

A Cross-sectional Study of Linguistic Creativity of Hindi Language Learners in Relation to their Academic Achievement

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Abstract

The present study is a cross-sectional study of language creativity in Hindi language learners to explore its relationship with academic achievement, conducted through a descriptive survey research method. The sample for the study was taken from the population of secondary level students of Class IX. A sample size of 800 respondents has been chosen based on stratified random sampling technique by random selection of participants from three strata, namely: (i) Background (Urban and Rural), (ii) Type of school (Government and Private), and (iii) Gender (Male and Female). A standardised verbal language creativity test designed by S. Malhotra and Sucheta Kumari has been used to test language creativity and the scores of Class VIII final examination have been taken as the measure of academic achievement of learners of different levels. One-way ANOVA and t-test in the statistical tools were employed to test null hypotheses. The conclusions of the study establish that the language creativity in Hindi language learners in writing skills is affected by their academic achievements levels. Therefore, by augmenting the academic achievement of language learners, their language creativity can be improved along with the Hindi writing skills and expressions.

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INTRODUCTION

Language has been and will continue to be the timeless achievement of humans in the succession of our evolutionary history. Descartes proposed, 'The ability to produce a new sentence, appropriate to the situation, is unique to man'. The most outstanding feature of language is that it evolves within the context of its environment. To best describe the malleability of language in its social and cultural context, Saussure has stated that language is one of the elemental structures of human life and we 'do not discover' it but we 'create' it according to the innate structures of human mind (Zawada, 2006). Here to create implies generating new possibilities for better understanding and adjustment with our world, which, when juxtaposed with language, leads to language creativity.

Language creativity holds the keen interest of researchers and educators due to its theoretical and practical importance. While its theoretical foundation lays down directive principles of effective language teaching and learning, its practical implementation offers a potent tool for language educators to sharpen their learners' language skills incessantly. Ronald Carter splendidly held, 'linguistic creativity is not simply a property of exceptional people but an exceptional property of all people' (Carter, 2004, p.13). It applies equally well to language creativity which is studied under linguistics. Apparently,

every language user is 'exceptionally creative' (Budlova, 2014).

The study embraces this as its focal point that every language learner has the latent potential to create novel ideas or products of language. It is significant to relate this quality of language learners with the prominent factors of teaching-learning situations. One of the primary approaches to language learning is academic achievement; therefore, it is essential to study its effect on language creativity. Further, the study specifically examines the effect of academic achievement on the language creativity in Hindi language learners as Hindi is an essential subject of the curriculum of Indian schools, by establishing a relationship between language creativity of Hindi language learners with their academic achievement. For this, the study focuses on writing skills of Hindi language learners by the components of the tool implemented for the study. A conceptual overview of the study is as follows:

Review of Related Literature

Language creativity has been studied in relation to various teaching-learning variables. Sharma (2017), in her research work, evaluated the impact of creative self-instructed teaching-learning material on the academic achievement of Hindi language learners. She developed computer-based teaching-learning material of Hindi grammar and administered them through experimental research method.

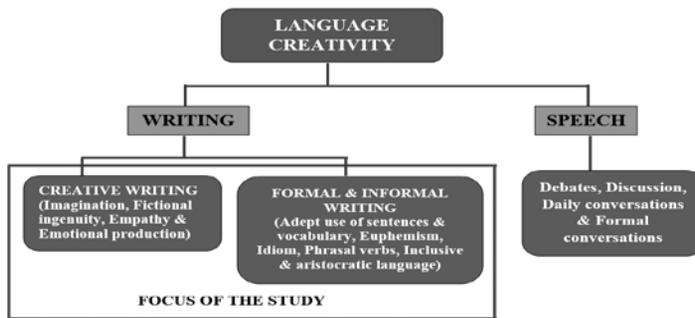


Fig. 1: An overview of Hindi Language Creativity in writing

She successfully concluded that computer-based creative teaching-learning material of Hindi grammar has increased the achievement of the learners.

Sharma (2016), through her research work on language creativity, also reinforced about learners' academic achievement by classifying learners based on their academic achievement under different intelligence levels. She successfully concludes that high intelligence levels of learners positively affect their Hindi language creativity.

Bagaria (2016) reinforced through descriptive survey research that there is a positive correlation between English language creativity and academic achievement, which means a high level of language creativity in English will definitely increase the academic achievement.

