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RESEARCH ARTICLE

STRATEGY-BASED READING FOR COMPREHENSION ENHANCEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to ascertain the reading strategies used by and the level of reading comprehension of Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) major in English students at Surigao State College of Technology, Surigao City. It looked into the profile of the participants as to their sex and year level. Moreover, it also probed the various strategies used by the respondents when grouped accordingly and the significant relationship between the reading strategies employed and their comprehension levels. The study made use of a descriptive research design. The data were obtained from the participants using the researcher-made questionnaire. There were 105 participants. In the treatment of the data, frequency count and percentage computation, mean and standard deviation, Scheffe test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were statistical tools employed. It was found out that 80.95% of the participants from first year to fourth year were female and only 19.05% were male. In other words, the female dominated the number of participants. However, the study showed that sex did not affect their reading strategies used and the level of comprehension. On the other hand, it study revealed that Bottom Up, Top Down, Scanning and Skimming Strategies were deemed effective based on their mean and standard deviation. These four (4) reading strategies greatly aided them in the enhancement of their reading comprehension. This further implies that the participants utilize these strategies in extracting and construing the meaning of printed materials.

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INTRODUCTION

The explicit teaching of reading strategies helps students to become increasingly skillful at interpreting, understanding and analyzing text. Reading strategies are vital tools employed by language and literature teachers to augment the comprehension level of students which has great impact on their academic achievement. Many students encountered difficulties in comprehending the meaning of what they read. Problems associated with comprehension are augmented because of the lack of strategic reading interventions in the classroom and students seldom use higher-level comprehension strategies that promote critical analysis. Interventions that emphasize on the deeper processing of written materials such as self-explanation and elaborative interrogation have been successful in improving students' understanding. Furthermore, reading strategies help the students in making sound judgments and conclusions that influence their academic achievement in English and Literature.

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Reading is more than recognition of words and gleaming on the concepts and information. It requires thinking skills that may contribute to the total development of the students in terms of academic excellence. According to Palinscar (2005) reading comprehension consists of three important parts: (1) an active, constructive process (2) thinking process before and during after reading (3) interaction between the reader and the text. This means that effective reading strategies must be employed by the teachers to stimulate the students' intellectual ability. Effective and efficient reading is a product of reading strategies utilized by the teachers in teaching English and literature.

This is an evident manifestation that students' proficiency in reading depends on the strategies applied by the teacher in the delivery of instruction in the classroom. Along with this idea, the researchers have felt the need to determine the reading strategies commonly used and the level of comprehension of all Bachelor of Secondary Education specializing English across year levels at Surigao State College of Technology in order to delve for a solution to the research problem and so the study may give content knowledge to the English major students on how indispensable is reading.

METHODS

The study employed a descriptive design. This research design was considered appropriate because it simply described the interplay of variables specifically the profile of the respondents in terms of sex and year level. This study also determined and described the level of reading comprehension along with the reading strategies used by the respondents. The participants of the study were the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) students specializing English from second year to fourth year levels of Surigao State College of Technology, City Campus, Surigao City. This study made use of a researchers-made questionnaire in obtaining the necessary data. The questionnaire was composed of two parts. Part I elicited the profile of the respondents as to sex and year level. The second part delved statements that would determine the extent of reading strategies and level of reading comprehension. The analysis of data followed after the retrieval of the questionnaires. The data were treated using the following tools:

Frequency Count and Percent Computation. These were used in profiling the variables of the respondents.

Mean. This was used to determine the level of reading strategies used and level of comprehension of respondents.

One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was used to determine the significant difference on the reading strategies when the respondents were grouped according to their profile variables.

