phases of critical reading, the interpreters of the respective groups of students had to record, either on tape or through writing, the discussions of their group members regarding different phases of critical reading and research design. It is through this phenomenon that this investigator could understand the mechanism of the generation of new ideas, the process of analysis and the formulation of alternative theses by the participants in a multilingual environment. The level of this understanding was enhanced by the personal participation of the investigator in the discussions of different groups turn by turn. Moreover, the recorded discussions and conversation among group members would throw ample light on the mechanics of the students' thought-processes during their debate on the text and their own research projects.

During all the phases of critical reading, interlinking ideas, research design and conduction of actual research, each group of the participants had to have sessions with the facilitator (investigator in this case) for understanding the general principles of developing a formal research design and the writing format of a research report.

The sources used by the facilitator for this purpose were Babbie Earl's (2004) *The Practice of Social Research 10th Ed* and Diana Hacker's (1995) *A Writer's Reference*.

The final reports submitted were given for evaluation to the research coordinator (Dr Kashifurrahman) Bahria University Islamabad. The criteria was fixed to be 45% marks for qualification, 50% to 60% for grade 'C', 60% to 80% for grade 'B' and 80% to 100% was fixed to be grade A. Grade A to C reports were considered to be publishable research papers with prescribed modifications. The participants had to give oral presentations after submitting their reports for defending their thesis in front of at least three faculty members and 25 students of the graduate classes of the department of Management Sciences Bahria University Islamabad.

Post interviews were held after the completion of the students' projects in which the students were asked to elaborate on their experiences while unfolding of the text, debating on the argument of the author and developing the alternative thesis (see appendix II).

Setting

The groups of students would meet in their respective lecture halls at the Institute of Management and Computer Sciences, Bahria University Islamabad, forming circles or semicircles to openly discuss the text, interlinking ideas and research design. They would meet for one and a half hour each time for three times a week under the supervision of this investigator. Every effort was made to avoid the external physical distractions to let the students concentrate on their projects.

The Investigator

Having a background in Sociolinguistics, this investigator has been involved in the teaching of language, linguistics and research methods for the last 10 years in different universities of Pakistan. Presently, he has been assigned the task of teaching ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and Business Communication at Bahria University Islamabad. He has also been involved in a research project on the reading habits of the university students of Pakistan for the last one and a half years by relating reading type and volume with the cognitive abilities and academic achievements of the students. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan under the National Research Assistance Programme is funding this project.

A close interaction with students, general observation of the universities' environment in Pakistan and discussions with the officials and academics of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan gave ample opportunity to this investigator to think and formulate a methodology, which could be helpful in the development of a research culture in the universities of Pakistan and hence the Reading Research Activity Method came in to being.

Limitations

There are two limitations of this study. Firstly, there were those participants who had English as their second language as they communicated through this language in their close family circles and there were those for whom English was a foreign language because they rarely communicated in English in their close family circles. The second limitation of this study was the time constraints. The participants of the proper study had to complete Reading Research Activity Method within five weeks because they had to take their final term exams immediately after completing their projects.

Phases of Critical Reading and the Materials Used

The first session of the various phases of Critical Reading was devoted to the discussion on the differences between Reading Comprehension and Critical Reading which was debated thoroughly borrowing the concepts of “depth, complexity and quality of text” developed by Professor John Lye (2001). The students in this session also discussed the concepts that Critical Reading is not only meant to grasp “What a text says” but also to explore “What a text does and what a text means”(Kurland 2000). This first session also discussed the objectives of critical reading:

- “to recognize an author’s purpose
- to understand tone and persuasive elements
- to recognize bias” (Kurland 2000)

The participants went through the following phases as group work during the critical reading exercise (several of these phases are based on the Introduction to a compiled work titled as Reflections on Language by Hirschberg and Hirschberg 1999):

- The students form groups on their own, consisting of not less than three and not more than five members. The whole class thus has some ten to eleven groups. The students after forming groups go to the library as a group and select an article, research paper or a chapter of a book written by a well-known author. In this regard, they have complete autonomy of choosing any subject, area or genre according to their collective inclinations. The discussion among themselves for selecting the article gives them an opportunity to find out which kind of ideas they are more interested in.
- As the major emphasis is on the generation of new ideas, even short stories and novels can be selected for the purpose. If this be the case, the participants have to find out the setting of the novel, the ideological content, the social issues addressed, the characters, the purpose of selecting the type of characters etc (it is pertinent to mention here that one group during this study had selected Clinton’s autobiography “My Life”. This group after critical analysis came with a project on the orphanages in Islamabad and another group had selected Tehman Durrani’s “My feudal Lord”. This group came up with a research project on the conditions of women in a feudal society after critical analysis of the work).
- In the next class, all groups of the students sit in a circle or semi-circle by re-arranging the furniture of the classroom. The facilitator instructs them to rub the

