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The Effect of Using Intensive and Extensive Techniques to Develop Iraqi Learners' Ability in Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is considered to be the most useful and important skill that occupies an important goal in the teaching English as a FL. It can be said that teaching FL is not teaching reading skill, but reading comprehension skill is an important in teaching language as all. This study aims at investigating the effect of using intensive and extensive techniques in teaching reading comprehension on the achievement of the second stage. The following null hypothesis has been posed: "There is no a statistically significant difference between the achievement scores of the subjects in the pre-and the post test of reading comprehension." It is found that the success of intensive and extensive techniques led to an important change in students' performance in learning FL. In the light of the outcomes, some recommendations and suggestions for further studies are made.

Keywords: Intensive, extensive, reading comprehension

Section One: the Problem of the study

Language is the essence of human experience. The primary goal of learning English as a foreign language is how to communicate. Therefore, Harmer (1983:39) argues that foreign language learning is the most effective essence when learners are placed in communicative situations. For several years, teachers and researchers have been seeking for new ways to motivate learners to achieve this goal. Jones (2003: 1) states that general foreign language curricula will certainly attempt to provide four skills that enable outstanding learners to perform at their level of English

Harmer (1983: 26) asserts that reading skill is an important part of foreign language learning, allowing learners to enhance their knowledge in all areas, not just for the sake of information and fun activity. Rivers (1983: 259) sees the skill of reading as consisting of letter recognition, word recognition, discrimination and thus word sampling, prediction of existing content, and intention to make sense of the text.. Burns et al. (2005: 5) explain that communication is the central of reading instruction that results from the reader's construction of meaning through integrating his/her prior knowledge with the information presented in the text.

From the researcher point of view, reading comprehension is an essential step to EFL learners in which it gives a chance to be in contact with the living language; in addition, it has an important role in determining whether a person will succeed in mastering a foreign language or not .

Iraqi readers face many difficulties in using skills, they easily understand, but they are unable to connect their prior knowledge to the writer's idea beyond the printed page. FL teachers at colleges were asked about the difficulties faced by students on RC, they show that students have lack of an experience background, a lack of reading comprehension skills, therefore, their role limits in answering comprehension questions; many students are unskilled readers and they fail to understand what they are reading. This study attempts to investigate the effect of using intensive and extensive techniques in teaching reading comprehension on the achievement of students.

1.2 Aim

The present study aims at investigating the effect of using intensive and extensive techniques in teaching reading comprehension on the achievement of students 'college in English department.

1.3 Hypothesis

The null hypothesis is posed: - "there is no statistically significant difference between the achievement scores of the experimental group who taught reading comprehension by using intensive and extensive techniques from those who are taught reading comprehension using traditional method in the pre and posttest".

1.4 Limits

The present study is limited to:-

- 1- The use of intensive and extensive techniques in teaching reading comprehension of the experimental group.
- 2- Second stage of students, college of basic education / English department during the academic year 2023-2024.
- 3- Teaching seven passage to the experimental group from practice book (developing skills)

1.5 Value

This study can be useful in:-

1. Facilitating reading comprehension among college students.
2. Assisting college EFL teachers in applying intensive and extensive English as a foreign language teaching.

1.6 Definitions of Basic Terms

The terms defined in this section include (1) intensive technique (2) extensive technique (3) Reading Comprehension

(1) Intensive technique

Philpot (2011:6) states that "sometimes you read for every detail, for example. a description of process. The results of a scientific study or a set literature text. To do this, you should to take your time. Stop and think about what you are reading. Have you understood the text? You may need to read the text more than once"

(2) Extensive technique

Sometimes, you will read for pleasure – perhaps as extra research or purely for interest. You may concentrate, but do not have to worry about details. (Philpot, 2011:6)

(3) Reading Comprehension (RC)

Fry (1965: 22) defines reading comprehension as "a part of comprehension process of getting the thoughts that were in the author's mind into the reader's mind that involves the transmission of an idea through several imperfect media".

From the researcher point of view, RC is the 'linguistic process of reconstructing the intended message of a text by translating its lexical and grammatical information into meaningful units that can be integrated with the reader's knowledge and cognitive structures'.

