

How does Parental Engagement Affect Language Learning in Teenagers?

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ABSTRACT

Language being the most important medium of communication and education, its development occupies an important place in the National Policy on Education and Programme of Action. Therefore, promotion of Hindi and other 21 languages listed in the schedule VIII of the constitution. This paper aims to examine the relationship between parental involvement and students learning achievement in language Hindi. A Multistage Sampling Design (MSD) was adopted for the selection of different sampling units. A randomly selected group of 150 students from 25 secondary schools of a district of Bihar and their parents participated in this study. In order to map out the objectives of the study, Parental Support Scale developed by Nandwana and a standard language Hindi achievement test developed by the SCERT survey team were employed to capture responses. The results indicate that students were not performing well in the language because their parents have little knowledge of the language. It was also found that girls achieved higher average scores than boys. Overall, the findings reveal that parental involvement appears to have facilitated children's language learning and contributed to their literacy development as well.

Keywords: *Parental Involvement, Learning Achievement, Secondary school, Students and Language Hindi*

The facts about India being a multilingual country are well known. The 1971s census, which can legitimately be considered most authentic in this respect, recorded a total of 1652. The result of that, today society follows English language and English medium education.

Languages belonging to five different language families in this country. Over 87 languages are used in print media, 71 languages are used on the radio, and the administration of the country is conducted in 13 different languages. Yet one notices with a sense of regret that only 47 are used

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Received: April 15, 2017; Revision Received: May 3, 2017; Accepted: May 15, 2017

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as the media of instruction in schools and Hindi is one of them. Hindi has been accorded the status of official language at the national level.

Our education starts with a language teaching. Skills acquired in the language helps in teaching and learning other subjects. There is no doubt that language is a skillful subject while teaching Hindi language teachers should take care of student's ability, skill and proficiency and not the subject matter through the teaching of the lesson or story. Language plays a central role in learning. No matter what the subject area, students assimilate new concepts largely through language that is when they listen to and talk, read and write about what they are learning and relate this to what they already know. Through speaking and writing, language is linked to the thinking process and is a manifestation of the thinking that is taking place. Thus, by explaining and expressing personal interpretations of new learning in the various subject fields, students clarify and increase both their knowledge of the concepts in those fields and their understanding of the ways in which language is used in each (Corson,1990).

For a very long time now, we have been talking in terms of *Listening-Speaking-Reading-Writing (LSRW)* skills as the objectives of language teaching (in more recent times, we have started talking about communicative skills, accent neutralization and voice training, etc. in an equally disastrous way). Consequently, all teachers are encouraged to participate in developing language skills and competencies within their fields of responsibility and thus contribute to a school learning policy as a whole. In summary one can state the following beliefs:

1. Language is more than communication skills
2. Language is also linked to the thinking process
3. Language is a tool for conceptualizing, for thinking, for networking
4. Language supports mental activity and cognitive precision
5. Language for academic purposes helps to express thoughts more clearly
6. Language helps to structure discourse and practice discourse functions

The Indian Education System was based on the British model, but changed over the years into a 10+2+3 system, i.e. 10 years of basic education, 2 years of senior secondary education and 3 years of higher education. The language of instruction in basic education is the most common language (**L1**) of the region (Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil or Urdu). In std. VI, English or Hindi is introduced as a second language (**L2**). The language of instruction during the last two classes (XI and XII) of secondary school is English or Hindi. In higher education the language of instruction is in most cases English.

Ordinarily, Hindi is both a medium of instructions and a school subject in majority of northern Indian states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. In Bihar, teaching and learning Hindi to Hindi speaking children is considered as a **first language (L1)** as presented in table 1. Hindi is also a contact language that

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facilitates the day to day interactions in many parts of the country in different spheres of life. Table 1 gives the details of Hindi being learnt as a first and second language in acculturation and enculturation situation in India. However, it needs to be pointed out that learning a language in enculturation situations create more problems for the learners than the acculturation.

