METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH OF GRADE 7 STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

In learning, metacognition is considered important as it is a strong predictor of a learner's academic success. Generally, students with good metacognitive skills demonstrate good academic performance compared with students with poor metacognition. Students with poor metacognition may benefit from metacognitive trainings to improve their metacognition and academic performance. Individual differences exist in metacognition and people with poor metacognition are deemed "incompetent" as they perform less relative to their peers (Kruger and Dunning, 1999). Metacognition enables students to be strategic in their learning by learning new information rather than focusing on studying information already learned. This study sought to determine the metacognitive awareness and academic performance in English of Grade 7 students of Cagayan National High School. It made use of descriptive-correlational research design utilizing the Metacognitive Awareness in Reading Questionnaire as research instrument. The participants of the study are the Grade 7 students of Cagayan National High School for the School Year 2014-2015. The study found that participants who have good academic performance generally use the bottom-up strategy. They understand the text that they are reading by dealing with the letters and words used in their reading materials. These students are able to acquire reading comprehension through getting the meaning of words. Furthermore, the participants who possess low academic performance prefer to use the top-down strategy.

INTRODUCTION

People are placed in a society where demands and needs are complex. They have to possess intelligence, skills and talents in order to thrive in the competitive race of humanity. This is where education comes in. Through education, one can acquire learning and trainings which can help him hone his skills and enrich his knowledge which are necessary in order for him to give what the society demands. In relation to what one can gain from education, a learner must recognize his prime responsibility in his own learning. This implies his big role in the education process.

A learner must acquire learning skills and strategies in order for him to maximize his education. The use of appropriate and effective strategies is his weapon to experience academic success. In addition, a learner must be aware of his own learning skills for him to assess himself in terms of the impact of his learning skills and strategies in his studies and adjust them if they are not useful in his learning. These draw the line between successful learners and those who are not. Metacognition then plays an important role in the academic success of a learner.

Metacognition is generally defined as the activity of monitoring and controlling one's cognition. It can further be defined as what one knows about his/her cognitive processes and how one uses these processes in order to learn and remember (Ormrod, 2004). Another definition of metacognition is that, it is "one's knowledge concerning one's cognitive processes and products or anything related to them" (Flavell, 1976).

Metacognition is important in learning and is a strong predictor of academic success (Dunning, et al, 2003; Kruger and Dunning, 1999). Students with good metacognition demonstrate good academic performance compared to students with poor metacognition. Students with poor metacognition may benefit from metacognitive training to improve their metacognition and academic performance. Individual differences exist in metacognition and people with poor metacognition are deemed "incompetent" as they perform inadequately relative to their peers (Kruger and Dunning, 1999). Metacognition enables

students to be strategic in their learning by, for instance, learning new information rather than focusing on studying information already learned (Everson & Tobias, 1998).

One of the skills that a learner must possess is good reading. In addition, metacognition is a foundation for other reading comprehension strategies. It can then be drawn that metacognition is vital in the acquisition of good reading skills of a learner. People need to learn how to read well because it is very impossible to have a day without having to read something. When people look at their surroundings, there are several printed materials present which need to be read in order for them to grasp what they mean. The ability to comprehend these materials will allow them to gain knowledge, information and skills that are vital for them to become as competent individuals.

It is important to remember that the other learning areas, just like Mathematics and Science, are carefully planned to develop, mold, and produce learners who are knowledgeable and skillful. It is through reading where learners can augment their knowledge on these learning areas that are essential for their growth and development. These are the ways on how reading as a skill sets as an important factor in the success of the learners in school.

Gray (1960) said that reading is an interaction between the reader and the written language through which the reader attempts to reconstruct a message from the writer. Reading is also a sampling, selecting, predicting, comparing, and confirming activity in which the reader selects a sample of useful graphic cues based on what he sees and what he expects to see.

The goal of all reading instruction is to help students become expert readers so that they can achieve independence and can use literacy for lifelong learning and enjoyment. Learning to use strategies effectively is essential in constructing meaning. Readers who are not strategic often encounter difficulties in their reading (Pari, et al, 1991). Moreover, these early difficulties in reading may influence the way readers learn throughout the rest of their lives (Anderson, et al, 1985). The importance of having a good reading skill and effective reading

strategy should be emphasized in order to become an efficient learner. One must continue to practice the habit of reading for him to have a good reading ability.

