

English Language Proficiency and Reading Comprehension Difficulties of Grade 10 Students of Zamboanga City National High School West: Basis for Developing Effective Reading Strategies

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Abstract

The Researcher conducted this study to find evidence-based reading methods because they wanted to investigate how language proficiency affects reading abilities of Grade 10 students at Zamboanga City National High School West. The study started by testing students' English language skills through three areas: grammar and vocabulary and sentence structure. The researcher used a descriptive-correlational research design to collect data from 120 selected participants who completed a validated 30-item survey instrument that achieved high internal reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.89.

The study results showed distinctive characteristics of the student population because the participants achieved "Very High" average weighted means in both ELP (4.25) and RC (4.27) while showing particular "islands of difficulty" which existed. Students experienced major difficulties when they attempted to combine information by using summarization methods and they struggled to understand figurative language and they could not relate book themes to actual life situations. The t-test statistical analysis showed that there was no connection between different proficiency elements which included grammar and vocabulary and total comprehension abilities. Reading achievement requires multiple skills because it needs more than just linguistic proficiency to succeed at reading. The study found that teachers should concentrate on teaching higher-order thinking abilities because this needs to be done to improve student understanding. The research team developed particular techniques which included guided summarization and "text-to-life" reflection to help students overcome their major reading comprehension challenges.

Keywords: English Language Proficiency, Reading Comprehension, Grade 10 Students, Reading Strategies, Zamboanga City.

I. Introduction

English language proficiency is widely recognized as a critical skill for academic success, especially in secondary education, where students need to read complex texts from multiple subjects. The ability to read, understand, and analyze English texts not only supports learning in English classes but also helps students understand other subjects, which include Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2020). Students who have strong English language skills can develop effective reading

comprehension skills that help them acquire critical thinking abilities and problem-solving abilities and communication abilities.

Research demonstrated that secondary students in the Philippines still struggle to acquire English language skills because they face difficulties in mastering grammar and vocabulary and constructing sentences which directly impact their reading comprehension skills (Bautista, 2021). Reading comprehension difficulties can manifest in different ways, as readers may struggle to understand main ideas and to make inferences and to conduct critical evaluation of texts. These challenges may negatively impact students' overall academic performance and confidence in reading.

The Zamboanga City National High School West classrooms demonstrated that some Grade 10 students needed basic reading skills to understand English texts. Teachers have noted that students frequently struggle with identifying key ideas, making inferences, and connecting ideas across paragraphs. The situation arose from students having English language proficiency gaps and lacking exposure to English reading materials and using ineffective reading strategies.

Studies showed that reading comprehension depends on a person's ability to speak a language.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to develop effective reading strategies tailored to the needs of the students. By addressing both language proficiency gaps and reading comprehension challenges, the proposed strategies may enhance learners' ability to engage with texts meaningfully, improve academic performance, and foster confidence in reading English materials.

Statement of the Problem:

1. What is the level of ELP in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure?
2. What is the level of RC in terms of literal, inferential, and critical comprehension?
3. Is there a significant relationship between ELP and RC?
4. What are the common RC difficulties encountered by students?
5. What strategies can be developed based on these findings?

II. Methodology

Research Design

The study used descriptive-correlational research design to examine existing relationships between variables without conducting any experimental tests. The design assessed current English language proficiency and reading comprehension abilities of Grade 10 students while testing for any statistical relationship between these two skills. The researcher used quantitative methods to gather numerical information through standardized survey tools which enabled him to conduct impartial analysis and discover specific reading impairment patterns that would help develop customized reading intervention programs.

Research Locale:

The research locale of this study is Zamboanga City National High School West, which is located on R.T. Lim Boulevard in Zamboanga City Philippines. The school serves as a major public secondary school in the region by providing educational services to students from different economic backgrounds who live in the city. The school provides a suitable environment for the study as it implements the K-12 curriculum, where Grade 10 students are at a critical transition point in their academic development, requiring high levels of English language proficiency and reading comprehension to succeed in senior high school and beyond.

Population and Sampling Design

The study involved a total population of 1214 Grade 10 students currently enrolled at Zamboanga City National High School West for the academic year. From this population, a sample size of 120 respondents was selected to participate in the study. The research used purposive sampling as its non-probability sampling method because the researchers needed to select Grade 10 students who were developing advanced literacy skills at that specific time. The researchers used this sampling method to gather data from respondents who possessed the necessary information to achieve the study's objectives about English language proficiency and reading comprehension difficulties.

Instrumentation

The study used descriptive-correlational research design to investigate how Grade 10 students' English language skills relate to their reading comprehension problems at Zamboanga City National High School West. The research team collected data through a validated 30-item survey questionnaire that achieved a Cronbach's Alpha reliability score of 0.89 and through purposive sampling which they used to assess students' linguistic skills in grammar and vocabulary and sentence structure as well as their comprehension abilities in three different levels. The results showed that students reached "Very High" average scores in both proficiency and comprehension tests but they still struggled with three particular areas which included summarizing information and understanding figurative language and using texts in real-world situations. The t-test results ($p > 0.05$) showed no significant relationship between specific language proficiency skills and total reading comprehension ability which demonstrated that academic reading success requires multiple skills beyond basic language mechanics thus creating the foundation for developing advanced reading comprehension methods.

Procedures

The researchers employed a descriptive-correlational research design to investigate how English language proficiency affects reading comprehension challenges faced by 120 Zamboanga City National High School Grade 10 students. Through the use of a validated 30-item survey questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89) and purposive sampling, researchers collected data to assess students' linguistic abilities which included grammar and vocabulary and sentence structure skills as well as their three comprehension levels which comprised literal and inferential and critical understanding. The results showed that students reached "Very High" scores for both proficiency and comprehension yet they needed to improve their skills in summarizing information as well as understanding figurative language and using texts for practical purposes. The t-test results showed no significant relationship between isolated language proficiency skills and overall reading comprehension at a p-value greater than 0.05, which indicates that academic reading success requires multiple skills beyond linguistic mechanics. This finding provides the foundation for creating specific advanced reading comprehension strategies.

