

# Periodic Research

## A Study of Relationship between Reading Comprehension Ability and Language Learning Capacity of Secondary Students



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### Abstract

Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive, produce and use words to understand and communicate. This capacity involves the picking up of diverse capacities including syntax, phonetics and an extensive vocabulary. The capacity to acquire and use language is a key aspect that distinguishes humans from other organisms. (Tomasello, 2008) Language development is a continuous process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Education helps to develop language among children or people. There are two phases of language acquisition that is reading skill and language comprehension. The acquisition of reading skill is supposed to affect the language learning ability. Being the medium of instruction, proficiency in language affect the overall school performance of the students. In this paper an effort has been made to study the relationship of reading comprehension ability and language learning capacity and to know the effect of reading ability on the language learning capacity of students.

**Keywords:** Relationship, Reading Comprehension Ability, Language Learning Capacity, Secondary.

### Introduction

Reading is a key to a wealth of knowledge and experience that links people in a way that extends to distant environments and distant times. Reading provides an experience by which an individual may expand his horizon of knowledge. He gains the essence of himself and of the universe. Reading is an inevitable instrument of learning. Reading provides experience through which the individual may expand his horizons, identify, extend and expand his interests and gain deeper understandings of him, of other human beings and of the world.

A child is able to understand a text only when he knows the language. Language enters a child's life from the very beginning i.e. from birth and continues developing throughout life, but language learning takes place when he enters the school. Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive, produce and use words to understand and communicate. This capacity involves the picking up of diverse capacities including syntax, phonetics and an extensive vocabulary. Since language permeates school life, boys and girls in their attempt to master the school curriculum and in the process of growing up have to call upon their reading resources. Moreover, they are expected to increase these resources by making the language encountered in their school learning a living part of their thinking and communicating. Thus reading proficiency and reading comprehension is a technique for improving students' success in extracting useful knowledge from the text. It is the central part of learning a language having unique position in school curriculum, as it is a tool for mastery on language which is a medium of instruction in school and a tool for mastery of other subjects.

### Need & Significance of the Study

Reading comprehension ability is found to be closely related to success in language learning capacity of students. Language acquisition is one of the key milestones in childhood development. So much of a child's future, social and intellectual development hinges on this milestone, that its delay can create a domino effect that begins with

isolation and withdrawal and turns into poor academic performance (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991). The researches studied and reviewed revealed reached a dramatic link between language acquisition or language learning and reading skill i.e. comprehension. Here also individual differences affect a lot. Some children learn with good speed while some remain lingering too long hindering their reading ability which affects their language learning and relatively effect their academic achievement i.e. their achievement or understanding of other school subjects. When a child starts understanding things easily, he develops a sense of literary comprehension which sticks to him forever. According to researches reviewed no study has been found till date on this topic so the researcher proposed this study with a purpose to know the relationship between reading comprehension ability and language learning capacity.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study the reading comprehension ability of secondary students.
2. To study the effect of reading comprehension ability on language learning capacity of secondary students.

### Hypotheses

#### H-1

There is significant difference in the Reading comprehension ability and Language learning capacity of secondary students studying in the schools affiliated to MSPUP, ICSE and CBSE Boards of Secondary Education.

#### H-2

There is no significant difference between means of scores of upper group A and lower group C on their language learning capacity.

### Delimitations of the Study

1. The study is restricted to the secondary students of Kanpur Nagar only.
2. Only 600 students selected for testing hypotheses on the basis of stratified random sampling.
3. The students are selected from secondary schools affiliated to CBSE, ICSE and MSPUP Board having English as medium of instruction.
4. Only private secondary schools were considered.

### Review of Related Literature

In the present study an effort has been made to study the relationship between reading comprehension ability and language learning capacity. Hence the review was made keeping in view the variables like reading comprehension and language learning ability. From the review of related literature and studies the researcher came to many interesting facts and drew some important conclusions chief among them are:

1. Sex does not create any difference in the reading comprehension ability of students. (Shah 1981, Samal 1990, Downing 1975) while Sumangala (1990) concluded that boys scored higher than girls while girls have better learning ability than boys. (Umer Farooque 2005)

