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Repeated Reading as A Technique of Developing Fluency

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Abstract: This article aims to discuss the importance of the technique known as "repeated reading" in forming young students' ability to read quickly and confidently.
Keywords: reading fluency, repeated reading, method, word rate, word recognition, motivation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading skills play a profound role in learners' education. Most of the knowledge is acquired through reading course books, authentic materials and many other resources. And in order for students to effectively process the information they are exposed to, reading fluency must be achieved. Fluency is defined as the ability to read easily, quickly and expressively without making much effort and with little difficulty understanding the text. On the basis of multiple researches conducted to discover an effective strategy to help young learners develop fluent reading, repeated reading has been found to be the most critical one.[1]

The technique of repeated reading is exactly what it appears to be—repeatedly reading a passage. The reader is given a short selection (50-200 words) to reread until he can easily read it at a predetermined rate. Most researchers suggest 100 words per minute on independent reading level material as a good target rate.[2]

Relatively current research in the use of repeated reading began in the second half of the 20th century. In 1974, Samuels and LaBerge of the University of Minnesota published a paper that triggered huge interest in the subject of reading fluency. They proposed that automaticity is crucial to fluency and that the best way to develop it is to practice—that is, to use repetition. They compared learning to read with learning to play a sport or a musical instrument. Developing automaticity of these skills, they pointed out, requires repeated practice of the same movements. Automaticity in reading, they argued, should be obtained no differently. For words to become automatic, they must be repeated[3].

Their theory was based on that of Dr. Edmund Huey. In his 1908 manual. "The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading", he suggested that perceiving, or reading, is performed more easily through numerous repetitions like any other act. Though first attempts of understanding new words can be imperfect, continuous repetition makes the process facile, freeing the mind from details and shortening the reading time.

Great deal of studies revealed that repeated reading increases reading rate. Namely, Sindelar, and O'Shea (1985) used repeated reading with 30 third graders who were functioning at or above grade level but were reading an average of 117 words per minute (referred to as wpm) at the instructional level. They increased their rate to 141.7 wpm after rereading three times and to 155.3 wpm after rereading seven times. This is a gain of 17.4% after three-time rereading and of 25% after seven-time rereading.

One study, however, was less supportive of repeated reading. It demonstrated that although this method successfully increased reading rate, the degree to which that rate transferred to new texts was dependent upon the number of shared words between the texts. The less common the vocabulary between the texts, the less transfer there was of increased reading rate[4]. However, fluency—properly defined—is more than speed. It is also smoothness, intonation, and phrase lengthening. Repeated reading offers practice that develops these aspects of fluency[5].

Not only does the method of repeated reading increase rate, but it also reduces the number of word recognition errors made by the reader[6]

[1] (Deeney, 2010;).
[2] (Dahl, 1974; Dowhower, 1987).
[3] (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974)
[4] (Rashotte and Torgesen, 1985)
[5] (Schreiber, 1980, 1991)
[6] (Dahl, 1974; Dowhower, 1987; Gonzales & Elijah, 1975;)

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Rasinski's (1990) eight day study with third graders indicates an improvement in word accuracy for both those rereading independently and those rereading while listening. Students who read independently improved their word accuracy by 19% from the pretest to posttest. Students who listened while reading improved their word accuracy by 25% from the pretest to posttest.

