READING COMPREHENSION COMPETENCE OF FIRST YEAR ENGLISH AND SOCIAL STUDIES MAJOR STUDENTS

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Abstract:

The reading comprehension competencies of the college students as a fundamental skill is essential for their academic success. It is in their higher level of comprehension that facilitates a more encompassing understanding of texts from various genres. In this paper, the comprehension competence of the first year college students had been looked upon under literal, interpretive, and applied. Test Question had been administered to the 77 participants of this study taken through total enumeration in order to test their comprehension competence,. The results show that the respondents are competent under the literal level but not competent on both the interpretive and applied levels. Further, there is no significant difference in the level of their comprehension competence with regard to their select profile variables.

Key words: applied, comprehension, literal, interpretive

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill essential for academic success and lifelong learning. It is the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate text, allowing individuals to extract meaning, make connections, and infer information from written material. Assessing reading comprehension levels among learners is critical for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to tailor instructional strategies effectively and address the diverse needs of students. There are multifaceted nature of reading comprehension levels among learners across different age

groups, educational settings, and linguistic backgrounds. By exploring various factors influencing reading comprehension, a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in reading comprehension be developed.

The Report of the Commission on Reading, Frankel, K. et al (2016) mentioned of reading and the five principles that guide its successful enactment: (1) reading is a constructive process, (2) reading must be fluent, (3) reading must be strategic, (4) reading requires motivation, and (5) reading is a continuously developing skill. The students with a 75% and above correct answer are categorized as "mastery level." Students with 50%-74% correct answers are categorized under "near mastery level." While the category "low mastery level" is for students with a score of 49% and below. The students were categorized based on the reader category of Imam (2014). In terms of reading comprehension skill result, it shows that only 7% of the total respondents are classified as Mastery Level readers. The result is trifling compared to the 49% near mastery level and 44% poor mastery level (Caraig & Quimbo, 2022),

Reading is a mental process. It starts with recognition of words and absorption of the linguistic message. It contributes to overall competence according to Krashen & Terrel (as cited in Nurul, 2014). The major goal of reading instruction is to foster in each student the ability to understand printed language. The Philippines is considered one of the largest English-speaking nations in the world. In fact, English is one of the official languages in the Philippines. But throughout the years, a gradual deterioration in English language proficiency can be observed among Filipinos based on the EF English Proficiency Index, Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and the average score of Filipino IELTS takers and according to Jimenez, R (2018).

According to Santos et. al (2022), Philippines is the largest English speaking nations of the world, with English as the primary medium of instruction (Cabigon, 2015) yet only two-thirds of the population are fluent in English (Marinas, 2021). Another to consider, is that for the past years, Filipinos have been priding themselves to being proficient in English Language. However, the 2022

report of Hopkin's International Partners reports that Philippines lags behind most ASEAN neighbors in English proficiency.

Before the said report, Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey in 2021 unveiled that the number of Filipinos, aged 10-64 years old, who do not understand what they read, has grown to 20.1 million.

This alarming issue encouraged the researchers to study the reading comprehension competence of the first year students of the Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English and Social Studies.

Objectives

This study aimed to assess the reading comprehension competence of the Bachelor of Secondary Education students enrolled for the School Year 2022-2023, whose majors are English and Social Studies, with reference to their profile variables which are sex, highest educational attainment of mother, highest educational attainment of father, and their first language. Further, their comprehension competence was also assessed under literal, interpretive and applied levels, and to determine the significant difference in the reading comprehension competence of the students when grouped according to profile variables. The findings of this study will redound to the benefit not only of the students but also those involved in the educative processes.

Conceptual Framework

This study was framed on the levels of comprehension by Herber (1978) presenting that there are three levels of comprehension which are literal, interpretive and applied. The literal level is simple getting information which is captured by "reading the lines" statement; the interpretive level is making inferences which is also simply summarized as "reading between the lines" which is sometimes called the critical or evaluative level of comprehension; and the applied level is "reading

beyond the lines" which puts onwards the integration to real life situations and the creation of new

knowledge or concepts.

