The Effect of Linguistic Comprehension Training on Language and Reading Comprehension

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Kristin Rogde and colleagues from the Campbell Collaboration have completed a systematic review that examined the effects of linguistic comprehension instruction on generalized measures of language and reading comprehension skills. Examples of linguistic comprehension skills include vocabulary, grammar, and narrative skills.

The authors searched literature dating back to 1986, and identified 43 studies to include in the review, which contains samples of both pre-school and school-aged participants. Randomized controlled trials and quasi-experiments with a control group and a pre-post design were included. Key findings of the review are as follows:

- The linguistic comprehension programs included in the review display a small positive immediate effect on generalized outcomes of linguistic comprehension.
- The effect of the programs on generalized measures of reading comprehension is negligible.
- Few studies report the follow-up assessment of their participants.

According to the authors, linguistic comprehension instruction has the potential to increase children’s general linguistic comprehension skills. However, there exists variability in effects related to the type of outcome measure that is used to examine the effect of such instruction on linguistic comprehension skills.