



English Reading Anxiety and Reading Proficiency in the New Normal Education

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Abstract

This study assessed the reading proficiency and reading anxiety of second-year Bachelor of Secondary Education students at Saint Columban College and examined the relationship between these variables in the context of distance online learning. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the study employed a Likert-scale questionnaire to determine the students' level of reading anxiety and a reading proficiency test to measure their reading proficiency. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The findings showed that the majority of the participants were classified under the Lower Advanced level of reading proficiency, while their overall reading anxiety was interpreted as somewhat disagree. Furthermore, the results revealed a weak and non-significant relationship between English reading proficiency and reading anxiety, indicating that anxiety is not a significant predictor of students' reading performance in the online learning modality. Although reading anxiety remains an important variable, the findings suggest that other factors may have a greater influence on students' reading proficiency.

Keywords

Reading proficiency, Reading Anxiety, Distance online learning, Descriptive correlational study, BSEd English students

1. Introduction

In today's global era, being a literate person is a significant element in leading to a successful life. When you have the ability on how to read well has now been an essential requirement in all academic levels and as well as the career opportunity in developing the learners. For example, if you don't acquire good reading skills, you might fail your academic and social life. Many people have assumed that reading is an easy process. They don't know that the reading process is not just one person understanding each word and the surface structure represented in the reading text. Hence, it also includes the student's reading proficiency. Most people also didn't realize that anxiety has been stated as one factor in which it could affect their reading process during this progress. The study examines the Reading Anxiety and Reading Proficiency among College Students in online classes.



Over the years, concerns of reading habits of the students raised by many places about their academic performance in the classroom. These concerns arise due to the relationship between reading competence and academic success (Cullinan, 2000). Reading can be interpreted as a cognitive activity in which readers can have a dialogue with the author through text. Students who independently read on their own without guidance is to achieve the best knowledge acquisition.

Anxiety plays an important role in learning success or lack of learning. Anxiety has been considered one of the most important affective factors influencing second language learning (NA, 2007). According to Otto, Calkins, and Hearon (2010), defined anxiety is “an emotional state characterized by a sense of apprehension, worry, and lack of control of one’s effective response.” Accordingly, reading anxiety is a fear or uncomfortable feeling or actions when reading. It happens especially when reading in front of the crowd where the main focus of the audience is the speaker or the message that the speaker is about to read, whether the speaker is about to read an essay, a chapter from a book, or anything that the speaker has prepared to read. It doesn’t happen only to certain people, but to anyone, and it certainly doesn’t choose who. Furthermore, reading anxiety can affect the speakers’ academic performance or in this case, students’ academic performance. According to Eysenck, Santos, Derakshan, and Calvo (2007), a student experiencing a high level of reading anxiety will have an academic difficulty which may cause interference on his or her work, as a result of this student will develop a reducing working memory which may restrain the student from using reading strategies. Hence, it is crucial to address this situation to gather possible techniques on quitting that feeling of uneasiness or fear of the students’ when reading because it can affect their academic performance. While-Reading proficiency is the skills in reading not limited to fluency and comprehension; fluency in pronouncing the words, in reading the sentence which includes the rising and falling intonation, the glide, etc.

Understanding about the given readings, including during the middle discussion of the teacher when he/she assign the students to read a specific paragraph or a sentence. At some activities in school, especially during school evaluation, some of the evaluators would rate the students’ reading proficiency; this also includes the students’ pronunciation and comprehension of the assigned topic. Reading proficiency is important not only for academic performance but also in life in general; understanding the guidelines in cooking to avoid burning the house, for example. Hence, reading proficiency is important, and that students must learn to acquire these skills to develop understanding and prevent misunderstanding.

Without a doubt, the ability to comprehend written and spoken languages and communicate ideas and concepts are vital in one’s growth and progress. Access to knowledge in the various disciplines is made possible through comprehension and communication and the mastery of several study skills, habits, and attitudes. One can develop the enthusiasm necessary in the continual persistence of learning (Shippen, Houchins, Crites, Derzis & Patterson,2010). In this article, Juan (2019) in Philstar Global said that among 79 participating countries and economies, the Philippines has scored the lowest in the reading comprehension year 2018 Programme for international student assessment or knew as PISA.



As per observation, some students who have reading anxiety don't often see participating in class. Some students also participate but only when called to read a paragraph, statement, or anything that the teacher prepared for them to read. But even when they are participating, some are still afraid. It is evident through the shaking of their hands, mispronunciation of a word, reading as fast as possible, not minding the periods, and commas, eager to finish the readings. It is also evident through group activities. This time it is easy to spot those students who have reading anxiety because it's a group. Only a few students are inside the circle. Hence, they can be easily spotted. If some of them are given a task to present a topic, they would immediately turn it down or pass the task to the other mates even if their mates would say that they would just read it. There are also instances at home, or when the students are even just alone, are afraid in reading such as reading on screen in laptop, desktop because it can affect their eyes, or their head causing them to feel a headache, or blur vision which leads them to not understanding of what they are reading at all.

