

Reading Skills and Grade Six Learners' English Academic Performance

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Abstract— The main objective of the study was to determine the reading skills in relation to grade six learners' English academic performance for School Year 2022-2023. The relationship of learners' reading skills and English academic performance was also measured. The study used descriptive – survey design to assess the relationship of learners' reading skills and English academic performance with the aid of standardized questionnaire. The participants were 62 Grade Six learners of Booy Elementary School. The gathered data were statistically treated, computed, and tabulated using the arithmetic mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation for analysis and interpretation. Findings showed that the learners' reading skills in terms of vocabulary, topic, main idea, and cause-effect relationship are satisfactory; while they only attained fair in terms to inferential comprehension. On the other hand, the English academic performance of Grade Six learners is Very Satisfactory. In the general average of the computed two variables, it was found out that the computed r value is - 0.075 implies low negative correlation, the level of significance is 0.05, the t value is - 0.5770, the tabular value is ± 2.00 denotes insignificant relationship, thus null hypothesis is accepted. The result of the study implies that the learners' reading skills does not create a significant impact on their English academic performance. Given the result, it claims that the learners reading skills do not relate their academic performance. This finding suggests that the relationship between learners' reading skills and English academic performance is insignificant.

Index Terms— English Academic Performance, Reading Skills, Vocabulary, Topic and Main Idea, Cause-Effect Relationship, Inferential Comprehension.

1. Introduction

Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. It is a process of making meaning that requires identifying the words in print, constructing an understanding from them identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate. English as a universal language stress that education today has adopted the era of using English as second language.

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Thus, reading in English can make a huge difference as one of the most effective ways to get familiar with the language and supercharge learning. Moreover, a child's reading skills are important to their success in school as this will allow them to access the breadth of the curriculum and improve their communication and language skills.

Additionally, since the country-wide implementation of community lockdown and the suspension of classes, more kids are being forced to stay at home, which causes more students to become alienated from or completely deprived of their education. Undoubtedly, the global COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions increased the existing literacy issues, drastically expanding the gap between children who are assisted and those who aren't when it comes to reading. Teachers ostensibly will help kids complete their learning modules, but since they must be completed at home with a guardian, there is a chance that parents or another household member will take on the responsibility or pleasure of completing the printed modules. Their primary role in modular learning is to establish a connection and guide the child (FlipScience, 2020).

With the aforementioned realities, the researchers felt the importance to conduct study on learners' reading skills in relation to their English academic performance especially amidst this Covid-19 pandemic where new normal learning platform has been implemented in education. Thus, this study assessed the significant relationship between the reading skills and the English academic performance of the grade six learners during the academic year 2022-2023.

2. Literature Background

Learning to read is a difficult process that requires both text comprehension and text decoding skills. It requires dynamic word groups to be recognized and understood. It is a thorough procedure that involves fluency, engagement, word recognition, and comprehension. There is no denying the value of reading. One of the most significant educational outcomes of primary education is the ability to read. It is an essential component of all learning and is linked to academic performance and professional success for an individual. (Garnes & Wichowski, 2004).

The Schema Theory is a theory that this study is based on. According to this view, reading comprehension involves a

conversation between the reader's prior knowledge and the text. Understanding a text involves the capacity to connect the textual content to one's prior knowledge. Understanding words, phrases, and full texts requires more than just having a solid command of the language (Goodman, 1971).

According to IDC theory by the Group of Asian Researchers, when motivated by interest, students create knowledge (ideas and artifacts), which means that students will excel in learning, develop twenty-first century skills, and form a habit of creation (Chan et al. 2018).

Moreover, Bottom-up Theory is also anchored in this study. This theory expresses that a decoding process of constructing meaning at the “bottom”, e.g. letters or words to the larger units at “the top”, e.g. phrases, clauses, and intersectional linkage. To elaborate, Gough (1972) proposes a phonics-based or bottom-up model of the reading process which portrays processing in reading as proceeding in serial fashion, from letter to sound, to words, to meaning, in the progression suggested in the accompanying figure. (Carrell and Eistenhold, 1983).

Furthermore, reading comprehension is the ability to understand a reading well and summarize it. Reading comprehension skills is the students' ability to conclude and understand the content and main ideas for reading correctly. The goals of reading for the student are to determine the main idea, sentence, paragraph, or discourse; determine core points; understand the flow and instructions; determine the organization of reading materials; determine visual images and other images of reading; conclude; predict meaning and conclusion; summarizing the discourse read; distinguish between facts and opinions, and get information from various sources, such as encyclopedias, atlases, maps, or digital annotation tools (Azmuddin et al., 2020). To get students' reading comprehension skills, the instructor can provide a reading comprehension test.

As discussed by Waring and Nation (2004), a strong relationship exists between vocabulary size and reading one which is clearly complex and not unidirectional. Most of our vocabulary acquisition takes place incidentally through reading, and a substantial knowledge and understanding of the vocabulary included in written texts is needed in order to read any type effortlessly and with success.