2. Students having high intelligence level perform better in reading than students with low intelligence level. (Shah 1981, Downing 1975, Devi 1990, Busch 1975, Mosley 1979, Garbedian 1979) while in the study of Kochen (1981). The role of intelligence was found to be much lower than expected.
3. Knowledge of Vocabulary has a positive bearing on reading comprehension (Pavlac 1974, Shah 1981).
4. Reading ability was considered to be an important factor related to the differential achievement pattern of school going pupils (Srivastava 1969, Swenson 1942).
5. SES, attitude of parents, teachers and peers, educational aspiration and study habits were found to be positively correlated with reading attainment, academic adjustment and scholastic performance of students (Reddy, 1978; Parmesh, 1975; Shivappa, 1980; Agarwal, 1990) while there is negative correlation between academic success and physical and family problems (Selvam & Soundaravelli, 2001).
6. Non verbal tests cannot predict reading difficulties of high & low standard (IQ) students (Cox, 1968).
7. Reading comprehension ability, interest and scientific attitude contribute towards academic success (Olson, 1966; Srivastava, 1969; Thorndike, 1973; Singh and Pandey, 1970; Williams, 1976).

### Methodology / Research Design

The present study is a normative survey. The aim of the present study is to know about the relationship between reading comprehension ability and language learning capacity of secondary students. All these variables have already occurred and researcher observed the dependent variables and then tried to draw conclusions about independent variables. It can be said that in this research, Ex-post facto research design was planned. In the present study it was tried to compare the reading comprehension ability and language learning capacity for English Language of secondary student studying in various secondary schools affiliated to Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, Allahabad (MSPU.P. Board), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Indian Council of Secondary Education (ICSE)

### Variables of the Study

#### Independent Variables

Reading Comprehension Ability, Different Boards of Education (MSPUP;CBSE;ICSE), Gender

#### Dependent Variables

In the present research work the dependent variable is Language learning capacity.

#### Controlled Variables

Educational and Mental ability level (class XI), Medium of Instruction (English), Age.

#### Sample

The size of sample was decided in view of the nature of the problem and the type and number of breakdowns needed in the statistical analysis. According to research design, different boards of

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secondary education and Gender are treated as independent variables, so for statistical analysis 6 such groups were to be formed. The researcher decided to take 100 students for each sub-group. Thus 200 students studying in the schools affiliated to one type of board of secondary schools were selected. The ratio between boys and girls was 1:1. In this way total 300 boys and 300 girls were selected in the sample. The total number of 600 respondents seems to be sufficient for the present research plan.

### Tools of the Study

The researcher decided to use the following tools for the study:

1. Reading Comprehension Test in English by P. Ahuja and G.C. Ahuja.
2. English Language Ability Test (10 to 12) by A. Pandey.

### Data Collection

For the administration of tools on students both boys and girls are secondary school of Kanpur City having different boards with English as medium of instruction were chosen. The tests were administered separately with proper instruction and within proposed time limit.

### Statistical Techniques Used/Data Analysis

The data was analyzed on the basis of measures of central tendency and variability. Graphical method was also used for presentation of data. Statistical techniques such as mean, SD, t and ANOVA were used to test the research hypotheses formulated.

### Presentation and Interpretation of Data

Two way Analysis of Variance was employed to test the effectiveness of different independent variables. The performance of selected students was compared on the basis of the type of schools. The performance of selected students was compared on the basis of the type of school. Total performance of secondary students studying in English medium schools affiliated to Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, Allahabad, and U.P. was found very poor in comparison to students studying in colleges affiliated to other two other boards of secondary education.

**Table 4.1**

### Comparison of the Performances of Secondary Students of Different Boards of Secondary Education

	Board 1	Board 2	Board 3
Mean	18.7975	33.0350	29.5575
S.D.	8.21	6.4052	9.0483

According to the Table 4.1, Board 2 (i.e. I.C.S.E.) seems to be the best among three boards under consideration, while the performance of selected secondary students of Board 1 (i.e. U.P. Board) was found poorest. The Independent variable

gender was not found significant enough to produce variations.

**Table 4.2**

### Comparison of Overall Performance of Secondary Boys and Girls

	Boys	Girls
Mean	27.3733	26.8867
S.D.	10.0366	9.9761

Though Boys studying in secondary schools affiliated to all the three boards, performed better in comparison to girls, but this difference was not significant enough. Sampled girls studying in schools affiliated to M.S.P. (U.P.) performed much better than the boys studying in the same type of school. Interaction between boards of secondary schools and gender was found significant. Independent variable reading comprehension Ability and dependent variable language learning capacity differ significantly. The mean of reading comprehension ability is 27.80 while mean of language learning capacity is 26.45.

