

Level of Reading Comprehension Among Grade 11 Learners Basis for Instructional Material Development



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ABSTRACT: This descriptive study aimed to determine the level of reading comprehension among 323 randomly selected Grade 11 learners from the academic and TVL tracks of Estancia National High School, through the use of a researcher-made instrument which had undergone validity and reliability test. Result revealed that when taken as an entire group, the females, the academic track Grade 11 learners, those with post graduate parents were “good” in literal and interpretive levels while “fair” in evaluative level. The males, the TVL track Grade 11 learners, those with elementary education parents were “fair” in the three levels. Those with high school education parents were “good” in literal but fair in interpretive and evaluative levels. Those whose parents had tertiary education were “good” in all three levels of reading comprehension. There was a significant difference in the three levels of reading comprehension when Grade 11 learners were classified as to sex and track. There was a significant difference in literal and evaluative levels when Grade 11 learners were classified as to parents’ highest educational attainment but no significant difference in interpretive level. Among the three levels, it was in the evaluative level that the Grade 11 learners barely passed. Based on the result of the study an instructional material was developed.

KEYWORDS: Reading Comprehension, Grade 11 Learners, Literal Level, Interpretive Level, Evaluative Level

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension as pointed out by Rutzler (2017) involves not only reading the words, but also deriving meaning from them or is the capability to perceive and understand the meanings communicated by texts (Nemati et al., 2016). It is being able to integrate reading with thinking and reasoning (Brooks, 2014), a complex process that requires the activation of numerous cognitive skills (Yee, 2010), or involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text like previous knowledge and strategy use as well as variables related to the text itself such as interest in text and understanding of text types (Klingner, 2007). When readers read, they do not only use their eyes to receive information from written symbols but they also make use of their intellectual acumen or cognitive prowess to deduce what those written symbols intend to meaningfully communicate to them (Bernardo, 2015).

Reading comprehension according to Umali (2013) is a very important skill students must possess. It does not only increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading according to Brooks (2014), but strong reading comprehension he continued, helps in all other subjects and in the personal lives. Students’ level of reading comprehension is the pivot to all other subjects, as it directly affects student’s attainment in the entire academic process (Jude & Ajayi, 2012). A study by Chege (2012) also concluded that reading comprehension is related to academic performance. Effective reading is an important avenue to effective learning. It is interconnected with the total educational process (Acheaw & Larson, 2014). After learning how to read effectively, students will be able to learn effectively (Pardede, 2010). Reading comprehension is the fundamental way of learning new information and it is the most significant skill required for the students’ success (Nemati et al, 2016). Consequently, students who experience difficulties in reading will be handicapped in acquiring knowledge and in succeeding academically (Bharuthram, 2012).

There are levels of reading comprehension (Smith, 1969; Westwood, 2003; Umali, 2013). First is the literal level, which involves surface understanding only. Common questions used to elicit this type of thinking are who, what, when and where questions. According to Bernardo (2013) these are the easiest to answer because the answer is expressed directly in the text. Interpretive level is when the reader gleans what is implied or meant, rather than what is actually stated. This level involves drawing inferences or reading between the lines. Readers tap into prior knowledge/experience and attach new learning to old information. Evaluative or critical level is when readers read beyond the lines. The learners are able to synthesize information, to question and to evaluate the author, to think critically and to form new, fresh ideas from the text (Ariong, 2013).

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Catts and Kamhi (2017) pointed out that to make learners proficient in reading is one of the essential goals of the educational system. The Department of Education (DepEd) has continuously aimed to improve the reading comprehension of public school students, through the implementation of different projects. For instance, the implementation of the Every Child a Reader Program can be observed in all public elementary schools in the country. It is a national program that addresses the thrust of DepED to make every Filipino child a reader at his/her own level. However, despite all the efforts reading problem is still prevalent. In the study of Bilbao, Donguilla and Vasay (2016) the overall reading comprehension of the education students in literal level, interpretive level, and evaluative level was satisfactory with the descriptive level of moderate which illustrates that there is still a need to provide a reading program for the education students to reach the maximum level of reading comprehension. While in the study of Imam, Abas, Jamil, and Ismail (2014), the students performed at the level of near mastery in getting main idea and making inference and low mastery in understanding vocabulary in context, noting details, predicting outcome, and drawing conclusion. The majority of the students had low mastery level in reading comprehension skills with a mean percentage of 47.37 which is equivalent to a failing mark according to the DepEd grading system.

