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RELATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SUB-COMPONENTS OF READING COMPREHENSION IN PREDICTING THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

*R*eading comprehension is a cognitive process that requires myriad skills and strategies. It's a part of communication getting thoughts that were in author's mind into the reader's mind. The teacher asks a few questions about the passage and the students are expected to find out correct answers to the questions. Then they are asked to write answers in their own words. This is very useful experience in learning process. It is also a two-fold process that involves speedy reading and quick understanding and precise reproduction.

KEYWORDS:*Relative Contributions , Academic Performance , part of communication .*

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is an understanding of a written text, extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible (Francas, et al., 1981).

Reading is an intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interaction between text and reader (Durkin, 1983).

There is no one comprehensive definition of reading. It has been difficult, in spite of all the research on reading, to arrive at a comprehensive definition. But one can say that it is mainly a decoding process in the following manner :

The encoder encodes the message which the decoder decodes and understands it and decoding is not much value if it is not followed by comprehension. The ability to pronounce the written or printed word is referred to by several related terms, such as, word recognition, lexical processing, and phonological decoding and grapheme-phoneme conversion. Decoding skill, even though essential for successful reading comprehension is not a sufficient condition ; numerous skills associated with comprehension components are also important. Usually children who perform poorly on terms, of phoneme awareness are poor readers and that training to phoneme awareness improves their reading comprehension.

TYPES / LEVELS OF READING COMPREHENSION

Different authors conceived reading differently and classified reading according to the purpose it is serving as types of reading or level of reading comprehension or skills of reading comprehension.

i. Skimming : Skimming is the faster reading speed. Here the objective is only to get a rough idea of what the passage is about. In this method, the poor reader cannot skim, whereas a good reader reads

800+ words per minute. Skimming is where one's eyes cover certain pre-selected section of the text to gain a general overview (Pugh, 1978).

ii. Scanning : Scanning is nothing but glancing over the material to find a particular piece of information. If anyone wants to search the number of any person in the telephone directory, he goes to the relevant page, runs over his eyes though it till he locates the name and then finds out the number of that person. Generally people use the same technique when they look up a dictionary to find out the meaning of a particular word. Scanning is more a limited activity, only retrieving information relevant to a purpose. Pugh (1978) expressed that since scanning is a less complex style of reading it can be introduced first. Brown Douglas (1994) suggested that perhaps the two most valuable reading strategies for learners as well as native speakers are skimming and scanning. Often they are sued together when reading a text. For example, the reader may skim through first to see if it is worth reading, then read it more carefully and scan for a specific piece of information to note. By practicing skimming and scanning, the individual learns to read and select specific information without focusing on information that is not important for meaning. Skimming and scanning are sometimes referred to as kinds of reading and at other times, as skills.

iii. Extensive Reading : Some times, students read longer text like a novel or a short story mainly for their pleasure. They read rapidly and aim at a global understanding of the novel. This type of reading is called extensive reading. Long, Michael and Richards (1987) identifies extensive reading as occurring when students read large amounts of high interest material, usually out of class, concentrating on meaning, reading for gist and skipping unknown words.   The average reading speed is the speed one used for every day reading of news papers, magazines, novels, etc. In this method a poor reader related 150 – 180 words per minute and a good reader reads 250 – 350 words per minutes. Brown Douglas (1994) explains that extensive reading in carried out to achieve a general understanding of a text.

iv. Intensive Reading : In case students want to extract any specific information for research, they read slowly and intensively. This is called intensive reading. Long and Richards (1987) said that, it is a detailed in-class analysis, led by the teacher, of vocabulary and grammar points, in a short passage. The aims of extensive reading are to build reader confidence and enjoyment. Extensive reading is always done for the comprehension of main ideas, not for specific details. Brown Douglas (1994) explains that intensive reading calls attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships, and the like. He draws an analogy to intensive reading as a zoom lens strategy.

REVIEW

        After reviewing the literature related to reading and reading comprehension, it is inferred that among the skills of language, reading as a receptive skill contribute for speaking and writing. Reading with comprehension is the goal of reading and listening. Successful comprehension enables readers (or listeners) to acquire information to experience and to be aware of words, to communicate successfully and thereby to achieve academic success. Reading comprehension is affected by several factors related to psychological, environmental, and personal and so on as per the studies reviewed.

        Research on reading comprehension yielded inconclusive results. To quote a few with regard to sex as a variable some studies reported significant differences between boys and girls. Some studies revealed boys have more comprehension levels while others revealed girls having more levels of reading comprehension.

        Similarly with respect to the variables : locality, management of the schools, medium of study, studies showed equivocal results in the reading comprehension levels of students. As such there is a need for further investigation into, how these demographic variables are associated with reading comprehension. If explored appropriate measures can be taken up either to sustain or enhance the comprehension levels if they are satisfactory or to find out the needed strategies to develop reading comprehension, if they are low, as the success in academics as well as life is influenced by reading comprehension.

        Students are expected to show higher abilities of reading comprehension at this level as compared to the first grade students. The study of Dailey Joanne (1975) concluded that vocabulary, reading comprehension

and auditory memory skills improved significantly through the use of daily mental abilities experiences.

There have been more studies to relate reading comprehension with different factors than on any other area. The efforts to construct and validate reading comprehension battery is also a means to such an end. These studies also seem to have assumed that a detailed understanding of reading comprehension factors would be helpful in understanding children and facilitating better learning. Reading comprehension factors have influence on students reading. Many writers have mentioned the close relationship between cognitive development and language learning. The present study takes such an assumption one step ahead by examining the relationship between reading comprehension and its components and academic performance of learners.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem chosen for the present investigation is to "study the relative contributions of the sub-components of reading comprehension in predicting the academic performance of students".

