

**READING COMPREHENSION LEVEL AND VOCABULARY SKILLS OF  
GRADE II PUPILS AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN  
ENGLISH OF ST. PAUL UNIVERSITY PHILIPPINES**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study aimed to assess the reading comprehension and vocabulary level of Grade II pupils and their performance in English. The study further investigated the relationship among the three focused variables. The descriptive correlation design was adopted to investigate the assessment and correlation analysis of the pupils' reading comprehension level and their performance in English. A reading comprehension test and vocabulary skill test were administered to the total enumeration of the pupils in the three sections of Grade II at Saint Paul University Philippines for the academic year 2014-2015. For data analysis, frequency, percentage count, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Chi-square test were employed. From the findings, it was assessed that the reading comprehension levels and vocabulary skills of Grade II pupils are "low" considering the majority belonging to the "frustration" level. On the other hand, the performance of pupils in English is relatively "high" with an equal number of pupils within the "advanced" and "proficient" level. For Chi-square test results revealed that a significant correlation exists between pupils' comprehension level and their performance in English. Similar results were inferred by the grade II pupils' level of vocabulary and their performance in English. The vocabulary skills of pupils along synonyms, context clues, configuration clues and homonyms are correlated to the reading comprehension levels of the pupils along noting similarities, identifying cause and effect, noting details and predicting outcomes. In contrast, the vocabulary skills of pupils along picture clues and their reading skill revealed a significant correlation. Therefore, there must be a need for the language teachers to make interventions to improve their students' performance in English.*

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**Keywords:** *Reading comprehension, vocabulary skills, academic performance*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Reading is the mother of all study skills. It is one of the most valuable skills a person can acquire. Reading is a complex process. Thus, it cannot be taught in isolation. Moreover, reading is not merely an ability to recognize written or printed words, but it also refers to putting meaning to what you read and drawing a unified thought of what is read. Moreover, reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas. Like all languages, it is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community which is culturally and socially situated. The reading process requires continuous practices, development, and refinement. Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand what we read - where words have context and texts have meaning. Reading comprehension skills allow people to read proficiently, learn effectively, problem-solve, strategize, conceptualize, and succeed in life. Without reading comprehension skills, many students are left behind. Reading comprehension is the heart and goal of reading, since the purpose of all reading is to gather meaning from the printed page. If a student says words in a passage without gathering their meaning, one will hesitate to call that reading. Reading as a field of teaching is considered one of the important areas of teaching if not the most important ever.

It is said to be one of the most necessary academic skills. Besides, it is a major pillar upon which the teaching/learning process is built. The reading ability plays a central role in the teaching/learning success at all educational stages. Having any difficulty in this skill will result in a variety of consequences on all subjects of study, since reading includes a variety of sub-skills. Ozdemir (2009) stressed that reading is fundamental in getting knowledge as all the lessons and learning activities are mostly based on the power of comprehensive reading; indeed, it is necessary to read comprehensively. Also, reading comprehensively really affects a learner's education and his life as a whole.

Learning in any lesson depends on the understanding of the learning instrument of that lesson; thus, a learner who cannot read comprehensively finds it difficult for him/her to be successful in his or her lessons. For many students, reading comprehension is a major problem. There are mainly three causes for poor reading comprehension: First is, if the person has a language problem. Language plays a vital role in reading. One cannot read a book in a language unless one knows that particular language. If a child's knowledge of English is poor, then his reading will also be poor, and naturally also his reading comprehension. Second is, if the foundational skills of reading have not been automatized. Moreover, teachers must help students do well in their subject and pass the required examination. At the same time, they can increase their students' competency in English and help them become fluent readers in English by engaging them in extensive reading. Thus, teachers in St. Paul University Philippines must be able to identify the level of their pupil's comprehension and vocabulary skills so that they could plan for effective strategies or programs that will eventually enhance their learners' critical thinking skills.

### Conceptual Framework

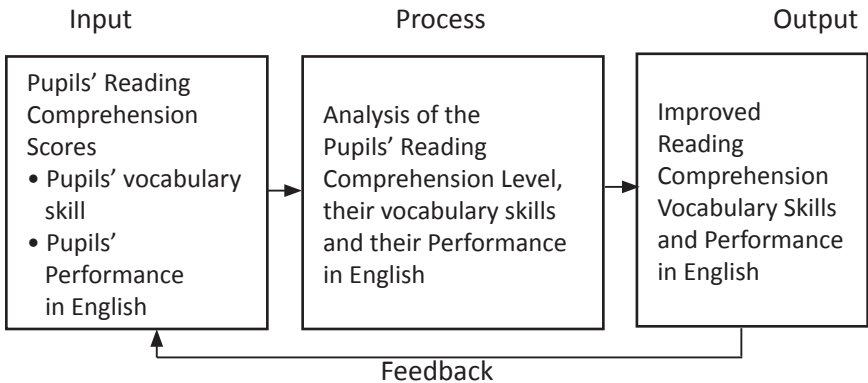


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

As shown, the reading comprehension scores, pupils' vocabulary skills and pupils' performance in English were considered the inputs of the study. An in-depth analysis on the obtained inputs was undertaken to gain insights about the reading comprehension, vocabulary skills and

