

# Reading Comprehension Levels in English among Grade 7 Students in Caraga State University, Philippines

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**Abstract** The study determined the reading comprehension levels in English of Grade 7 students of Caraga State University, Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte. It also described the profile of the participants and the perceived factors which determine the participants' reading comprehension levels in terms of availability of literary reading materials at home, adequacy of reading instruction in reading, availability of reading materials in school, and reading habits. The study made use of the descriptive research design using survey technique and a researcher-made questionnaire. There were 132 participants involved in the study. The statistical tools used were Frequency count and Percentage distribution, the Mean and Standard Deviation (SD), t-test, and analysis of variance. It was found out that there was no significant relationship between the participants' profile and factors of reading toward their reading comprehension level. It gave way to deal with some of the levels of reading comprehensions that were weak, namely interpretative, critical, and application that requires desirable intervention program.

**Keywords** English language, Reading comprehension, Reading comprehension levels, Profile of the participants, Reading factor

## 1. Introduction

English language is a medium of communication which helps the members of a community to communicate and interact with one another. It involves both verbal and non-verbal communication. Reading is a nonverbal communication that enriches ones greater understanding and vocabulary [1].

In schools, knowledge and information in English have been acquired often by reading. It has been an outstanding skill in getting information through translation and understanding the written text from different reading materials [4]. It has been considered the first provider of relevant information for other communication skills such as writing, speaking, and listening [3].

As observed, the demand for English proficiency through reading among students is rising. Reading comprehension levels (literal, interpretive, critical, and application) have to be introduced to students for deeper understanding and better usage of the appropriate texts read [5]. This attracted considerable attention in the present study. Despite the student's mastery of the basic elements of English such as grammar and vocabulary, their reading comprehension levels still need improvement.

There is that 10 to 15% of the general school population had experienced difficulty in reading [3]. She said that reading difficulties are the principal causes of failure in school. Reading experiences strongly influence a student's feeling of competency. If not achieved, there could be reading failure that may lead to misbehavior, anxiety, and lack of motivation in comprehending any of the reading materials in English [6]. It is within this context that the researcher was prompted to study the reading comprehension levels in English of the Grade 7 students of Caraga State University High School, Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte.

## 2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In the context of the present research, the framework of the study is illustrated at the research paradigm in figure 1 below. The first box on the upper left contains the participants profile in terms of sex, parents' highest educational attainment, and parents' monthly income. The second box on the lower left contains the factors which determine the participants' reading comprehension levels in English such as literal, interpretive, critical, and application. *Literal level* refers to the acquisition of information that is directly stated in a selection. *Interpretive Level* is "reading between the line" in which connotative meanings of the line are well-understood, and making inferences. *Critical level*

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refers to the evaluation of ideas and information. *Application Level* refers to the drawing of insights and conclusions from the reading text which can be applied in the real situations. The third box at the center contains the factors which

determine the participants' comprehensive levels in English in terms of reading which include the availability of literary reading materials at home, adequacy of reading instruction, availability of reading material in school, and reading habits.

