



CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

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2.01 INTRODUCTION

Many school going children face problems with language, particularly in reading which affects their academic achievement. The lack of adequate attainment in language hampers the progress of the pupil and failure in the achievement of appropriate targets in education. At the global level, the major problem in developing an interest in reading is posed by the inability of 800 million people to read. Reading can satisfy intellectual and political demands. Students use reading to acquire knowledge which is related to scholastic success; indeed many people view reading as the primary motive while an inability to read tends to isolate the individual. Reading is the basic tool that serves an individual for a life time. The ability to read permits a person to develop and maintain employable skills participate in social, cultural and political affairs; and fulfill emotional and religious needs. In addition, reading offers recreation and enjoyment (Kirk, Kliebhan and Lerner 1978).

A vast amount of research has been done in the area of reading Agarwal (1981) studied the effect of cognitive and non cognitive factors on reading

ability by using Krishna's Battery of Reading ability test. He selected a sample of 400 students (200 male and 200 female) The ANOVA result indicated that the interaction effect was found significant in study habits, academic achievement, anxiety, neuroticism, extroversion and parental attitude. Significant and positive relationship was found between reading ability and verbal and non verbal intelligence. Gender difference was found significant in reading ability. Cognitive factors were more meaningful in the context of reading ability than the non cognitive factors considered in the study.

Gaur (1982) in his study on reading ability in relation to achievement revealed that speed of reading comprehension and achievement affected the students achievement whereas age and gender did not influence the speed of reading, comprehension and vocabulary of the students. Socioeconomic status was significantly related to the speed of reading but not to comprehension and vocabulary. Rao (1986) worked on the nature and incidence of reading disability among school children. He conclude that reading disability was found in about 20% of students at primary level. The disabled readers were found to be poor in subskills of language development and paragraph comprehension. Gender difference was not significant to reading disability.

The reading disability was closely related to language deficiency in school children.

During the 1970 s a number of researchers used children's oral reading errors as a window onto the reading process at work (Goodman and Goodman, 1977). Goodman (1967) found that most substitution errors were syntactically and semantically constrained, as did Weber (1970). Biermiller (1970) found three stages in his study of first grade readers oral reading errors. In the first stage, children tended to substitute a word that would make sense for an unknown word, even if characterized by an increase in "no response". In the third children substituted a word that made sense in the context as they did in stage one but these substitutions were graphically similar to the text word. Goodman (1967) proposes that semantically and syntactically some children can have problems in reading individual word but still can grasp the meaning of passages. Shankweiler and Liberman (1972) found that vowel were more often misread than consonants, which they attributed to the more complex encoding of vowels in speech and the greater difficulty of isolating vowels.

2.02 READING ACCURACY

Under accuracy following types of errors were included :-

1. Substitution :-

(The using of one word for another.) By the age of 7-8 years words shift from the visual form to meaning substitutions. Failure to correct may indicate teaching which has not emphasized the need for reading to make sense.

2. Addition :-

(Word which is added to any other word either before or after). These may represent an attempt to elaborate or smooch out the text in older pupils or in pupils of all ages may reflect superficial reading with correspondence context clues.

3. Omissions:-

(When subject fails for bearence to insert or include the word). These may reflect the tendency to use the speed of reading orally. It may be seen in the omission of ending/inflections. Omissions may increase as oral speed increases. So, there may not be a great decline in their number as the child progress.

4. Reversal :-

(The act of reversing/annulling a degree). Reflects the lack of left right orientation, characteristics of beginning, regardless of age. They

tend to disappear as reading skill matures, but if retained may indicate a lack of attention to meaning. This should be self corrected.

5. Repetition:-

(Saying over again, the use of repeated words). Goodman thinks these are made in effort to correct a miscue. They may reflect poor directional attack, however, organising time before a difficult word spotted some way ahead.

6. Distortion:-

The word is partially or fully distorted by twisting or perversion of words so as to give to them a different sense.