Scheffé Test: This was used to adjust significance levels in a linear regression analysis to account for multiple comparisons. It is particularly useful in analysis of variance and in constructing simultaneous confidence bands for regressions involving basis functions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of year level. Out of one hundred five (105), 53 or 50.48% are first year, 20 or 19.05% are second year, 16 or 15.24% are third year and 16 or 15.24% are fourth year students. Among the four year levels, the first year has the highest frequency distribution as compared to the other year levels. In the same Table is the profile of the respondents in terms of sex. Out of 105 total number of respondents, 85 or 80.95% of them are females and 20 or 19.05% are males. This implies that majority of the respondents from first year to fourth year are dominated by female-students. Still, the education curriculum is attractive to females than males as nurturing ability is mutually endorsed to females towards their words. Table 3 shows the extent of reading strategies employed by the respondents in English and Literature subjects. As shown in the Table, Bottom Up strategy has an average mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.47, qualitatively described as Agree. Top down strategy has an average mean of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 0.57 qualitatively described as Agree. In the same Table, scanning strategy/technique obtained an average mean of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 0.54 qualitatively labeled as Agree. On the other hand, skimming strategy has the average mean of 3.94 and 0.49 as the standard deviation marked as Agree.

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents

Year Level	Population	Percentage
First Year	53	50.48
Second Year	20	19.05
Third Year	16	15.24
Fourth Year	16	15.24
TOTAL	105	100

To determine the reading strategies used by the respondents, the following scale was used:

Scale	Parameter	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.41-4.20	Agree
3	2.61-3.40	Undecided
2	1.81-2.60	Disagree
1	1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree

To determine the level of reading comprehension of the respondents scale below was used:

Scale	Parameter	Qualitative Description
5	4.6-5	Excellent
4	3.6-4.5	Very Good
3	2.6-3.5	Good
2	1.6-2.5	Poor
1	1-1.5	Very Poor

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent	
Year Level	First Year	53	50.48
	Second Year	20	19.05
	Third Year	16	15.24
	Fourth Year	16	15.24
Sex	Female	85	80.95
	Male	20	19.05

To generalize, the findings mean that the respondents are in consistent that the four (4) reading strategies have aided them in developing their reading comprehension skills. This implies that the respondents have utilized the reading strategies in extracting and construing the meaning of printed materials. The mean value and standard deviation of each of the reading strategies indicate the use of various strategies in comprehending the meaning of texts. Anchored on the study of Oxford (2007), the strategies with mean value higher than 3.5 are regarded as strategies with high frequency of usage. The strategies have almost the same level of frequency because of their mean value. Top down strategy has the average mean of 4.08 as the highest and bottom-up strategy has the lowest mean of 3.92. Scanning has the average mean of 4.04 and skimming has the mean value of 3.94. Thus, it can be described that these are uniformly used by the respondents. Furthermore, the Table reflects that the respondents are familiar with the reading strategies. This means that regardless of year level, the respondents are able to relate to the different strategies utilized in the study. It is clearly presented that the set of strategies are relevant and respondents were receptive to it. Table 5 shows the level of reading comprehension of the respondents from first year to fourth year. It can be gleaned from the Table that the first year respondents have the mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 1.01 which is qualitatively described as Very Good. The second year respondents have a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.95 which is described as Very Good.

Table 3. Extent of Reading Strategies of Respondents

Reading Strategy	Statements	Mean	Sd	Verbal Description
A. Bottom Up	1. I extract information from printed pages.	4.21	0.58	Strongly Agree
	2. I use automatic word recognition and rapid reading rate.	3.91	0.79	Agree
	3. I consider myself as a passive recipient of textual information.	3.68	0.96	Agree
	4. I focus on detailed linguistics forms- from phonemes, lexical and syntactic level.	3.91	0.77	Agree
	5. I decode written symbols into their aural equivalent.	3.89	0.79	Agree
	<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>3.92</i>	<i>0.47</i>	<i>Agree</i>
B. Top Down	1. I use my prior knowledge in comprehending texts.	4.25	0.79	Strongly Agree
	2. I overcome linguistic deficiency with a high degree of background knowledge.	3.90	0.88	Agree
	3. I manage to give emphasis on the context to construct meanings in the text.	4.17	0.81	Agree
	4. I consider reading as "a psychological guessing game."	3.96	0.90	Agree
	5. I predict/infer to derive meaning from the texts.	4.10	0.81	Agree
	<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>4.08</i>	<i>0.57</i>	<i>Agree</i>
C. Scanning	1. I start reading with a predefined set of keywords.	4.08	0.74	Agree
	2. I search for passages that contain keywords.	4.03	0.80	Agree
	3. I need to understand how texts are structured as an aid for comprehension.	4.15	0.92	Agree
	4. I quickly locate specific information from the text.	3.96	0.84	Agree
	5. I concentrate on the semantically related words on pages.	3.97	0.78	Agree
	<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>4.04</i>	<i>0.54</i>	<i>Agree</i>
D. Skimming	1. I get a rapid general impression of what a text is all about.	3.98	0.91	Agree
	2. I look on the table of contents, the summary and the subject index.	4.07	0.84	Agree
	3. I keep my attention on subtitles, headlines and prominent texts.	4.06	0.76	Agree
	4. I get the gist of a section or chapter.	4.03	0.73	Agree
	5. I only read what is important to my purpose.	3.55	1.14	Agree
	<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>3.94</i>	<i>0.49</i>	<i>Agree</i>