the performance of Grade II pupils in English. Correlation analysis on pupils' reading skills and academic performance were also undertaken. Moreover, as a significant output, an improved reading comprehension and vocabulary skills and improved performance in English would be manifested.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to assess the reading comprehension and vocabulary level of Grade II pupils and their performance in English. The study further investigated the relationship among the three focused variables. The assessment results served as bases in the formulation of policies to improve reading and comprehension level as well as vocabulary skills of pupils.

Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following problems:

1. What is the reading comprehension level of the Grade II pupils along the indicated reading comprehension skills?
  - 1.1 following simple directions
  - 1.2 noting similarities and differences
  - 1.3 identifying cause and effect
  - 1.4 noting details
  - 1.5 predicting outcomes
2. What level does the pupils' vocabulary skill fall regarding:
  - 2.1 Context clues;
  - 2.2. Synonyms;
  - 2.3. Homonyms;
  - 2.4. Picture clues; and
  - 2.5. Configuration clues?
3. What is the pupils' academic performance in English?
4. Is there a significant relationship between pupils' reading comprehension level and their academic performance in English?
5. Is there a significant relationship between pupils' vocabulary skills and their academic performance?

6. Is there a significant relationship between the pupils' reading comprehension level and vocabulary skills?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The descriptive-correlation design was adopted in the conduct of the study. This design was used since this study focused its investigation on the assessment and correlation analysis of the pupils' reading comprehension level, their vocabulary skills and their performance in English.

### **Participants of the Study**

The participants of the study constituted the population of Grade II pupils at St. Paul University Philippines for the academic year 2014-2015.

### **Instrumentation**

To assess the pupils' reading comprehension level and vocabulary skills, a reading comprehension test and vocabulary skill test were administered. The items on the reading comprehension test were taken from the reading comprehension test items in the book of *Strategies to Achieve Reading Success*, the vocabulary test were taken from the book entitled "*Adventures in English 2*". The instruments were pre-tested to Grade III before it was administered to the participants. The test for vocabulary skill was conducted a week after conducting the reading comprehension test. A documentary analysis on pupils' grades for the first, second and third grading periods for the current year was undertaken to determine their performance in English.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

A permission letter was forwarded to the Basic Education Unit Principal of St. Paul University Philippines. After obtaining permission

from the school principal, the researcher personally administered the reading comprehension test to the target pupils. After a week, the vocabulary test was administered to the same group of participants. Likewise, the researcher sought permission from the advisers to obtain a copy of the pupils' grades in English.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were analyzed using the following data analysis tools:

Frequency and percentage count were used to present pupils' reading comprehension scores per sub-skill.

Percentage scores were interpreted using the given scale:

Reading Scores	Reading Level
75-100%	Independent
51-74.99%	Instruction
0-50%	Frustration

On the level of performance in English, it was interpreted using the following scales:

Legend:

Advanced (A)	: 90% and above
Proficiency (P)	: 85-89%
Approaching Proficiency (AP)	: 80-84%
Developing (D)	: 75-79%
Beginning (B)	: 74 and below

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine whether a significant correlation exists on pupils' reading comprehension, vocabulary skills and their performance in English. Chi-square test was used to determine the relationship between the reading comprehension skills and vocabulary skills.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***On the Reading Comprehension Levels of Grade II pupils***

With respect to following simple directions, majority (62.63%) of the pupils are in the “independent level” when they are classified according to their reading comprehension level along following simple directions. Only a few of them belong to the “instruction” and “frustration” levels as reflected by the percentages of 22.22% and 15.15%, respectively. This means that most of the pupils can independently follow simple directions without the help of anyone.

In terms of noting similarities and differences, majority of the grade II pupils (68 or 68.69%) are in the “frustration” level when classified according to their comprehension level regarding noting similarities and differences, 21 or 21.21% could independently note similarities and differences and 10 or 10.10% belong to the instruction level. This finding implies that pupils could hardly note similarities and differences in the selection read.

On identifying cause and effect, majority of the pupils are at the “frustration” level, 31 or 31.31% are at the “independent” level and only a few (16 or 16.16%) at the “instruction” level.

With regard to noting details most or 49% of the Grade II pupils are within the “frustration” level and 42% at the “independent” level and only 9% at the “instructional” level.

For predicting outcomes, majority of the pupils (59.50%) are in the “frustration” level while 16.16% and 24.24% are in the “independent” and “instructional” level, respectively.

### ***Level of Vocabulary Skills of Grade II Pupils***

For context clues, majority (70.71%) of the pupils are within the “frustration” level with few numbers of pupils within the “independent” and “instructional” level as reflected by their percentages, 19.19% and 10.10%, respectively.

