



COMPREHENSION LEVEL OF GRADE 6 LEARNERS VIS-a-VIS TEXT AND TEST TYPES IN ENGLISH

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Abstract : This study was delimited to the comprehension level of selected Grade 6 learners of St. Vincent's Catholic School of Bayambang, Inc. during the school year 2018-2019. The data gathered were properly coded, recorded, tallied, tabulated and interpreted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for windows. Frequency counts, percentages and weighted mean and standard were used for descriptive analysis. The researcher found out that learners tend to reflect good comprehension of selections written in both genres - narrative and expository -as comprehension level seemed not related to text types. The learners' comprehension levels were of varying degrees based on test types. Their comprehension level adjusted to the test type they were asked to do. Learners did not do well in cloze test using exact responses in both narrative and expository texts. Thus, it may be modified to semantically acceptable responses to see more clearly how learners process the texts both in narrative and expository texts. Good comprehension was revealed in test type using English informal reading inventories both in narrative and expository texts. Teachers may keep on using informal reading inventories for assessment. Learners were at their best with regards to comprehension using retelling as a test type. Teachers may maximize this advantage so that learners excel as readers of narrative and expository texts. Good comprehension level in reading English narrative texts was slightly related to good comprehension level in expository texts. The score obtained in reading narrative text was slightly related to their score in reading expository text. The researcher recommended that teachers may continue giving assessment materials in narrative and expository text because both are related to one another. Test item developers may construct standardized cloze test and additional retelling passages to have alternative means for assessing comprehension. Knowing the comprehension level of levels on different test types shows different dimensions of comprehension as one reads. This will guide the teachers in their instructional planning anchored on the needs of learners in the classroom and on the demands of Filipino national examinations.

Keywords: Comprehension, text types, test types

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important skill that needs to be learned at an early age because it will make the learning of other skills, content, and knowledge easier owing to the fact that the foundation of almost all learning can be acquired through reading. Yet, many children seem to fail in acquiring this skill. Greaney (2006) said that around 1 billion people in the world, who are mostly from the developing countries, can not read. Without the ability to read, they are deprived of access to information about health, social, and cultural issues, or the simple appreciation that leisure reading brings.

Reading to every citizen is a new civil right. It is one of the most vital skills that have to be developed in the child's first stage of formal education. Naturally, the individual can hardly exist, if he does not know how to read. A child should be ready to read and ready to get clear understanding of what he sees and reads in order to provide him a good early experience. Knowing how to read is important in interactive learning. It affects the heart and the soul of a child. A child should have a strong language and a good pre-reading education to ensure his/her success as he/she goes through the journey of gaining education.

Reading is the primary avenue to knowledge. To advance in knowledge, one must forever learn more, study more, reason more. Reading helps to accomplish this. It is one of the most important tasks of learning and all lessons in school need reading. As one goes up the ladder of education, he has learned to read extensively in order to improve his level of achievement. This

gives a better chance to a pupil one who reads well to succeed in school work, over one who can not. A learner, who has developed the basic skills in reading, loves to read well. He is independent, well-informed, and eventually becomes a better citizen. Success in reading is success in school and success in future life.

Reading comprehension is one of the pillars of reading. When a person reads a certain text, he engages in a complex array of cognitive processes. He is simultaneously using his awareness and understanding of phonemes, phonics and ability to comprehend or construct meaning from the text. The last component of the act of reading is reading comprehension. At the same time, it is the most difficult and most important of the three.

Reading comprehension is incredibly complex and multi-faceted. Because of this, readers do not develop the ability to comprehend texts quickly, easily or independently. Reading comprehension strategies must be taught over an extended period of time by parents and teachers who have knowledge and experience using them. It might seem that once a child learns to read in the elementary grades, he is able to tackle any future text that comes his way. This is not true. Reading comprehension strategies must be refined, practiced and reinforced continually throughout life. Even in the middle grades, parents and teachers need to continue to help their children develop reading comprehension strategies. As their reading materials become more diverse and challenging, children need to learn new tools for comprehending these texts. Content area materials such as textbooks and newspaper, magazine and journal articles pose different reading comprehension challenges for young people and thus require different reading strategies. The development of reading comprehension is a lifelong process that changes based on the depth and breadth of texts the person is reading.