Table: 1 Details of Learning Hindi as first and second language in Acculturation and Enculturation situations

	First Language	Second Language
Acculturation	Hindi in Hindi speaking States for Hindi MT speakers	Hindi in Hindi speaking states for Non-Hindi MT speakers
Enculturation	Hindi in Non-Hindi speaking States for Hindi MT speakers	Hindi in Non-Hindi speaking States for Non-Hindi MT speakers

In India, Hindi is being taught in schools all over the country following the ‘**three language formula**’. As a result, depending upon which states one considers, Hindi is studied compulsorily by every student as first, or second, or third language for a period of ten, or six, or three years respectively. Besides, Hindi is the official language of the nation, one of the link languages among different states and also, the official language of seven states (as recognized in the constitution of India). So far as learning of Hindi is considered one finds both enculturation and acculturation situations in the country. The enculturation situation exists in all the non-Hindi speaking states where the target language group is not present and the language is learnt only in the formal class room context for a few years. The acculturation on the other hand, is found in the regions where Hindi and its dialects are spoken. The example of the latter is found in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar for instance. Here, the target language is in fact the language of the majority community. In acculturation situations, the environment and the mass media reinforce the learning of Hindi, whereas in an enculturation situation, they are conspicuously absent. However, the television media and the Hindi films do reinforce the learning of some extent, although this type of reinforcement is confined only to receptive skills and not to productive skills (Arena, 2013).

As far as teaching is concerned, languages are taught in schools like any other subject-Mathematics, Geography or Science and not so much as a language. The emphasis is on reading and writing abilities, knowledge of literature from ancient to modern times and on grammar. This is in contrast with intensive language teaching programmes in the education of the western countries. As a matter of fact, in many parts of rural India, teaching a language through the rote system still continues, where even the children in std II and III cannot read properly, but can reproduce the entire lesson from their text books by heart without mistakes (Arena,2013).

The Constitutional provision

Articles 343-351 of part XVII and the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India deal with issues of the language of the country. According to the Article 343(1), “the official language of the

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Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari Script”. Several special directives are given for the promotion of Hindi: “to promote the spread of Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as the medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India” (Article, 351).

Parental Involvement and Language Learning

Positive impacts of parental involvement on student academic outcomes have not only been recognised by school administrators and teachers, but also by policy-makers who have interwoven different aspects of parental involvement in new educational initiatives and reforms (Graves and Wright,2011; Larocque, Kleimen & Darling,2011; Mattingly et al,2002; Topor et al, 2010). “The idea that parents can change their children’s educational trajectories by engaging with their children’s schooling has inspired a generation of school reform policies” (Domina, 2005).

The importance of parental involvement in schools has been supported by research revealing benefits for students and schools (Epstein, 1985; Fan & Chen,2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek,1994; Shatkin &Gershberg,2007). Research also argues that parents are their children’s first and most enduring educators. Similarly, a wide-ranging literature supports the assertion that parents are major stakeholders in their child’s learning and have better understanding of their learning needs more than any other person in the system. Likewise, Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) and Harris & Chrispeels (2006) posited that parents have momentous constructive impact on children’s well-being and achievement after other variables are eliminated. Also, Sylva et al. (2004) support the notion that early involvement of parents in children’s education leads to future constructive commitment in educational progressions.

Teaching and learning Hindi to Hindi speaking children is considered as first language (L1) and to non-Hindi speaking children as a second language (L2). According to Rosenbusch (1987) “parent’s attitude towards language and people play a major role in shaping their children’s attitude toward another language and success as a student”. Forero & Quevedo (2006) also discuss how parents and children used written productions in L1 and L2 to make sense of the world by expressing perceptions, feelings, suggestions and expectations. Similarly, Gao (2006) proposes that the family may influence children’s L1and L2 study directly and indirectly; directly when family members work as language learning advisors, coercers, and nurtures, training their children to be good language learners and indirectly when family members act as language learning facilitators and teacher’s collaborators, creating learning discourses and motivating students to learn the language. The concepts above had a bearing on designing the inquiry and proposing an intervention in which teachers, parents and learners collaborated.

According to Castillo and Gamez (2013), those children were not performing well in the language Hindi (L2) because parents could not provide support since they had no knowledge of

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the L2 and how to tackle L2 study. A considerable number of studies regarding the impact of family involvement were found which focused specifically on literacy. Purcell-Gates (1994) showed that children of parents who read and write at relatively more complex levels and read together with their children have a better understanding of critical written language concepts when beginning formal instruction in literacy, compared to other children. Parents with little formal education may also be less familiar with the language used in the school, limiting their ability to support learning and participate in school-related learning.

Additionally, parents may not always have the tools and background to support their children's cognitive and psychosocial development throughout their school years. Parents' level of education, for example, has multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in schools. In one study, children whose parents had primary school education or less were more than three times as likely to have low test scores or grade repetition than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling (Willms, 2000). Parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents' income and need for help in the home or field- help that often comes at the expense keeping children in school (Carron and Chau, 1996). Parents with little formal education may also be less familiar with the language used in the school, limiting their ability to support learning and participate in school-related learning.