The Compton College's level of reading comprehension includes literal, inferential,

evaluative, appreciative, evaluative, essential, and critique level which are summarized in this

graphic organizer:
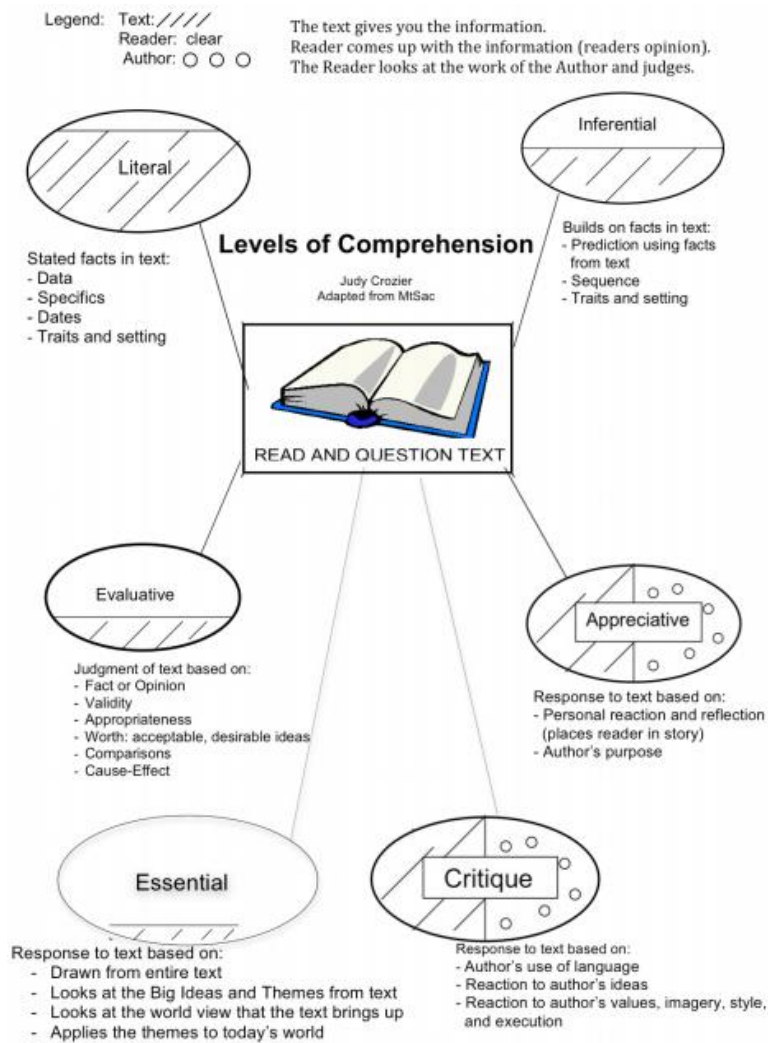
Herber's Reading Comprehension Competence

The reading comprehension competence of Herber is summarized under the literal,

interpretive and applied levels of comprehension as presented by the Centre for Canadian Language

Benchmarks that adapted the model of Vacca and Vacca (1986). Below are the tables for the three

levels of comprehension.

The literal comprehension is the first level of reading comprehension according to Herber.

		Some examples of question starters	CLB document: Stage 1 (Level 1-4). *(Refer to CLB 2012 for items in the list that would be appropriate to your level)*	CLB document: Stage 2 (Level 5-8) *(Refer to CLB 2012 for items in the list that would be appropriate to your level)*
LEVEL ONE	**LITERAL LEVEL** Getting the information – *reproducing what is found/heard in the text*	- These questions often start with but are not limited to: *Who...* *What...* *Where...* *When....* Thought processes could involve: naming, identifying, defining	- Identify facts, items, details - Locate/find details, key information - Recognize X - Follow instructions - Find X - Identify sequence & location signals - Recognize common sentence patterns, phrases, symbols	- Identify key details, key information - Locate information - Follow instructions, directions - Retell X

The tasks under this level require readers to retrieve information that has been explicitly stated in a passage.

Interpretive Comprehension

In the second level of reading comprehension, students interact with the text, read between the lines, and draw inference from the text given. Day and Park (2005) reflected from the work of Pearson and Johnson (1972) that inference requires students to identify meaning that is in the text but not explicitly stated.