2. Research Questions

The study examines the Reading Anxiety and Reading Proficiency among College Students in online classes. It focuses on one of the higher institutional schools in Pagadian City, utilizing the Bachelor of Secondary Education, Second Year College students of Saint Columban College as research participants. The making of the research study is in the school year 2020-2021.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following queries:

1. What is the level of the reading proficiency of the BSED college students of Saint Columban College?
2. What is the level of the reading anxiety of the BSED college students of Saint Columban College?
3. Is there a relationship between reading proficiency and reading anxiety in distance online mode of learning?
4. What implication can be derived based on the result?

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Method Used

The researchers will use the Quantitative research method. Quantitative research is defined by Bryman (2012, p35) as a research strategy that emphasizes the quantification in gathering and analysis of the data. This means that it indicates amounting into something. Quantitative attempts to look into the possible answers to the questions given that start with how and what (Rasinger 2013). It can also quantify their level and other defined variables and generalize its knowledge and understanding with its outcomes. Quantitative is preferred by the researchers because it can be measured. This research method deals with numbers and statistics to explain the findings, according to Kowalczyk 2016. the Quantitative has limitations that it also fails to find out the means and explanations of the study because



somewhat it misleading. The study of Sanders and Bergh (2015) shows that it has not explained the effect and the meanings of their content very well. The advantage of quantitative research is that it uses statistical data to save time and resources. Just as Bryman (2001) does, he argued that quantitative research is the research that has places in emphasizing numbers and figures in gathering and analysis of the data.

A type of quantitative the researchers are going to use a Descriptive type. Descriptive research is research that aims to give in detail and orderly describes a phenomenon. This type can answer how, what, when, and where questions and doesn't answer why questions. This type can use surveys in gathering the data about the different subjects. It is appropriate because it aims to identify everything that you wanted to know and able to understand how and what happens.

3.2. Research Setting

The researchers will conduct their research in Saint Columban College, locates at the corner Alano – Sagun Street, San Francisco District, Pagadian City. The SCC was constituted by Fr. Sean Nolan of the Missionary Society of Saint Columban (MSSC) in 1957. He served as the first director and started opening the first year and second year of high school. In the following year, Fr. Patrick Campeon, MSSC, took over as the school director. The College Department operated in 1963, offering Liberal Arts, Education, Commerce, and Secretarial, and created a third-story college building near the Provincial Capitol. In 1967, the Grade School Department operated with Sr. Eugene de Maries, SPS, as the Principal. In 1969, secondary education was in full operation and a downtown fourth-story building was built erect. In 1978, they turned over the school to the Diocese of Pagadian Bishop Jesus B. Yuquib, as well served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and appointed Fr. Jose Maria Luengo as the first Filipino Priest who became the School President. At present, Rev. Fr. Rico P. Sayson, JCL, serves as the President with Mrs. Virginia A. Ruben as the Vice President for Finance and Administration, Dr. Susan M. Ramirez as the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Sr. Ammie Adoremos, CB, as the Vice President for Spirituality and Formation. SCC has eight departments: Kindergarten, Grade School, High School, Senior High School, College of Business Education, College of Teachers Education Arts and Sciences, College of Computer Studies, and the Graduate School.

3.3. Respondents of the Study

The research participants in this study were primarily selected from 2nd-year college students of College of Teachers Education, Arts, and Sciences, considering of one of the Higher Educational Institutions in Pagadian, Zamboanga Del Sur. There were some students but we just have chosen 30 students as respondents for this study who are enrolled in online learning modes.

Modes of Learning	Year Level	Population	Sample	Number of Students
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Online Class	Second Year College	84	30	30
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3.4. Instruments of the Study

Google Forms is a web-based app that is used to create forms for data collection purposes. The researchers use this online survey to save time in collecting the data while working on other tasks (Llieva, Baron, & Healey, 2002). The instrument that the researchers used to gather data was a Likert scale questionnaire. The researchers made two questionnaires, the set A is for the Reading Anxiety and the students will rate Reading Anxiety experience in Online Classes. The Set B questions are about the Students Reading Proficiency Test; the Researcher will rate the students Reading Proficiency by the used of online Reading Proficiency Tester.

The questionnaire was made to know the possible reason why students have anxiety in and to know their level of reading proficiency in different methods of learning specifically in an online mode of learning.

3.5. Data Gathering Procedure

According to Yin, 2014, data collection techniques include interviews, observations (direct and participant), questionnaires, and relevant documents. It is used in collecting the participants' responses to the given questions regarding the research study. The researchers will be going to use a survey form of questionnaires to gather the data, the findings, and the participants' responses. The process of gathering the survey questionnaires to the participants' responses is done online since we couldn't meet the target participants in person due to the government's safety protocols to avoid the spread of the COVID19 pandemic.