One of the difficulties faced by secondary school teachers today is that many students come into their classrooms without the requisite knowledge, skills, or disposition to read and comprehend the materials placed before them (Lipka, 2010). The phenomenon of poor reading comprehension performance in English is a great challenge for teachers, especially in the senior high school. So this study was conducted to determine the reading comprehension in literal level, interpretive level and evaluative level among Grade 11 learners of Estancia National High School. Moreover it sought to determine the significant difference in literal, interpretive, and evaluative levels when learners were classified as to sex, track, and parents' highest educational attainment.

METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

Descriptive research approach was utilized in the study. Descriptive research according to Prieto et al. (2017) is a means of discussing new meanings, describing what exists, determining the frequency with which something occurs and categorizing information. It involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the present nature, composition or processes of phenomena. The focus is on prevailing conditions, or how a person, group, or thing behaves or functions at the time of the study. It often involves some type of comparison or contrast.

B. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were the three hundred twenty-three randomly selected Grade 11 learners of Estancia National High School for the academic year 2017-2018. They were classified as to sex, track, and parents' highest educational attainment.

C. Instrument

A researcher-made instrument was utilized in the study. A 105 item reading comprehension test in multiple choice, where each level of reading comprehension had 35 items was submitted to the panel of experts for validation. The retained 103 items were then administered for reliability testing to three national high schools in two neighboring towns. The KR-20 of 0.94 showed that the instrument was reliable. After the reliability test, seven items were eliminated. The retained 96 item test was used to determine the level of reading comprehension of Grade 11 learners. It has two parts: the personal information questionnaire to gather information about the respondent's sex, track, and parents' highest educational attainment then the reading comprehension test in a multiple choice form.

D. Data Gathering Procedure

As soon as the test was noted as valid and reliable, a letter of permission to conduct the study was secured from the school Principal and the assistant school Principal of Estancia National High School to utilize the Grade 11 learners enrolled in academic and TVL tracks for the academic year 2017-2018 as respondents of this study. The test was personally administered. After the Grade 11 learners had answered, the test papers were then gathered and checked.

E. Treatment of Data

The data in this study were analysed using mean, standard deviation, t-test for independent sample, and one-way ANOVA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Level of reading comprehension of Grade 11 learners when taken as an entire group and when classified as to sex, track and parents' highest educational attainment

When taken as an entire group, the reading comprehension of Grade 11 learners in literal level ($M=11.11, SD=4.24$) and interpretive level ($M=15.79, SD=6.57$) was "good". Thus this means that Grade 11 learners can answer basic information, follow simple instruction, apply and analyze cognitive processes though not that high.

The Grade 11 learners in the evaluative level ($M=10.56, SD=4.24$) was "fair" which shows that they have the difficulty to

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make judgments as they read.

This result is inconsistent with the findings of the study of Barasaba et al. (2012) in which for the score of 8 none of the Grade 8 students mastered the literal and evaluative level of reading comprehension. For the score of 7 only 2 of the 60 students were able to get a score in the literal level and none scored in the evaluative level, which means that only a small number have nearing mastery in the literal level and none in the next levels of reading comprehension. So as with the study of Sari (2015) in which literal level was very good, interpretive level was low, and critical (evaluative) level was failed.