title of the articles and then find out the main thesis of the article. Finding a thesis involves discovering the idea that serves as the focus of the article. The thesis is often stated in the form of a single sentence or several sentences that assert the author's response to an issue that others might respond to in a different manner. For this purpose the students read the first two or three paragraphs of their respective articles because the writers usually give their major theses in the first two or three paragraphs. The method of reading should be that one student in the group reads the paragraphs and the rest of the students listen to him/her and then all the students discuss and find out the major assertion of the article. Then the students put down the thesis extracted from the article in their own words in their journals.

- There are two tasks that the groups of students have to perform in the next class— Finding the main ideas of the article by reading the first sentence of each paragraph and finding the arguments of the author to support his/her main thesis. The arguments of the author are usually preceded by the words like: since, because, for, as follows from, as shown by, in as much as, otherwise, as indicated by, the reason is that, for the reason that, may be inferred from, may be derived from, may be deduced from, in view of the fact that etc. The arguments are found out by the groups for their respective articles and are then noted down in their journals.
- The next class is devoted to the generation of ideas. This is the most important phase absolutely depending upon the motivation the students receive from their teacher. The students are instructed that ideas can be generated by keeping in view the following questions/points:
 - 1- Are the arguments of the author objective, rational and logical?
 - 2- Do the arguments of the author duly support his thesis?
 - 3- Is the evidence deployed credible? Does it support the author's argument?
 - 4- What is missing in the article? Information that is not mentioned is often just as significant as information the writer chose to include.
 - 5- Analysis of the article in terms of what the students already know and what they did not know about the issue.
 - 6- The students might consider whether the author presents a solution to a problem. In this regard, the words that are to be looked for in the article are: therefore, hence, thus, so, accordingly, in consequence, it follows that, which means that, I conclude that, in conclusion, in summary, which shows that, and which entails, consequently, proves that, as a result, which implies that, which allows us to infer, points to the conclusion that etc.
 - 7- After stating what the author's position on an issue is, the students are told to try to imagine other people in that society or culture who would view the same issue from a different perspective.

The facilitator, at this stage, involves himself with groups turn by turn by giving them clues to expand the scope of their imagination incorporating different angles of the issue at hand (see Results and Discussion for details).

- In the next session the groups are asked to describe the theses, arguments, evidence and assumptions of their respective authors in front of the other participants turn by turn. The participants of the rest of the groups are allowed to question the evidence, arguments, assumptions and presentation of the authors. All the interpreters at this stage put down the observations of the participants in response to the above points in their journals. The students of the respective groups in the light of their own observations and perceptions analyze the facts, realities and assertions of the author, which give them an opportunity to gather sufficient amounts of ideas.
- The students are now in a position to develop their alternative thesis on the issue or any other interlinked issue after lengthy discussions with their fellows in the groups, putting it down in their journals. The facilitator gives them a brief introduction of research methodology on how can they be able to collect primary data (the tools of data collection like constructing questionnaires, conducting interviews and carrying out qualitative studies), how to analyze the collected data (statistical tools) and how to reach conclusions. In this whole process, they have to remain objective, rational and logical. For collecting secondary data, the students are told that they have to evaluate the authenticity and credibility of the literature they are going to refer to.
- Before the students embark upon reporting their observations in a written form, the facilitator discuss with them the distinctive features of a newspaper article, essay, report and research paper along with giving them handouts about different writing formats.
- Before giving finishing touches to their writing and research, I ask the students to keep the following questions in mind:
 - 1- Have you offered sufficient evidence to support your assertions?
 - 2- If your approach requires you to attack the credibility of an opposing viewpoint, have you summarized the opposing position before countering its main assertions?
 - 3- Have you effectively questioned the assumptions underlying the opposing argument, disputed the validity of the evidence cited and pointed out logical fallacies in the process by which the conclusions were reached?
 - 4- Did you support your recommendations or proposed solutions with logical reasoning and compelling evidence? (Hirschberg and Hirschberg 1999: xxvii-xxxiv)

Results and Discussion

After the successful completion of the Reading research Activity Method, the submitted project reports were marked. 50% of the students got qualifying marks, 20% of students got 'C' grade, 10% got 'B' grade and 10% got 'A' grade while 10% of the participants could not complete their projects. The whole course carries hundred points. After the students qualify this course, they can take the advance courses of Research Methodology, Project Design and Business Communication, which is an important ingredient for the completion of their Business Administration degrees. The 10% students who could not

complete their projects have to take up the present course again in the next semester. The research coordinator who awarded the marks had already made the criteria of marking and assessment known to the participants. 25% of marks go each to the analysis of the selected articles, the research design, the drafting of the report and the presentation of the report.