7. Hesitation:-

In this the student hesitates while reading. This occur mostly in earlier age.

2.03 READING COMPREHENSION

Comprehension in reading is generally defined as getting meaning from print. The word 'Comprehension' means literally holding together. Thus reading comprehension means that the reader holds together in his mind the elements of meaning coded by a writer into print. Comprehension is but one of several necessary skills that make up the process of reading. It

involves determining the meaning of words in author's language setting and at the same time linking the meaning into larger language patterns and fusing them to a chain of related ideas usually those that author has in mind. Whether one is reading for knowledge or for meaning is central. The degree of understanding depends on many factors such as the nature of the reading task, the clarity of expression, the reader's purpose, interest and his background and past experience. Comprehension takes place on three levels:-

- (i) Literal meaning
- (ii) Interpretation of meaning
- (iii) Evaluation of meaning.

1. Literal meaning :-

Reproduction of author's words and translation of his thoughts into one's own words. He understands the main idea in a passage and follows the sequence of ideas expressed in it.

2. Interpretation of meaning:-

Reading critically to recognise author's motive intention and purpose, interpret his thoughts, pass judgement on his statement, assess the relevance of the material read, summarize the passage. He establishes a purpose for reading, draw and supports conclusion and makes inferences or predictions. This

is also known as critical reading.



3. Evaluation of Meaning :-

Evaluation involves critical reactions to the material read, which may include many intellectual processes such as discriminating, imagining, analysing, judging and problem solving. It also involves deriving implications speculating about consequences and drawing generalisation not stated by the author i.e. "reading beyond the limit."

Precisely speaking comprehension is a controlled process i.e. attention demanding capacity limited and decoding in an automatized process i.e. not attention demanding does not require readers control.

Three components are essential to any act of reading comprehension:-

- a text;
- a reader of the text;
- an interpretation of the text by the reader.

The results for any study of reading comprehension will depend on the types of test used, the reader's knowledge and purpose for reading and the performance measure for evaluating the quality of the interpretation. In text comprehension psychological processes became a target for cognitive psychologists in

the late 60s. Despite the fact that psychologists, educationalists and reading specialists have been conceived with research evaluation and training of reading comprehension for several decades, the measuring and analysis of a reading comprehension is still debated (Rost, 1989). This is because of the complexities involved.

The 1970's were the time of large scale studies of reading comprehension. In 1976 the centre for the study of reading established at the university of Illinois. Much of the research in reading comprehension has been conceived with prior knowledge and with test characteristics. Other topics studied during the decade are whether reading comprehension is a single skill or cluster of subskills and how reading comprehension can be taught effectively.

During the last 3 decades, several theories have been developed to explain reading comprehension. The most prominent theories are :-

- (a) Propositional theory (Kintsch and Vandijk)
- (b) Schema theory (Anderson 1978, Rumelhart 1980)
- (c) Mental Model theory (McNamara et.al. 1991)

and Reilly 1985), have described comprehension as a complex phenomenon consisting of various subskills, Reilly (1985) have defined a hundred or more subcomponents of comprehension.

Petit and Cockriel (1974) have presented an intermediate approach to comprehension. According to them, there are only 2 components of reading comprehension i.e. vocabulary or literal reading and general language comprehension or inferential reading. But a consensus has not yet been achieved on this approach. Pearson (1975) proposed that both reading and language can be analyzed in terms of three levels of understanding graphemic phonetic, semantic and phonetic. Franks and Bransford (1976) and Pearson (1974-75) have also found that different syntactic structures affect comprehension differently. Weaver (1979) found that a sentence structure training programme appeared to improve the reading comprehension ability of poor readers. Cummings (1983) has presented his view by saying that early reading consists of subskills but the skilled reading is holisted. Some reading specialists argue that the pupil who is learning to read presents a different case, where separate sub skills of comprehension in reading are first induced and developed. Later by constant practice, these subskills are fused into integrated and holistic reading comprehension (Rost, 1989). Both these approaches to comprehension

have led to improvements in reading attainments among children. However, in the case of minority group children the subskill approach to comprehension has seemed to be more effective (Otto, 1977). On the assumption that separate subskills exists in beginning readers, almost all reading instruction material, primers and curricula for elementary school classes were at that time, based on the subskill approach.