**Table 4.3**

### Comparison of the Secondary Students on Reading Comprehension Ability and Language Learning Capacity

	Reading Comprehension Ability	Language Learning Capacity
Mean	27.80	26.45
S.D.	11.64	7.08

The mean difference between these two tests was found significant. Different sub groups variates on this variable and F ratio (9.29) was found significant. Reading comprehension ability and language learning capacity seems to be the same type of abilities then there should not be significant difference between these two abilities. On the basis of results it can be concluded that these two abilities were found different. The performances of different sub groups would be analyzed further.

### Testing of Hypotheses

#### Hypothesis – 1

H-1- There is significant difference in the Reading Comprehension Ability and Language Learning capacity of Secondary Students studying in the schools affiliated to M.S.P.U.P., I.C.S.E. and C.B.S.E. Boards of Secondary Education.

According to research design proposed earlier, independent variable Reading Comprehension Ability was assessed and compared among sub group formed on the basis of other two independent variables i.e. gender and different boards of secondary education. To test the hypotheses two way ANOVA was applied. The results and interpretations of the analyzed data are discussed here.

**Table 4.4**  
**Summary of ANOVA -1**  
**Required Level of Significance = .05**

Source of Variations	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Squares	F. Ratio	P	R
Boards of Sec. Edu.	44078.935	2	22038.48	378.24	.000	.01
Gender	71.06	1	71.05	1.22	.28	NS
Reading.Learning (c)	641.363	1	641.363	9.29	.002	.01
Board.Gender	2552.93	2	1276.46	21.91	.000	.01
Board.Reading.Learning	2963.25	2	1481.62	25.43	.000	.01
Gender.Reading Learning	158.88	1	158.88	2.88	.1010	NS
Boards.Gender.C	428.52	2	214.26	3.68	.0258	.05
Error	89220.69	1188	58.288			
Total	120011.71	1199	100.093			

Variables	S.E.D.	Critical Difference at .05 Level
Boards of S.Edu.	0.53975	1.05897
Reading & Learning	0.44071	0.86465
Board.Gender	0.76333	1.49761
Board.Reading Learning	0.76333	1.49761

Independent variable Boards of Secondary Education is found significant enough to produce difference in performance of secondary students. F ratio is 378.24 and P.000. It can be concluded that the sampled secondary students of different schools affiliated to three different boards performed differently. The students of I.C.S.E. were found best, and the students of M.S.P.U.P. were found at the lowest pedestal. The results are highly significant. (Table 4.1)

Independent variable Gender is not a significant factor for variations among different sub groups of sampled secondary students. Though Boys and girls of different boards performed differently girls studying in the schools affiliated to M.S.P.U.P. performed better than boys, but boys of C.B.S.E. affiliated schools were significantly better than girls. Results of ANOVA table also confirm the fact. F ratio for Gender is 1.22 and P is .28 which is not significant and the statistical or null hypothesis is retained. Interaction between Gender and Boards of secondary education is highly significant for variation among sub groups of sampled secondary students. The hypothesis of zero difference stands rejected as observed value of F ratio is 21.91 and P.000 is highly significant. It is evident that research hypothesis is confirmed. Comparisons of sub groups on reading comprehension ability and Language Learning Capacity (c) is found significant to produce variations among groups. Sampled students differ significantly on these two abilities. According to table 4.4, F ratio is 9.29 and P is .002 hence null hypotheses for this variable stand rejected. Our research hypothesis that there is significant difference among sub groups on these two abilities (c) is confirmed. Interaction between reading comprehension ability and language learning capacity (c) with Boards of Secondary education is found significant. F ratio for this interaction is 25.43

which is highly significant as P is .000. Hence null hypothesis for this interaction stands rejected. Interaction between C and Gender is not responsible for variations among sub groups. F ratio for this interaction is 2.88 which is not significant as P is .10. Interaction among all Independent variables i.e. Boards of Secondary Education, Gender and Reading Comprehension Ability is found significant to create variations among sub groups of secondary students. F ratio for interaction among Boards of secondary education Gender, RCA & LLC is 3.68 and P is .025 hence null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis that there is significant difference in subgroups based on these independent variables is accepted.

