CRITICAL THINKING AND ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION: INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE ESL SCIENCE STUDENT LEARNERS AT PUNJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH (INDIA)

[1]MITRAPAJOUMNIA, [2]SANAZ MARZBAN

[1]Research Scholar, [2]Research Scholar
Department of English & Cultural Studies, Punjab University India
Email: [1]m.pajoumnia@yahoo.com, [2]sanazmrzbn@gmail.com

Abstract- Research has shown that understanding of text in context can best be created by application of critical thinking skills that refer to logical and reflective thinking involving the processes of actively questioning and analyzing information gathered from the text while reading and supplemented by inference drawn from the text content and past background knowledge possessed by the reader. The present article is an effort to examine (i) the relationship between ESL (English as Second Language) university students' critical thinking (CT) and Reading Comprehension (RC); and (ii) the roles of gender as a moderating factor in the relationship between students' CT and RC are investigated in science departments of Panjab University in India. To obtain the objective of the research, a fairly representative sample of science students was drawn using random sampling technique. Hence, the sample consisted of 208 male and female ESL science students. The sample-students were administered the "Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal" (Form A) questionnaire and reading comprehension test. The findings of the study indicated that gender played a significant role as a moderating factor in the relationship between ESL science student-learners' Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension. The results also revealed that there was a significant difference in Critical Thinking between female and male students. It was also found that there was a significant difference in English Reading Comprehension skills of females and males further gender has also significant effect as a controlling variable to discover relationship between English Reading Comprehension skills and critical thinking (partial correlation coefficient .645).

Key words - Critical Thinking; Reading Comprehension; Gender