It was found that students who had received speed isolated comprehension tests than those not provided with any training (Dah-1, 1979) Samuels et. al (1974), Fleusher et. al. (1979) have also indicated, on the basis of 2 experiments, that poor readers who had received training performed no better than their non trained poor reader counter parts. Both groups of poor readers learned and untrained performed worse than the good readers on comprehension measures. The strong association of vocabulary to reading comprehension is taken into account both in subskill theories of comprehension (Davis 1968; Spearitt, 1972) and in global theories (Thorndike 1973). Anderson and Freebody (1979) discuss three possible explanations for this relationship: the instrumentalists position which holds that the vocabulary knowledge directly facilitates reading comprehension (Becker 1978, Yap 1979) the general aptitude position and thirdly the vocabulary knowledge position which holds that vocabulary knowledge

reflects general knowledge which in turn affects comprehension is said to be at the heart of reading.

Aaron (1989) argues that the differences which exists in reading achievement are due to factors associated with either decoding or comprehension or a combination of both. To differentiate between these two abilities is necessary to assess them independently.

Researchers have proposed more educationally relevant assessment related to phonological processing (Seigal 1989) or listening comprehension (Spring French 1990). Stanovich cop. ltd. discusses the feasibility of listening comprehension which can then be contrasted with measures of decoding skills. He acknowledges that his another kind of discrepancy definition but listening comprehension would at least be more closely related to the purpose of reading and writing.

2.04 THE ISSUES OF GENDER DIFFERENCE IN READING

It has been suggested in many early studies (1920-1950) that development of language skills proceeds more rapidly for girls than for boys. When these early studies were reviewed by the more recent writers. It was found that some recent workers in this field have reached the conclusion that the difference between boys and girls in their language development may now be much smaller or even now existent than was

earlier thought to be the case (Maccoby and Jaklin, 1974).

Some early studies found that girls matured faster in linguistic development during early childhood and performed better than boys in reading at primary stage (Maccoby, 1966). At the same time there were some other studies which gave counter evidence showing that boys had a better knowledge of words than girls (Templin, 1957) or showing no difference in the performance of boys and girls (Strickland, 1962). It has been assumed that the reading superiority of girls may be due to cultural factors rather than cognitive factors (Fairweather, 1976). When language ability was taken into consideration, it was found that at low ability levels, the performance of girls in syntax was superior to that of boys, but that at high abilities it was just the reverse (Loban, 1963).

In some of the US studies, girls performed better than boys at reading (Bank et.al. 1980). These studies support the general finding that girls are superior in all early learning which involves reading and language convention while boys are better at arithmetical reasoning and science concepts (Downing et.al. 1982). A low correlation was found between gender and comprehension cases, when data from the International Association for evaluation of educational

achievement collected from several countries was analyzed (Thorndike, 1973). These differences disappear if they are matched on the amount they lead in their spare time. Hoguebe et. al. (1985) pointed out that gender is not the cause of the difference in their performance, the real cause is the behaviour that is correlated with them.

Acherma et.al. (1983) found boys to be poor readers than girls because boys displayed a wider variety of the causes associated with reading failure. When sex linked neurological functioning were considered it was found that boys preferred to process information visually (Restak 1979, Helfeldt 1983) whereas girls preferred to do editorially (Watson 1969). Rose (1977) also found first grade boys to excel in visual tasks whereas girls were superior in auditory types of task. These differences may be the causes of their reading differences. Such differences partly explain the fact that 95% of hyper activities of reading problems are in boys (Restak, 1979).