### Test of Difference between Mean Scores of High and Low Groups (On the Basis of RCA) of Secondary Students

As it was planned in research design, the comparison was made in the achievement of students scored high on reading comprehension ability (RCA) test and the achievement of students scored low on RCA. Three groups were made on the basis of their scores on RCA. Mean + one S.D. and Mean – one S.D. was decided the limits of group B (Average Ability above this limit group A (High Ability) and below this limit, group C (Low Ability). Students of Group A and Group C were compared on other observations of achievement to find out the relationship of RCA with achievement of other subjects if there is any.

**Table 4.9**  
**Comparison of Scores on Reading Comprehension Abilities (RCA) achieved by Secondary Students**

	MSPU.P.	I.C.S.E.	C.B.S.E.
Mean	17.28	34.47	31.05
S.D.	9.32	6.40	10.46

It is evident that mean scores of all the three groups variate too much, hence division of upper and lower groups were made on the basis of mean and S.D. of the different groups. Total 18 groups were formed, but only Group A and Group C of each Board of secondary education were compared, further description of Group A and Group C is given below:

**Table 4.10**

Boards of Secondary Education	Group A				Group C			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
MSPUP	31.92	13	27.4	24	17.20	24	1.71	7
ICSE	42.1	12	41.7	17	22.3	11	23.56	16
CBSE	43	10	42.8	5	14.4	5	5.38	18

According to table 4.10 it may be concluded that 13 boys studying in the schools affiliated to M.S.P.U.P. were identified as having high reading comprehension ability and 24 boys having low reading comprehension ability. On the contrary 24 girls were identified in group A while 7 girls were identified in group C. 12 boys studying in schools affiliated to ICSE were placed in group A and 11 boys in group C. 17 girls were placed in group A and in group C 16 girls were identified in colleges affiliated to CBSE only 10 boys and 5 girls were identified in Group A and 5 boys and 18 girls were identified in Group C among sampled secondary students. All these 12 groups were compared on these six variables to identify the relation of RCA with the variable Language learning capacity.

**Hypothesis- 2**

**There is no Significant Difference between Reading Comprehension Ability and Language Learning Capacity**

Group A and Group C were compared on Language Learning Capacity. Significance of difference between means of Group A and group C were tested for the boys and girls studying in the schools affiliated to different boards separately to arrive at conclusions.

**Table 4.11  
MSPUP-BOYS**

<b>Ho- I.</b> Mean of Group A = Mean of Group C		
Required level of P = .05		
= .01		
df = 35		
	<b>GROUP A</b>	<b>GROUP C</b>
<b>Mean</b>	20.0000	17.2083
<b>S.D.</b>	4.7434	6.1360
<b>N</b>	13	24
t = D/SE <sub>D</sub>		
= 2.7917/1.9619		
= 1.4230		
t = 1.4230		
P = .0818		
Ho is retained.		

It may be concluded that the boys having good reading comprehension ability shows better learning capacity in comparison with the boys having poor reading comprehension ability

**Table 4.1  
MSUP – GIRLS**

<b>HO-2 =</b> Mean of Group A = Mean of Group C		
Required Level of P = .05		
= .01		
df = 29		
	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group C</b>
<b>Mean</b>	25.0417	15.7143
<b>S.D.</b>	6.3826	1.1127
<b>N</b>	24	7
t = M <sub>1</sub> – M <sub>2</sub> /SE <sub>D</sub>		
= 9.3274/2.4513		
= 3.8054		
P = .0003		
Result. Ho is rejected.		

It is evident that sampled girl students studying in the colleges affiliated to MSPUP having good RCA performed very well in the language learning capacity test than girls having poor RCA. This mean difference was found significant hence chance hypothesis is rejected. It can be said that Reading comprehension ability improved language learning capacity.

**Table – 4.13  
ICSE – BOYS**

<b>Ho – 3 =</b> Mean of Group A = Mean of Group C		
Required level of P = .05		
= .01		
df. = 21		
	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group C</b>
<b>Mean</b>	38.5833	29.6364
<b>S.D.</b>	2.1933	4.7386
<b>N</b>	12	11
t = M <sub>1</sub> – M <sub>2</sub> /SE <sub>D</sub>		
= 8.9470/1.5173		
t = 5.8967 P = .000003		
Result = Ho is Rejected.		

Observed t value 5.8967 is highly significant and hypothesis of zero difference is rejected. It may be concluded that boys studying in colleges affiliated to ICSE, placed in Group A were found superior in language learning capacity than boys placed in group C.