Ultimately, learners should be able to be skilled reader in order for them to succeed. Learners need an assistance especially in terms of vocabulary, identifying topic & main idea, cause-effect relationship and master inferential comprehension. Due to the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, challenges in education especially in reading affects the development of the learner. It exacerbated that leads to education crisis.

According to Marlon P. Labastida, a citizen's point of view on the onset of reading performance on the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. With these school closures, learners are experiencing what UNICEF terms “learning loss.” He added the blended learning that the Department of Education is adapting does not suffice in augmenting the

learning needs of the students. Learning motivation is consistently deteriorating; skills development has been superficially delivered and, most unfortunate, reading abilities of the learners are at risk of continuous decline.

Specifically, this study is anchored on the DepEd Memorandum 173, series of 2019, all offices at the Central Office (CO), Regional Offices (ROs), Schools Division Offices (SDOs), and school levels that strongly encouraged to respond to Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiative) by intensifying their reading advocacy to turn all learners into readers at their grade level and allowing teachers to become effective reading facilitators and fulfill its mandate to produce productive and responsible citizens equipped with essential competencies and skills for lifelong learning. To make every learner a proficient reader, schools across the country are tasked to help learners develop their reading skills.

A. The Problem

The main purpose of the study was to assess the reading skills of grade six learners in Booy Elementary School for the school year 2022-2023 in relation to their English academic performance.

More specifically it inquired into the following aspects of the main problem:

- 1) *What are the reading skills of the grade six learners as revealed in their:*
 - 1.1 vocabulary;
 - 1.2 topic and main idea;
 - 1.3 cause-effect relationship; and
 - 1.4 inferential comprehension?
- 2) *What is the English academic performance of the learners?*

Is there a significant relationship between the reading skills of grade six learners in relation to their English academic performance?

3. Results And Discussion

Table.1.
Respondent's Reading Skills

Score Range	Description	Categories							
		Vocabulary		Topic & Main Idea		Cause-Effect Relationship		Inferential Comprehension	
		Frequency f	Percentage %	Frequency f	Percentage %	Frequency f	Percentage %	Frequency f	Percentage %
13-15.00	Outstanding	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
10-12.9	Very Satisfactory	11	17.74	10	16.13	17	27.42	10	16.13
6-9.9	Satisfactory	14	22.58	27	43.53	26	41.94	17	27.42
3-5.9	Fair	22	35.48	21	33.87	15	24.20	24	38.71
0-2.9	Needs Improvement	9	14.32	4	6.45	4	6.45	11	17.74
Average Score		7.24		6.91		7.92		6.23	
Description		Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Fair	
Overall Performance		7.0825							
Description		Satisfactory							

N = 62

Table.1 shows the respondents' reading skills in terms of vocabulary, topic and main idea, cause-effect relationship, and inferential comprehension of the 62 grade six learners in Booy Elementary School.

The data shows that 22.58% of the learners exhibit a satisfactory performance in the test under vocabulary. The question at this level provides the “enabling knowledge” required to be successful in other areas of language proficiency

(Laufer and Nation, 1999). Indeed, words are the primary carriers of meaning (Vermeer, 2001), and there is growing evidence that the more extensive one’s vocabulary is, the higher their language proficiency will be. The size of a student’s vocabulary has been found to correlate closely with reading comprehension (Beglar, 1999; Qian, 1999) as well as with writing ability (Beglar, 1999; Laufer, 1998; Laufer and Nation, 1995). The average score under this level is 7.24 which is indicated as Satisfactory.

The topic and main idea category show an average score of 6.92 indicated as “Satisfactory”, which goes to show that 27 out of 62 learners or 43.55% of them performed satisfactorily in terms of identifying key concept being expressed in the text. According to Gunning (1996), readers who can detect a text’s main idea and it’s supporting details will better understand and retain information in the text than readers who fail to use the text’s organization.

It is revealed under the cause-effect relationship that 26 out of 62 learners or 41.94% of them are satisfactory in identifying cause and effect based from the given information in the test. Readers who recognize cause-and-effect relationships understand that in-text events happen (effects), along with the reason why they happen (causes). When students recognize this relationship, comprehension is increased (Kneene & Zimmermann, 1997).

Under the inferential comprehension, only 38.7% or 24 out of 62 learners are able to fairly execute the given test. Those 24 learners have inferred the general mood of certain events through the speaker’s actions, intentions and utterances. Thus, resulting an average score of 6.23 indicated as “Fair”. This supports the study of Guided Reading: Reciprocal Teaching that students can decode the words but might not understand what they are reading about (Palinscar, 2013). According to Heilman, Blair, and Rupley (1988). In this level, the readers’ involvement is required to formulate and rethink ideas of his own and must have the knowledge of emotional response and knowledge of form, style and structure of the response.

In general, the grade six learners have an overall performance of 7.05 indicated as “Satisfactory”. Given with the result, it claims that the learners reading skills is not ideal to their grade level. The result supports the study of “Perceived Challenges in Reading of Learners as a Basis for School Reading Programs” (Tomas, M., Villaros, E, & Galman, S. 2021). The grade six students’ experienced difficulties in reading. Majority of the grade six learners were at the average level, hence, a need for improvement of the reading level must be considered in devising development plans for the learners. Also, the perceived causes, origins and attendant variables of the students’ reading level were instructional of word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension.