		Some examples of question starters	CLB document: Stage 1 (Level 1-4). *(Refer to CLB 2012 for items in the list that would be appropriate to your level)*	CLB document: Stage 2 (Level 5-8) *(Refer to CLB 2012 for items in the list that would be appropriate to your level)*
LEVEL TWO	**INTERPRETIVE LEVEL** Integrating information and making inferences *- seeing the relationship between the ideas found in the literal level*	- These questions could start with: *Why... How... In what way... What is the main idea... Compare... Contrast... What could cause...* Thought processes could involve: integrating, inferring, explaining, stating relationships, comparing, contrasting, summarizing	- Identify or understand purpose, layout, type of text - Get the gist - Identify overall meaning - Find main idea - Interpret graphics - Infer meaning of individual words - Indicate politeness and tone - Identify type and purpose - Compare facts/information/ simple information - Identify meaning of connective words	- Identify implied meaning, reader/writer relationship, mood, attitude of writer, context, register, style, purpose, attitude, intent - Interpret sequence and location signals - Summarize - Identify main idea & key details - Identify layout and organization to find information needed - Identify organization of text and links between paragraphs - Interpret sequence and location signals and implied meaning to infer correct sequence - Find and use information - Get the gist - Distinguish fact/opinion - Compare information - Infer correct sequence - Follow sequences of narrative or processes - Locate and integrate relevant information - Present information in a chart or some other format

Applied Level

This level is also known as critical or evaluative comprehension, applied comprehension extension of the knowledge, skills, and strategies required of literal and inferential comprehension tasks. According to Vacca et al, (2008), and taking the model of 1986, the thought process in this level could involve judging, evaluating, defending choices, predicting, hypothesizing and interpreting.

		Some examples of question starters	CLB document: Stage 1 (Level 1-4). *(Refer to CLB 2012 for items in the list that would be appropriate to your level)*	CLB document: Stage 2 (Level 5-8) *(Refer to CLB 2012 for items in the list that would be appropriate to your level)*
THREE	**APPLIED LEVEL** Using information from the text to construct knowledge (express opinions and form new ideas based on information in	- These questions could start with: - *Predict...* - *Imagine ...* - *Based on what you have read/hear how might...* - *What is your opinion/ What do you think about...support your*	- Use facts to plan or make a decision - Compare facts/opinions to make a choice	- Find and use information - Compare facts to make choices - Identify information to make a decision, determine appropriate info, evaluate - Evaluate ideas to draw conclusions - Evaluate ideas, compare with own opinions - Find and integrate information for

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive-correlation research design was utilized to o determine the profile of the respondents and the reading comprehension competence of the first year college students major in English and Social Studies, and the significant difference between the reading comprehension competence and respondents' profile. This study was conducted at the Cagayan State University - Andrews Campus, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan particularly among the first year Bachelor of Secondary Education students of the College of Teacher Education who were enrolled for the school Year 2022-2023. There were 77 respondents identified through total enumeration sampling procedure. The instrument used was taken from the Classic Learning Test (CLT) series of 2016 developed by Classic Learning Initiatives. This instruments is developed for college admissions for a number of schools in Canada and the USA to provide an alternative to other standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT. The test question was administered among the respondents, and they were informed that the result of the exam was for research purpose only. The frequency count and percentage were used to treat the personal profile and the reading comprehension competence of the students. ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to test the significant difference along the three levels of comprehension and select variables. The reading comprehension competence was measured through the three levels of comprehension using score and percentage.

 Results and Discussions

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	38.96

Female	47	61.04
Total	77	100.00

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to sex. Around 38.96% or 30 are males, while 61.04% or 47 are females. This reveals that the English majors are female dominated.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to first language

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Ibanag	9	11.7
Iluko	38	49.4
Isneg	1	1.3
Itawes	25	32.5
Gaddang	2	2.6
Tagalog	2	2.6
Total	77	100.00

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to first language. The top three first languages spoken by the respondents are Iluko with 38 out of 77 or 49.4% of the total population, followed by Itawes with 25 out of 77 32.5% of the total population and Ibanag with 9 out of 77 or 11.7% of the total population. This reveals that the First year English Majors are dominated by Iluko speaking individuals.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to mother's educational attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary Graduate	8	10.4
Elementary Undergraduate	9	11.7