When classified as to sex, the males' reading comprehension in literal level ($M=9.59, SD=3.98$), interpretive level ($M=12.94; SD=5.78$) and evaluative level ($M=9.10, SD=3.95$) was "fair", while the females in literal level ($M=12.29; SD=4.06$) and interpretive level ($M=18.00; SD=6.30$) were "good", and in evaluative level ($M=11.69; SD=4.13$) "fair".

The result indicated that females outscored the males in the literal and interpretive levels. However, both males and females had the same low performance in the evaluative level but looking into the mean scores the females scored higher than the males. This result confirms the study of Tibus and Pobadora (2016) which shows that in the literal and interpretive levels the males were considerably low than females. Even with the study conducted by Logan and Johnston (2009) where girls are better in reading comprehension than boys.

When classified as to track, the reading comprehension of academic track Grade 11 learners in literal level ($M=12.68, SD=4.05$) and interpretive level ($M=18.83, SD=6.41$) was "good", and in evaluative level ($M=12.13, SD=4.64$) was "fair". This means that learners in the academic track performed well in literal and interpretive level but hardly passed in the evaluative level. The TVL learners in literal ($M=10.10; SD=4.06$), interpretive ($M=13.83; SD=5.90$), and evaluative level ($M=9.54; SD=3.63$) were "fair". This result means that TVL track learners find it hard to pass the three levels.

When classified as to parents' highest educational attainment, the reading comprehension of Grade 11 learners with post graduate parents was "good" in literal ($M=11.45, SD=4.71$) and interpretive levels ($M=16.86, SD=6.53$), and "fair" in evaluative level ($M=11.55, SD=3.49$). This means that learners with post graduate parents were able to pass the literal and interpretive level but were challenged in the evaluative level. Those with tertiary education parents were "good" in literal ($M=13.02, SD=4.56$), interpretive ($M=18.16, SD=6.30$) and evaluative levels ($M=13.09, SD=4.84$). This means that learners with parents who have tertiary education performed well in the three levels. This result is explained by the study of Chin and Ko (2008) which revealed that mothers above high school have more positive reading attitudes and frequently read at home. They also took part in their children's reading activities since their children were young. With early and recent literacy experience children have better reading achievement. Those with high school education parents were "good" in literal level ($M=11.18, SD=4.17$) and "fair" in interpretive ($M=15.45, SD=6.78$), and evaluative levels ($M=10.27, SD=4.07$). This means that learners with high school parents did well only in the literal level and were having difficulty in both interpretive and evaluative levels. Those with elementary education parents were "fair" in literal ($M=9.68, SD=3.59$), interpretive ($M=14.88, SD=5.96$), and evaluative levels ($M=9.43, SD=3.88$). This means that learners whose parents have elementary education found the three levels challenging.

Table 1. Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 11 Learners when Taken as an Entire Group And when Classified as to Sex, Track and Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Category	N	Mean	SD
Description			
Entire Group			
Literal level good	323	11.11	4.24
Interpretive level good	323	15.79	6.57
Evaluative level fair	323	10.56	4.24
Sex			
Male			
Literal level fair	141	9.59	3.98
Interpretive level fair	141	12.94	5.78

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Evaluative level fair	141	9.10	3.95
Female			
Literal level good	182	12.29	4.06
Interpretive level good	182	18.00	6.30
Evaluative level fair	182	11.69	4.13
Track Academic			
Literal level good	127	12.68	4.05
Interpretive level good	127	18.83	6.41
Evaluative level fair	127	12.13	4.64
TVL			
Literal level fair	196	10.10	4.06
Interpretive level fair	196	13.83	5.90
Evaluative level fair	196	9.54	3.63
Parents' highest educational attainment			
Post Graduate			
Literal level good	22	11.45	4.71
Interpretive level good	22	16.86	6.53
Evaluative level fair	22	11.55	3.49
Tertiary			
Literal level good	45	13.02	4.56
Interpretive level good	45	18.16	6.30
Evaluative level good	45	13.09	4.84
High School			
Literal level good	182	11.18	4.17
Interpretive level Fair	182	15.45	6.78
Evaluative level fair	182	10.27	4.07
Elementary			
Literal level fair	74	9.68	3.59
Interpretive level fair	74	14.88	5.96
Evaluative level fair	74	9.43	3.88

