Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High School Students

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Abstract

This experimental and descriptive study was conducted to enhance the reading comprehension of 177 Grade 11 HUMSS students of Tipas Integrated National High School through the utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets (LPWs) designed and integrated with the Course Reading and Writing Skills given for eight weeks during the 3rd Quarter of the School Year 2021-2022. It is a quantitative type of research that used correlational design and purposive sampling techniques. It used pre and post-test, LPWs and perceptionnaire as research instruments. The study revealed that the pre-assessed level of comprehension skills among respondents before the LPWs' utilization ranged from non-reader to independent level while the post-assessed level of comprehension skills among respondents ranged from frustration to independent level after the utilization of LPWs. The respondents perceived the quality of designed LPWs as very satisfactory in terms of objectives, content, format and language, usefulness, and satisfactory in terms of instructional delivery. The hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the pre and post-assessed level of reading comprehension before and after the utilization of LPWs is not supported. Additionally, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the perceived quality of the designed LPWS and the respondents' reading comprehension is not supported. The designed worksheets contributed a lot towards enhancing the lexical proficiency and comprehension skills of the learners.

Keywords: Lexical Proficiency Worksheets, Lexical, Literal, Interpretive, Applied, Affective Comprehension Skill

Introduction

Every graduate of basic education should be an empowered individual with the competence to engage in creative and critical thinking, the ability to communicate effectively, the capacity to pursue productive employment and entrepreneurship, or the skills and potential to thrive with the demands of tertiary education. These goals which reflect the vision and mission of the K-12 Program stated in the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533) highlight the need to fully develop the students' 21st-century skills with a focus on the development of comprehension skills which are vital in mastering varied core competencies. Over the years, in recognition of the need to strengthen every

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022

Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

172

Filipino student's reading performance, the Department of Education has implemented different reading programs and the most recent of which was the 3Bs initiative otherwise known as "Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa".

Contained in DepEd Memorandum No. 173, s. 2019, 3Bs Initiative stressed the challenge to further intensify reading programs as the national assessments showed that there were still many early-grade learners struggling to meet the learning standards in early language, literacy, and numeracy. It stated that low achievement levels in English, Mathematics, and Science were due to gaps in the learners' reading comprehension which were also reflected in the   Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Results in 2019 where the Philippines landed with the second lowest score in Reading and Mathematics. PISA results showed that the majority of the students cannot identify the main idea in a piece of text of moderate length and they also found it hard to represent the literal meaning of single or multiple texts in the absence of explicit content or organizational clues.

Under the new normal and the gap in the conduct of face-to-face classes, the dismal reading performance of the students remains the same. It is a challenge that must be addressed and the mandate of the Department of Education to continue to intensify reading measures supports the nature and main goal of this study. It aimed to equip the students with the lexical proficiency needed in enhancing basic reading comprehension skills.

For this study, the Lexical Proficiency Worksheets (LPWs) have been designed to help the learners develop their vocabulary breadth and depth of knowledge and fluency. The activities were compliant and supportive of the prescribed Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) for the Course "Reading and Writing Skills" and the worksheets feature varied vocabulary drills and literary selections to develop literal, interpretive, applied, and affective comprehension skills. Through the activities, the students have identified word meanings and functions, recognized and recalled specific and relevant details, and made inferences. It also helped them to discuss relationships between main ideas, draw conclusions, write comparative and critical analyses and expound on the relevance of the featured texts to their lives and their experiences.

Equipping the Grade 11 students with lexical proficiencies and developing their comprehension skills were vital forms of direct vocabulary instruction which helped them cope with academic texts that posed increasing difficulty as students engaged in varied types of academic pursuits. Knowing, understanding and analytically processing what they were reading and being provided with relevant written and performance tasks have enhanced their comprehension and thinking skills. Their learning experiences through the worksheets helped the students become more proficient readers and critical thinkers capable of benefitting from the challenges of reading and learning.

This study is anchored on the Schema Theory developed by Frederic Bartlett in 1932 and cited by Xue (2019), Bartlett considered schema as "an active organization which controls the past reactions or past experience". People understand new things when they can connect new knowledge with known or familiar concepts.