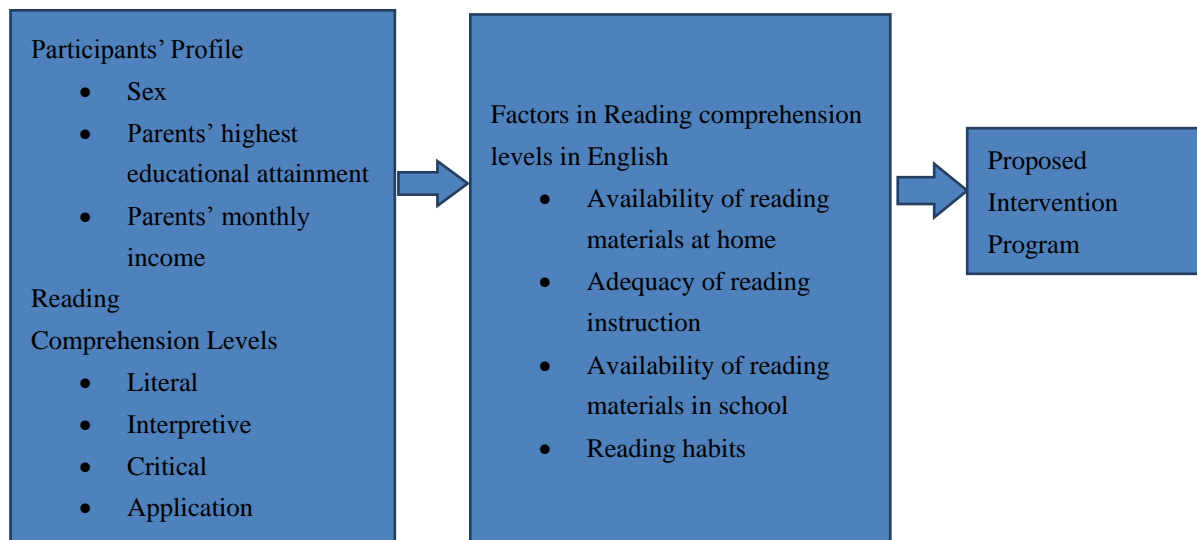


Figure 1. The Research Paradigm

### 3. Research Design and Methodology

The study made use of the descriptive-survey design. This served as a technique which focused and identified the participants' profile, the factors of reading, and listening and their reading comprehension levels that are weak. It sought to answer the following questions on the profile of the participants, on their level of comprehension, on factors determining their reading comprehension, and on their levels of significance and difference to both profile and reading factors. All three Grade 7 sections served as respondents.

In gathering the data, the researcher-made questionnaire was used. The instrument consisted of three important parts: Part I was used to determine the profile of the participants. Part II of the questionnaire solicited the participants' levels of reading comprehension and anchored on the Higher Order Thinking Skills on the work of Castigador (2007). A pretest was administered to the Grade 7 students of Father Saturnino Urios University-High School at Ampayon, Butuan City for its validation. Part III dealt with the factors that determine the participants' reading comprehension levels in English on the Reading Factors.

The data gathered were statistically tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted through Frequency and percentage distribution, Mean and Standard deviation, the t-test, and the analysis of variance. The result was dealt with the nonparametric test for parameters estimation of the distribution from the sample data. It determines the ordinal variables as an outcome for interpretation.

### 4. Results and Discussions

Table 1 below shows the profile of Grade 7 students. As indicated in the same table, 53 (40.15%) of the participants are males and 79 (59.85%) are females with a total of 132. The result shows that female students are greater in number. As to their parents' educational attainment, it can be gleaned that it has the total of 102 (77.27%). These point out that a majority of their parents entered college and educated. This provides the greater social status of the family. As to their parents' monthly income, it can be gleaned in the table that there were 44 (33.33%) of the income earned by both parents ranging from P15,000 and above, and 34 (25.75%) parents had an income of P10,000 to P14,000. This implies that majority of the participants have parents who can support them to school and even provide materials at home for personal consumption. The rest belongs to the age brackets of P7,000 to P9,999 down to below P4,000. This emphasizes a degree of deficiency to be provided to the students in terms of materials at home for reading improvements.

As reflected in table 2 below, **literal level** has an average mean of 7.66 with a standard deviation of 1.31 and verbally interpreted as *Very Satisfactory*. From this, it implies that most of the participants were able to comprehend the information from the questionnaire. **The interpretive level** shows that it has 4.67 average mean with a standard deviation of 1.48 and verbally interpreted as *Fair*. This implies that some of the participants were not able to infer what is being asked to some reading materials. **Critical level**

of the participants was 3.70 average mean with the standard deviation of 1.62, lower than that of the interpretive level, which is verbally interpreted as *Fair*. From this, one can infer that the participants have to improve their skill in this level since this level requires them to read analytically. And **application level** of the participants which marked an average mean of 5.7 and standard deviation of 1.84 which implies a *satisfactory rate*. This result simply indicates that the participants are required to improve more this skill in reading for learning application.

**Table 1.** Profile of Participants

Variables	f (n = 132)	%
Sex		
Male	53	40.15
Female	79	59.85
Highest Educational Attainment		
Father		
Elementary	1	0.75
High School	23	17.42
College level and graduate	102	77.27
M.A. level and graduate	6	4.54
Ph. D. level and graduate	0	0.00
Mother		
Elementary	1	0.75
High School	24	18.18
College level and graduate	99	75.00
M.A. level and graduate	7	5.30
Ph. D. level and graduate	1	0.75
Parents' Monthly Income		
P 4,000 and below	11	8.33
P 4,000 to P 6,999	18	13.63
P 7,000 to P 9,999	25	18.93
P 10,000 to P 14,999	34	25.75
P 15,000 and above	44	33.33

To sum it all, the result was *Satisfactory* with a total average mean of 5.45 and standard deviation of 1.56. Two levels, namely **Literal and Application** are appreciated, and these have to be sustained and further developed. These levels can alert the students as to how words are learned, used, and applied to a reading situation for learning [4].