Moreover, the literature regarding parental involvement and student achievement has mixed findings. Some researchers have found a strong correlation between parental involvement and learning achievement (Hill & Craft, 2003; Jeynes, 2007; Lee & Brown, 2006). The recent meta-analysis conducted by Jeynes (2007) showed a strong positive association between parental style and learning achievements. However, other researchers have found little to no association between parental involvement and students learning achievement (Singh, et al. 1995; White, Taylor & Moss, 1992). Singh, et al. (1995), who used data from the National Longitudinal Study: 88, found no correlation between parental involvement in school activities and improved student achievement.

Background of the study: *Low enrolment, high dropout rates, poor school readiness and low standardized test score have elevated education reform to a policy priority. In response to the abundance of research demonstrating the benefits of parental involvement, education reform efforts at both federal and local levels have emphasized the importance of involving parents. As class 9th is known as a penultimate grade and is basically a beginning of secondary education in India and teaching of language should provide pupils fill mastery over the applied form of language and maturity in oral and written expression. The first subject prescribed in school syllabus is Hindi and is called as 'Matri Bhasha' mother tongue, regardless of whether it happens to be or not in every case. So it is essential that students have a clear concept about the Hindi language and its grammar because its provide input to learn other subjects. Today, in Bihar, Hindi language education is in a very bad condition. There are very less number of pupils*

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who speak pure Hindi. In addition, the Government policy of language education makes the miserable condition of the Hindi language.

Purpose

The main purpose of this study was to measure language Hindi achievement level of students and examine how parental engagement affects language learning in teenagers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of learning achievement location wise of the students of class 9th in Hindi language.
2. To study the differences in learning achievement gender wise.
3. To study the levels of parental involvement location wise.
4. To study the relationship between parental involvement scores and learning achievement scores in Hindi language.

Hypothesis

1. There will be no significant differences between learning achievement scores of rural and urban students.
2. There will be no significant difference between learning achievement scores in Hindi of boys and girls.
3. Parents from urban areas will be more involved than rural areas.
4. There will be significant relationship between parental involvement scores and Hindi learning achievement.

METHODOLOGY

The Coverage and Settings

A multistage sample design (MSD) had been employed in this study. In this study stratified random sampling techniques was used for selecting schools, random sampling was used for learners and purposive sampling was used to select parents. About 150 learners studying in class IX of different public secondary schools in a district of Bihar were selected through random sampling method. Out of sampled students 90 students were from rural areas and 60 from urban area. The ratio of boys and girls was to 60:40. Parents from selected students were requested to join the study. Finally, 150 students and their parents were selected for study.

Tools Used

1. **Parental support scale-** Standardized and developed by Shobha Nandwana and Nimmki Asawa (1971). This scale consists 37 items. This scale measures 3 dimensions-Parental interest, Parental Behavioural and Resource provision. It is standardized on parents of adolescent.

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- 2. Achievement test in Hindi.** A standardized test developed by SCERT survey team has been used in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To meet the objectives of the study data were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0. The results obtained and discussed thereof have been presented as follows:

1. Learning achievements by Location

It was hypothesized that there will be no significant differences between learning achievement scores of rural and urban students. Table 2 compares the average language Hindi scores achieved by students in rural and urban schools. It shows that within this group, no significant difference was detected in the average achievement levels of the two groups. Further, students from rural schools outperformed those from urban schools by an insignificant margin (mean score of 50.41 and 47.70 respectively).

Table 2: Average language Hindi scores by location

	Location	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	SED	t	F	Sig.
Hindi	Rural	90	50.41	9.549	1.007	1.66	1.64	1.27	.261
	Urban	60	47.70	10.500	1.356				

2. Learning achievements by Gender.

It was hypothesized that there will be no significant difference between learning achievement scores in Hindi of boys and girls. Table 3 depicts the summary of the statistical comparison between boys and girls in terms of the language Hindi scores. Table 3 compares the average language Hindi scores achieved by boys and girls. It shows that, no significant differences were detected in the average achievement levels of the two groups. Results also confirmed that girls achieved higher average scores than boys by an insignificant margin (mean score of girls is 50.43 and boys 48.59 respectively).