In the educational process, the task of teachers is to help students develop new schemata and establish connections between them, combined with background information and prior knowledge, new schemas improve memory and comprehension.

In this study, improving the learners' schemata was attained by providing them with LPWs designed to enhance their comprehension skills. After the utilization of the worksheets, its effectiveness was described through the learners' perception of its objectives, content, format and language, usefulness, and instructional delivery.

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

173

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to enhance the comprehension skills of SHS students through the utilization of LPWs. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Analyze the pre and post-assessed level of comprehension skills of the respondents before and after the utilization of the LPWs in terms of lexical, literal, interpretive, applied, and affective comprehension.
2. Evaluate the respondents' perception of the quality of the designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in terms of its objectives, content, format and language, usefulness and instructional delivery.
3. Determine the significant difference between the pre and post assessed level of reading comprehension before and after the utilization of the LPWs.
4. Analyze the significant relationship between the perceived quality of the designed LPWs and the respondents' reading comprehension.

Methodology

Research Design. This study is experimental and descriptive research. After the utilization of the LPWs, a description has been obtained when the students evaluated its impact and showed how they perceived the tool in terms of its objectives, content, format and language, usefulness, and instructional delivery. This study utilized the quantitative type of research and used correlational design to determine the relationship between variables using statistical analyses. A purposive sampling technique has been applied and the locally made Pre and Post Test for Reading Comprehension has been used to determine if a significant difference in the learners' comprehension skills would be achieved after the utilization of the LPWs.

Respondents of the Study. There were 177 respondents for the study, the Grade 11 HUMSS students of Tipas Integrated National High School for the School Year 2021-2022. They came from three sections: Jeremiah (61 students), Ezekiel (60 students), and Elijah (56 students).

Data Gathering Procedure. During the pre-research stage, the researcher asked for the approval of the school head, the Public Schools District Supervisor, the Schools Division Superintendent, and the LSPU research panel to conduct the study. The research tools have been validated and the Pre-Test has been conducted at the start of the third quarter of the school year. The LPWs and separate answer sheets were released as part of the activities in the Weekly Home Learning Plans (WHLPS) and the Learning Activity Sheets (LAS) for the course Reading and Writing Skills. The students utilized the LPWs for eight weeks (3rd week of February – 2nd week of April 2022) then they answered the Post Test. The students also evaluated the LPWs by answering the Perception Survey Questionnaire for the worksheets to reflect how they perceived its impact on their comprehension skills.

Statistical Treatment of Data. For analysis and interpretation of data, the research made use of frequency and percentage to determine the pre and post-assessed level of comprehension skills before and after the utilization of the LPWs.

Mean and Standard Deviation have been employed to determine how the respondents perceived the quality of the designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in terms of objectives, content, format and language, usefulness, and instructional delivery. Paired t-test has been utilized to determine if there was a significant difference between the pre and post-assessed level of reading comprehension before and after

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

174

the utilization of the LPWs and Pearson r has been used to determine if there was a significant relationship between the perceived quality of the designed LPWs and the respondents' reading comprehension.

Results and Discussion

1. Pretest Results in Reading Comprehension

Table 1
Pre-Assessed Level of Comprehension Skills

Score	Reading Comprehension Skills										Interpretation
	Lexical		Literal		Interpretive		Applied		Affective		
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
8-10	6	10.0%	5	8.3%	9	15.0%	7	11.7%	11	18.3%	Independent
5-7	25	41.7%	23	38.3%	25	41.7%	24	40.0%	22	36.7%	Instructional
2-4	26	43.3%	27	45.0%	24	40.0%	25	41.7%	25	41.7%	Frustration
0-1	3	5.0%	5	8.3%	2	3.3%	4	6.7%	2	3.3%	Non-Reader
Total	**60**	**100.0%**	**60**	**100.0%**	**60**	**100.0%**	**60**	**100.0%**	**60**	**100.0%**	

Legend: 80-100% Independent, 59-79% Instructional, 11- 58% points Frustration, 0-10% point Non-Reader (Revised Phil-IRI 2018).