The extent factors in reading comprehension levels (table 3) have the overall average mean of 3.07 and slightly different in their standard deviation of 0.40, which is interpreted as “Extensive”. The result implies that there are reading factors which require slight assistance. The following factors are the *Availability of reading materials at home*, and the *reading habit*. Both imply that these should be provided regularly with the appropriate and healthy reading materials and gradual monitoring on the part of the parents and teachers to encourage their students to spend more time in reading for improvement of their reading skill.

It is crucial that young students are taught the importance of getting meaning from reading materials [1]. Appropriate materials should suit their reading needs. Reading through the guidance of teachers and parents would create skillful readers who use prior knowledge, make connections, visualize, infer, and ask questions while reading [2].

**Table 2.** Participants' Reading Comprehension Levels

Indicators	<u>M</u>	SD	VI
<i>Literal</i>	7.66	1.31	VS
<i>Interpretive</i>	4.67	1.48	F
<i>Critical</i>	3.70	1.62	F
<i>Application</i>	5.77	1.84	S
Overall	5.45	1.56	S

Legend:

Scale	Parameters	Verbal Interpretation (VI)	Qualitative Description
1	7.25 - 10.00	Very Satisfactory (VS)	Very Good
2	5.00 - 7.24	Satisfactory (S)	Good
3	2.50 - 4.99	Fair (F)	Weak
4	0.00 - 2.49	Poor (P)	Bad

**Table 3.** The Reading Factors

Factors for Reading	<u>M</u> (Ave.)	SD	VI
Reading			
<i>Availability of Reading Materials at Home</i>	2.84	0.51	Extensive
<i>Adequacy of Reading Instruction</i>	3.33	0.51	Very Extensive
<i>Availability of Reading Materials in School</i>	3.31	0.70	Very Extensive
<i>Reading Habit</i>	2.80	0.53	Extensive
Overall	3.07	0.40	Extensive

**Table 4.** ANOVA on the Participants' Reading Level According to their Profile

VARIABLES	SS	Df	MS	SS	Df			
	Effect	Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	P	DECISION
<i>Sex</i>	0.61	1	0.61	35.63	130	2.23	0.1380	Don't Reject H <sub>0</sub>
<i>FHEA</i>	1.41	3	0.47	34.83	128	1.73	0.1636	Don't Reject H <sub>0</sub>
<i>MHEA</i>	2.41	4	0.60	33.83	127	2.26	0.0662	Don't Reject H <sub>0</sub>
<i>PMI</i>	0.36	4	0.09	35.88	127	0.32	0.8638	Don't Reject H <sub>0</sub>

Legend:

*FHEA*- Father's Highest Educational Attainment

*MHEA*- Mother's Highest Educational Attainment

*PMI*- Parents' Monthly Income

The figures shown in table 4 confirm that sex profile has the p value of 0.1380, fathers' educational attainment has the p value of 0.1636, mothers' educational attainment has p value of 0.0662, and parents monthly income has the p of 0.8638. The results are greater than the 0.05 test of significance. The decision of both variables is "Do not reject the null hypothesis" which implies that the profile of the participants does not affect the reading comprehension levels of the participants.

Table 5 shows that the factors on reading comprehension have the p-value of 0.758. The p values is greater than 0.05 test of significant relationship. Hence, null hypothesis is not rejected. This warrants that there is no significant relationship between the factors of reading to reading comprehension levels. This means that reading comprehension levels of the participants are not affected by the factors that determine their reading skills.

The result shows that the factors have no significant relationship to the participants' reading comprehension levels that could strongly affect their reading skills. The factors in reading do not bring disruption to the reading skill of the participants.

**Table 5.** Relationship between the Participants' Reading and the Factors in Reading

VARIABLES	Factors on Reading	Decision
Reading Level	$r = 0.027$ (* $p = 0.758$ )	Ho is not rejected

\* $p < .05$  significant

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: (1) the majority of the participants were females and their parents were on college levels or college graduates, and had good income; (2) both the interpretive and critical levels of reading comprehension of

the Grade VII students are fair; (3) the factors that determine both the reading comprehensions of the students are extensive; (4) the profile variables of the students do not affect their reading comprehension levels; (5) the factors that determine the reading comprehension of the students are not related to their reading comprehension levels. These imply that English teachers should consider programs and activities in school that develop students' critical and interpretive thinking, and conduct regular evaluation to monitor their academic progress in reading comprehensions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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