High School Graduate	12	15.6
High School Undergraduate	9	11.7
College Graduate	23	29.9
College Undergraduate	15	19.5
Vocational	1	1.3
Total	77	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents according to mother's educational background. As shown in the table, majority of the respondents' mother's educational attainment are College Graduates with 29.9% or 23 of the total population followed by College Undergraduate with 19.5% or 15 of the total population. Also, there are 15.6% or 12 who are High School Graduates while the 11.7% or 9 of the total population is shared by Elementary Undergraduate and High School Undergraduate. This reveals that most of the respondents' mothers are college graduates.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to father's educational attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary Graduate	5	6.5
Elementary Undergraduate	8	10.4
High School Graduate	27	35.1
High School Undergraduate	8	10.4
College Graduate	12	15.6
College Undergraduate	14	18.2
Vocational	3	3.9
Total	77	100

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents according to father's educational background. As shown in the table, majority of the respondents' father's educational attainment are High School Graduates with 35.1% or 27 of the total population followed by College Undergraduate with 18.2% or 14 of the total population. This reveals that most of the respondents' fathers are high school graduates.

Table 5. Reading comprehension competence along literal level

Literal (12)	Frequency	
10-12 (88%-100%)	0	Very Competent
6 – 9 (75%-87%)	40	Competent
1-5 (74below)	37	Not Competent

Table 5 shows the reading comprehension of the respondents along literal level. As reflected in the table, 40 out of 77 of the total population of the respondents scored 6-9 items correctly having a qualitative description competent. In addition, 37 out of 77 students scored 1-5 items correctly which shows that they are not competent. No one among the respondents scored very competent in the literal level. This now highlights the literacy problem in the Philippines as reported by FLEMMS (Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey) in 2018. This also agrees with Hopkin's International Partners reports that Philippines lags behind most ASEAN neighbors in English proficiency.

Table 6. Reading comprehension competence along interpretive level

Interpretive	Frequency	
10-12 (88%-100%)	1	Very Competent
6 – 9 (75%-87%)	36	Competent

1-5 (74below)	40	Not Competent

Table 6 shows the reading comprehension of the respondents along interpretive level. As reflected in the table, 40 out of 77 of the total population of the respondents scored 1-5 items correctly having a qualitative description not competent. In addition, 36 out of 77 students scored 6-9 items correctly which shows that they are competent. Only one among the respondents scored very competent in the interpretive.

Table 7. Reading comprehension competence along applied level

Applied	Frequency	
10-12 (88%-100%)	0	Very Competent
6 – 9 (75%-87%)	15	Competent
1-5 (74below)	62	Not Competent

Table 7 shows the reading comprehension of the respondents along applied level. As reflected in the table, 62 out of 77 of the total population of the respondents scored 1-5 items correctly having a qualitative description not competent. In addition, 15 out of 77 students scored 6-9 items correctly which shows that they are competent. No one among the respondents scored very competent in the interpretive.

Table 8. Summary table of scores reading comprehension competence

Literal, Interpretive, Applied (36)	Frequency	
26-36 (88%-100%)	0	Very Competent
15-25(75%-87%)	39	Competent
1-14 (74below)	38	Not Competent

Table 8 shows the summary of reading comprehension competence of the respondents.as reflected in the table, 38 out of 77 of the total population of respondents got a total score which ranges from 1 to 14. In addition, 39 out of 77 students got a total score which ranges from 15 to 25. No one among the respondents got a total score which ranges from 26-36. With the summary of scores, 39 of the respondents are competent in the reading comprehension. However, 38 of the respondents which is half of the total population are not competent in reading comprehension.

Table 9. Difference in the reading comprehension competence of the students when grouped according to First Language (L1)

	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision
Literal	Ybanag	1.73	0.639235	Accept Ho
	Itawes	1.5		
	Ilokano	1.42		
	Isneg	0		
	Tagalog	0.71		
	Gaddang	0.71		

Alpha=0.05

Level	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision
Interpretive	Ybanag	1.54	0.295273	Accept Ho
	Itawes	1.40		
	Ilokano	1.64		
	Isneg	0		
	Tagalog	2.12		
	Gaddang	0		

Alpha=0.05

Level	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision
Applied	Ybanag	1.58	0.586786	Accept Ho
	Itawes	1.58		
	Ilokano	1.66		
	Isneg	0		
	Tagalog	3.54		
	Gaddang	0		

Alpha=0.05

Table 9 shows the ANOVA: Single Factor Analysis of Variance of respondents when grouped according to First Language along the three levels of reading comprehension. There is no significant difference between the first language and the reading comprehension competence of the respondents. Therefore, the first language(L1) of the respondents does not affect their reading comprehension competence.

