



Teaching Reading Comprehension to English Language Learners: A Case Study

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Abstract: English language teachers play a vital role in helping their students becoming a good readers. Reading is a mother of all skills to discover all things this world. The study determined the teaching reading comprehension to English language learners (ELLs) at Talitay National High School. Employing qualitative case study approach. Three English teachers participants were selected through purposive sampling technique. The in-depth interview with semi-structured research questionnaire was used to delineate the research phenomena. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis patterned on Clarke and Braun, (2017) Thematic Analysis. The results revealed that teachers let their students read a text by giving them guide questions to answer, identify their strengths and weaknesses, craft systematized reading program that would encourage and cater the student's reading needs and interests, and the content of the reading activity shall be contextualized to achieve maximum relevance; some of the problems encountered in teaching reading comprehension to ELL were unfamiliar words, understanding the words and the thoughts of the text, and long texts; these problems can be addressed by using context clues, bringing a dictionary, and constant reading comprehension practices; and the common strategy identified to improve teaching reading to ELL was constant reading and writing. The study has implications for education, teachers, and students. Paper suggested that, Department of Education may conduct various training programs.

Keywords: English Language Learning, English Teachers, *Reading Comprehension, High School Students.*

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Introduction

Reading is essential for academic success as it serves as foundation accessing content across all subjects areas. Language is pivotal tool in communication which consists of structured words which conveyed through writing and speaking. Pulindao and mohamad, (2023). On the other hand, English language learning. involves both verbal and non-verbal communication. Reading is a nonverbal communication that enriches ones' greater understanding and vocabulary (Bernardo, 2009).

English is considered most spoken language with almost 1.27 billion English speakers around the world as of 2020. (Britannica). English has been officially language of 50 nations which considered predominantly used in Educational setting and other commerce and business. (Pulindao and Mohamad, 2023). Hence, English language learning is a complex phenomenon because of its complexity. It is hard to learn and challenging like, set of words, grammar rules, unexpected spelling and ambiguous organizational ideas. Butukan, et al., (2024).



Teaching reading comprehension is crucial to the learning process of all learners. Four abilities are involved in teaching English language learning (ELL), speaking, reading, writing and listening. Reading is the mother of all study skills. It is one of the most valuable skills a person can acquire, when it comes to enhance learners' general knowledge, expanding their vocabulary. Nguyen, (2022). Thus, study conducted in Hau Giang Community College about Teaching Reading Comprehension, as cited by. (Huynh, 2022). Stated that, teachers have been using various strategies like the art of questioning, predicting, retelling and picturing to promote reading comprehension.

Teachers of English are essential in helping English Language Learners (ELLs) in developing their reading comprehension skills. Therefore, it cannot be taught separately because It is a complicated. Furthermore, reading involves more than just being able to identify words that are written or printed; it also involves explaining what you read and coming up with a cohesive idea about it. Wallace (1992). The RAND Reading study group (2002, p. 11) describes it as a process of simultaneously acquiring and creating meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. McNamara and Magliano (2009) state that the interaction between the reader and the text occurs within the broader social environment. Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983, pp. 21–23) agree. The ability to comprehend what you read is crucial.

A quantitative analysis case of 578 Norwegian university students' academic English reading proficiency was conducted in Norway. Reading proficiency was measured using self-assessment items, which were validated using the Academic Reading Module of the International English Language Testing System. According to the survey, 44% of the participants considered reading in English more challenging than reading in their native tongue, and over 30% of the respondents experienced significant reading difficulties. Slow reading and unfamiliar language were the biggest issues, whereas extracurricular readers and respondents who could infer word meanings from context scored higher on reading assessments. Many people struggled with poor language skills, to the point where they were below the linguistic threshold. Effective instruction for reading comprehension seems to understand first what contributes to one's ability to read and comprehend. As highlighted in the study of Cotham & Chutikarn, (2024). Teaching Reading Comprehension to English Language Learners in a System with a low proportion of Language Minority Students' revealed that factors involve individual's proficiency like, simple views of reading, word recognition, linguistic comprehension, level of acculturation and beyond simple views of reading those are the factors enhancing. (ELLs.)

Reading comprehension, the majority of people can still read aloud texts with proper pronunciation but have no idea what they are reading. The reason behind is that, they don't have enough practice, poor foundation of reading, difficulties experienced by children with specific type of comprehension deficit. Identification of underlying cause of poor readers' comprehension difficulties in that they impair the reader's ability to retain the words. In the study conducted by (Hulme and Snowling, 2011). The primary goal of the reading is to get meaning from text that might depend on decoding language-comprehension skills. Children who can read accurately but have poor comprehension. Thus, it emphasizes that,

can be ameliorated by school-based interventions done by the English teachers.