Table 1 shows the Pre-Assessed Level of Comprehension Skills indicating that respondents are predominantly under the frustration and instructional level. It also shows that before the utilization of the LPWs, there are non-readers who struggle with their lexical, literal, interpretive, applied, and affective comprehension.

Hawkins, et.al. (2011) and Jung (2016) state that much of the learners' comprehension of text depends on word identification, fluency, and vocabulary knowledge. During reading, poor readers experience difficulty in decoding hence they fail to read and understand the words of their texts accurately. The attention that they give to figure out the words hinders them from understanding the message of the text.

Meanwhile, Stanovich (2016) said that the gap between good and poor readers may increase over time. This is referred to as Matthew effect which takes place when students have poor decoding skills, causing them not to understand what they are reading hence they tend not to read for pleasure or read for the academic purpose causing them to reach high school with poor literal and low comprehension skills.

2. Post-Test Results in Reading Comprehension

Table 2 indicates the Post-Assessed Level of Comprehension skills where it can be gleaned that the utilization of the worksheets obtained very good implications for the enhancement of lexical, literal, interpretive, and applied comprehension. There have been no non-readers and almost no frustration readers except for four readers who remained under the frustration level for literal comprehension.

The frustration readers may have uncorrected reading disabilities since their primary grades. They find it hard to read texts and they also fail to fully understand what they can decode. They often read less making it difficult for them to acquire new vocabulary and sufficient exposure to varied texts. Marinak and Gambrell (2013) stated that extended failure with reading comprehension can contribute to apathy

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

175

and lack of motivation which can stifle the learners' progress and prevent any movement toward increased competence.

Table 2
Post-Assessed Level of Comprehension Skills

Score	Reading Comprehension Skills										Interpretation
	Lexical		Literal		Interpretive		Applied		Affective		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	
8-10	45	75.0%	31	51.7%	44	73.3%	40	66.7%	40	66.7%	Independent
5-7	15	25.0%	25	41.7%	16	26.7%	20	33.3%	20	33.3%	Instructional
2-4	0	0.0%	4	6.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	Frustration
0-1	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	Non-Reader
Total	**60**	**100.0%**	**60**	**100.0%**	**60**	**100.0%**	**60**	**100.0%**	**60**	**100.0%**	

3. Respondents' Perception of the LPWs' Quality in Terms of Objectives

Table 3
Lexical Proficiency Worksheets as to Objectives

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I think the objectives are:			
1. supportive of the lesson competencies.	3.80	0.40	Very Satisfactory
2. specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound.	3.55	0.50	Very Satisfactory
3. localized and contextualized to suit my abilities, experiences and interests.	3.25	0.51	Satisfactory
4. are considerate of my academic needs.	3.53	0.62	Very Satisfactory
Overall	**3.53**	**0.36**	**Very Satisfactory**

Legend: 3.50-4.00 Very Satisfactory, 2.50-3.49 Satisfactory, 1.50-2.49 Unsatisfactory, 1.00-1.49 Needs Improvement

Table 3 shows the perception of the students towards the quality of the designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in relation to its objectives.

Marked as Very Satisfactory, the learners perceived all indicators as well formulated and obtained. However, they only gave a Satisfactory rating for the worksheets being localized and contextualized.

Designed for pedagogical purposes, worksheets tend not to be fully localized or contextualized. Flowerdew and Peacocok (2014) stated that non-authentic text does not represent real-world language because it aims to provide further knowledge for academic skills. Similarly, Wallace (2012) asserted that texts lose authenticity the moment they were brought into the classroom for academic purposes.