Note: Literal level (1.00-5.20 poor, 5.21-10.40 fair, 10.42-16.60 good, 16.61-20.80 very good, 20.81-26.00 excellent)

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Interpretive level (0.00-7.80 poor, 7.81-15.60 fair, 15.61-23.40 good, 23.41-31.20 very good, 31.21-39.00 excellent)

Evaluative level (0.00-6.20 poor, 6.21-12.40 fair, 12.41-18.60 good, 18.61-24.80 very good, 24.81-31.00 excellent)

B. Difference on the level of reading comprehension of Grade 11 learners when classified as to sex

An independent sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the literal level of reading comprehension of males ($M=9.59, SD=3.98$) and females ($M=12.29, SD=4.06$); $t(323)=-5.98, p=.001$; in the interpretive level of males ($M=12.94, SD=5.78$) and females ($M=18.00, SD=6.30$); $t(323)=-7.41, p=.001$; and in the evaluative level of males ($M=9.10, SD=9.00$) and females ($M=11.69, SD=4.13$); $t(323)=-5.70, p=.001$. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

Through the result it can be inferred that there is a big difference in the level of reading comprehension between the female and the male Grade 11 learners. By looking into the mean the females had higher reading comprehension in literal, interpretive, and evaluative levels compared to the males.

This result confirms the study of Pagal, Miafuentes and Ypanto (2017) where there was a statistical difference in the literal and evaluative levels between the male and the female Grade 8 students. However, it negates the study of Oda and Abdul-Kadhim (2017) where there was no significant difference in the literal and inferential level between the male and female college students but then it was consistent in the evaluative level where there was a significant difference between the male and the female. The females being better in reading comprehension than the males is supported by the study of Arellano (2013) which revealed that female students had higher level of reading comprehension in English. The female students got higher results in all the analysed parameters related to reading comprehension in English. They obtain the highest differences in *deducing meaning from the context*, 0,4991. This difference in achievement between males and females was significant. All of these students were aged 16.

Table 2. Difference on the Grade 11 Learners' Level of Reading Comprehension when Classified as to Sex

	Mean	Mean Diff	df	t	P
Literal					
Male	9.59				
Female	12.29	-2.70	321	-5.98	.001
Interpretive					
Male	12.94				
Female	18.00	-5.06	321	-7.42	.001
Evaluative					
Male	9.10				
Female	11.69	-2.59	321	-5.70	.001

B. Difference on the level of reading comprehension of Grade 11 learners when classified as to track

The difference in the level of reading comprehension of Grade 11 learners when they were classified as to track was determined using an independent sample t-test.

Results revealed that there was a significant difference in the literal level of reading comprehension of the Grade 11 learners on the academic track ($M=12.68, SD=4.05$) and TVL ($M=10.10, SD=9.00$); $t(323)=5.59, p=.001$, interpretive level, academic track ($M=18.83, SD=6.41$) and TVL ($M=13.83, SD=5.90$); $t(323)=7.19, p=.001$; and evaluative level academic track ($M=12.13, SD=4.64$) and TVL learners ($M=9.54, SD=3.63$); $t(323)=-5.60, p=.001$. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

The result implied that the academic track learners performed better in the three levels of reading comprehension based on their mean scores compared to the TVL track learners. This maybe because the academic track focuses on soft skills which include critical thinking, problem solving, and communication while TVL is more on practical or technical skills.