(2) Reading Comprehension

As for Fry (1965:22) reading comprehension is "a part of comprehension process of getting the thoughts that were in the author's mind into the reader's mind that involves the transmission of an idea through several imperfect media". The researcher defines RC as "the linguistic process of reconstructing the intended message of a text by translating its lexical and grammatical information into meaningful units that can be integrated with the reader's knowledge and cognitive structures."

Section Two: literature .Review

2.0 Introductory Note

Primarily, this section is divided into two parts. The first section covers cooperative learning and the nature of reading, as well as key points related to this skill as an activity. The second section covers new techniques (intensive and extensive).

2.1 Cooperative Learning (CL)

Johnson et al. (1989: 36) define CL as "an instructional use of small group so that student work together to maximize their own and each other's learning". . Arends (1997:115) states that CL did not evolve from the thinking of any individual approach to learning. Its roots go back through the early Greeks, but its contemporary development can be traced to the work of educational psychologists and pedagogical theorist at the beginning of the twentieth century. Richards et al. (1992: 87) describes CL as a successful teaching strategy in which small groups, each with students of different levels of abilities participate. He also states such learning is used to increase students' learning since":

- a- It increases the amount of students' participation in the classroom.
- b- It reduces the need for competitiveness.
- c- It reduces the learners' dominance in the classroom.

Johnson (1993: 12) asserts that group work is considered vital to the education process because among other reasons:

- 1- It offers an embracing affective climate.
- 2- It promotes learners' responsibility and autonomy.
- 3- It is a step for self-directed learning".

Jacobs (2004: 8) adds that group work helps to foster learning, deeper learning, critical thinking skills, articulation of thoughts, and it also can provide a feedback to teachers. The second part of this section is dealt with reading comprehension skills

2.1 Importance of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension (RC) is essential for understanding, analyzing, and interpreting written texts. It is a critical skill in education, as it enables students to process and retain information effectively. Without strong comprehension abilities, reading becomes a passive activity with little learning or engagement. RC allows individuals to extract meaning, make connections, and apply knowledge in various contexts. It also supports academic success, as subjects like history, science, and literature require reading comprehension. Developing RC skills helps individuals become independent learners (Baker, 1984: 74).

In professional settings, reading comprehension is vital for understanding work related documents, contracts, and reports. Employees with strong RC skills can interpret company policies, industry regulations, and technical manuals with ease. This ability ensures that workers make informed decisions and avoid costly mistakes. Poor comprehension in the workplace can lead to miscommunication and reduced productivity. Many professions, including

law, medicine, and engineering, rely on advanced RC skills (Cheng, 2001: 152).

2.2 Reasons for Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is also essential for critical thinking and decision making. When individuals read news articles, political statements, or research studies, they must evaluate the reliability of the information. Strong RC skills help readers distinguish between facts, opinions, and biases in a text. This ability is crucial in the digital age, where misinformation spreads rapidly. Readers with high comprehension levels are better equipped to question sources and recognize manipulative language (Blackcom, 1998: 45). There are several purposes for Reading Comprehension, which are the following:

1. People read for different reasons, depending on their needs and interests. One of the most common reasons is to gain knowledge and stay informed about various subjects. Reading newspapers, research articles, and books allows individuals to expand their understanding of the world. It helps people learn about history, science, culture, and current events (Carter, 2016: 74).
2. Students and professionals rely on reading to develop expertise in their fields. The more a person reads, the more informed and knowledgeable they become. Reading allows individuals to explore new ideas and perspectives that they may not encounter otherwise. It broadens their worldview and encourages intellectual curiosity (Bloom et al, 1987: 45).
3. Another important reason for reading is education, as students must read textbooks, articles, and academic papers to succeed. Reading is a fundamental part of formal learning, as it enables students to understand complex theories and concepts. Without reading, it would be difficult to complete assignments, write essays, or conduct research (Carter, 2016: 77).
4. Academic reading includes understanding theories, analyzing case studies, and evaluating scholarly arguments. Through reading, students improve their ability to comprehend, summarize, and apply information effectively. Reading also enhances memory retention, making it easier to recall important details. A strong reading habit contributes to lifelong learning and continuous personal growth (Baker, 1984: 98).
5. Reading plays a crucial role in effective communication, as it allows individuals to interpret and respond to messages accurately. Understanding written texts, such as emails, reports, and instructions, ensures clarity in professional and personal interactions (Dycus, 1988: 66).
6. Reading is essential for professional growth, as employees must read reports, emails, manuals, and industry-related materials. Professionals in

various fields, such as medicine, law, and business, rely on reading to stay updated with new developments. Lawyers read legal documents, contracts, and court cases to interpret laws accurately (Dycus , 1988: 127).