Without comprehension, reading is nothing more than tracking symbols on a page with your eyes and sounding them out. Imagine being handed a story written in Egyptian hieroglyphics with no understanding of their meaning. You may appreciate the words aesthetically and even be able to draw some small bits of meaning from the page, but you are not truly reading the story. The words on the page have no meaning. They are simply symbols. People read for many reasons but understanding is always a part of their purpose. Reading comprehension is important because without it reading doesn't provide the reader with any information.

Beyond this, reading comprehension is essential to life. Much has been written about the importance of functional literacy. In order to survive and thrive in today's world, individuals must be able to comprehend basic texts such as bills, housing agreements (leases, purchase contracts), directions on packing and transportation documents (bus and train schedules, maps, travel directions on a bottle of medicine or warnings on a container of dangerous chemical. With the ability to comprehend what they read, people are able not only to live safely and productively, but also to continue to develop social, emotionally and intellectually.

In the Philippines, majority of the Filipino students do not possess the ability and motivation to read. Moreover, based on an evaluation of Scholastic Incorporated (2007) cited in Philippine Star (2010), 70% of the nation's learners are incapable of reading within the expected level. Scholastics Incorporated explained that one cause of this reading incapability is a mismatch between the reader's ability and the level of reading materials that students are required to read. Borja (2009) cited Dr. Quijano, former Department of Education (DepEd) administrator, who believed that a decline in the reading comprehension also reported a decline in many other areas.

Snow (2002) defined reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. It consists of three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading. Maria (2010) also explained reading comprehension as a holistic process of constructing meaning from written text through the interaction of the reader's knowledge he brings to the text, like word recognition ability, word knowledge, and knowledge of linguistic conventions; the reader's interpretation of the language used in meaning making from the text; and the reader's situation while reading the text. McNamara and Kendeou (2011) added that reading comprehension is a product of mental representation in the reader's memory. This mental representation happens in the process of reading. Failure in the reading process leads to low comprehension product.

As learners construct meaning, they bring with them language experiences that widen their understanding of how the world works, improving their schema. Prior knowledge or schema is a unit of organized ideas that represents concepts, relationships, situations, events, sequence, and more. It is the building blocks of knowledge which can help the readers understand the reading material. Schema aids reading comprehension.

According to the theory described above, there are two types of schema. These are formal schema and content schema. Formal schema relates to the rhetorical structure of different text types - narrative and expository. Narrative texts generally speak of story grammar which consists of character, setting, plot, and theme. On the other hand, expository texts are mostly top level pattern where major and minor details are presented in hierarchical order. Unlike the narratives, expository structure is used to tell, describe, explain, enumerate sequence, compare and contrast, identify cause and effects, and point out problem and solutions, which affect the readers' interaction and comprehension.

On the other hand, content schema is the knowledge of the content which includes knowledge about people, culture, and world to help the readers understand the texts. It has long been claimed that scores based on types of text and test can be related to the three functional reading levels of learners— whether independent, instructional, or frustration. Independent level is in which readers understand a text without assistance from an adult (or a teacher); instructional level is one in which assistance from an adult (or a teacher) to read and understand a text is required; and frustration level is one in which the assistance and guidance given to readers appropriate for their grade level appear to be of no use as manifested by their failure to make sense of the text. The reading levels require assessment in relation to the types of text and test format to determine whether these variables influence the meaning-making process, although the study assumes that a positive correlation exists among them (Gillet and Temple, 2010).

Pinter (2006) defined assessment as the process of analyzing data teachers use to get evidence about the learner's performance and progress. Through assessment, teachers can see the gaps between the objectives, the child's performance, and topics that need to be reinforced.

Rubin (2011) expressed that teachers do not need to rely on a single assessment procedure because multiple assessments can make sound decisions on how instruction should be executed to the diverse needs of the pupils; show a picture of student achievement on his comprehension; and give numerous data on the different dimensions of the child's reading skill.

Pinter (2006) referred to this multiple assessments as triangulating data by gathering information from more than one source which can provide teachers with more reliable results as they explore deeply and confirm the findings from various instruments and sources.