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Table 3. Difference on the Grade 11 Learners' Level of Reading Comprehension when Classified as to Track

	Mean	Mean Difference	Df	T	P
Track					
Academic	43.63				
TVL	33.46				
Literal					
		2.58	321	5.59	.001
Academic	12.68				
TVL	10.10				
Interpretive					
		5.00	321	7.19	.001
Academic	18.83				
TVL	13.83				
Evaluative					
		2.59	321	5.60	.001
Academic	12.13				
TVL	9.54				

C. Difference on the level of reading comprehension of Grade 11 learners when classified as to parents' highest educational attainment

To determine the difference of the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 11 learners when classified as to parents' highest educational attainment, a One-Way ANOVA was used. The respondents were divided into four groups according to their parents' highest educational attainment (Group 1: Elementary; Group 2: High School; Group 3: Tertiary; Group 4: Post Graduate).

Result revealed that there was a statistically significant difference on the literal level of reading comprehension for the four groups $F(2,323)=6.23, p=.001$. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

Post-hoc comparison using the Scheffe test indicated that the mean score for Grp1, elementary ($M=9.68, SD=3.59$) was significantly different from Grp3:Tertiary ($M=13.02, SD=4.56$).

The result goes to show that the literal level of reading comprehension of the respondents varies depending upon the educational attainment of their parents and the evident difference was found between parents with elementary education and with tertiary education. Respondents whose parents are with tertiary education performed better in literal level of reading comprehension compared with those whose parents are with elementary education. This can be explained by Magnuson (2007) and Westerlund and Lagerberg (2008) when they said that the level of parental education is a determining factor in children's reading abilities and achievement.

There was no statistically significant difference in the interpretive level of reading comprehension scores for the four groups $F(2,323)=2.83, p=.059$. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

Based on the result it can be inferred that whatever is the educational attainment of the parents of the respondents whether elementary, high school, tertiary, or postgraduate the reading comprehension of the respondents in interpretive level does not vary. There was a statistically significant difference in the evaluative level of reading comprehension for the four groups $F(2,323)=8.28, p=.001$.

Post-hoc comparison using the Scheffe test indicated that the mean score for Grp1, elementary ($M=9.43, SD=3.88$) was significantly different from Grp3:Tertiary ($M=13.09, SD=4.84$), Grp2:High School($M=10.27, SD=4.07$), and post graduate ($M=11.55, SD=3.49$). Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

The result implied that the respondents whose parents are with elementary education do not perform well in literal, interpretive, and evaluative level in reading comprehension unlike those whose parents are with high school, tertiary, and post graduate education who do well.

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Table 4. Difference on the Level of Reading Comprehension of Grade 11 Learners when classified as to Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Level	M	N	Df	F	P
Literal			3	6.23	.001
Elementary	9.68	74			
High School	11.18	182			
Tertiary	13.02	45			
Post Graduate	11.45	22			
Interpretive			3	2.83	0.59
Elementary	14.89	74			
High School	15.45	182			
Tertiary	18.16	45			
Post Graduate	16.86	22			
Evaluative			3	8.28	.001
Elementary	9.43	74			
High School	10.27	182			
Tertiary	13.09	45			
Post Graduate	11.55	22			

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result it can be concluded that most of the Grade 11 learners were capable on answering the literal level of reading comprehension while they found evaluative level challenging. This may be attributed to the fact that the questions of literal comprehension can be answered directly and explicitly from the text. As for the evaluative comprehension the reader is required to move beyond the text or critically analyze it. The result shows that the critical thinking skills of Grade 11 learners is not developed, practiced and honed.

The result showed that the females have better reading comprehension than the males. Although this is already an old issue but still it is proven in this study.

The academic track performed better in reading comprehension than the TVL track, which could be due to the fact that academic track learners are being prepared for college courses such as engineering, sciences, business management so they give emphasis or more focus on enhancing their reading to augment them academically. Unlike the TVL track which invests primarily on students skills which they would be needing in their work space. TVL is for those students who wanted to work after graduation, because it immediately prepares the students for their future job.

There is a big difference in the literal and evaluative level of reading comprehension between the learners whose parents are with elementary education from those learners whose parents are with high school, tertiary, and post graduate education. In the interpretive level whatever is the educational attainment of the parents the learners' reading comprehension is the same.

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