Challenging Projects

The participants had carried out challenging projects on social, cultural, political and educational issues. One of the groups, which consisted of two members from A levels (the Cambridge Board) while the other two members had done intermediate-FSc, from the local board and which got an 'A' grade for their project titled "Attitude of the Pakistani society towards transsexuals is not civilized" describe how they came up with this project,

We too like any other person around us hardly gave any attention to transsexuals. It was not until we saw an episode on TV show "Oprah" which was about the transsexuals living in America and the problems they face every day. We went online and searched the Internet for articles related to transsexuals and their problems. We found an article that was printed in Marie Claire about a transsexual. The writer (herself a transsexual) faced three problems: pain and mental torture, fear of admitting and rejection faced by her.

During post interviews, the members of this group said that they learnt to unfold the hidden meaning of a text, to see an issue from different angles, to make a rational, logical and objective argument and to draft a coherent report. The discussions among the group members took place mostly in English, while Urdu was used rarely. All the members were of the opinion that they needed no 'cut and paste' for their projects in future and that the pleasure they received from the completion of the project is matchless. Another interesting comment was made regarding the presentation of their report. They said that they were involved in an academic discourse about an issue for the first time during their educational carrier like B says, "I learnt how to analyze, report and debate. I learnt how to write and talk with arguments". The group members also mentioned the fact that they could now develop ideas for their own projects.

Another group which selected a newspaper article for critical reading titled "Structural problems in Pak-Israel relations" by Moeed Yousaf which appeared in The Friday Times on 16th of Dec 2005, got 'B' grade in evaluation. All the members of this group had done A levels from the Cambridge University Board. The group members after critically analyzing the arguments given by the author reached the conclusion that, "Many of the arguments put by the author are assumptions and are not supported by facts and figures. Author has given a one sided view". In their recorded discussions, the group members reached a consensus regarding the assumptions of the author unsupported by evidence:

- Pakistan's relation with Arab world will deteriorate
- Pakistan's relations with Palestine will deteriorate

- There will be domestic opposition
- There will be no meaningful economic cooperation between Pakistan and Israel
- Pakistan's image in international community won't improve if it improves relations with Israel.

The group developed the following interlinking ideas after picking the assumptions to bits and pieces:

- Will Pakistan benefit economically (if it improves bilateral relations with Israel)?
- Will Pakistan benefit strategically?
- How will president Musharaf build consensus on the issue?
- Reaction of international community—the West, Muslim World, South Asian countries
- Reaction of the general public of Pakistan
- Reaction of the political parties
- Role Pakistan can play in Middle East peace process if relations with Israel are improved.

The group developed the following research question after exhaustive discussions among the members as “Should Pakistan improve bilateral relations with Israel?” The tool of data collection used was a questionnaire on 5 Likert scale and analysis was done through simple frequency distribution. The report of the group says, “The questionnaire was distributed among 50 people residing in Islamabad. The sample included well-educated individuals aware of current affairs, between the ages of 18-35 years. The respondents were from different walks of life including students, government officials, bankers, corporate executives, doctors and lawyers, both male and female”. The report concludes:

From the questions and the trend in the responses from people it can be seen that the majority seems to take this step (improvement of bilateral relations with Israel) in a favourable way and agrees with us that such relations would not only prove to be beneficial for Pakistan strategically and economically but also enhance Pakistan's image in the world community. Like the author of the aforementioned article some people have shown negative attitude towards the improvement of bilateral relations but this group represents only a small minority.

This group also adopted English as their medium of discussion among group members. The students of this group in their post interviews said that they for the first time in their academic career got to know how an assumption could be tested and debated from different angles. They appreciated the analytical skill, which was brought to use during the completion of their project. Regarding the pleasure element, they were of the opinion that though the Reading Research Activity was a time consuming project, yet they could not help enjoying it. It gave them enlightenment, they said.

Another interesting project got grade 'C' in the evaluation. It was titled as "Suicide Bombers—A Survey". This group had earlier selected an article titled "The Scourge of Suicide Terrorism" by Daniel Pipes published in *National Interest Summer 1986*.