Borja (2009) and Luz (2007) stated that reading problems are the main culprit for the poor reading performance of students in the National Achievement Test (NAT). Luz (2007) pointed out that elementary graduates have a low level of reading comprehension. Borja (2009) even mentioned that the reading comprehension results (66.33%) revealed a low score or at the “near mastery level” in all subject areas. Detamble (2005) added that there was even a decline in English language proficiency based on the National Achievement Test results from 61.26% in 2001 sliding down to 42.48% in 2005. This shows that Filipino learners are faced with difficulty in comprehending academic texts. This paper intended to continue with regards the comprehension level of grade 7 learners using academic texts in English with two types of text in three types of test.

Nowadays, teachers are encouraged to go beyond paper-and-pencil assessment of children’s accomplishment. Pinter (2006) and Rubin (2011) advised to explore alternative assessments which permit children to be more engaged. Rathvon (2004) and Paris (2007) said that teachers use most frequently informal reading inventory, cloze test, and retelling for assessing comprehension especially for beginning readers. These assessment measures can identify children who need additional instruction for reading and can bridge reading tasks from reading to oral recalls. In addition to that, different types of comprehension assessment pull out different levels of understanding.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to assess the comprehension level of Grade 6 learners of St. Vincent’s Catholic School of Bayambang, Inc. during the school year 2023-2024.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the comprehension level of Grade 6 learners before their exposure to the text types as to narrative and expository texts?
2. What is the comprehension level of Grade 6 learners:
 - a. in reading English narrative texts based on test types: informal reading inventory, cloze test, and retelling?
 - b. in reading English expository texts based on test types: informal reading inventory, cloze test, and retelling?
3. Is there a significant different between the comprehension levels of the Grade 6 learners in terms of test types?
4. What narrative and expository texts can be developed to improve the comprehension level of the learners?
5. What is the level of acceptability of the proposed narrative and expository texts as evaluated by experts?
6. Based on the findings, what digitized reading materials on narrative and expository texts can be developed to improve the comprehension level of the Grade 6 learners?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of the study which includes the research design, sources of data, instrumentation and data collection, and the tools for data analysis.

Research Design

The descriptive-correlational design will assess the comprehension level of Grade 6 learners vis-à-vis text and test types. According to the National Research Council (2002), descriptive design is used when data are collected to describe the characteristics of persons, organizations, and settings of phenomena. Oriondo and Antonio (2004) defined correlation design as a design utilized to determine the relationship between two variables that indicate magnitude of relationship and the direction (positive or negative) of the relationship variables. Descriptive design described the comprehension level, and correlation design determined the relationship between text and test types to comprehension levels. The correlation coefficients were interpreted based on the given coefficients by Calmorin and Calmorin (2004).

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The study made use of narrative and expository texts in three kinds of tests -informal reading inventory, cloze test, and retelling - to measure the comprehension level of the target respondents. English passages for Informal Reading Inventory and retelling were extracted from the Phil-Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), a national reading assessment tool prepared by the Department of Education (DepEd). In this study, the Grade 6 Phil-IRI reading passages were used as they were deemed standardized; hence, the validity of this instrument has been established. Reading passages from the Phil-IRI were used. Both narrative and expository texts have eight questions of varying levels and difficulty. The cloze test passages were picked from the Grade 6 texts and which were read by the learners. English passages were prepared and evaluated by experts. The experts evaluated the instruments that provided insights for the improvement of the instruments and data gathering procedures. Pilot testing provided feedback to improve the instruments and administration procedures with actual participants. Silent reading and answering was done in informal reading inventory and cloze test while retelling was conducted through silent reading and recorded oral retelling.

Tools for Data Analysis

A maximum of 40 minutes a day at a time for each type of assessment will be given. No aid will be given to the learners as they answer the Phil. IRI and cloze tests at home. For the retelling, each learner will be scheduled for individual retelling. Every learner will be asked to read the passages for retelling first before answering, and when each will be done with retelling, he/she will be requested not to talk about the story with anybody until all were done with the test. While each learner individually worked on the retelling, others will continue with the usual classhome activities.