Variable of the Study
i. Independent Variable : Reading Comprehension and its sub-components
ii. Dependent Variable – Academic Performance in Kannada

Objective of the Study
The present study is designed with the following specific objectives in view:
i.To determine the relative efficiency of the different components of reading comprehension in predicting changes in academic performance of students in Kannada.

Method of Research

For the present study descriptive survey method of research was found to be appropriate. The purpose was to study the changes in academic performance of students in Kannada on the basis of sub-components of reading comprehension.

Tool Used

In order to assess the reading comprehension of secondary school students in Kannada language, a "Reading Test Battery" covering different components of reading comprehension was developed by the investigator. The scores of the mid-term examination were used to assess the academic performance of students in Kannada.

Sample

The sample for the study consisted of secondary school students. Random sampling technique was adopted in order to select the students. The sample consists of 600 secondary school students studying in IX Standard of Bellari district.

Collection of Data

The investigator visited secondary schools of Bellari district with the permission of the heads of the institutions. The students were given necessary instructions about the various instruments and motivated to respond genuinely to all the items. The tools and personal data sheet were administered.

Statistical Analysis

In pursuance of the objective of the study, appropriate 't' test, correlation and multiple regression analysis techniques were used.

Results

Relative Efficiency of Reading Comprehension in Predicting Performance of Students in Kannada - An Analysis

The linear regression predicting performance of students in Kannada in terms of dimensions of reading comprehension such as story reading, passage reading, newspaper reading, conversation and vocabulary were found to be as under :

Table–1: Significant Regression Coefficients and Multiple Correlation Coefficients

Independent variables	Regression coefficient	SE of reg. coeff.	t-value	p-level	Signi.
Story Reading (X_1)	1.4877	0.0439	33.8910	< 0.05	Yes
Passage Reading (X_2)	1.4636	0.0581	25.1869	< 0.05	Yes
News Paper Reading (X_3)	1.4059	0.0576	24.4177	< 0.05	Yes
Conversation (X_4)	1.4414	0.0685	21.0469	< 0.05	Yes
Vocabulary (X_4)	1.4943	0.0425	35.1460	< 0.05	Yes
$R=0.9449$, $R^2=0.8929$, $F(5,494)=824.22$ $p<0.01$, S, SE_{est}: 3.7124					

The regression equation is as follows :

Academic Performance in Kannada = 85.0063 (Constant) + 1.4877 (Story Reading) + 1.4636 (Passage Reading) + 1.4059 (News Paper Reading) + 1.4414 (Conversation) + 1.4943 (Vocabulary)

The multiple R of the linear regression equation is 0.9449. For testing the multiple correlation coefficient the F ratio (824.22) was found to be significant at 0.01 level. Thus, the significance of R suggests that estimation of performance in Kannada is possible on the basis of five predictor variables, namely, Story Reading, Passage Reading, Newspaper Reading, Conversation and Vocabulary. Further, the regression equation shows that Vocabulary has greater impact (1.4943) than all other predictors. Story Reading, Passage Reading, Newspaper Reading, Conversation, and Vocabulary can be used to predict performance in Kannada with the coefficient of multiple determination R2 as 0.8929. It can, therefore, be said that 89.29 per cent of the variation in the performance in Kannada can be accounted by the factors Story Reading, Passage Reading, Newspaper Reading, Conversation and Vocabulary.

The SEest for the regression equation is 3.7124. This means that each time the regression equation for the sample is used to predict performance in Kannada the chances are about 1 to 100 that predicted performance in Kannada will not miss the actual performance of students in Kannada at secondary level by more than +3.7124.

The index of forecasting efficiency [E=100(1- $\sqrt{1-R^2}$)] was found to be 67.27. This means that predictions by the means of regression equation is 67.27 per cent better than those made merely from a knowledge of the mean of the performance of students in Kannada at secondary level.

The relative contributions of the five components of reading comprehension in terms of proportions of coefficient of determination predicted by each are given by the corresponding (x r) values and are presented in the following table :

Table–2 : Relative Contributions of the Five Components of Reading Comprehension to Change in Performance of Students in Kannada

Predictors	'β' - Values	'r' Values	β x r	% of Contribution
Story Reading	0.5037	0.5023	0.2530	25.30
Passage Reading	0.3935	0.3711	0.1460	14.60
News Paper Reading	0.3792	0.3601	0.1366	13.66
Conversation	0.3521	0.3118	0.1098	10.98
Vocabulary	0.4772	0.5188	0.2476	24.76
Total			**0.8930**	**89.30**

It is evident from the above table that about 89.30 per cent of the criterion variable is accounted for by the five predictors, in case of performance of students in Kannada at secondary level. Out of this, about 25.30 per cent of the criterion is accounted for by the variation in Story Reading, about 24.76 per cent by the Vocabulary, about 14.60 per cent by the Passage Reading, about 13.66 per cent by the Newspaper Reading, and about 10.98 per cent by the Conversation. Thus, Story Reading seems to be the best predictor of all the predictor variables. The next best predictors of performance of students in Kannada at secondary level in the order of priority are Vocabulary, Passage Reading, Newspaper Reading and Conversation respectively.

Conclusion

The following conclusion is based on the significant regression coefficients emerged in the multiple regression analysis and also the contribution of each of the significant predictor variable to the coefficient of determination R^2. The analysis reveals that among the components of Reading Comprehension – Story Reading, Passage Reading, Newspaper Reading, Conversation and Vocabulary taken together in the prediction of performance of students in Kannada at secondary level, Story Reading makes the maximum contribution and Vocabulary, Passage Reading, Newspaper Reading and Conversation makes considerable contribution for prediction.

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