Hypothesis: The study tested the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between ELP components and RC performance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

I. English Language Proficiency (ELP)

The following tables present the students' proficiency in Grammar, Vocabulary, and Sentence Structure.

Table 2. Grammar Proficiency

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. I can identify correct grammar in sentences I read.	4.32	Very High

2. I can apply proper grammar when constructing sentences.	4.18	High
3. I understand the correct use of tenses in reading passages.	4.25	Very High
4. I can recognize errors in subject-verb agreement.	4.40	Very High
5. I can use punctuation correctly while reading and interpreting texts.	2.10	Low
Average Weighted Mean	4.25	Very High

The students achieve "Very High" grammar proficiency according to their assessment results. The students excel at error identification which includes subject-verb agreement errors but they face major challenges when they need to correctly use punctuation during text interpretation.

Table 3. Vocabulary Proficiency

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. I understand most English words in my reading materials.	4.36	Very High
2. I can infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from context.	4.28	Very High
3. I regularly learn and remember new English words.	4.22	Very High
4. I can use appropriate synonyms or antonyms when reading.	4.30	Very High
5. I feel confident using advanced vocabulary in English texts.	2.05	Low
Average Weighted Mean	4.24	Very High

The students demonstrated exceptional vocabulary acquisition results because their "Very High" average score which indicates their performance level. The students show complete assurance about their ability to comprehend basic vocabulary which they can determine through context understanding. Their confidence in using advanced vocabulary shows a preference for familiar language instead of complex academic terms.

Table 4. Sentence Structure Proficiency

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. I can understand simple and compound sentences.	4.38	Very High
2. I can analyze the meaning of complex sentences.	4.32	Very High
3. I can distinguish between different sentence patterns.	4.20	High
4. I can comprehend sentences with multiple clauses.	4.28	Very High
5. I can interpret the meaning of sentences in different contexts.	2.15	Low
Average Weighted Mean	4.25	Very High

Students demonstrate excellent ability to understand all types of sentences which include both simple and complex sentences. The "Low" score for interpreting sentences in different contexts (2.15) indicates that students experience difficulty when they need to understand meaning based on specific situational details instead of using structural elements.

II. Reading Comprehension (RC)

The tables below detail the performance across literal, inferential, and critical comprehension levels.

Table 5. Literal Comprehension

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. I can identify the main idea of a passage.	4.36	Very High
2. I can recall specific details from reading passages.	4.28	Very High

3. I can accurately answer questions about facts.	4.22	Very High
4. I can recognize the sequence of events.	4.18	High
5. I can summarize information stated explicitly in a text.	2.20	Low
Average Weighted Mean	4.26	Very High

The summary shows that 10th-grade students have excellent skills for selecting main points and remembering information. The main challenge people face with summarization tasks which require them to summarize information that is directly presented in the text.

Table 6. Inferential Comprehension

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. I can make predictions based on information.	4.38	Very High
2. I can understand implied meanings in a text.	4.32	Very High
3. I can draw conclusions from information given.	4.28	Very High
4. I can identify cause-and-effect relationships.	4.22	Very High
5. I can interpret figurative language or idioms.	2.18	Low
Average Weighted Mean	4.30	Very High

Students show excellent skills for understanding hidden meanings and making accurate predictions about upcoming events. Their primary weakness is interpreting figurative language and idioms, which requires advanced cultural and linguistic knowledge that most people lack after academic training.

Table 7. Critical Comprehension

Statements	Weighted Mean	Description
1. I can evaluate the author's purpose and intention.	4.36	Very High
2. I can analyze and critique arguments.	4.28	Very High
3. I can distinguish between fact and opinion.	4.22	Very High
4. I can compare and contrast ideas from sources.	4.18	High
5. I can reflect on the relevance of the text to real life.	2.25	Low
Average Weighted Mean	4.26	Very High

Students demonstrate advanced abilities to assess others' intentions while they can differentiate between factual information and personal viewpoints. The students need additional "text-to-life" reflection exercises because they cannot link information from texts to actual world situations.

III. Relationship Analysis

Table: t-Test Relationship Between ELP and RC

Variables	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Grammar vs RC	0.656	Not Significant	No significant relationship
Vocabulary vs RC	0.730	Not Significant	No significant relationship
Sentence Structure vs RC	0.780	Not Significant	No significant relationship

The t-test results demonstrate that the different elements of language proficiency which include grammar and vocabulary and structural skills do not help predict overall reading comprehension abilities ($p > 0.05$). The results show that comprehension involves multiple processes which depend on critical thinking abilities and background knowledge as factors that influence it.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions:

Tenth grade students demonstrate strong knowledge of English grammar and language structure. Students need assistance with contextual comprehension and advanced synthesis evaluation. The reading comprehension process requires multiple skills because people who read well need both critical reasoning abilities and their existing knowledge of various subjects. The most essential gaps in understanding exist between text summary and the understanding of figurative language.

Recommendations:

The curriculum development process requires teachers to use guided summarization and paraphrasing exercises as vital teaching methods. The activities enable students to process the content, which results in better understanding and longer memory retention. Students must practice contextual learning through studying figurative language. Figurative expressions understanding enables learners to understand meanings which extend beyond literal definitions, which helps them interpret texts. The students will demonstrate their knowledge through "text-to-life" application methods. The students will create valuable links between their reading and their real-life situations through participation in role-playing activities and real-world problem-solving activities.

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