One point per correct answer will be given for informal reading inventory with a total of eight points. Rating will be obtained by getting its percentage.

One point per correct answer will be given to cloze test with a total of 25 points. Exact answers will be accepted to lessen the subjectivity and time for checking and analyzing the cloze test responses. Moreover, accepting synonyms may affect the reliability of the comprehension level criteria since these were established on exact word replacements.

Analysis for retelling will be done by transcribing the texts. Maximum of four points will be given depending on the depth of retelling each story element using Teodoro’s Narrative Retelling Rubric, and a total of 36 points will be the perfect score. Using Morrow’s Informational Text Retelling Technique, the researcher will give a maximum of four points on main and supporting details retold by learners, totaling to 20 points as the perfect score.

The narrative and expository retelling rubric will be checked as to language and content. To lessen the subjectivity of scoring, inter-rater scoring will be established by orienting the raters on the purpose and nature of retelling and by working together on a sample case and practicing how to rate each given response; however, only one of the experts will be requested as inter-rater will be able to make the inter-scoring of the retelling. The scores that will be given by the inter-scorer and the researcher will be computed for the average of scores to lessen the subjectivity of scoring the retelling passages.

Mean percentage of scores will be used to determine the comprehension level of selected the Grade 6 learners. To determine their comprehension level in reading text and tests types, the guide for interpreting scores is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Mapping Scores between Test Types and Comprehension Level

Comprehension Level	Phil – IRI	Cloze Test	Retelling
Independent	80% - 100%	57% - 100%	51% - 100%
Instructional	59% - 79%	44% - 56%	33% - 50%
Frustration	below 58%	below 43%	below 32%

Rubin's (2011) composite score range on identifying the comprehension level from various sources guided the computation of overall score. Accordingly, the mapping of scores will be determined by assigning the following values: 1 for frustration; 2 for instructional; and 3 for independent. The composite score for each learner will be calculated by averaging the reading-level indications, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Mapping the Composite Score Range of Comprehension Levels

Comprehension Levels	Range
Independent	2.33 – 3
Instructional	1.67 – 2.32
Frustration	1 -1.66

Chi-square will be used to determine the relationship of comprehension level of the selected Grade 6 learners vis-à-vis text and test types using the SPSS program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter delineates the gathered data, the interpretation and analysis of the findings, and the narrative explanation of the tabulated results providing answers to the problems presented earlier in Chapter 1.

Comprehension Levels and Text Types

Table 3 summarizes the comprehension level of the selected Grade 6 learners in reading narrative and expository texts in English whose composite scores were based on three test types administered.

Table 3. Comprehension Level of Selected Grade 6 Learners in Reading English Narrative and Expository Texts

Text Type	Mean Percentage	Composite Scores	Comprehension Level
Narrative Texts	55.09%	2.05	Instructional
Expository Texts	51.97%	1.87	Instructional

The comprehension level in reading narrative texts shown by the composite score is 2.05 interpreted as instructional level, with a mean percentage of 55.90%. On the other hand, the composite score for the comprehension level in reading English expository texts is 1.87, instructional level, with a mean percentage of 51.97%.

The comprehension levels attained by the selected Grade 6 levels can be explained by Gillet and Temple's (2010) idea that learners are reading within their comfortable level with good comprehension and accuracy in word recognition. It supported the fact that students are able to comprehend narrative and expository texts on their grade level, and they stand to benefit from regular instruction ably facilitated by teachers.

Comprehension Level and Test Types

The comprehension level of the selected Grade 6 learners in reading English narrative and expository texts using informal reading inventory, cloze test, and retelling is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Comprehension Level of Selected Grade 6 Learners in Reading English Texts in Each Test Type

Text Type	Test Type					
	Informal Reading inventory		Cloze Test		Retelling	
	MP	CS	MP	CS	MP	CS
Narrative	78.23%	2.00	38.46%	1.31	51.00%	2.46
Expository	65.26%	1.85	33.85%	1.23	56.46%	2.54

MP – mean percentage, CS – composite scores

Referring to Table 4, the mean percentage of the selected Grade 6 learners using informal reading inventory in narrative text is 78.23% with a composite score of 2.00. Likewise, the comprehension level when reading English expository texts using the

same type of test is 65.26% with a composite score of 1.85. Both were in the instructional level. The data above show that learners comprehended narrative and expository informal reading inventory with good comprehension level and good accuracy in word recognition. They also indicate that the learners would benefit from a regular classroom instruction with teacher assistance to interact with texts and construct their meaning.