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

176

4.   Respondents' Perception of the LPWs' Quality in Terms of Content

Table 4
Lexical Proficiency Worksheets as to Content

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I think:			
1. the featured words help me in understanding the tasks and activities for the course.	3.90	0.35	Very Satisfactory
2. the unfamiliar terms in the featured selections are covered.	3.45	0.50	Satisfactory
3. the examples and context clues help me in understanding word meanings, usage and applications.	3.63	0.52	Very Satisfactory
4. the varied types of vocabulary drills challenge me to think deeply.	3.70	0.46	Very Satisfactory
Overall	**3.67**	**0.28**	**Very Satisfactory**

Table 4 shows the perception of the students towards the quality of the designed LPWs in relation to its content. All the indicators are perceived by the respondents as Very Satisfactory aside from the indicator which states that the unfamiliar terms in the featured selections are covered and classified as Satisfactory only. Although the students are already in Grade 11, some learners remain unfamiliar with basic words because their reading exposure has been very limited.

In general, students with reading disabilities should be directly taught words that represent key concepts or big ideas. It is also important to teach multiple-meaning words to students with the limited lexicon, as these words may be particularly confusing for them. Schmitt, Jiang , & Grabe (2011) stated that a child must be able to comprehend the meaning of 90-95% of the words in a passage for it to be fully understood. Explicit vocabulary words should be specifically targeted for instruction, and they must be presented through multiple exposures within rich language contexts where word awareness is created through the explicit focus on the target words (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011).

Vocabulary learning is a long-term process, it requires repeated encounters with words hence using the LPWS and having additional follow-up drills in Grade 12 could address the vocabulary skills gap among learners who perceived that not all unfamiliar terms have been covered in the LPWS this year.

For further improvement of the worksheets, a survey of remaining unfamiliar terms and their inclusion in the revised worksheets may address the respondents' concern and help bridge the remaining gaps in their lexical and comprehension skills.

5.   Respondents' Perception of the LPWs' Quality in Terms of Format and Language

Table 5
Lexical Proficiency Worksheets as to Format and Language

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I think:			
1. the format/ layout is organized.	3.70	0.50	Very Satisfactory
2. the font and font size used are appropriate and highly readable.	3.37	0.55	Satisfactory
3. the language used is clear, simple and motivating.	3.63	0.52	Very Satisfactory
4. the instructions for the activities are easy to follow.	3.37	0.58	Satisfactory
Overall	**3.52**	**0.37**	**Very Satisfactory**

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

177

Table 5 shows the perception of the students towards the quality of the Lexical Proficiency Worksheets about its format and language. The respondents perceived all the indicators as Very Satisfactory although they only gave a Satisfactory rating for the font and font size and the simplicity of the instructions for the activities making it easier to follow. As indicated in the Guidelines and Processes for LRMDS Development and Production released by the Department of Education in 2019, typeface and fonts affect the readability of text-based content. In general, there must be consistency in character size and typeface used for the main body text, captions, indices, and diagrams. The hierarchy of information and the relationship between ideas should be communicated through the effective use of contrasting print sizes and styles. Font variations should only be used as a cueing device, not just to be artistic. It also mentioned that for spacing, it must be ensured that there is enough white space between blocks of text and in-line tables, diagrams, and images. For visual design, graphics and use of color can be used to enhance interest in the material. It must be visually clear with good visual contrast.

6. Respondents' Perception of the LPWs' Quality in terms of Usefulness

Table 6
Lexical Proficiency Worksheets as to Usefulness

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I think the worksheets:			
1. help and motivate me to learn.	3.85	0.40	Very Satisfactory
2. help me in mastering the use and application of a lot of vocabulary words needed for academic learning.	3.53	0.60	Very Satisfactory
3. develop my critical and creative thinking skills.	3.78	0.42	Very Satisfactory
4. serve as an additional material to maximize my learning.	3.70	0.46	Very Satisfactory
Overall	**3.72**	**0.33**	**Very Satisfactory**

Table 6 shows the perception of the students towards the quality of the Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in relation to its usefulness.

The respondents believe that the worksheets have been very useful as attested by the Very Satisfactory rating for every indicator. It implies that the students perceived that the worksheets have allowed them to build and construct on their current and new understandings. The LPWs have provided challenging experiences based on the user's previous understanding of the concepts.

Nunez and Tellez (2019) stated that materials development should focus on encouraging students to learn new words and use them to start writing simple paragraphs. The learners agreed that the worksheets have helped in developing their vocabulary skills. The worksheets have taught them words they have never known before and they are thankful to be exposed to good stories and varied vocabulary drills.