The above-cited significance of employing reading strategies implies that one should be aware of his own reading strategies which are acquired through metacognition. With these concepts, the researcher conducted a study on the metacognitive awareness and the academic performance of Grade 7 students of Cagayan National High School.

Cagayan National High School, known as one of the best schools in the region, is comprised of learners with varied learning strategies. One of these learning strategies is how they comprehend texts that they read. In doing so, students use reading strategies in order to equip themselves with the knowledge they can derive from reading.

Moreover, Grade 7 students of Cagayan National High School are exposed in the different learning areas that enable them to achieve their maximum potential. One can possibly appreciate and understand these different learning areas when he is equipped with good reading skills. Thus, reading is vital in order not to be deprived with the gift of learning. Along with this skill, appropriate and effective strategies must be employed by the students to acquire learning which is necessary for their growth and development.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the metacognitive awareness of Grade 7 students and their academic performance in English.

Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the participants when grouped according to their academic classification?
2. What is the participants' level of academic performance in English?
3. Is there a significant difference in the academic performance of the participants in English when grouped according to academic classification?

4. What is the metacognitive awareness of the participants?
5. Is there a significant difference in the metacognitive awareness of the participants when grouped according to academic classification?
6. Is there a significant relationship between participants' metacognitive awareness and their academic performance in English?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive-correlational research design was utilized in the conduct of the study. It is appropriate in investigating the correlational analysis of the metacognitive awareness of the students and their academic performance.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study are the Grade 7 students of Cagayan National High School for the School Year 2014-2015. Representation of participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
The Academic Classification, Number of Sections, Total Number of Students, Sample Size and Population per Section of the Participants

Academic Classification	Total Number of Students		Sample Size	
	f	%	f	%
Science Sections	229	16.58	65	15.15
Academic Sections 1-10	465	33.67	130	30.30
Academic Sections 11-25	633	45.84	180	41.96
Special Program in Sports	24	1.74	24	5.59
Special Program in the Arts	30	2.17	30	6.99
TOTAL	**1,381**	**100**	**429**	**100**

Instrumentation

A Metacognitive Awareness in Reading Questionnaire was used to determine the participants' metacognitive awareness. The questionnaire includes the use of bottom-up and top-down strategies. It contains twenty-nine items which consists of eight items from bottom-up strategy and twenty-one from top-down strategy.

Bottom-up strategy is where readers decode the linguistic features to comprehend the text while top-down strategy deals on how readers make use of their previous knowledge and their operational knowledge about how to approach texts to construct their meaning (Oranpattanachi, 2004).

All the items were adopted from the study Perceived Reading Strategies Used by Thai Pre-Engineering Students conducted by Pornpun Oranpattanachi except for the last two reading strategies which were from Carrell (1989).

The participants answered the questionnaire by rating their degree of frequency in using the strategies while reading an English text. The scales very often, often, sometimes, seldom and never were employed.

The validity of the questionnaire was checked through the two English teachers in the area of TEFL who affirmed that the items did measure the construct sensibly and acceptably. Its reliability coefficient is 0.81. In addition, the participants' mean grade from first to fourth grading in English was computed to identify their academic performance.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher asked permission from the principal of Cagayan National High School through a letter. After permission was granted, the researcher sought consent from the participants to ensure their voluntary participation to the study. After which, she personally administered the questionnaire on metacognitive awareness to the target participants.

In addition, the researcher also asked permission from the English Department Head and the English teachers of the participants to obtain the latter's grades from first to fourth quarter. When consent was given, the researcher collected the class records of the English teachers to determine the grades of the participants.

Data Analysis

Frequency, percentage, mean, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Chi-Square test were utilized to treat and analyze the data gathered.

Frequency and Percentage. Participants' degree of frequency in using a reading strategy was measured through frequency count. This degree of frequency was further expressed in terms of percentage.

Mean. This was used to determine the academic performance of the participants in the four grading periods in English.