In the case of Ministry of Basic Higher, and Technical Education. (MBHTE). The teaching reading coordinators have tasked to make reading intervention programs for non-readers students in every divisions in adherence to the mandated by DepEd Memorandum No. 402 s.2004 and Administrative Order No. 324, which aims to ensure reading proficiency and Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). It is a National Tool introduced in 2012 to assess the reading levels. (Ganohay et al., (2025).

The Talitay National High School Teachers find it significant and relevant case where reading comprehension challenges among Bangsamoro learners are observed. The challenges faced by the Bangsamoro learners, were lacks of vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, Attitude towards English learning, barriers to English reading progress, destructive learning environment, lack of reading materials resources and, English is challenging to learn. Therefore, the researchers deem to interest and investigating the case study about how do English teachers teach ELLs. So that, this case can make a recommendation align with the DepEd ongoing efforts about Students Reading Comprehension during the school year. 2024-2025.

The researchers would like to find out how teachers teach reading comprehension to English Language Learning (ELL), determine various problems in teaching reading comprehension to English language learners how these problems will be addressed, and the suggested activities to improve teaching in reading to ELL.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions.

1. How do the teachers teach reading comprehension to English language learners?
2. What are the problems encountered in teaching reading comprehension to ELLs?
3. How do they address the problem/s?
4. What are the suggested activities to improve teaching reading to ELLs?

Methodology

Research Design

This qualitative case study research. It explained why three (3) teachers participants in teaching reading comprehension to ELLs to examine the case of teachers teach reading comprehension at Talitay National High School. Qualitative method involves very small number of people and cases in exploring research phenomenon. Patton, (1990). As cited by Mohamad, (2021) Mohamad and Parcon, (2022) Pulindao and Mohamad, (2023). The primary goal is to inquire extensive data and interpret complex description and interpretation of the problem in the specific study. Thus, case study describes the specific type and exploration deeper report a cases that helps to develop and uncovered the experiences by the participants. Baxter & Jack, (2008). In addition, according to Creswell, (2013). Case study involves in-depth exploration of specific topic and bounded systems through detailed and in-depth

data collection involving rigorous analysis of information description.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were the selected three (3) High School teachers employed in the school year 2019-2025. Only three participants were purposively selected, comprising teaching reading comprehension to Senior High School students in Grade 12 of Talitay National High School. The sampling technique was purposive, with selection conducted interactively until theoretical saturation was achieved when no new themes or meaningful insights emerged from further interviews ensuring a thorough understanding of English teachers teaching reading comprehension to ELLs.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at Talitay National High School, MDN, Poblacion, Talitay, Maguindanao. MBHTE-BARMM. For the school year 2025. It is about 7 kilometers away from the National High way. The school is offering both Junior High School and Senior High School. During the time of creating kto12 program, in the year 2012-2013, the enhanced curriculum for k to 12 was implemented known as RA 10533 signed by previous President. Benigo S. Aquino. Senior High School curriculum was finished in 2014 and for 2015. likewise in the same year, school started offer only TVL Program which was Agriculture and Farming System, which was the school situated in farm area and the major source of income was an agriculture product, a year fast by, the school itself applied for another TVL program like Information and Communication Technology and Driving NCII and one academic program which was General Academic Strand (GAS).

Research Instrument

The researchers used the research questions to gather the data needed. The main instrument was semi-structured research questionnaire particularly on the English teachers teaching strategies about reading comprehension of the ELLs. Prior to the research questions, researchers ensured that the guide questions extricated and align with the insight on the topics needed to the research study.

Research Procedure

The researchers sought the approval of the principal for the conduct of the study, set the time and day according to the availability of the teachers involved. The teachers were questioned based on the research questions of the study. The information gathered were analyzed, transcribed, and interpreted.

Analysis of the Data

The researchers conducted an in-depth interview to the participants of the study. The data were gathered through a recorder. The researcher then analyzed, transcribed, and interpreted the data. The data were arranged into themes. Thematic Analysis (TA) is flexible and robust method of analyzing, and interpreting patterns of themes in qualitative case study in exploring how do teachers teach ELLs in reading comprehension. As discussed by Clarke and Braun, (2017), hence, the steps starting with familiarization, data collected from participants’ statement. This process involves thorough reading and carefully reviewing data to

gain initial understanding. Next step includes Initial Codes generating by extracting crucial and necessary details from the responses of the participants. The researchers look for a themes by grouping the gathered data into meaningful categories based on the initial themes. Utto and Lumogdang, (2025).