After all the group members reached consensus regarding their alternative thesis, they embarked upon their project and devised a methodology for their investigation. They write about their method of research in their report:

- After having a detailed discussion, we noted down few research questions so that we could make it clear what we want to search about suicide bombers.
- We then prepared questionnaire keeping in mind our research questions.
- Then we conducted our survey to know the public opinion about suicide attackers.
- After collecting our questionnaires, we then analyzed the result and prepared statistical graphs showing the overall percentage of number of people who agreed or disagreed.
- We randomly studied some cases to get general information about suicide bombers.
- We studied some Islamic magazines that encourage suicide bombing to find out the basic motive of this act.
- Then we discussed the main aspects of suicide bombing and then concluded our research with our own opinions.

The group reached the following conclusions given in their report:

- 90% of the people surveyed are against suicide attacking for any kind of protest.
- 77% disagreed to the fact that suicide attacks have any positive consequences.
- 80% people said that the cause of suicide attacks is frustration.
- 69% people agreed to the statement that majority of suicide attackers are Muslims.
- 62% people disagreed to the statement that suicide attackers work on their own.
- 84% of people agreed to the statement that suicide attackers are mentally sick.

In post-project interview, the members of this group said they learnt new vocabulary, analysis and argumentation from this project. A student in this group was of the opinion that she never knew about countless new ideas that always lie just beneath the apparent text. What they enjoyed the most was that they were able to form objective argument and could write and present reports coherently. They said they were motivated to carry out such kind of projects in future on their own. They felt confident for developing new ideas and for producing their own analytical and creative work.

Relationship Between Multilingualism and Generation of New Ideas

This investigator could hardly find evidence about the relationship of multilingualism and the generation of new ideas. In fact, most of the groups adopted English as medium for

their discussions on the text and the generation of new ideas. A few groups used Urdu also while the first language was used very rarely during the discussions among members of different groups. It was observed, however, that the groups which had participants from both A levels and FA/FSc from local boards performed well during the Reading Research Activity Method.

Most of the students in their post interviews said they developed a sense of cooperation, coordination and close relationship during the Reading Research Activity Method. It gave them an opportunity, they said, to understand themselves and their fellows better than before.

There was another positive result of the Reading Research Activity Method. Once the students embarked upon literature review for their projects, it gave them an opportunity to be motivated for engaged and extensive reading. Some students in their post interviews said they “had no opportunity before to select readings for themselves and hence the decline of reading habit with the passage of time ensued. But RRAM motivated them to be involved in extensive reading for pleasure, ideas and personal development”.

Conclusion and Future Direction

In this whole process of critical reading and developing thesis by the students, the teacher remains a facilitator and a consistent motivator. The students once start unfolding the inherent meaning, identifying the logical fallacies and questioning the validity of arguments of their respective authors, receive a new kind of pleasure. This actually is the pleasure of generating new ideas and creating new knowledge.

During interviews with students after the course was finished and the final drafts submitted, it was found out that the characteristics of the pleasure received by the students in this process was absolutely different from the pleasure they received from other sources. Firstly this type of pleasure remains for a comparatively long time, and secondly it sparks both the intellectual and emotional contents of personality at the same time. Strangely enough, it was found during interviews with the students that critical reading enhances the Emotional Intelligence Score, propounded by Daniel Goleman and his colleagues in 1995, and helps in the attainment of self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy in addition to the capacity for building effective relationships.

The students during this course completed interesting research projects within five weeks time. The projects were diverse encompassing social issues, management issues, cultural issues, economic issues and educational issues. During the presentations of these projects, all the groups got an opportunity to see the results of the labours of their fellows and debate the issues presented, keeping in view the relevance, objectivity, rationality and logical parameters in mind. In this way, they also learnt how to debate the issues and promote the culture of critical thinking, tolerance and dialogue.

There is a dire need that another study is conducted keeping in view the multilingual environment of Pakistani classrooms. For this purpose, it is advised that the formation of

the groups should be based on the concept that different groups have participants who speak the same language—Pushto-speaking, Punjabi-speaking, Urdu-speaking and English-speaking. Only then can the relationship between multilingualism and critical reading be investigated.

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Appendix I

Appendix II
Post Study Interview Questions

- 1- What exactly did you learn from the Reading Research Activity Method that you carried out in your English language class of this semester? Specify please.
 - 2- Did you enjoy the activity?
 - 3- Is it now possible for you to devise your own research design without the supervision of a peer or teacher?
 - 4- Is this activity helpful to eradicate plagiarism, cheating and unfair means in exams in general and in research projects in particular?
 - 5- Do you find yourself improved after the completion of your project as far as language skills like reading, writing and speaking are concerned? To what extent?
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