Mishra (2016) has established through her research study that a new version of English language known as Indian English has evolved due to the influence of Indian English speakers. She has emphasised explicitly on the spellings, vocabulary and pronunciation of Indian English

language, which has become essential in various Indian situations. Further, her work ascertains that Indian English has comparatively more correct grammar than its other varieties across the globe and stands a definite chance to gain a distinguished position.

Another fascinating study about language creativity by Malik (2016) discusses the status quo of creative use of Hindi-English language in daily communication. Her study focuses on the aspect of language creativity where less work has been done with few or low number of available researches in the field. She points out that in a multilingual country like India, Hindi-English code-switching is an integral part of spoken and written English, like in interviews, advertisements, discussion on television, newspapers and magazines, etc. Tools used for the study were questionnaires, interviews and observations with a sample consisting of 15 lecturers both from colleges and universities with different backgrounds. She concluded the study with the acceptance of code-switching in written as

well as in spoken forms. To survive in a multilingual setting, code-switching is essential. In order to excel at code switching, one has to be proficient in both the languages. The teachers, who have favoured its use in the classroom, maintain that code-switching facilitates the learning and teaching process. For example, switching to the Hindi explanation of an unfamiliar English word gives learners a better understanding of the topic.

Holmes et al. (2015), in their study, explored the relationship of children's creativity, social play and language abilities. They selected 225 pre-schoolers for the study, out of which 109 were girls, and 116 were boys. The tools employed for the study were — goodenough — Harris Draw-a-Person task' to measure creativity and observations of children's social play; Howes and Matheson's Peer Play Scale and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-IV) to measure receptive vocabulary of the preschoolers. By using correlation analysis, an evident association was recognised between some of the social plays and creativity. The conclusions of the study affirm that children's creativity and social play enhance their language abilities.

The study by Massarrat (2014) consisted of the students of Class VIII of urban and rural background. She concluded that the students from urban background were superior in language creativity than the students from rural background. Further, she ascertained in relevance to the

present study that the students of rural background have low language creativity, especially they lack the vocabulary and expression. In contrast, urban students are better in expression due to the array of co-curricular activities performed in the school. She also discovered through a self-developed questionnaire that some English language teachers were unaware or disinterested in fostering language creativity.

The study of Asore (2012) closely corresponds to the study. This is a descriptive survey research in which the sample comprised 100 students of Class IX randomly selected from five Marathi medium schools of Aurangabad city. The data was collected through the Hindi Language creativity scale of Malhotra and Sucheta Kumari. The findings revealed a positive and significant correlation between Hindi Language Creativity and achievement of students of Class IX.

Guill'en and Bermejo's (2011) paper reported about music as a pedagogical tool to help in encouraging learners' too creativity by enriching their literacy in English, content and use of language. They proposed a natural bond between music, language and the thinking process; therefore, embracing music in day-to-day teaching results in the development of creative thinking. This happens through the evocation of imagination and visualisation among learners of all ages through storytelling. So, participants under

the study began by listening to music. They then eventually started creating their own stories using the words and phrases gained through the musical experience to empower their creative skills facilitating their language learning. It does, demonstrate on how music functions as an instrument in language learning.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The positive relationship of language creativity with academic achievement has been reinforced by various studies conducted for Hindi language learners, but these studies are sparse. Following are the reasons that motivated the researcher to take up this study and decide its direction and design:

1. A need was felt to study the language creativity of Hindi language learners though their academic achievements as abundant findings were available to support the relationship between the language creativity of English language learners and their academic achievement but very few and insufficient studies have been found exploring the language creativity of Hindi language learners and their academic achievement. Also, language creativity has been linked with music, art and everyday novel speaking practices but not with academic achievement (Guillen and Bermejo's, 2011 and Holmes et al., 2015).
2. Another significant reason to study the language creativity of Hindi language learners is the immense value that Hindi has gained in multilingual societies, like India, for effective teaching and learning. Studies of Mishra (2016) and Malik (2016) about Indian English and Hindi-English code-switching establish that Indian English can only be applied to Indian contexts and situations. This is evident from the increased online courses and tutorials being developed by the private and government stakeholders in English and Hindi languages for the multilingual learners of Indian education system.
3. Various studies attempted to assess the factors of general creativity identified by Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) as fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. So, a need was felt to study the learner's language creativity regarding their expression of Hindi language. Therefore, conversely, the dimensions for specific creativity of Hindi languages by Guilford's theory of creativity were studied.
4. Another reason for the study was that all secondary level students of different backgrounds face difficulties in relation to expression writing and speaking in Hindi language. As indicated by Massarrat (2014) regarding English language learning, teachers are insufficiently willing or equipped to foster creativity, so it became imperative to conduct a study of low, average and high achievers concerning their Hindi

language creativity in the area of writing skills.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Method and research design

The nature of the study is quantitative research using descriptive survey method, wherein comparative static group research design was employed. The chosen research design is apt for the study. It facilitates the uncovering of learners' academic achievement in Hindi language as an independent variable while measuring the linguistic creativity in Hindi language expressions.