In the overall result, cause-effect relationship is highest with an average score of 7.82 interpreted as “satisfactory” while inferential comprehension is lowest at 6.23 average score interpreted as “fair”.

Additionally, findings proved that according to the UNICEF there are less than 15 percent of schoolchildren in the

Philippines, or about three in every 20, can read simple texts in large part due to the longest schools’ closure of more than 70 weeks as of the middle of February caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest UNICEF assessment translates to a learning poverty defined by the World Bank as the share of 11-year-olds who cannot read or understand a simple story—of more than 85 percent, which is slightly better than the World Bank estimate of as high as 90 percent in November of last year (De Vera, 2022).

One of the major challenges experiences during modular distance learning is that there are learners who don’t have parents to help studying their lesson especially in reading at home while there are other parents who answers their children’s module leaving teachers being worried. Parents should refrain from answering the self-learning modules so their children could truly learn (Carino,2020).

Department of Education raised concern about the educational system today because of “No Student Left Behind Policy” This may be the root why Grade Six students promoted to high school despite not being able to read (Clea, 2022)

Table.2.
Respondents’ Academic Performance in English
N = 62

Grade Scale	Description	Frequency	Percentage %
90-100	Outstanding	21	33.87
85-89	Very Satisfactory	15	24.19
80-84	Satisfactory	14	22.58
77-79	Fairly Satisfactory	11	17.74
Below 75	Did not Meet Expectations	1	1.61
Average Grade		85.73	
Description		Very Satisfactory	

Table.2. shows the academic performance of the Grade Six learners in English based on DepEd Order No. 8 s. 2015, of the 62 learner-respondents, 21 (33.87%) gained a grade point of 90-100 with descriptive interpretation of “Outstanding” and 1 (1.61 %) gained a grade point of below 75 with descriptive description of “Did not Meet Expectations.” The computed average grade was 85.73 interpreted as “Very Satisfactory.”

The result of the assessed performance of the learners in all quarters was exemplary. This signifies that the learners performed well and accomplished adequately their tasks, assessments and exercises in English. Moreover, it was evident that the students attained very satisfactory grade in the subject.

A study made by Aina, et. al. (2013) concluded that the proficiency in English language is strongly related to students’ academic performance in English, Science and Technical Education. It is therefore very important to always ensure that students who are admitted into these courses have good English language proficiency.

Table.3.
Relationship between Reading Skills and the Academic Performance
N=62

Variables	Computed r value	Description	Level of Significance	Computed t	Tabular value	Interpretation	Decision
English Academic Performance vs Relationship between reading skills	-0.075	Low Negative Correlation	0.05	-0.5770	±2.00	Insignificant	Do not Reject Ho

Table.3. presents the relationship between reading skills and English academic performance. In the general average of the computed two variables, it was found out that the computed r value is -0.075 implies low negative correlation, the level of significance is 0.05 , the t value is -0.5770 , the tabular value is ± 2.00 denotes insignificant relationship, thus null hypothesis is accepted.

The result of the study implies that the learners' reading skills does not create a significant impact on their English academic performance. Given the result, it claims that the learners reading skills do not affect their academic performance. This finding suggests that the relationship between learners' reading skills and English academic performance is insignificant. Which explains that the "Satisfactory" rate of their reading skills is not ideal to their "Very Satisfactory" grade of their English academic performance. This do not mean that when the grades are high, their reading skills were above average.

This supports the study by Estremera (2018) on Factors Affecting the Reading Comprehension of Grade Six Pupils. It reveals that pupils' reading skills are on the average level. It turned out that pupils have limited vocabulary, poor grammar and spelling and are low in finding the main ideas of what is being read. Further, there were factors affecting the reading comprehension of the pupils. These factors are pupil, language, teacher, school head, school, home and community factors.

Additionally, the Department of Education (DepEd) said that low basic literacy skills especially in reading among grade school students is one of the problems that the department is facing as they transition to full implementation of face-to-face classes after two years of distance learning because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. DepEd admitted that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the literacy development of young students as they even received feedback about some students who did not know how to read (Herrera, 2022).

The pandemic further pushed the development of students backward even before the pandemic struck where assessments showed that some learners were already struggling to meet the minimum required literacy proficiency. Even without the pandemic, the learners are still struggling how much more that they were out of the classrooms (Uytico, 2022).

4. Conclusion

Based from the findings, the researchers concluded that there is no significant relationship between the reading skills and grade six learners' English academic performance as proven in the study that students' Academic Performance is very satisfactory but their reading skills are only satisfactory.

It was found that reading skills and academic performance have no significant relationship as proven in the study that students' Academic Performance is very satisfactory but their reading skills are only satisfactory. Which goes to show that the learners' reading skills in terms of vocabulary, topic, main idea, and cause-effect relationship are satisfactory while they

only attained fair in terms of inferential comprehension. On the other hand, the English academic performance of Grade Six learners is Very Satisfactory.

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