7. Some people enjoy reading biographies or memoirs to learn about the lives of influential figures. Comic books, graphic novels, and humorous writings provide amusement and relaxation. Watching movies or TV shows based on books often encourages people to read the original works. Reading for entertainment also fosters creativity by inspiring individuals to write their own stories or poems (Carter, 2019: 89).

2.3 Purposes for Reading Comprehension

There are several purposes of reading comprehension, which are the following:

2.3.1 General Knowledge and Intellectual Growth

One common purpose of reading is to gain general knowledge about various topics, including science, history, technology, and culture. People read books, newspapers, and online articles to stay informed about current events and global issues. This type of reading helps individuals expand their intellectual abilities and improve their critical thinking skills. Knowledge gained through reading allows people to engage in meaningful discussions and make informed decisions. It also enhances their problem solving abilities by providing insights from different fields (Black, 1998: 82).

General reading contributes to lifelong learning, enabling individuals to adapt to new information and ideas. Without regular reading, staying updated with the ever-changing world would be challenging. Reading broadens perspectives and encourages a deeper understanding of society and human experiences. It is an essential habit for personal and intellectual growth (Anderson, 2017: 67).

2.3.2 Academic Success

Another key purpose of reading is academic success, as students rely on textbooks, research papers, and study materials. Academic reading involves understanding complex theories, analyzing case studies, and evaluating scholarly arguments. It helps students develop critical thinking skills, which are essential for writing essays, participating in discussions, and solving problems. Many subjects, such as literature, science, and history, require extensive reading to master key concepts (Gaith, 2013: 94). Reading academic materials also improves students' ability to comprehend, summarize, and apply information effectively. A strong reading habit allows learners to grasp challenging ideas and apply them in their studies. Schools

and universities emphasize reading as a tool for intellectual and professional preparation, making it a cornerstone of higher education (Hidi, 2006: 73).

2.3.3 Professional Development

Reading is also essential for professional development, as many careers require continuous learning. Professionals read industry-related materials, reports, and research to stay updated with the latest developments in their fields. Doctors, engineers, lawyers, and business executives rely on reading to improve their expertise and make informed decisions. Many companies encourage employees to read books on leadership, communication, and problem-solving to enhance their skills (Johnson, 1981: 88). Additionally, professional reading helps individuals advance in their careers by expanding their knowledge of industry trends and best practices. Employees who engage in professional reading are more likely to develop innovative solutions and adapt to new workplace challenges. Organizations that promote reading among their employees often see improvements in productivity and strategic thinking (Ghaith, 2003)

2.4 Types of Reading Comprehension Skills

There are several types of reading comprehension, which are the following:

2.4.1 Intensive Reading skill

This type of reading is often used in academic settings, where students need to comprehend complex concepts. Intensive reading requires focus and critical thinking to grasp the full meaning of the text. It is useful for studying textbooks, research papers, and literary works that require deep analysis. Readers often take notes, highlight important points, and reread passages to ensure full comprehension (Hidi, 2006: 87).

2.4.2 Extensive Reading skill

Extensive reading involves reading large amounts of material for general understanding. Unlike intensive reading, extensive reading focuses on fluency rather than analyzing every detail. It is commonly used for reading novels, newspapers, and magazines for enjoyment or general knowledge. Extensive reading helps improve reading speed and comprehension by exposing readers to various writing styles and topics (Ellis, 2002: 76). This type of reading is beneficial for developing a love for reading and improving overall literacy. Extensive reading is often encouraged in schools to make students more comfortable with reading in a second language (Johnson, 1981: 89).