4. Results

4.1. Level of the reading proficiency of the BSED college students of Saint Columban College:

Table 2 shows the level of reading proficiency of the participants. A total of 6.66% of participants belong to Level 1, Elementary, with a score that falls under 20–35%. While 20% of the participants are under Level 2, Lower Intermediate, with a score that belongs to 40–55%.

Moreover, 33% belong in Level 3, which indicates Upper-Intermediate that implies a 60–75% score. Finally, 40% of the participants belong to Level 4, Lower Advanced, with a score of between 80 and 95%. No participants belong to Level 5 because none of them got the correct answer to the given questionnaire in line with Level 5.



In conclusion, the level of reading proficiency of the highest research participants is Level 4, which indicates as Lower Advanced with a score around 80–95%, followed by Level 3. The lowest participants fall under Level 1, followed by Level 2.

4.2. Level of English Reading Anxiety of the Research Participants

Table 1 shows the reading anxiety of the research participants. The average score for question 1 was 2.6, indicating that the respondent somewhat disagrees. The mean average for question 2 was found to be 3, which shows somewhat agree. The mean average for question number three was 2.7, specify somewhat disagree. It was found out that the students somewhat disagree with questions 4, 5, 7, and 8.

Still, the mean average for question number 6 was 3.1, for question number 9 was 3.3, for question 10 was 3.3, and for question number 11 was 3.2, which indicating somewhat agree. The mean average of question number 12 was 2.8, and question number 13 was 2.8, which shows somewhat disagree. Question number 14 is somewhat agree, which has a mean average of 3 and somewhat disagree with question number 15 in the mean average of 2.7.

The question number 16 has a mean average of 3, question number 19 was 3 also, and 20 was 3.1, indicating somewhat agree. Still, the question number 17 and question number 18 specified somewhat disagree. Finally, the students' reading anxiety weighted average was 2.88, indicating that they somewhat disagree.

4.3. Significant Relationship between Reading Proficiency and Reading Anxiety

Table 3 shows the relationship between English Reading Anxiety and Reading Proficiency among BSED-II College students in the College of Teachers Arts and Sciences Department. According to the data above mentioned, the data got 0.04 of multiple R, which means is a weak correlation. The significance f of the data was 0.81.

The alternative hypothesis declaring a significant relationship between English Reading Anxiety and Reading Proficiency was tested using the Likert Scale and Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis, as shown in Table 3.

5. Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that the level of English reading anxiety among the participants was interpreted as somewhat disagree, as reflected by the overall weighted average of 2.88. This indicates that the students generally do not strongly experience English reading anxiety, although certain indicators still showed somewhat agree responses. These results suggest that while anxiety is present, it does not dominantly affect most students when engaging in English reading tasks.

In terms of reading proficiency, most of the participants belonged to Level 4 or Lower Advanced, followed by Level 3 or Upper Intermediate, indicating that the majority of the students demonstrated



relatively high reading proficiency. Only a small percentage of participants fell under the Elementary and Lower Intermediate levels, showing that fewer students exhibited lower reading performance.

With regard to the relationship between English reading anxiety and reading proficiency, the results showed a weak correlation with a multiple R value of 0.04 and a significance f of 0.81. This implies that English reading anxiety does not have a significant relationship with the reading proficiency of the participants. The result suggests that the students' level of reading proficiency may not be strongly influenced by their level of English reading anxiety.

6. Conclusion And Recommendation

This study was conducted to probe the relationship between reading anxiety and reading proficiency among second-year College students under the College of Teacher Education Arts and Sciences Department of Saint Columban College, Pagadian City. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there are perhaps other reasons that influence the level of reading proficiency of the students since the relationship between reading anxiety and reading proficiency showed a weak correlation.

Although the data revealed that the level of reading proficiency of the highest number of participants belonged to Level 4, which corresponds to a score of 80–95%, the number of respondents in this level did not reach 50%. This indicates that there are still more students who fall under lower levels of reading proficiency, with scores ranging from 20% to 75%. On the other hand, the weighted average of the students' level of reading anxiety was 2.88, which was interpreted as somewhat disagreeable, further supporting the weak correlation between the two variables.

Therefore, while reading anxiety still influences students' reading proficiency, it is not the main reason behind their level of reading proficiency. The weak correlation suggests that other factors may have a greater impact on students' reading performance, even though reading anxiety should not be disregarded entirely as a contributing factor.

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that teachers include activities that will enhance and develop both the students' reading anxiety and reading proficiency. In addition, further studies related to reading proficiency may be conducted to address other recurring problems in reading. Teachers should also regularly monitor the reading proficiency of students and establish a reward system for those who obtain the highest percentage of reading proficiency at the end of each reading remedial program in order to motivate them to perform better. Moreover, parents and the community should be involved in improving students' reading proficiency by encouraging parents to tutor their children, especially in reading. Lastly, teachers must integrate positive affirmations for students who experience reading anxiety in order to lessen or eliminate their anxiety.

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