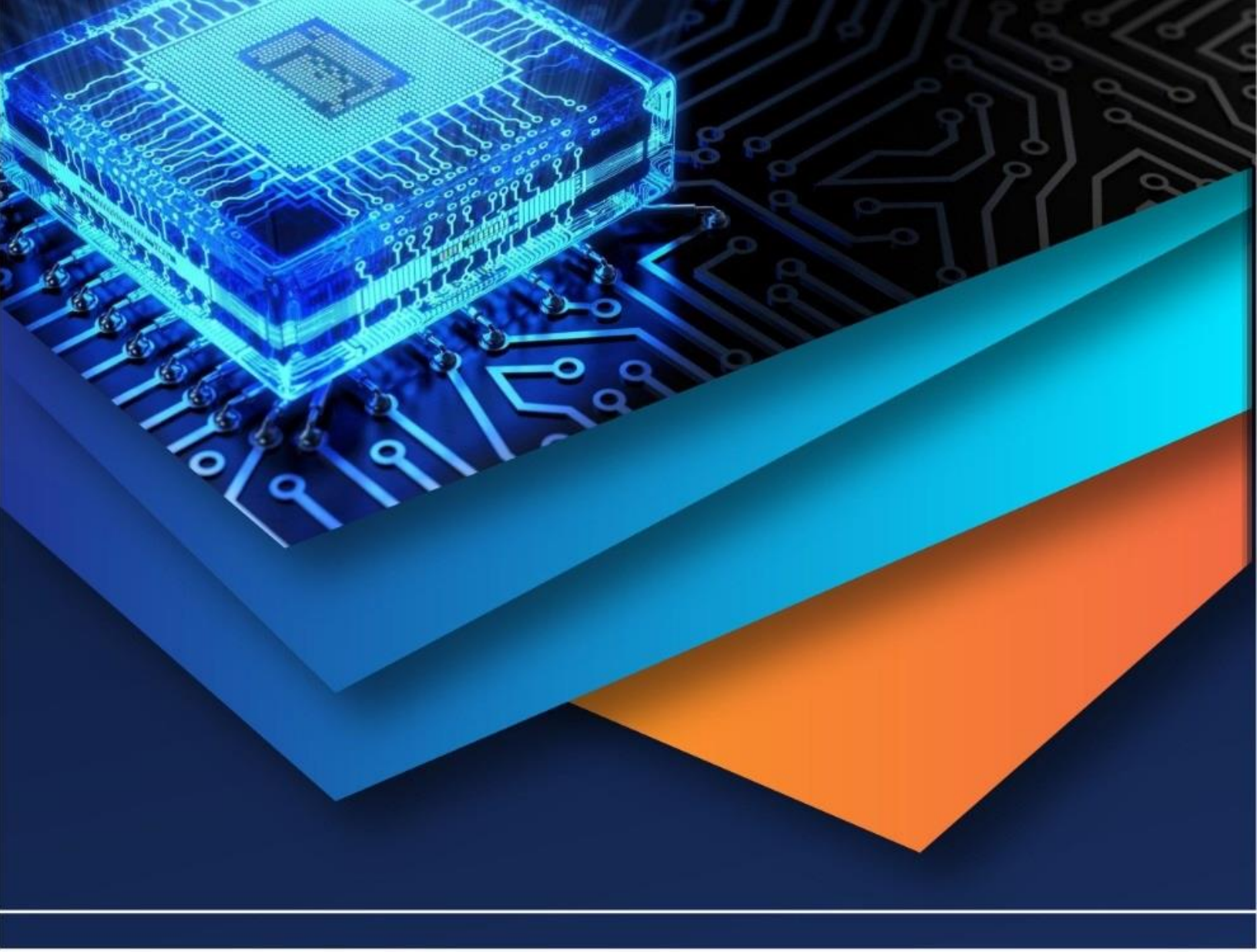
It can be inferred that word recognition errors decrease with the use of repeated reading.

Moreover, it should be noted that repeated reading positively influences learners' motivation. The growth of speed in their own reading generates new interest in the activity. Students' progress is the best reward that drives them to proceed further reading. When 12 teaming disabled students ages eight to twelve were asked if they wanted to continue repeated reading after the research was over, 75% answered in the affirmative. They said that repeated reading made it easier to get a high speed score.

In conclusion, repeated reading is a highly effective strategy that can help inexperienced learners become fluent readers. With regard to the evidence collected from various researches, repeated reading assists students stumbling through texts in developing smooth reading experience without conscious effort being put into comprehension of the meaning of a passage. in addition, the technique mentioned above positively affects one's reading in several ways. Namely, it stimulates the growth of reading rate, improves word recognition accuracy and encourages students to immerse themselves in more reading.

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