Table 4. Level of Reading Comprehension of the Respondents

Year Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
First Year	53	3.90	1.01
Second Year	20	4.45	0.95
Third Year	16	4.63	0.62
Fourth Year	16	4.75	0.58
<i>Total</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>4.25</i>	<i>0.95</i>

Table 5. Significant Difference on the Reading Strategies Used by the Respondents when Grouped by Profile

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value	Decision	
Sex	A. Bottom Up	1	0.009882	0.045203	0.832052	Not Rejected	
		103	0.218623				
	B.. Top Down	1	0.006476	0.019933	0.887999	Not Rejected	
		103	0.324893				
	C. Scanning	1	0.057148	0.19549	0.659313	Not Rejected	
		103	0.292335				
	D. Skimming	1	0.034084	0.140702	0.708356	Not Rejected	
		103	0.242243				
	Year Level	A. Bottom Up	3	0.544358	2.631271	0.054123	Not Rejected
			101	0.20688			
		B.. Top Down	3	0.562165	1.786393	0.154548	Not Rejected
			101	0.314693			
		C. Scanning	3	0.454829	1.594887	0.195316	Not Rejected
			101	0.28518			
		D. Skimming	3	0.777642	3.467291	0.019006	Not Rejected
			101	0.224279			

Table 6. Significant Relationship between the Reading Strategies Employed And the Level of Reading Comprehension

Reading Strategies	R	r ²	p-value	Decision
a. Bottom-up	-0.07667	0.005878	0.436931	Do not Reject ho
b. Top-down	0.17189	0.029546	0.079543	Do not Reject ho
c. Scanning	-0.06758	0.004567	0.493341	Do not Reject ho
d. Skimming	0.087577	0.00767	0.374346	Do not Reject ho

The Table reflected that the third year respondents have the mean of 4.63 and a standard deviation of 0.63 which is marked Excellent.

The fourth year respondents have the highest mean of 4.75 and a standard deviation of 0.58 which is qualitatively described as Excellent.

Based on the study of Song (2010), level of reading comprehension varies according to year level. It is dominant on his study that level of comprehension increases when the year level and the learning of the students progresses. This implies that the level of reading comprehension improves when the learners accumulate more knowledge about the extent and content of this respective subjects. Table 5 presents the significance difference on the reading strategies used by the respondents when grouped according to profile variables. As indicated, the Table shows that the variables do not affect the strategies used by respondents. When the respondents were grouped according to sex in terms of the reading strategies used namely: bottom-up, top-down, scanning and skimming, the computed P-value are 0.83, 0.88, 0.65 and 0.73 respectively which are greater than 0.05 level of significance thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This supports the idea of Hung (2009) who investigated the frequency and types of reading strategies used by male and female-students. From his study, it was found out that there was no significant difference between male and female-students in terms of overall strategy used. Besides, no significant difference is found between male and female students when they read are grouped according to their sex. Kuo (2009) stressed that proficiency and gender differences in reading strategies used to achieve success in reading comprehension tests has no existing relationship. He stated that there is no difference between male and female students in reading strategy used. On the other hand, when the students were grouped according to their year level on the following reading strategies used such as top-down, scanning and skimming the computed P-value is 0.054 0.15, 0.19 and 0.19 which are greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