Ethical Consideration

The researchers established trust with the research participants, and this was achieved by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Participant protection was ensured by obtaining informed consent after clearly explaining the study’s purpose and the roles of participants. Confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the research process, with all data securely managed using QDA Miner Lite software to support systematic and transparent handling. Participants were fully informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. These ethical standards, combined with peer and adviser review of emergent themes, upheld the trustworthiness and integrity of the study.

Results and Discussion

Participants	Length of Service	Description
P1. Datu****	13	He is teaching both Junior High School and Senior High School.
P2. Sultan****	12	She is teaching Junior High School.
P3. Bulawan****	1	He is hired as newly teacher in Senior High School. He taught 5 years in Private School.

(P-Participant, ****Pseudonym)

The Case

Description of the Participant

Datu is a full-time SHS teacher in Talitay National High School and the same-time teacher in JHS. He is doing this for almost 4 years. He loves to extend service in all forms such as serving the studentry and community through outreach program and extension services rendered by the college. He is doing very well in class. In fact, he is an English teacher. It is expected that he is proficient in his field of expertise. And he once proved it when he was recognized as one of the top performing faculty. He is well – tailored in class discussions and makes sure he addresses everyone with fairness. He also emphasizes the importance of consistent practice to achieve proficiency in using the English language inside or outside the school premise.

Strategies of Teachers in Teaching Reading Comprehension to ELL

When he was asked on how he teaches reading comprehension to ELL he said he let the students read. He stated that

I let them read. Let’s say for instance, I’m giving them the what we call this one...the reading material and I will give them some guide questions for them to answer. Now, to find

out whether they really understood the text, they really need to answer the questions to find specific information so they can use skimming and scanning.

Reading

Reading is important because it develops the mind. The mind is a muscle. It needs exercise. Understanding the written word is one way the mind grows in its ability. Teaching young children to read helps them develop their language skills. It also helps them learn to listen. Reading helps children focus on what someone else is communicating.

Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning are great techniques to help students read long, complex pieces. As they practice these skills, their research skills will improve as well.

Problems Encountered in Teaching Reading Comprehension to ELL

When he was asked about his problems encountered in teaching reading comprehension to ELL, he said that

Unfamiliar words, let's say for instance when the writer use unfamiliar words they could not easily understand, grasp the reading material so I think that hinders the reading comprehension of the children.

Unfamiliar Words

Unfamiliar words refer to the unknown terms found on a reading material. Students find it difficult to understand the text because they do not recognize difficult items while reading. They are not familiar with the use of context clue. Hence, they are just reading because they are tasked to.

Ways to Address the Problems

When he was how to address the problems he encountered, he said that

Of course, let's say for instance, the unfamiliar words, we can use context clues if we lack dictionary, library, Meriam dictionary so we can use context clues. Now, if you have the dictionary then perhaps you can browse it.

Context Clues

Context clues are information in the text, which can be used to help deduce the meaning of an unknown vocabulary word within the text. Context clues are words, pictures, graphs, tables, and side notes, all of which might be included in the text. Knowing how to use context is one of the most important skills that can be taught in order to promote vocabulary growth in students (Gambrell & Headley, 2006). While having strong vocabulary knowledge is positive for comprehension, the opposite can also be true; that is, not having a sufficient vocabulary can easily limit a student's comprehension (Pressley, 2000).

Suggested Activities to Improve Teaching Reading to ELL

When he was questioned about the activities he could suggest to improve teaching reading, he answered that

Let them read story books, novels, short stories. Because if you really wanted a child to read and understand, let them read.

Reading

Reading is bringing meaning to and getting meaning from printed or written material. Through the reading activity, the students can enlarge their knowledge and it can also make them wise and respectful. Everything teachers do in reading class should be designed to build students' ability to understand increasingly complex content of the texts.

Description of the Participant

Sultan is a former SHS teacher at St. Benedict College of Cotabato and she was also working at Dr. P Ocampo Colleges Inc, as a SHS teacher. He passed the LET last September 2016. and hired at Talitay NHS year 2018. As a teacher, he sees to it that everything is learned.

