

Analyzing the Effect of Multilingualism, Language 1, and Language 2 on Reading Comprehension

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Abstract : Due to the increase of students with reading difficulties, digital reading support with diagnostics was developed to foster the individual student's reading comprehension. The digital reading support focused on the reading comprehension of elementary school students. The digital reading packages consist of literary texts with aligned reading exercises. The number of students with German as a second language is growing in Germany. Students with multilingualism, language 1, and language 2 learn German together in school. The research's focus is on determining whether and to what extent multilingualism, language 1, and language 2 affect reading comprehension. For the methodology, an ABA design was selected for the intervention study to examine the reading support. The study was expedited from April 2023 until July 2023 and collected quantitative data of individuals, groups, and classes. It comprised a survey group (N = 58) and a control group (N = 53). The quantitative data was collected from 3 classes of 3 teachers and 47 students for all three test times. To show differences between the groups, a standardized reading comprehension test was used for the three test times, pretest, posttest, and follow-up. The standardized test consists of three subtests regarding word comprehension, sentence comprehension, and text comprehension. The main findings include that students who spoke German as their first language had the best test scores. Interestingly, students with a different language had better testing scores than students with German as the first language and (an) other language/s. Also, the students with another language outperformed the native language speakers in one of the subtests of the post-testing. The variables of spoken language at home and German as a second language were also examined and correlated with the test results. One significant correlation was found between spoken language at home and the text comprehension test of the pretesting. Additionally, the variable German as a second language had multiple significant correlations in the pretest, posttest and follow-up. The study's significance is to understand the influence of several languages, language 1, and language 2, on reading comprehension.

Keywords : multilingualism, language 1, language 2, reading comprehension, second language

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