Table 10. Difference in the reading comprehension competence of the students when grouped according to educational attainment of the mother

Levels	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision
Literal	Elementary Graduate	2.01	0.537538	Accept Ho
	Elementary Undergraduate	1.32		
	High School Graduate	1.47		

	High School Undergraduate	1.45		
	College Graduate	1.62		
	College Undergraduate	1.39		
	Vocational	0		

Alpha=0.05

Levels	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision
Interpretive	Elementary Graduate	1.60	0.142387	Accept Ho
	Elementary Undergraduate	1.54		
	High School Graduate	1.41		
	High School Undergraduate	1		
	College Graduate	1.62		
	College Undergraduate	1.64		
	Vocational	0		

Alpha=0.05

Levels	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision

Applied	Elementary Graduate	1.60	0.833091	Accept Ho
	Elementary Undergraduate	2		
	High School Graduate	1.50		
	High School Undergraduate	1.64		
	College Graduate	1.81		
	College Undergraduate	1.44		
	Vocational	0		

Alpha=0.05

Table 10 shows the ANOVA: Single Factor Analysis of Variance of the respondents when grouped according to the educational attainment of the mother along the three levels of reading comprehension. There is no significant difference between the educational attainment of the mother and the reading comprehension of the respondents. This reveals that the educational attainment of the mother does not affect the reading comprehension competence of the respondents.

Table 11. Difference in the reading comprehension competence of the students when grouped according to educational attainment of the father

Levels	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision
Literal	Elementary Graduate	1.39	0.607603	Accept Ho

	Elementary Undergraduate	1.30		
	High School Graduate	1.55		
	High School Undergraduate	1.49		
	College Graduate	1.17		
	College Undergraduate	1.60		
	Vocational	1.53		

Alpha=0.05

Levels	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision
Interpretive	Elementary Graduate	1.30	0.399489	Accept Ho
	Elementary Undergraduate	1.34		
	High School Graduate	1.71		
	High School Undergraduate	1.04		
	College Graduate	1.17		

| | College Undergraduate | 1.50 | | |
| | Vocational | 0.58 | | |

Alpha=0.05

Levels	Variables	SD	P-value	Decision
Applied	Elementary Graduate	1.52	0.238087	Accept Ho
	Elementary Undergraduate	1.89		
	High School Graduate	1.78		
	High School Undergraduate	1.51		
	College Graduate	1.34		
	College Undergraduate	1.38		
	Vocational	1.73		

Alpha=0.05   Table 10.3

Table 11 shows the ANOVA: Single Factor Analysis of Variance of the respondents when grouped according to the educational attainment of the father along the three levels of reading comprehension. There is no significant difference between the educational attainment of the father and the reading comprehension of the respondents. This reveals that the educational attainment of the father does not affect the reading comprehension competence of the respondents.

Summary of Findings

Most of the respondents were female than male, and most them are speaking the Ilocano language at home. With regard to educational attainment of the parents of the respondents, most of their mothers are college graduates, while most of their fathers are high school graduates. The respondents are competent with the literal level of reading comprehension but not competent in both the interpretive and applied levels of reading comprehension. Further, there is no significant difference between the first language and the reading comprehension competence of the respondents. There is no significant difference between the educational attainment of their parents (father and mother) with the reading comprehension of the respondents.

Conclusion:

The reading comprehension level of the first year students whose major is English as revealed in the result of the study is more on the literal level. So the respondents are only competent in the literal level but not competent in both the interpretive and applied levels of reading comprehension.

Recommendations:

Based on the summary of findings, the following are the recommendations:

1. That the learners particularly the BSED English major be given more reading activities by their English professors to enhance their reading ability.

2. The reading program for the learners be intensified by taking enough time for the learners to have guided reading activities.

3. Reading classes not only in the English classes but also in other disciplines be intensified.

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