This result proves that there is no significant difference on the strategies used by the students when they are classified in terms of their year level. . This result blend with the study conducted by Oakhill (2010) to the college students that reading comprehension alters when year level increases. Table 6 shows significant relationship between the reading strategies employed and the level of comprehension. There is no significant relationship between the reading strategies employed and the level of reading comprehension. Reading strategies of the respondents do not affect the level of their comprehension. With the mean difference significance at 0.05, the result reveals that the mean difference is less than the value required in order to assert significant relationship between the reading strategies employed the level of comprehension of the respondents. Moreover, same author stressed that the longer exposure of the fourth year students than the first year students to the various reading strategies may be one of the reasons of their higher level of reading comprehension.

There is an abundance of research using varied reading strategies and level of comprehension (Compton-Lilly et al., 2009), to extrapolate the findings to the college-level reading experience. On the premise that college-level students, particularly those who belong to higher level are generally proficient readers, thus they are likely to engage in different reading processes and strategies than college students of the lower level who are struggling and beginning readers. This means that level of reading proficiency and comprehension depends on learning experience of students on the language, fourth year students are more exposed than the first year, therefore, the level of comprehension of fourth year students is higher than the first year.

In another study, Fisher et al (2011) focused on how college students extract meaning from the text. College students utilized various reading strategies that are applicable to a particular purpose of reading. They found out that students who belong to the higher level, specifically the third year and fourth year students made use of reading strategies effectively compared to those in lower years. Students engage on the use of different reading strategies that suit their reading needs. The effectiveness of the use of reading strategies can be assessed on how they extrapolate information from the text. From here, a higher level of reading comprehension is achieved when these students are more acquainted to the language.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings

- It was found that out of one hundred five (105) respondents, 53 or (50.48%) are first year, 20 (19.05%) are second year, 16 or (15.24%) are third year and 16 or (15.24%) are fourth year. As to sex, Eight five (85) or (80.95%) are females and 20 or (19.05) are males.
- The respondents rated the following reading strategies: Bottom-up (M=3.92, QD=Agree), Top down (M=4.08, QD=Agree), Scanning (M=4.04, QD=Agree) and Skimming (M=3.94, QD=Agree).
- There is no significant difference on the reading strategies of the respondents when they were group according to their profile variables such as sex and year level.
- There exists a significant relationship between the reading strategies employed and the level of comprehension specifically on the skimming strategy used by the first year and fourth year student. The P-value is 0.03 which is less than 0.05, thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion

- Majority of the respondents are females. Among the four year levels, the first year has the highest frequency distribution compared to the other year levels.
- The respondents are acquainted to the reading strategies presented in the study. This means that the strategies are utilized by the respondents either consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or involuntarily in extracting or construing the meaning of printed materials. The mean value of each of the reading strategies indicates the use of various strategies in comprehending the meaning of texts.
- The profile variables of the respondents do not affect the reading strategies employed by the respondents regardless of sex and year level.
- The fourth year respondents used the skimming strategy more effectively compared to the first year level students because of the difference of their mental maturity level. Therefore, reading comprehension was affected by the use of skimming strategy used by the first year and fourth year respondents.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are given:

- English teachers must highlight on the use of different reading strategies that would help the students develop their reading comprehension. The students may acquire reading skills needed to promote critical and higher order thinking skills.
- The teachers must focus on improving the level of comprehension of the students so that they may acquire reading comprehension skill. These skills are essential in the teaching of reading which can invoke higher order thinking skills and onwards on their LET examination which exhibits reading comprehension as type of test.
- The teachers must fully develop the reading comprehension skills of students by means of organizing and implementing remedial reading classes and enriching reading discussions so that students learn commendable reading strategies.
- The teachers must utilize more reading materials and develop reading-teaching devices to improve their reading comprehension skills. Moreover, teachers must adopt various reading methods, programs and project in teaching reading.
- The teachers must emphasize the importance of reading in order to develop higher order thinking skills which are the basic to effective reasoning and thinking.
- The students must expose themselves to different reading materials so that they may be equipped with reading skills which can be used in comprehending the text and strengthening their reading performance.

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