For synonyms, majority or 53% are within the “frustration” level and 25% in the “instructional” level while 21% belong to the “independent” level.

For homonyms, majority (64.65%) of the Grade II pupils are within the “instructional” level and a small number of pupils belonging to the “frustration” and “instructional” level as shown by the percentages 16.16% and 19.19%, respectively.

On picture clues, majority (63.64%) of the pupils belong to the “frustration” level while that of the rest are in the “instructional” and “independent” level as reflected by the percentages, 24.24% and 12.12% respectively.

In terms of configuration clues, most of the pupils (43 or 43.43%) are within the “frustration” level while 34% are in the “independent” level and 22% are in the “instructional” level.

### ***Pupils’ Academic Performance in English***

Majority of the Grade II pupils are within the “advanced” and “proficient” levels with the percentage of 30.30%. It is worthy to note that none of them belong to the beginning level. This is a manifestation that the Grade II pupils of St. Paul University Philippines are gearing towards proficiency in English if not in the advanced level.

### ***Relationship between the Pupils’ Comprehension Level and Their Performance in English***

Chi-square analysis revealed that pupils’ reading comprehension level along following simple directions is significantly correlated with their performance in English. Pupils who belong to independent level tend to have higher proficiency in English.

Along noting details, a significant correlation exists in the reading comprehension level of pupils and their performance in English.

Pupils’ reading comprehension level specifically in giving cause and



effect, is significantly correlated with their performance in English.

A significant correlation exists on the participants reading comprehension of noting similarities with their performance in English.

Moreover, pupils' reading comprehension along predicting outcomes, is significantly correlated with their performance in English.

### ***Correlation between pupils' level of vocabulary skills and their academic performance in English***

Vocabulary skills in identifying synonyms, is significantly correlated with their academic performance in English among pupils. This implies the difficulty of pupils to recognize words of the same meaning.

Vocabulary skills in terms of identifying homonyms, is significantly correlated with their performance in English. It can be inferred from this result that pupils find difficulty in distinguishing the meaning of a word of similar spelling.

A significant correlation was observed on the vocabulary skills of pupils in identifying words through picture clues and their performance in English. This means that pupils could hardly identify words through the configuration clues are given them. Only a few among those who obtained "advanced proficiency" could coin words based on the clue.

### ***Correlation analysis between pupils' reading comprehension level and their level of vocabulary skills***

In the vocabulary skill of pupils in terms of identifying synonyms, there is a significant correlation with the reading comprehension skill of pupils along identifying cause and effect and predicting outcomes, respectively.

The vocabulary skill of pupils along context clues, has found a significant correlation with the reading comprehension of pupils along noting similarities and differences, identifying cause and effect, and noting details.

In the vocabulary skill of pupils along picture clues, there was no significant correlation with their reading comprehension.

The vocabulary skill of the pupils along configuration clues is significantly correlated with the reading comprehension skills of the pupils, except in the following simple directions where no correlation was observed.

In the vocabulary subskill of the pupils in terms of homonyms, it is significantly correlated with their reading comprehension level along noting similarities, identifying cause and noting details.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

It could be gleaned that the reading comprehension levels and vocabulary skills of Grade II pupils are “low” considering the majority belonging to the “frustration” level. Performance of pupils in English is relatively high with an equal number of pupils within the “advanced” and “proficient” levels.

Chi-square test results revealed that a significant correlation exists between pupils’ comprehension level and their performance in English. Similarly, a significant correlation was observed in the pupils’ level of vocabulary skills and their performance in English.

The vocabulary skills of pupils along synonyms, context clues, configuration clues and homonyms are correlated to the reading comprehension levels of the pupils along noting similarities, identifying cause and effect, noting details and predicting outcomes. In contrast, the vocabulary skills of pupils along picture clues and their reading skill revealed a significant correlation. Therefore, there must be a need for the language teachers to make interventions to improve their pupils’ performance in English.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

Pupils may spend the time to explore reading materials especially those that will enhance their thinking/comprehension skill.

Teachers as well as parents may spend more time for pupils to explore reading materials especially those that will enhance their knowledge skill, particularly on those sub-skills where they are weak at.

Teachers may use methodologies, strategies, and activities that will develop their pupils' reading ability most particularly their higher comprehension skill. They should also choose the strategies and books most appropriate for achieving their teaching objectives.

Teachers may incorporate their teaching into good reading selections, effective teaching procedures, reading comprehension activities and techniques that introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussions, excite imaginative responses and become the springboard for well-rounded, fascinating lessons.

Teachers may provide drills on word meaning and reading comprehension to improve the vocabulary skills and reading comprehension level of the pupils.

Other research studies may be conducted using other grade levels, other important variables, and factors that lead toward better proposals for further improvements of students' higher reading comprehension and vocabulary skills.

School administrators may support the reading programs initiated by the Department of Education.

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