Strategies of Teachers in Teaching Reading Comprehension to ELL

When she asked about his strategies in teaching reading comprehension to ELL, he answered that:

Basically, I always see to it first what are their strengths and weaknesses in terms of reading. If I'm able to...If I already able to diagnose that, I would give them the best fit of reading material.

Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses

Knowing where you come in strong and where you need assistance can help you stabilize your reading and help apply your strengths in other areas.

Problems Encountered in Teaching Reading Comprehension to ELL

The problems encountered by the second participant are difficulty in understanding a word and difficulty in understanding the thought of the text. He stated this:

Problems like difficulty in understanding a word, difficulty in understanding the thought of the text.

Comprehension

Comprehension is an essential part of reading. A student should read between the lines in order for them to understand the context they are reading.

Ways to Address the Problems

When he was asked on how he addressed the existing problems, he answered that:

In one of my classes, I incorporated the problem of the difficulty of understanding a specific word. Perhaps, for me, it's not hard to understand but for them it's like hifalutin. I would always tell them to bring dictionary with them. It's very helpful in terms of reading.

Bring a Dictionary

A dictionary is a very important tool for anyone who is learning a new language. With a good dictionary you can look up the meaning of an English word you see or hear.

Suggested Activities to Improve Teaching Reading to ELL

When he was asked about the strategies to improve teaching reading to ELL, he said:

Perhaps, constant writing. I mean consistently letting the students write their own thoughts because from there you can say that if they are able to express themselves in writing or any other forms of or in another way they would be able to relate with their reading.

Writing

Writing is an essential job skill. Writing is the primary basis upon which one's work, learning, and intellect will be judged. It equips us with communication and thinking skill and fosters our ability to explain and refine our ideas to others and ourselves.

Description of the Participant

Bulawan is also a high school English teacher of Talitay National High School. She is passionate when teaching English to her students. She sees to it that her students would understand the things she would discuss.

Strategies of Teachers in Teaching Reading Comprehension to ELL

When Bulawan was asked about her strategies in teaching reading comprehension to ELL, she stated that:

Craft a systematized reading program that would encourage and cater the student's reading needs and interests. Moreover, the content of the reading activity shall be contextualized to achieve maximum relevance.

Problems Encountered in Teaching Reading Comprehension to ELL

When Bulawan was asked the problems she encountered in teaching reading comprehension to ELL, she said that:

The attitude of the students towards reading long texts is the problem I usually encounter. They dread seeing lengthy texts. Thus, affecting their interest in continuing to comprehend the text. There are also students who haven't found the reading strategies fit for them, making it more difficult to comprehend texts.

Ways to Address the Problems

Bulawan addresses the problems encountered by:

By implementing constant reading comprehension practices. In my class, I made a structured reading comprehension activities for literature. I also have a time-pressured reading drill where students get to read three texts and answer comprehension questions in 30 minutes. Through constant implementation, there has been a significant change in their attitudes towards reading.

Strategies of Teachers in Teaching Reading Comprehension to ELL

Bulawan said that reading drills is very important in teaching reading comprehension to ELL, she only said that:

Reading drills.

Concluding Remarks

After having analyzed the gathered data, the researchers conclude that students should do well in their reading activities as it helps students to develop other skills like writing and listening. Thus, their higher level of thinking or comprehension must be enhanced by employing the varied activities as discussed in this study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are presented.

1. Encourage students that should spend time to explore any reading materials especially those that will enhance their thinking/comprehension skills, and takedown notes;
2. Teachers may employ various methodologies, strategies and activities that will develop their students reading ability most particularly their higher comprehension skills. Explicit instruction, modeling, guided and independent constant practice. They may also choose the strategies and good books most appropriate for achieving their own teaching objectives;
3. The lessons should be incorporated with good reading selections, effective teaching procedures, reading comprehension activities and techniques that introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussions, excite imaginative responses and become springboard for well rounded, fascinating lessons; and
4. The school administrators and Teachers are encourage to develop the reading mentorship programs those proficient and readers assist those struggling readers. Regular assessment of the students' reading progress. Matched with activities design to boost self-confidence where they make reading is an enjoyment;
5. A collaborative efforts involving schools, parents and wider community is pivotal. Community-based initiatives such as reading camps, storytelling events, and mobile library services can provide meaningful support;
6. Training session for parents on how to assist their children with reading from home that can strengthen the support system about the reading comprehension program.
7. Other research studies should be conducted using other grade levels, other important variables and factors that lead toward better proposals for further improvements of students' higher reading comprehension skills.

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