**Table – 4.14  
ICSE – GIRLS**

<b>Ho – 4</b> Mean of Group A = Mean of Group C		
Required level of P = .05		
df = 31		
	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group C</b>
<b>Mean</b>	35.4706	24.6875
<b>S.D.</b>	3.2233	7.1154
<b>N</b>	17	16
= M <sub>1</sub> – M <sub>2</sub> /SE <sub>D</sub>		
= 10.7831/1.9034		
t = 5.6653, P = .0000015		
Result = Ho is Rejected.		

It is evident that girls having good Reading Comprehension Ability possessed good language learning capacity also. Difference between mean of group A and mean of Group C was found significant and null hypothesis is rejected. It may be concluded that RCA influenced language capacity.

**Table 4.15**  
**CBSE – BOYS**

<b>Ho – 5</b> Mean of Group A = Mean of Group C		
Required level of P = .05		
df = .01		
	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group C</b>
<b>Mean</b>	32.6000	22.6000
<b>S.D.</b>	4.8120	8.1425
<b>N</b>	10	5
$t = M_1 - M_2 / SE_D$ $= 10 / 3.3059$ $t = 3.0249,$ $P = .0048$ Result = Ho is Rejected.		

After the analysis of results it seems that boys having good reading comprehension ability and placed in group A, had better language learning capacity than boys having poor reading comprehension ability and were placed in group C.

**Table – 4.16**  
**CBSE – GIRLS**

<b>Ho – 6</b> - Mean of Group A = Mean of Group C		
Required level of P = 0.05		
df = 21		
	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group C</b>
<b>Mean</b>	36.0000	23.2778
<b>S.D.</b>	.7071	4.9682
<b>N</b>	5	18
$t = M_1 - M_2 / SE_D$ $= 12.7222 / 2.2651$ $t = 5.6166,$ $P = .000007$ Result = Ho is Rejected.		

It may be concluded that girls placed in Group A have better language learning capacity. Hypothesis of zero difference is rejected as P is very high. Out of six comparisons five were found significant and all 6 groups in A category have larger mean than group C. It may be concluded that Reading comprehension Ability has positive effect on language learning capacity.

### Major Findings of the Study

Though a large number of revealing and interesting findings have emerged from this study but only some major findings have been given here to put into sharp focus the thrust of investigation. These notable conclusions generate thinking and stimulate prompt policy makers to make reasonable and realistic decisions in the area of secondary education. The prominent findings of this study may be summarized as follows:

1. It can be concluded that the sampled secondary students of different schools affiliated to three different boards performed differently. The achievement level of students of ICSE Board was higher while students of MSP (UP) were found to be the lowest among all the three boards i.e. ICSE, CBSE and MSP (UP), (Table 4.1, 4.4 and 4.5), though boys studying in secondary schools affiliated to all three boards performed better in comparison to girls but this difference was not significant enough.

2. The independent variable Gender was not found significant enough to produce variation. F ratio for gender is 1:22 and P is .28 which is not significant. Interaction among boards of secondary schools and gender was found highly significant. F ratio was 21.91 and P .000. (Table 4.4)
3. It was found that the independent variable Reading Comprehension Ability and dependent variable Language Learning Capacity differ significantly. The students of the three boards differ significantly on these two variables. The mean of Reading Comprehension Ability was 27.80 while mean of Language Learning Capacity was 26.45 (Table 4.3) ratio is 8.29 and P is .002 (Table 4.4).
4. It was found that in all the Boards of Secondary Education, students having good Reading Comprehension Ability have better Language Learning Capacity than students having poor Reading Comprehension Ability (Table 4.11 - 4.16). Thus it was concluded that Reading comprehension ability has positive effect on Language learning capacity.

### Implications and Usefulness of the Study

In the present study, effort was made to understand the relationship between Reading Comprehension Ability and Language Learning Capacity of students. The findings of the study revealed that reading comprehension affect language learning capacity of children which relativity affects their academic achievement. Hence it has become the need of the hour to focus our attention on laying emphasis on reading and improving comprehension and familiarities among students. The teachers, who are agents of transformations of the young generation, have to concentrate on accelerating the comprehension capabilities of young minds. The parents and classmates should build developing strategies for better study habits of underachievers. Opportunities should be provided to students to express themselves that may create love in the minds of students to learn a language. Love of reading should be inculcated among students right from beginning of education. Therefore, there is a need for properly planned, deliberate and conscious effort on the part of teachers, parents and all the members of the society to provide children conducive atmosphere for the development of their reading ability and increasing Language learning capacity for better achievement in academic field.

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