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READING SPEED AND TRANSFER OF TRAINING

Earlier studies of reading speed transfer have dealt with transfer from English to the mother-tongue. In his experiment West (1941) found that training in English resulted in a speed increase of 266% in Bengali for Bengali students. West concluded that:

Reading is a general power. It is not confined to one language for improvement in the ability to read one language is 'transfered' and shows itself in improvement of the reading of another language... If practice in a foreign language improves the rate of reading in the mother tongue, it follows that practice in the mother tongue will probably improve reading in a foreign language... If such practice is needed it should obviously be given in the mother-tongue for preference.

This study deals with transfer from the National Language, Indonesian, to a foreign language, English. Indonesian is the language used in schools from the third year onwards.

Speed reading courses usually result in an increase of speed of approximately 100% with an increase in comprehension or with the maintenance of comprehension at a desired level, about 70% (see Fry 1963, Poulton 1961).

West (1941) suggests that by providing a few questions before a passage is read, increases in speed will be greater. These "before-questions" give rise to "a searching attitude" which is the main feature of efficient reading.

METHOD

The subjects were students of a Teachers Training College in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. One group was from the English department, where most classes are conducted in English. The other was from the Education department, where Indonesian is the medium of instruction. Each group was randomly divided into two. One half was given three before-questions to look at before reading teach passage. These three questions were included in the ten questions that had to be answered once reading was completed. In addition to this, a control group was also set up.

of the passages ranged from 675 to 775 words. Each passage was followed by ten multiple choice questions. Each question had four choices. The English passages were written within a 500 word vocabulary and the Indonesian passages were within an 800 word vocabulary. Each group was given two passages per week. No homework was given and there were no associated lectures except one given twenty Indonesian passages, and two more English passages as a final measure of transfer. The control group, which consisted of English department students, received only the four English passages. The length at the beginning of the course. A small amount of individual advice was given. The course consisted of two English passages as an initial test

Results

Effects of training in reading speed

Indonesian

English

Groups	n				¢	
Control (a)	24 16	Before 213	After 375	Before 206 206	After 230 364	
(p)	12	213	329	206	355	
(a)	20	173	267	126	211	
dept (b) 20	20	171	270	133	237	
		,				

E E without before-questions with before-questions

The results show

For English Department students

a gain of 65% in Indonesian reading speed.
b) a gain of 75% in English reading speed as a result of transfer.
c) a superiority of 5% for the method not using before-questions

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For Education Department students (a) a gain of 54% in Indanesian results (b) a gain of 72% in English reading (c) a superiority of 11% for the me

a gain of 54% in Indanesian reading speed.
a gain of 72% in English reading speed.
a superiority of 11% for the method using before-questions.

Comprehension remained at the desired level for both groups. The control group made an increase in speed of 12%. When this is subtracted from the average of the two experimental groups, the increase in English reading speed as the result of transfer is 62.5%.

DISCUSSION

training in the national language or the mother-tongue. The necessary material is not difficult to prepare, consisting merely of passages with The results of the experiment show that there is a large amount of reading speed transfer from Indonesian to English. Where English is taught as a foreign language it would seem desirable for a variety of reasons, several of them not directly pedagogical, to give speed reading training in the national language or the mother-tongue. The necessary questions.

One group showed a greater increase with before questions, the other showed a greater increase without before questions. It seems that before-questions do not necessarily have effect suggested by West.

Further research needs to be done to compare the effect on The results regarding the use of before-questions is contradictory.

of most of the subjects in this experiment, training in the mother-tongue could be compared with training in the national language. One may English reading speed of training in English with training in the mother-tongue or national language. As Indonesian was not the mother-tongue considerable. predict however that whatever approach is used, the transfer will be

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