Table 4 also provides the mean percentage of the selected Grade 6 learners using cloze test in narrative text which is 38.46% with a composite score of 1.31. Likewise, the comprehension level when reading Filipino expository texts using same type of test is 33.85% with a composite score of 1.23. Scores were obtained on the exact replacement for cloze test. Both were interpreted as frustration level.

Comprehension Level of Grade 6 Learners in Relation to Text and Test Types

Table 5 shows the comprehension level of the selected Grade 6 learners in relation to text types, narrative and expository. The computed positive correlation coefficient of the mean percentage in the comprehension level was .398 which revealed low or slight correlation. It means that the comprehension level in English narrative texts slightly increases as the comprehension level in English expository text slightly increases.

Table 5. Comprehension Level of Grade 6 Learners in Relation to Text Types

Text Types	Pearson r	Magnitude	Direction
Narrative and Expository Texts	+0.398	low or slight	positive

It may be inferred that an increase in children's ability to understand narrative texts preceded the ability to comprehend expository texts. It may mean that the higher the comprehension level in reading the narrative text, the same will be in their comprehension level in reading expository text. Good comprehension level in narrative texts may mean slightly related to good comprehension level in expository texts or vice versa. This frequent assumption is true perhaps only when the reading instruction of expository texts is aided by content subjects in narrative form (Anthony, Pearson, & Raphael, 2009). Dr. Gatmaitan uses this writing style in children's story book in narrative form but with science content. Delivering science content implied or directly stated in narration form helps in improving comprehension of exposition which is one nature of content area reading (Anthony, Pearson, & Raphael, 2009).

Comprehension Level of the Selected Grade 6 Learners in Relation to Test Types

Table 6 shows the relationship of the comprehension level in each type of test in both narrative and expository texts.

Table 6. Comprehension Level of the Selected Grade 6 Learners in Relation to Test Types

Variable	Pearson r	Magnitude	Direction
N & E IRI	- 0.098	negligible	negative
N & E Cloze	- 0.022	negligible	negative
N & E Retelling	+0.974	high	positive

Informal Reading Inventory

Table 6 shows the relationship of narrative and expository texts informal reading inventories. The computed correlation coefficient of the mean percentage was .098 which revealed negligible and negative correlation between IRIs. Narrative and expository texts IRIs have negligible or no significant relationship to comprehension level. Moreover, a negative direction means that high comprehension level in narrative IRI does not mean high comprehension level in expository IRI or vice versa.

Acceptability of the Developed Reading Comprehension Materials

The acceptability of the developed Reading Comprehension Materials in English for Grade 6 learners was evaluated by the experts like the principal. Acceptability was assessed in terms of content, format, language, and organization and presentation of the various reading skills in Literal, Interpretative, and Applied levels of comprehension. The average weighted mean score for each item was obtained to numerically summarize the evaluators' rating. These average weighted means were then interpreted using the suggested acceptability scale.

Table 7 on the next page shows that the overall average weighted mean is 4.91 interpreted as Highly Acceptable. This finds support in the literal reading skill on noting and recalling details content, format, language and organization/presentation, all with 4.9 average weighted mean; interpretative reading skill on finding cause-effect relationship format and organization/presentation with both getting average weighted mean of 5.0 and the content and language, 4.9 each; and applied reading skill on giving solutions based from facts and giving appropriate endings format, language and organization/presentation, all with 4.9 and content with average weighted mean of 4.8

The developed Material has also obtained a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of .8667 which indicates that reliability and internal validity of the instruments used in the acceptability are good.

These findings can be probably credited to the fact that the materials in English for Grade 6 learners were developed strategically with the purpose of enhancing the reading comprehension capabilities of the Grade 6 learners.

Since the acceptability is very high, it is indicated that materials are Acceptable for use by the Grade 6 learners.