7. Respondents' Perception of the LPWs' Quality in terms of Instructional Delivery

Table 7 shows the perception of the students towards the quality of the Designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in relation to its Instructional Delivery.

The respondents give a Satisfactory rating for this indicator. The general perception is affected by the low scores given under receiving immediate feedback for outputs submitted online and the learners' failure to understand the instructions right away.

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

178

Table 7
Lexical Proficiency Worksheets as to Instructional Delivery

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I think:			
1. I received the worksheets on time.	3.80	0.51	Very Satisfactory
2. I understood the instructions in my worksheets.	3.37	0.58	Satisfactory
3. I received responses from my teacher regarding my questions and submitted outputs for the worksheets.	3.50	0.57	Very Satisfactory
4. I received feedbacks for outputs which were submitted online.	3.30	0.56	Satisfactory
Overall	**3.49**	**0.40**	**Satisfactory**

Feedback helps in enabling learners to monitor, evaluate, and regulate their learning. As expounded by Ferguson (2011), this indicates that despite problems with an internet connection, to improve the utilization of the worksheets, there must be immediate feedback to ensure the students that their outputs are objectively checked and recorded. Consequently, Shank (2019), stressed that feedbacks help a lot in developing specified skills and competencies. It can confirm understanding and improve or correct mistakes and misconceptions. It can close the gap between what learners can do and what they should do and it strengthens their understanding of lessons and concepts.

With regard to the learners' failure to understand the instructions right away, the result reflects that there is a need to further improve the lexical and comprehension skills of the students.

Beglar & Nation (2013) stated that learners with reading disabilities often read less than those who are proficient readers which makes it more difficult for them to acquire new vocabulary and comprehend even simple forms of academic texts, this states the need to focus on approaches to improve vocabulary learning. Moreover, Chou (2011) proposed that a comprehensive vocabulary program should include learning the meanings of individual words, extensively reading rich texts, and developing the student's ability to learn new words independently. Designing such a program requires multiple strategies because both indirect instruction and direct instruction are important to a student's vocabulary growth (Iwankovitsch, 2013).

8. Paired Differences in the Pre and Post Test Results in Reading Comprehension

Table 8
Pre and Post Assessed Level of Reading Comprehension Skills

Comprehension Skills *Pretest-Posttest*	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% CID				
				Lower	Upper			
Lexical	-3.433	1.890	0.244	-3.922	-2.945	-14.072	59.000	0.000
Literal	-3.033	1.948	0.252	-3.537	-2.530	-12.060	59.000	0.000
Interpretative	-3.133	2.135	0.276	-3.685	-2.582	-11.368	59.000	0.000
Applied	-3.283	1.842	0.238	-3.759	-2.807	-13.807	59.000	0.000
Affective	-2.767	1.960	0.253	-3.273	-2.260	-10.932	59.000	0.000

Legend: Sig. (2-tailed) $\leq$.05 (significant); Sig. (2-tailed) >.05 (not significant)

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

179

Table 8 shows the Pre and Post-Assessed Levels of Reading Comprehension Skills of the respondents. It reflects that there is a significant difference between the pre and post-assessed level of reading comprehension before and after the utilization of LPWs.

Results show that the mean score for lexical comprehension obtained the highest degree of significant difference after the post-test followed by applied, interpretive, literal, and affective comprehension.

The utilization of the worksheets greatly improved the breadth and depth of word knowledge of the students although the affective comprehension skills of the respondents obtained the lowest degree of significant difference in the post-test. Affective comprehension entails more than just defining or identifying vocabulary meanings or making simple inferences, it requires critical analysis and higher levels of understanding.

The utilization of the worksheets has improved basic word recognition skills but it has not fully enabled all respondents to acquire higher levels of comprehension. There is a need to further provide direct vocabulary instruction and help learners develop language skills through reading varied literary selections.