Population and sample

The sample for the study was taken from the population of secondary level students of Class IX of Alwar district of Rajasthan. A sample size of 800 students has been chosen based on stratified random sampling technique by randomly selecting participants from the three strata, namely, (i) Background (urban and rural), (ii) Type of school (Government and Private), and (iii) Gender (male and female).

Tools

A standardised verbal language creativity test designed by S.P., Malhotra and Sucheta Kumari has been used to test language creativity of school and college students. The central thought of the test is that creative writing brings out each learner's distinct way of expression in the form of word and sentence formation by employing the forms

of creative writing, like poetry, lyric, story, drama, essay or letter writing as their medium of expression. The language creativity test encourages the choice of responses, both qualitative and quantitative, within the specified time, thus ascertaining the aptness of the tool in determining the areas of divergent thinking.

About the Test

Language creativity has five subtests. Due to the focus on expression in Hindi language learning, its sub-areas are being elaborated as under:

1. Plot Building is based upon Guilford's multiple story plots where an imaginary situation is given to the learners to promote free flight of imagination. In all, there are seven items in it, which measure ideational fluency, originality and elaboration.
2. Dialogue Writing is based upon Guilford's multiple emotional expressions and multiple social problems. Learners pen down various feelings that they may want to say when they are subjected to an emotional situation to test their ideational fluency, originality and elaboration.
3. Poetic Diction is based on Guilford's expressional fluency and word-pair revision. The factors tested here are fluency and originality.
4. The Descriptive Style is developed on the pattern of Guilford's controlled associations. The purpose of this sub-test is to

evaluate the illustrative style of the students in terms of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration and as test item.

5. Vocabulary Test is based on Guilford's expressional fluency, controlled association, multiple grouping, word-pair revision and word fluency tests. The items to be tested are fluency, flexibility and originality.

The quantitative achievement scores are gained by the learners in their Class VIII final examination. Various research studies have taken final examination marks (Sharma, 2016) to measure academic.

Objective of the Study

To compare language creativity of high, average and low academic achievers.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the language creativity of high, average and low achievers.

- 1.1 There is no significant difference in the language creativity of high and average achievers.

- 1.2 There is no significant difference in the language creativity of high and low achievers.

- 1.3 There is no significant difference in the language creativity of learners—average and low achievers.

Statistical Methods

To analyse the data statistically, the measures of central tendency, namely mean and SD were calculated. One way, ANOVA was used to find out

the significant difference between three groups— high, average and low achievers on language creativity. It was found that there was a significant difference in the means of the three groups. Further, a data analysis was performed employing a t-test to determine the difference between the three groups— high and average achievers, high and low achievers, and average and low achievers.

Results and Interpretation

Table 1 shows group formation, namely: (i) High achievers (A graders), (ii) Average achievers (B graders) and (iii) Low achievers (C graders), based on the marks and corresponding grades they have obtained in their previous classes.

Table 2 clearly shows that the obtained value of F is 421.8, which is more than the critical value of $F=4.63$ at the 0.01 significance level; thus, hypothesis 1 is rejected. This implies a significant difference in the language creativity of learners of high, average and low academic achievement. To analyse it further, it is essential to find out whether there is a significant difference between the groups, namely: (i) High and Average achievers, (ii) High and Low achievers and (iii) Average and Low achievers, through hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 3 informs that the mean and SD of language creativity of high achievers for $N=168$ are 522.12 and 128.56 and average achievers for $N= 439$ are 370.84 and 103.14, respectively. Since the calculated

Table 1
Academic achievement wise and grade wise classification of learners

	Total	High academic achievement		Average academic achievement		Low academic achievement	
		Marks	Grade	Marks	Grade	Marks	Grade
Boys	800	106	A	196	B	97	C/D
Girls		62	A	243	B	96	C/D

Table 2
Values of F between groups and within group

	Sum of groups	df	Mean	f value	Significance level
Between groups	921760.48	2	4608803.74	421.18	At 0.01 Significance level Ij (fis4.63), which is significant
Within group	8294448.84	758	10942.54		

t-value of 13.61 is more than the p-value of 2.59 at the significance level of 0.01, null hypothesis 1.1 is rejected. This shows a significant difference in the means of language creativity of high and average achievers. It implies that language creativity gets affected by the learners' high and average level of academic achievement.