Table 7. Acceptability of the Reading Materials in English

Areas	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Literal Reading on noting and Recalling Details		
a. Content	4.90	Highly Acceptable
1. Mentions the learning competency.	4.90	
2. Mentions the concrete outcome or product learners are expected to demonstrate.	4.90	
3. Allows pupils to make discoveries and formulate ideas on their own.	4.90	
4. Provides exercises, drills or activities that assess learners understanding of what they have learned and correct errors when appropriate.	4.90	
b. Format	4.90	Highly Acceptable
1. Gives a preview of what pupils will learn.	4.90	
2. Cites briefly the activities	4.90	
3. Challenges the learner in performing the tasks	4.90	
c. Language	4.90	Highly Acceptable
1. The language used in the lesson is within the comprehension level of the learners.		
d. Organization/Presentation	4.90	Highly Acceptable
1. The lessons reinforce the pupils' practice on the difficult objectives in English.	4.90	
2. The lessons are presented in contexts the learners can identify with.	4.90	
3. The lessons met the needs of the learners in varied English activities.	4.90	
Interpretative Reading Skill on Finding Cause-Effect Relationships		
a. Content		Highly Acceptable
1. Mentions the learning competency.	4.90	
2. Mentions the concrete outcome or product learners are expected to demonstrate.	4.90	
3. Allows learners to make discoveries and formulate ideas on their own.	4.90	
4. Provides exercises, drills or activities that assess learners understanding of what they have learned and correct errors when appropriate.	4.90	
b. Format		Highly Acceptable
1. Gives a preview of what learners will learn.	5.00	
2. Cites briefly the activities	4.90	
3. Challenges the learner in performing the tasks	4.90	
c. Language	4.90	Highly Acceptable
1. The language used in the lesson is within the comprehension level of the learners.		
d. Organization/Presentation	5.00	Highly Acceptable
1. Mentions the learning competency.	5.00	
2. Mentions the concrete outcome or product learners are expected to demonstrate.	5.00	
3. Allows learners to make discoveries and formulate ideas on their own.	5.00	
4. Provides exercises, drills or activities that assess learners understanding of what they have learned and correct errors when appropriate.	5.00	
Applied Reading Skill on Giving Solutions Based from Facts and Giving Appropriate Endings		
a. Content	4.80	Highly Acceptable
1. Mentions the learning competency.	4.80	
2. Mentions the concrete outcome or product learners are expected to demonstrate.	4.80	
3. Allows learners to make discoveries and formulate ideas on their own.	4.80	
4. Provides exercises, drills or activities that assess learners understanding of what they have learned and correct errors when appropriate.	4.80	
b. Format	4.90	Highly Acceptable

1. Gives a preview of what learners will learn.	4.90	
2. Cites briefly the activities	4.90	
3. Challenges the learners in performing the tasks	4.90	
c. Language	4.90	Highly Acceptable
1. The language used in the lesson is within the comprehension level of the learners.	4.90	
d. Organization/Presentation	4.90	Highly Acceptable
1. Mentions the learning competency.	4.90	
2. Mentions the concrete outcome or product pupils are expected to demonstrate.	4.90	
3. Allows learners to make discoveries and formulate ideas on their own.	4.90	
4. Provides exercises, drills or activities that assess learners understanding of what they have learned and correct errors when appropriate.	4.90	
Average Weighted Mean	4.91	Highly Acceptable

Alpha= .8667

Legend:

Point Value	Limits	Descriptive Equivalents
5	4.21 - 5.00	Highly Acceptable
4	3.41 - 4.20	Acceptable
3	2.61 - 3.40	Moderately Acceptable
2	1.81 - 2.60	Slightly Acceptable
1	1.00 - 1.80	Not Acceptable

Recommendations

- Teachers may continue giving assessment materials in narrative and expository text because both are related to one another.
- Test item developers may construct standardized cloze test and additional retelling passages to have alternative means for assessing comprehension.
- Knowing the comprehension level of levels on different test types shows different dimensions of comprehension as one reads. This will guide the teachers in their instructional planning anchored on the needs of learners in the classroom and on the demands of Filipino national examinations.

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