



**Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596**

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal

[www.j.vidhyayanaejournal.org](http://www.j.vidhyayanaejournal.org)

Indexed in: ROAD & Google Scholar

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**Role of school environment in developing Reading comprehension and  
Language creativity Among Adolescents**

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Man's unbound inquisitiveness has led him down the ages to the vast expanse of information. Right from the dawn of civilization, knowledge has been accumulating itself through the unending process of views and reviews. Snowballing into its modern Himalayan heights of information, it has been encompassing everyone within its web of modern technology. Naturally, this fast-growing information age necessitated man to keep himself so properly in touch with the daily occurrences as to meet the requirements in all the walks of life.

Technology has brought about significant changes in the field of education. Innovations of the digital revolution-CD's, DVD's streaming videos, wireless communication have had an impact on the way languages are learnt in formal contexts. Researches are exploring ways in which technology can be used to make language education more effective and motivating for students. Language learning in the digital environment might compensate for the limitations of the classroom by extending both instructional and learning activities beyond the formal setting.

We are currently witnessing the emergence of a new paradigm in educational technology research based on changing assumptions about the nature of learning, leading to a new set of practices in educational settings. By the end of the 1980s, many researches in second language acquisition had moved away from the idea that the input that learners receive through communicative activities alone would promote language acquisition. Research through the decade had convinced many those learners need to 'interact' with linguistic input in order to acquire the target language.

It is clear that we are all drowning in a sea of information. The challenge is to learn to swim in that sea, rather than drown in it (Lyman & Varian, 2000). How to compass ourselves in the infinite sea of our accumulated awareness is as important as the gathering of information. In fact, it is the miracle of language that makes all communications capable of transferring idea and information to the receptive minds. Language is art and science, two in one, a science of artistic communication, which caters to our emotions, colors our imaginations and images the realities. Nothing is more effective than language in the world of communication.

Indeed, the whole secret of education with its manifoldness of information lies in the intelligent employment of one's potential. Many a channel has flowed in the daily arising information the world over. Of these, reading as a powerful vehicle of communication, has



played a dominant role in the diffusion and enrichment of knowledge.

Education helps in solving almost all the world problems. Since education is lame without reading, 'reading' has always to remain at the forefront. Experience has always taught us that those who fail in school usually have failed first in reading. Reading is considered to be the first button in the garment of education.

Academic achievement is determined by many variables and the most important among them are: school environment, cognitive ability and language creativity. The success as a whole depends on the skills of the individual. These skills may be literacy skills, professional skills, behavior skills, creativity skills, language skills and performance skills etc. under the category of literacy skills, Reading owns a relevant place. Learning to read and write is a basic skill that unfortunately not all children in the world learn sufficiently. In a time, when societal change puts increasing demands on individual's competence using written language, it is important schools are able to teach such skills to all children. In the present modern post-industrial society, a high level of literacy is not only a pre-requisite for further studies and professional accomplishment; it is indispensable in daily life too. Early mastery of reading is important in the sense that it can contribute to the child's development of intellectual self-control since written words offer possibilities for the child to stop, think and consider.

Another variable that makes a big difference in the success of a child is language creativity. As all we know that language is not a subject, rather it is a skill. Expertise in any language is possible through a lot of practice and interest. But to use language creatively, is another important aspect.

Language creativity, or the artful use of language, is central to children's emotional, cognitive and social development and education, as well as to communicate in general. Linguists and psychologists have shown that children naturally play and experiment with language sounds, structures and meanings and it has been argued that this kind of spontaneous often playful, creativity in language, contains the seeds of more prestigious poetic, literary and dramatic cultural forms (Cook 2000; Tannen 2007).

In this paper, the role of school environment is being discussed in developing reading comprehension and language creativity. Before explaining about the role of school environment, let us understand briefly about reading comprehension and language creativity.



Reading comprehension is one of the most complex behaviors in which humans engage. Reading theorists have grappled with how to comprehensively and meaningfully portray reading comprehension and many different theoretical models have been proposed in recent decades (McNamara & Magliano, 2009; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014).

Reading is an activity performed to develop an understanding of a subject or topic. Reading is an essential skill that individuals need to process in order to be successful in life. Reading keeps individual informed and up-to-date. Reading is both a receptive and active process. It is a dynamic process in which the reader is searching for connections of ideas in the text. Reading requires the utilization of many mental processes as information is collected, processed and analyzed. If a child can read and understand the meaning of something he reads, he is said to have reading comprehension. More than just being able to read the words, reading comprehension includes the ability to draw inferences and identify patterns and clues in a text. For instance, if a child is reading about a person who decides to carry an umbrella, the child can infer that the person is expecting rain, or that rain may factor into the story somehow.

Reading is the basic tool for education. It improves comprehension and stretches vocabulary, widens the knowledge base and instils confidence in students. Reading is a standout amongst the most imperative segments of our dialect and it is a basic instrument for long lasting learning for all students. Reading has come to hold the most important place in education as a means of communication in a well-educated society.

It is an education by itself and it is vital that the school authorities, the teachers and the librarians at schools recognize this and support the school curriculum in diverse ways to inculcate and promote the reading habit among the school students. The accomplishment of quality fundamental education requires the promotion of the good reading habit for the school students. In order to face the 21<sup>st</sup> century, education has to prepare these students to adapt to social and technological changes that are taking place at an unparalleled rate. Education, under these conditions depends to a great extent on language competency. In this unique situation, reading particularly is an asset for life-long learning and obtaining new knowledge, expertise and information.