Table 4 clearly informs that the values of mean and SD of language creativity of high achievers for N=168 are 522.12 and 128.56, and that of

low achievers for N=193 are 199.84 and 80.80 respectively. Since the calculated t-value of 31.90 is more than p-value, which is 2.59 at the significance level of 0.01, so null hypothesis 1.2 is rejected. This shows that there is a significant difference in the means of language creativity of high and low academic achievers. It implies that language creativity gets affected by high and low level of academic achievement of the learners.

Table 3
Results of test of significance of high and average academic achievement groups

Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance level
High academic achievement group	168	573	522.12	128.56	13.61	At 0.01, the Significance level p-value is 2.59, null hypothesis is rejected
Average academic achievement group	439		370.84	103.14		

Table 4
Results of test of significance of high and low academic achievement groups

Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance level
High academic achievement group	168	353	522.12	128.56	31.90	At 0.01, the Significance level p-value is 2.59, the null hypothesis is rejected
Low academic achievement group	193		199.84	80.80		

Table 5
Results of test of significance average and low academic achievement groups

Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance level
Average academic achievement group	439	588	370.84	103.14	21.81	At 0.01, the Significance level p-value is 2.58, the null hypothesis is rejected
Low academic achievement group	193		199.84	80.80		

Table 5 informs that the mean and SD of language creativity of average achievers for N=439 are 370.84 and 103.14, and low achievers for N=193 are 199.84 and 80.80, respectively. Since the calculated t-value of 21.81 is more than the p-value, which is 2.58 at the significance level of 0.01, null hypothesis 1.3 is rejected. This shows a significant difference in the means of language creativity of learners of average and low academic achievement groups. It implies that language creativity gets affected by the learners' average and low level of academic achievement.

Findings of the Study

As per the testing of hypothesis 1, it has been found that the three groups of students of high, average and low level of academic achievements significantly differ in their Hindi language creativity. To examine further the exact cause of this difference in Hindi language creativity, the three groups, namely; (i) High and average achievers, (ii) High and low achievers, and (iii) Average and low achievers, have been composed and tested through hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 respectively, findings of which are as follows:

- As per the testing of null hypothesis 1.1, high achievers are good at language creativity than the average achievers.
- Further, as per the testing of null hypothesis 1.2, it came out that high achievers are also good at language creativity than the low achievers.
- Finally, it was discovered as per the testing of null hypothesis 1.3 that average achievers are better in language creativity than the low achievers.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The findings of the study direct us to the conclusion that language creativity in Hindi writing expression is affected by high, average and low academic achievement of the students. It is in tandem with the research studies by Sharma (2017), Sharma A. (2016) and Asore (2012), who have established that achievement in Hindi language positively affects the language creativity of the learners. The study also reaffirms that a higher level of academic achievement ensures a higher level of language creativity in Hindi language expression. Therefore, by augmenting the academic achievement of language learners in Hindi, their language creativity can be improved in Hindi writing expression. The study contributes by establishing that creative writing assignments in the Hindi language

namely, dialogue writing, plot building and poetic diction make Hindi language learning effective. Therefore, these should be made a necessary part of Hindi language teaching.

Educational Implications

The results of the study unfold various educational implications for teachers, learners and schools, which are as follows:

1. The study establishes that improving the academic achievement of Hindi language learners increases their language creativity. So, teachers can arrange and build compelling teaching-learning experiences with necessary provisions for diagnostic and remedial teaching. Practical evaluation is the key to improved academic achievement of the learners.
2. Academic achievement in Hindi subject should be taken care of in respect of low, average and high achievers. Expression based creative assignments should be made for the three types of achievers according to their levels and requirements.
3. Some suggested methods for transmission are storytelling and writing, dialogue writing, poetry writing and vocabulary building.
4. The school environments also need to be conducive to encourage creative activities for language development through emotional expression.

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