

Research comparing reading comprehension tests has consistently found that these tests, all designed to measure the construct of reading comprehension, tap various and frequently different component skills. A number of studies have examined the relationship of oral language skills to reading comprehension test scores and have found significant predictive ability of some language skills. The studies examining these tests have sometimes included children with language impairment in their participant group, but have not investigated whether the pattern of results might differ for children with and without language impairment. The current study extends this body of research in two ways: 1) The predictive ability of language skills was examined in relation to language group status (typical development and language impairment); 2) predictors were examined for two reading comprehension tests, one of which had not been examined previously. The test not previously included in this type of research was the *Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement—2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (KTEA-II)*. The other test examined was the *Woodcock Reading Mastery Test—Revised/Norms Update (WRMTR)*. The *KTEA-II* includes passages of increasing length followed by question-response tasks. The *WRMTR* includes short passages with one word missing. The task is to provide the missing word (a cloze task). Participants were 54 students in grades 4 through 6 (M age 10.08, SD .63, range 9.08-11.5). Thirty students had typical language development; 24 had language impairment. Oral language measures included receptive and expressive measures of vocabulary, morphosyntax, and narrative language; also tested were decoding, working memory and nonverbal IQ. Through a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses, it was found that the two reading comprehension tests compared tapped different language skills, although vocabulary and decoding were strong predictors of both tests. In addition to vocabulary and decoding, *KTEA-II* scores were predicted by narrative skills and *WRMTR* scores were predicted by syntax. The

second contribution of this study was the comparison of results for children with and without developmental language impairment. A stratified analysis of the data revealed that the pattern of predictors noted above was only true for children with typically developing language. For children with LI, only decoding and vocabulary were predictive. This result leads to a practice recommendation that reading test results for children with LI be supported by detailed language assessment to support selection of therapy goals.

The methodology of this study also made a contribution to research comparing reading comprehension tests. The predictive value of receptive and expressive language measures was compared via multiple regression. The results showed that both modes could provide useful results, with a large proportion of shared variance between receptive and expressive measures. It is suggested that the Simple View of Reading, which views reading as the product of decoding plus oral language comprehension, be slightly extended so that the “comprehension” construct be understood as “oral language skills” to more clearly incorporate expressive language skills in the context of reading comprehension.