As Adejimola & Ojoulape (2013) stated, literature does not and cannot exist independent of language because language is the conveyor of literature. An understanding of the nature and structure of language enables readers to appreciate a literary work much better because language and thoughts are the raw materials of literature. Literary writers use language in their works and prose can be used to teach summary and comprehension. Language is not only a necessity for the formulation of thoughts but also part of the thinking process itself. It is one of the great attributes of a literary man, that is, the power of intuition which is a key to gaining skills in affective comprehension.

9. Determining the Correlation Between Perceived Quality of the Designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets and Reading Comprehension

Table 9
Test of Correlation between Perceived Quality of the Designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets and Reading Comprehension

	Comprehension Skills				
	Lexical	Literal	Interpretive	Applied	Affective
Quality of the Designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets					
Objectives	-.012	.118	.015	.140	.298*
Content	.005	.081	-.102	.234	.368**
Format and Language	.165	.057	.183	.233	.115
Usefulness	-.008	.012	-.054	.081	.188
Instructional Delivery	.141	.028	.046	.136	.201

*Legend: ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed)*
* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (two-tailed)

Table 9 shows the Test of Correlation between Perceived Quality of the Designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets and Reading Comprehension. Among the components of the quality of the Designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets, the objectives and content showed significant correlations with affective comprehension skills.

It implies that the student's ability to determine plot and character development and identify the theme and message of the writer is determined or shaped by the formulated objectives which serve as the basis for the words, format of questions, sample sentences and tasks featured in the worksheets.

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*
180

Meanwhile, the content showed a significant correlation of .368 at 0.05 alpha level with affective comprehension. The featured literary selections, the chosen words for the drills, and the type of drills and manner in which the words were used in context contributed a lot towards the enhancement of the affective comprehension skills of the students. They were able to identify the underscored theme, tone, writer's purpose and characterization in the stories and poems in the worksheets because of the presentation and quality of the content of the LPWs.

The results of this study coincide with the conclusion of Webb & Chang (2015) that lexical proficiency possesses a strong relationship with reading comprehension; students need to understand the meaning of critical words they will be reading to have the capacity to make inferences, determine which statements are true or false, draw or form conclusions and react correctly and accordingly with the given text.

The said findings are likewise paralleled with the conclusion of Chou (2011) who established that participants who received a list of vocabulary to study performed better in the reading comprehension test in comparison to the participants who relied on background knowledge. The links between reading comprehension and vocabulary point out strong considerations to plan for effective direct vocabulary intervention anchored on sufficient and well-planned content for higher levels of understanding including drills for word decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Teaching students to have strong vocabulary skills equates with providing them explicit instruction on how they may learn independently. As they get older, students must have instructions designed for oral and written lexical competency to enable them to comprehend varied texts that may become more complex as they reach higher grade levels (Loftus & Coyne, 2013).

Conclusions

The following are some of the conclusions that can be drawn from the study based on the findings.

The utilization of the LPWs yielded a significant difference between the respondents' Pre and Post Test Results in reading comprehension. Likewise, the study revealed a significant relationship between the worksheets' objectives and content and the respondents' affective comprehension skills which is the highest level of comprehension. This study shows that improving the vocabulary or lexical proficiency of learners through carefully designed worksheets leaves a positive impact in enhancing comprehension skills.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1. Senior High School teachers may use the Lexical Proficiency Worksheets to enhance the comprehension skills of Grade 11 and 12 students. Supported by varied related literature and the results of this study itself, it is evident that the designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets have been effective in enhancing the vocabulary and comprehension skills of the students.
2. Teachers in the lower grade levels may craft their own Lexical Proficiency Worksheets based on the levels of comprehension, vocabulary skills and prescribed competencies for the learners. Proven in this study and other studies cited herewith, direct vocabulary instruction helps the students a lot in

Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

181

comprehending the reading text. It provides them familiarity with basic words that comprise the reading material.

3. Revisions to improve the Designed Lexical Proficiency Worksheets may be done and implemented based on the feedback of the respondents and teacher validators of the LPWs.

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Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (APCMR), 30 – 31 July 2022
Deduque, J.S., Diva, C.B., *Utilization of Lexical Proficiency Worksheets in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Senior High school Student, pp. 172 – 183*

182

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183