In this paper, we are discussing about two variables: one is Reading comprehension, that is explained above and the second is Language creativity, that is explained below:

The notion of linguistic creativity is propounded by Chomsky in 1966. It is the ability



of ideal speaker in a homogeneous speech community to combine a finite stock of elements on the basis of a finite known stock of computational patterns.

It is a general view that only writers, poets, painters, musicians and scientists are creative persons, but now a day, a number of psychologists have started feeling that creativity can exhibit its pleasant influence on any sphere of life. A doctor, teacher, clerk, peon, laborer and a butler all can be creative persons in their respective fields of work. Guilford and Hoepfner (1971) stressed the same thing when they pointed out that specialization in art, music, shop work or commercial subjects undoubtedly calls for quite different combination of abilities and aptitude score summations of different compositions.

The scientists, technicians and businessmen etc. all have creative talent that pertains to specific field. Similarly, poets, novelists and writers display a peculiar type of creativity in their writings that can be called as language creativity.

Language creativity means multidimensional attribute that is differently distributed among the people and includes mainly the factors of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. Language means a body of words and systems for their use; common people of the same community or nation and creativity means having the power of creating or producing.

It is primarily the activity of making new meaning by a speaker (in the broadest sense of the user of language in all forms and in all mediums), and the re-creation and re-interpretation of meanings by a receiver.

Reading is a complicated cognitive skill that includes getting information from the text, reading between the lines to infer what is not overtly stated, and moving beyond the obvious connection between the elements of the script to get meaning by clarifying the message from various points of views and aspects. Reading without comprehension or understanding a text is not what can be called efficient reading. Comprehension is the goal of reading, but it can be a difficult skill to master, especially for learners of English as a foreign language. Reading comprehension includes constructing meaning from the text and decoding the writer's words by using background knowledge.

Comprehension is the essence of reading and the active process of constructing meaning from text (Durkin 1993). Reading comprehension is a complex interaction among automatic and strategic cognitive processes that enables the reader to create a mental



representation of the text (van den Broek & Espin, 2012). Comprehension depends not only on characteristics of the reader, such as prior knowledge and working memory but also on language processes, such as basic reading skills, decoding, vocabulary, sensitivity to texture, inferencing, and motivation. Comprehension also requires effective use of strategic process, such as metacognition and comprehension monitoring. As readers mature in their comprehension skills, they are able to progress efficiently from the stage of learning to read to the ultimate goal of reading to learn.

Reading comprehension refers to the basic ability or skill of individuals (in case of language learners) which makes him/her to understand the texts that they read and also ability to extract what the text or writer of the text is trying to convey to its reader.

In the process of reading and comprehending a text, when learners face problems they apply consciously certain strategies to comprehend the give text which are also flexible in depending the kind of problem or difficulty they facing with a particular give text. Such strategies are called reading comprehension strategies.

Reading comprehension is defined as ‘ a thinking process by which a reader selects information, or ideas from printed materials; determines the meanings the author intended to transmit; decide how they relate to previous knowledge; and judge their appropriateness and worth for meeting the learners’ own objectives’ ’Veeravagu, et al (2010: 206).

Reading comprehension requires the coordination of multiple linguistic and cognitive processes including, but not limited to, word reading ability, working memory, inference generation, comprehension monitoring, vocabulary and prior knowledge ( Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2005).

Language creativity enables the learner to play with the words in such a joyful and creative manner that even the simplest words may do wonder. Whether in written form or in spoken form, language creativity may win the hearts of millions. Somehow reading comprehension and language creativity are inter-related terms. Until the reader or learner is unable to comprehend or understand the text, he/she would not be able to use the text creatively whether in written or spoken form.

In developing any quality or norm, school environment plays the most significant role. Undoubtedly, the contribution of school environment in developing reading comprehension



and language creativity is measureless.

School environment implies all the circumstances, people and events that surround the pupils at school, which influences their lives. It includes the sum total of all the social, moral, economic, political and intellectual factors which influence the development of the individual and contribute to teaching-learning situations.

According to Mick Zais (2011) school environment means the extent to which school settings promote student safety and student health which may include topics such as the physical plant, the academic environment, available physical and mental health supports and services and the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary producers, as supported by relevant research and an assessment of validity.

So, the congenial and positive environment in the classroom, behavior of the teacher, habit of reinforcing and motivating the students by providing positive and encouraging comments, personal and individual involvement to the deserving or needy learners and the quality and quantity of the efforts done by the teachers in developing reading comprehension and language creativity and attaining the desired academic achievement all have a great impact on the overall performance of the learners.

School is considered as the second home of the child. Classroom environment is a second teacher for any student. A large amount of the child's time is spent sitting in a classroom. This place is where they will learn the various skills deemed necessary and proper for them to achieve success in the global society. The learning environment must be filled with thinking, listening and discussion. Generally, the school environment must be congenial enough to make students comfortable to learn everything, especially learn 'how to read' and 'how to use language creatively.'

This is the basic reason that the environment of the school must be healthy enough along with home environment so that the skill of reading with comprehension may be inculcated and further language creativity may make its path and learners may become creative linguistically.



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