To interpret the academic performance of the participants, the given scale was used:

Table 2
Scale for Mean Grade for the Academic Performance of the Participants and their Descriptive Interpretation

Mean Grade	Descriptive Interpretation
90 and above	Advanced (A)
85-89	Proficient (P)
80-84	Approaching Proficiency (AP)
75-79	Developing (D)
74 and below	Beginning (B)

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was used to identify whether a significant difference exists in the participants' academic performance in English when they are grouped in terms of their academic classifications. Tests of hypotheses were set at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Participants when Grouped According to Their Academic Classification

A total of 429 students served as the participants of the study. There are 180 or 41.96% of the participants are from the Academic Sections 11-25, 130 or 30.30% from the Academic Sections 1-10, 65 or 15.15% from the Science Sections, 30 or 6.99% from the Special Program in the Arts and 24 or 5.59% from the Special Program in Sports.

From the data, it is shown that majority of the participants belong to the Academic Sections 11-25 while the least number of participants came from the Special Program in Sports.

Participants' Level of Academic Performance in English

From the total of 429 or 100.00% participants, 20 or 4.66% participants are in the Advanced level, 122 or 28.44% participants are in the Proficient level, 232 or 54.08% participants are in the Approaching Proficiency level, and 55 or 12.82% participants are in the Developing level. The computed mean based on the grades of all the participants is 83.21 which is in the Approaching Proficiency level.

In addition, it can be gleaned on the data that the bulk of the participants are in the Approaching Proficiency level while the Advanced level got the lowest chunk.

Test for Significant Difference in the Academic Performance of the Participants in English when Grouped According to Academic Classification

The academic performance of the participants when grouped according to academic classification is significantly different from one another as to the computed probability value of less than 0.01.

Metacognitive Awareness of the Participants

In Science Sections, 36 or 55.38% of the participants employed the bottom-up, 28 or 43.08% preferred top-down and one or 1.54% applied the neutral strategy.

In Academic Sections 1-10, 65 or 50.00% of the participants used the bottom-up, 63 or 48.46% applied top-down and two or 1.54% employed the neutral strategy.

In Academic Sections 11-25, 68 or 37.78% participants utilized the bottom-up and 112 or 62.22% employed the top-down strategy.

In Special Program in Sports, 13 or 54.17% utilized the bottom-up, 10 or 41.67% preferred top-down and one or 4.16% used the neutral strategy.

In Special Program in the Arts, seven or 23.33% of the participants practiced the use of the bottom-up and 23 or 76.67% used the top-down.

Out of 429 participants, 189 or 44.06% employed the bottom-up, 236 or 55.01% used the top-down and four or 0.93% utilized both the bottom-up and top-down strategies.

Test for Significant difference in the Metacognitive Awareness of the Participants when Grouped According to Academic Classification

There is a significant difference in the metacognitive awareness used by the participants when grouped according to academic classification. The computed probability value of 0.005 is lesser than 0.05; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Relationship between the Participants' Metacognitive Awareness and their Academic Performance in English

There is a significant relationship between the participants' metacognitive awareness and their academic performance in English. The computed probability value was 0.02 which is less than the 0.05

level of significance; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

CONCLUSION

Based on the summary of findings, the following conclusions were derived:

The participants use reading strategies in order to help them comprehend the texts that they are reading. The metacognitive awareness of the participants was measured by their use of the bottom-up strategy, top-down strategy or the combination of both strategies as their reading strategy.

The participants who have good academic performance generally use the bottom-up strategy. They understand the texts that they are reading by dealing with the letters and words used in their reading materials. These students are able to acquire reading comprehension through getting the meaning of words. The participants who have low academic performance prefer to use the top-down strategy. They try to comprehend the reading materials based on their prior knowledge and expectations.

The result revealed that the participants who have good academic performance are aware of how they comprehend reading texts by employing the bottom-up strategy such as recognizing words and their meaning. On the other hand, participants who have low academic performance are aware that they employ skills that fall under the top-down strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary of findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. Teachers should serve as guides in allowing students to reflect on their metacognition.
2. Teachers should give interesting and appropriate reading exercises to the students for the latter to practice, develop and refine their reading strategies.

3. Future researchers can conduct further studies using the same questionnaire but must allow their participants to read the text first to have actual determination of their reading strategies.

4. Future researchers can use a questionnaire that consists not only of bottom-up and top-down strategies.

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