2.4.3 Silent Reading skill

Silent reading is the process of reading without vocalizing words, allowing for faster and more private comprehension. This method promotes concentration, encourages independent learning, and improves reading speed. It is essential for academic studies, research, and leisure reading, where understanding is prioritized over verbal expression. Silent reading also helps develop critical thinking skills by allowing readers to focus deeply on the content without distractions (Matheson, 1988 :92).

2.4.6 Online Reading

Online reading skill involves accessing and interpreting digital texts , including websites , blogs , e.books and social media content . it requires different skills , such as navigating hyperlinks, evaluating sources , and managing information overload. Unlike traditional reading. online reading often includes , multimedia like videos, images and interactive features which can enhance or distract comprehension (Herried,2004 :88)

2.4.7 Skimming

Skimming is a rapid reading technique used to get a general overview of a text. It involves quickly glancing over headings, subheadings, and key sentences to identify the main points. This skill is useful for reviewing material before detailed reading or studying. It saves time and enhances efficiency in comprehending large volumes of text (Philpot, 2011:8).

2.4.8 Scanning

Scanning is a focused reading strategy used to locate specific information within a text. Readers move their eyes quickly over the material to find names, dates, or keywords without reading everything. This technique is particularly helpful for answering questions, verifying facts, or searching for definitions. It improves reading speed and accuracy in retrieving relevant details (ibid).

2.4.9 The advantages of Intensive and Extensive Techniques in RC

In the field of teaching foreign languages this technique has many benefits such as:

- Enhanced learner language production.
- Greater variety of language functions in learner language production.
- Lower anxiety and higher motivation.
- More individualization of instruction.
- Greater enjoyment.
- Greater opportunities to learn to collaborate.

2.4.10 the Teacher's Role in Intensive and Extensive Techniques

Arends (1997:113) states that "the learning environment for intensive and extensive techniques are characterized by democratic processes and active roles for students in deciding what should be studied and how. The teacher should provide a high degree of structure in forming groups and defining overall procedures, while students are left in control of the minute to minute interactions within their group. He also adds that there are six basic roles should be involved in intensive and extensive techniques lessons, these roles are summarized in Table (2).

Table (2) Teacher's Roles

The Roles	Teacher Behavior
'Present goals and set	The teacher reviews the lesson objectives and sets the learning set.
Present information	The teacher presents information to the students either by display or text.
Organize students into learning groups	. The teacher explains to the student how to learn form the different learning groups
Assist group work and study	It helps teachers organize learning during their work.
Test over materials	Teacher tests over learning materials or groups present results of their work.
Provide recognition	Teacher finds ways to recognize both individual and group efforts and achievement'.

Johnson et al. (1995: 4) state that the teacher's role can be summarized into":

- 1- forming groups
- 2- Building and maintaining group cohesiveness.
- 3- Sequencing instructional activities.
- 4- Organizing material.
- 5- Develop and managing oriented classroom activities.
- 6- Evaluating performance.
- 7- Providing feedback.

2.4.11 the Roles of Learners

The learners have a responsibility for creating a relaxed environment in the class. Wood (1990: 2) sets out a number of learners roles that create a positive participation in the group activities, these roles are:

- *Silencer: Quiets the group when appropriate.
 - *Asker: Asks to make sure everyone understand the material.
 - *Encourager: Makes sure everyone is working well.
 - *Mediator: Settles disagreements about behavior or answers.
 - *Checker: Makes sure group members' understanding of the material and every member has all the information.
 - *Reader: each one his chance to read and provide others members important information.
- Tewksbury (2006: 3) explains that intensive and extensive techniques require learners to prepare outside of class by answering specific questions to check adequate learners preparation. In addition learners asked to plan "how" they will teach what they have learned. In both, the learners read and draw the conclusions themselves, as opposed to being planned to.

Section Three: Methodology of the Study

3.1 Experimental Design

The experimental design followed in the present study is:

Pre-test → Experimental Treatment → Post-test

Pre – test Control Treatment Post test

A pretest was given to the experiment and control groups before the beginning of the experiment to assess the participants' level of successful in reading comprehension. This test was repeated at the end of the experiment to assess the participants' level of confidence in RC skill. At the end of the experiment, the researcher compared the results of the pretest and posttest.