Witelson (1977) proposed that the brain is more diffusely organised in girls, thus is less prone to cerebral dyfunctions such as reading retardation or dyslexia. This finding is also indicative of a gender difference in cerebral organisation that hemisphere specialization for spatial processing is developed in

the boys by the age of five but not till thirteen in girls. The following factors have been adduced to explain the gender differences manifested in reading (Dwyer, 1974; Johnson and Greenbarun, 1980 and Banket.al. (I980).

- Physical maturity (girls mature faster than boys)
- Sex relevant content
- teaching style
- female teacher bias
- discriminatory treatment and
- differential response.



Most of the factors mentioned above affect the interaction between boys and their female teachers and vice versa.

It has been found that fifth grade boys only did as well as girls on comprehension when high interest material was used (Asher and Markell, 1974) This may indicate that gender difference in reading is due to a lack of interest or motivation rather than to a lack of skill or ability. On the other hand, Gross (1978) states that attitudes towards reading are similar in both genders. Samuels and Turnure (1974) found that children who paid less attention also gained low reading scores.

There is some research which has

attributed gender differences in reading to cultural differences (Dwyer, 1980); Johnson (1982) found a significant gender mode interaction when he compared the recall performance of 96,7-9 year old average readers under these different modes of text presentation (normal, silent and aural). The girls were found to be equally proficient at the recall tasks under all the three modes, whereas the boys were equally good at the tasks after normal and aural modes, but displayed poorer comprehension after silent modes of presentation. In the same study Johnson found the miscue rate for 7-9 year old boys and girls to be 39 and 26, respectively. The girls' superiority in the acquisition of speech sound articulation skills was attributed to this difference. Among Asian children there is no clear evidence of differential performance on reading assessment (Taylor and Hegarty, 1985). It has been found that girls wish to enter further education to a greater extent than boys do (Gupta, 1977). Another study conducted on 86, 7-8 year old children found no sex difference in reading comprehension (Fletcher and Pumphrey, 1988). A reading attainment x gender interaction which was significant at the .05 level, revealed that at high reading attainment levels the boys performed better. In another study, no significance was found on different miscue scores (grapho-phonetic, semantic and syntactic) of boys and girls even after taking into consideration their reading attainment levels (Pumphrey and Fletcher, 1969).

Another study was conducted on 540 students in the fifth grade to find out the effect of the gender of the main character on boys and girls and their comprehension (Bleakely et.al. 1986). The findings revealed, that boys rated stories much less interesting when the main character was female. The girls formed stories with male protagonists less interesting. On comprehension measures, the girls outscored boys. There are very few maturation or physiological differences between the genders that might affect their verbal ability during the early years of schooling, but which later on may not affect their comprehension ability. Their performance may be different but not inferior.

2.05 DIALECT DIFFERENCE

Some authors have speculated that the difficulties in learning to read among children who speak a non standard dialect, stem from the mismatch between the child's spoken language and the language used in the materials of instructions. Review by Harber and Bryan (1976), Pflaunnconnor (1978), Shuy (1979) Simon (1979) and Somervilli (1975) have found that phonological, syntactic and semantic interference may affect oral reading but not silent reading comprehension. Melmed (1971) reports that dialect speakers show some confusion in isolated word reading with words that are homophones, but no confusion when

the words are well set in context.

Karger (1973) suggest that dialect difference may be most important when children are learning to decode, but because ability to decode may slow up the comprehension process (Perfetti and Lesgold, 1979) there may in fact be some interference in reading achievement over time.

Piestrup (1973), who observed dialect children in a variety of classes and found that some teachers spent a disproportionate amount of time correcting features of their children's speech. The achievement of th children was generally higher in the classes with the least amount of correction. Simon's suggested (1979) that correction time not only takes among from instructions time but also convey disapproval by the teacher.

Some suggestions for minimizing the hypothesized interference of dialect for beginning reading have been to use a language experience approach (Serword, 1969), to use the beginning reading materials written to avoid dialect features (Pflaunn-cinnor 1973), or to use regular materials but with the teadchers alerted to accept dialect for communications and syntatic patterns (Goodman and Bucke, 1973).