Table 3: Average language Hindi scores by gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	SED	t	F	Sig.
Hindi	Boys	90	48.59	9.596	1.012	1.66	-1.108	.911	.341
	Girls	60	50.43	10.550	1.362				

3. Parental involvements by Location.

The third hypothesis of the research was that the parents from urban areas will be more involved than rural areas. A perusal of table 4 reveals that parents from rural and urban areas do not differ significantly between themselves in terms of dimensions of parental involvement scores. Table 4 compares the average parental involvement scores obtained by rural and urban parents. Preliminary analysis of the data showed that all parents reported relatively high levels of

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involvement in activities that support their children's academic performance. The average parental involvement scores of the urban parents were 80.52 with a SD of 11.60 compared with rural parent's average parental involvement score 78.38 with a SD of 12.78. When data was analyzed by examining each dimensions of the scale, it was found that the 'Resource Provision' was the dimension of the scale that revealed the highest scores by both groups of parents rural and urban. The dimension with the second highest score was 'Behaviour' by both rural and urban parents. 'Interest' was last in the sequence of both groups.

Table 4: Average Parental Involvement scores by location

Dimensions of P.I.	Location	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	%	Rank	SED	t	F	Sig.
Interest (0-30)	Rural	90	20.74	4.12	.44	69.13	3	.667	-1.124	1.78	.184
	Urban	60	21.45	3.81	.49	71.5					
Resource (0-30)	Rural	90	22.21	3.59	.38	74.03	1	.574	-.881	1.517	.220
	Urban	60	22.72	3.20	.41	75.73					
Behaviour (0-51)	Rural	90	35.51	5.56	.59	69.63	2	.896	-.936	1.198	.275
	Urban	60	36.35	5.08	.66	71.27					
Overall (0-111)	Rural	90	78.38	12.78	1.35	70.61		2.054	-1.041	1.778	.184
	Urban	60	80.52	11.60	1.50	72.54					

4. Relationship between parental involvement and language Hindi scores.

It was also contended that there would be a significant relationship between parental involvement scores and language Hindi learning achievement. Table 5 presents summary of regression analysis using by SPSS version 16.0.

Table 5: Summary of Regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	29.146	5.811		5.016	.000
Interest	.862	.512	.345	1.684	.094
Behaviour	.098	.358	.053	.275	.784
Resource	-.064	.453	-.022	-.142	.887
F=7.973; Sig. .000		R= .375	R square= .141	Adjusted R square= .123	

Predictors: (Constant) interest, behaviour, resource

Dependent Variable: Hindi

Table 5 shows that the interest (b= 0.862) is not statistically significant (p= 0.094), but only just so, and the coefficient is positive which would indicate that greater interest is related to higher language achievement. Next, the effect of behavior (b= 0.098, p= 0.784) is not significant and its

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coefficient is negligible but positive indicating that the greater the favourable behavior of parents, the higher the language achievement. Lastly, the resources provided by parents ($b = -0.064$, $p = 0.887$) is not significant and its coefficient is negative which would indicate that the larger resources is related to lower language achievement. Finally, this result was somewhat unexpected and seems to indicate that dimensions of parental involvement are not an important factor in predicting language Hindi learning.

The value of R square indicates that 14% of the variations in Hindi learning scores are explained by its linear relationship with the independent variables. The F value is statistically significant (.05), this signifies that the model using the predictors did a good job of predicting the outcome variable and that there is a significant relationship between the set of predictors and the dependent variable.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study show that students of the secondary schools were not performing well in the language Hindi because their parents had little or no knowledge of the language. Overall, the findings reveal that parental involvement appears to have facilitated children's language learning and contributed to their literacy development as well. It was also found that the F value is statistically significant (.05), this signifies that the model using the predictors that appeared in the regression can reliably predict the student's achievement in language Hindi. These findings correspond with some research findings such as Gao (2006) proposes that the family may influence children's L1 and L2 study directly and indirectly; directly when family members work as language learning advisors, coercers, and nurturers, training their children to be good language learners and indirectly when family members act as language learning facilitators and teacher's collaborators, creating learning discourses and motivating students to learn the language. Similar results were found in the work of Gill and Sidhu (1988), which reported that classroom scores were low where there is low parental motivation and sharing of parental work with the children. Shivathamma (1981) and Siddiqui et al (1983) also indicated the role of motivation from the parents and favourable parental responses to encourage achievement among the children. This finding contradicts that of other researches. Some researchers have found little to no association between parental involvement and students learning achievement (Pezdek, Berry & Renno, 2002; Singh, et al. 1995; White, Taylor & Moss, 1992).

Acknowledgments

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interests: The author declared no conflict of interests.

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How to cite this article: Kumari A, Pandey L (2017), How does Parental Engagement Affect Language Learning in Teenagers?, *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Volume 4, Issue 3, ISSN:2348-5396 (e), ISSN:2349-3429 (p), DIP:18.01.058/20170403