3.2 Sample

The sample of the current study is taken from English department / College of Basic Education. The total number of students is (92) at the second level, (88) students is grouped in two sections, A and B: Section B which includes (92) students has been chosen randomly to be the experimental group, while the other section has been excluded.

Four students are excluded from section A and B because they are repeating the year for the second time. The rest totaling are (88) students.

3.2.1 The Pilot Test

Miles defines a pilot test as a "pre-study of a fuller study that help researcher works out some of the procedural bugs even though they know it is not likely to add anything new or significant to the main study but also to:

- Hypothesis testing. The study may change, reject, or develop some hypotheses.
- Providing researchers with ideas and methodologies that may not have been anticipated prior to the pilot study.
- Statistical and analytical review of its organizational plans.
- Overcoming difficulties revealed by the pilot study.
- Saving time and money.
- Experimenting with several alternatives.

Thus, select those that produce the clearest results for the main study. Therefore, after examining the validity of the test, it is administered to a sample of 40 students.

3.2.2 Test Validity

"A test will be valid when it measures what it is intended to measure" (Miles, 2000:124). It aims at providing information about several constructs. To achieve the apparent superiority of the test, it was presented to a jury of (14) university professors known for their experience in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. The experts agreed that the test is accepted of the students' knowledge except for some modification..

3.2.3 Test Reliability

Ebel (1972: 310) defines a reliable test as "a test whose scores remain relatively stable from one administration to another". There are four methods to find out test reliability. They are the split-halves method, equivalent-form method, Kuder Richardson method, and test-retest method (Alexander, 1977:195). Split-half method requires that the test as a whole to be divided in two equal halves. The procedure followed is scoring the odd-numbered items and the even-numbered items separately and then the correlation between scores on the odd and even numbered items is calculated". By using Pearson's formula below, the reliability coefficient of the test computed was (0.93). The reliability coefficient of a RC test would be acceptable if it is not less than (0.50)".

3.2.4 The Administration of the Pre-test

The pre-test in its final form is administered on the 18th of February 2024. The study subjects totaling (88) students are seated to take the test in a comfortable room in English department/ college of Basic Education /Al-Mustansiriya University., the teachers explained the instruction in Arabic to avoid any ambiguity. The exam papers are corrected by the researcher. The length of the period of instruction is nearly the whole semester of the academic year 2023-2024, it is about 7 weeks. The experiment started on the 19th February, 2024, and ended on the 30th April of the same year.

3.4 The Instruction of Material

The instruction of material includes the following stories which are chosen from practice Book, it consists of two sets each set has (15) lessons, these lessons focus on pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension skills. Moreover, at the end of each set there is a "Cut-out/Fold –up Books" which contains seven stories .In order to achieve face validity, the stories are presented to the juries.

The stories are:

- 1- A Puma at large
- 2- Thirteen equal one
- 3- Find Something to Do.
- 4- The Moon
- 5- A Free flight to Dubia
- 6- Once in a While.
- 7- A Piece of Cake.

3.7 The Experimental Application

3.7.1 Teaching Material

The material was chosen from practice book. The material involves 8 stories. This type of stories provides a rich and authentic resource for teaching EFL.

3.7.2 The Model Plan

Lesson objectives:

By implementing intensive and extensive techniques, students were assigned to an expert group. Thus, students' comprehension of material was demonstrated through their discussion and responses.

3.7.3 Construction of Intensive and Extensive Techniques

The experiment stated on the 17th February, 2023. The researcher taught the experimental group reading (seven stories) in a single lesson. The researcher has followed the following procedures in teaching stories:

- 1- Before following the general steps of intensive and extensive techniques, the researcher explained the importance of implementing such a cooperative technique to help students get a better idea of these techniques.
- 2- The class was divided by the researcher into groups of four or five students according to the ability, this step took 10 minutes.
- 3- The researcher divided the story into four parts and gave each group a different part of story.
- 4- The researcher gave 7 minutes to read and study their parts and to discuss the preparation and developing a strategy for teaching the

material to members of other groups. It is the responsibility of each group to make sure that all of its members understand the material and are prepared to teach it. This step helps to provide guide line for what you mean by "teach".

- 5- The researcher gave some guidance which helped to put individual groups in the right direction. The researcher also helped groups to make sure that each of them is prepared to teach mixed groups.

3.2.5 The Final Administration of Posttest Administration of the Pre-test

Posttest in its final form is administered on the 27 April of 2024. The study subjects totaling (88) students are seated to take the test in a comfortable room in English department/ college of Basic Education /Al-Mustansiriya University., The exam papers are corrected by the researcher.

Section Four: Study Results

This section analyzes the data that remain relevant to the study and its hypothesis. The current study focuses on the effect of intensive and extensive techniques in achieving second-grade students' achievement in RC. The study also attempts to verify the current zero- hypothesis, which can be used to obtain ."There is no statistically significant difference between the achievement scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test who taught reading comprehension by using intensive and extensive techniques from those who taught reading comprehension by using traditional method"

The "t" test formulas is used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the scores of the pretest, which is found to be 2.259 and the mean scores of the posttest which is found to be 19.916 for the experimental group, see table (5). The "T" value is found to be at 2.759 the level of significant of 0.05, which indicates that there is a significant difference between the two tests' scores. This means that the experimental group did much better in the post-test. This is because of using intensive and extensive techniques that the students in the experimental group got. then, the hypothesis of study is rejected"

Table (3) The Mean, Standard Deviation and the "T" Value of the Pre- and Post-Test of the subjects

	M	N	Std. Deviation	df	t-value
PRE-TEST	2.259	44	2.29768	88	-9.904
POST-TEST	2.959	44	2.60645		

2.4 Results Discussion

The statistical average of the results indicates that the test value in the experimental group is (2.959), which is higher than the group average value by (2.259). This means that the students in the experimental group obtained the best experience/significantly higher than what they obtained in the pre-test. This indicates that the course that the experimental group which attended for 7 weeks was useful and the results also show the effectiveness of implementing intensive and extensive techniques in teaching reading comprehension.

2.5 Conclusions

In light of the obtained results, the use of intensive and extensive techniques in teaching RC. It

1. Proves to be an effective techniques in teaching RC skill.
2. Saves time and effect to practice and develop students' abilities compared with traditional techniques.
3. Develops understanding of particular passage as they explore the passage and meaningfully participate in small group.
4. Has facilitating effect in developing the reading abilities of the learner.
5. Gives the students the opportunity to develop their reading skill.
6. Enables the students to express themselves in reading skills, freely and without hesitation by using their own words.

2.6 Recommendations

In the light of the results and conclusions, the following recommendations are set:

1. EFL teachers need to be aware of the importance of employing intensive and extensive techniques in teaching RC skills.
2. EFL teachers should give his / her students an equal opportunities to communicate inside the class.
4. The students should be trained to use *intensive and extensive* techniques not only in comprehending reading passages, but also in other skills like writing and speaking.

2.7 Suggestions for Further Studies

The results of the current study showed a significant change in the experimental group of the performance in their reading comprehension. On the basis of findings of the current study, the following studies are suggested for further research:

1. The Effect of using intensive and extensive techniques on EFL College student's writing skill.
2. A similar study can be applied to investigate the effectiveness of using intensive and extensive techniques on students' performance in listening, speaking or writing.

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مستخلص البحث:

يعد الاستيعاب القرائي واحداً من اهم المهارات و الاكثر فائدة حيث يحتل هدفاً مهماً في تدريس اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية . ويمكن القول ان تدريس اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية لا يعد فقط لتدريس مهارة القراءة ولكن ان تدريس الاستيعاب القرائي هو مهم في تدريس اللغة ككل. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى معرفة اثر استخدام تقنيات القراءة الشاملة و المكثفة في تدريس الاستيعاب القرائي ومن اجل تحقيق هذا الهدف تم افتراض الفرضية الصفرية الآتية :-
انه "لا يوجد فروق ذات دلالة احصائية بين درجات الطالبات للمجموعة التجريبية ذات الاختبارين القبلي والبعدي في الاستيعاب القرائي". وقد اظهرت نتائج الدراسة مدا فاعلية القنيات القراءة الشاملة والمكثفة على أداء الطلبة في تعلم اللغة الانكليزية وفي ضوء هذه النتائج تم وضع بعض التوصيات والمقترحات للدراسات اخرى