Context Clues Knowledge and Reading Comprehension Skills of Grade 10 Students

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive, comparative, and correlational research design aimed to determine the level of context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills of Grade 10 students. A researcher-made validated and reliability-tested questionnaire was used to 246 randomly selected respondents composed of Grade 10 students in the three-class programs in the K-12 Curriculum. Mean and standard deviation yielded an outcome of average, which means students have acceptable knowledge in context clues and expanding results, which refers to an acceptable reading proficiency of students. Kruskal-Wallis and Post hoc Dunn's test revealed a significant difference in the context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills when respondents are grouped according to class programs. Spearman Rank Correlation determined that there is a significant relationship between context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills. The findings were utilized in the preparation of enhancement/supplementary activity worksheets in strengthening the students’ ability in word meaning and reading proficiency.

Keywords: Context Clues, Reading Comprehension, Descriptive, Comparative, Correlative, Grade 10

Context clues can significantly increase reading comprehension (Bailey, 2019); they are surrounding words in a sentence that gives the word its specific meaning. They help readers figure out the meaning of unknown or unfamiliar words without a dictionary (Pirozzi, 2003). They make readers catch the meaning of words and easily comprehend the reading text (Ramadhani & Harputra, 2018).
Moreover, reading is a dynamic, complex act that involves bringing to and getting meaning from the printed page (Opitz, 2011). It is an instrument that people use every day to get information, understand something, solve problems, and entertain themselves (Lane 2014). Effective reading skills can bring about personal success in life’s endeavors, education, and finding a good job (Zimmerman, 2012; Mohammadi & Abidin, 2014) and in achieving a wholesome personality (Snowling & Hulme, 2011). Reading comprehension is vital to learning and is considered the top priority in the contemporary academic situation (Lane, 2014).

Effective reading skills can bring about personal success in life's endeavors, education, and finding a good job (Zimmerman, 2012; Mohammadi & Abidin, 2014) and in achieving a wholesome personality (Snowling & Hulme, 2011). Reading comprehension is vital to learning and is considered the top priority in the contemporary academic situation (Lane, 2014; Panganiban, 2015). Reading is a skill that makes all other learning possible, from complex word problems and the meaning of history to scientific discoveries and technological proficiency (Obama, 2005).

Globally, the three most common reading problems are issues with decoding, poor comprehension, and speed (Cicerchia, 2016). For the first time, the Philippines took part in the triennial international assessment conducted by the inter-government group, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to test the reading proficiency of 15-year-old learners. The primary domain of the assessment was reading literacy, such as locating information, understanding, evaluating, and reflecting. Sadly, in the result of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2018), the Philippines scored last in reading comprehension out of 79 countries (San Juan, 2019).

Several studies have been conducted on context aids (Chua, 1988; cited Lap, 2017; Uchihara, Webb, & Yanagisawa, 2019). Some studies have also focused on the assessment of vocabulary skills (Escalaba, 2006; Kiattichai, 2010; Villegas, 2018) and reading comprehension (Panganiban, 2016; Iligan, 2018; Hajan, 2019). However, there have been no studies correlating context clues knowledge of students with their reading comprehension skills. Hence, this study was conducted to fill the gap and to explore the relationship between the level of context clues knowledge using definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and logical inference and the reading comprehension skills in the literal, inferential, and critical levels of the Grade 10 students in a public Junior High School in Bacolod City.

Results of this study were utilized in developing enhancement/supplementary activity worksheets that seek to improve context clues knowledge in the forms of synonyms, definitions, antonyms, and reading, logical inference, and reading comprehension skills in terms of literal, inferential, and critical level in the competencies of English 10 under the K-12 curriculum program.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to determine the level of context clues knowledge in the forms of synonyms, definitions, antonyms, and logical inference of the Grade 10 students in a public 4 high school in Bacolod City during the school year 2019-2020 when they are taken as a whole and when they are grouped according to their class program. Likewise, this study investigated their level
of reading comprehension skills in terms of literal, inferential, and critical levels as a whole and according to class program.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:
1. Is there a significant difference in the level of context clues knowledge in the forms of synonyms, definitions, antonyms, and logical inference of the students when they are grouped according to their class program?
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of reading comprehension skills in terms of literal, inferential, and critical levels of the students when they are grouped according to their class program?
3. Is there a significant relationship between context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills?

Several studies have been conducted on context aids (Chua, 1988; cited Lap, 2017; Uchihara, Webb, & Yanagisawa, 2019). Some studies have also focused on the assessment of vocabulary skills (Escalaba, 2006; Kiattichai, 2010; Villegas, 2018) and reading comprehension (Panganiban, 2016; Iligan, 2018; Hajan, 2019). However, there have been no studies correlating context clues knowledge of students with their reading comprehension skills. Hence, this study was conducted to fill the gap and to explore the relationship between the level of context clues knowledge using definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and logical inference and the reading comprehension skills in the literal, inferential, and critical levels of the Grade 10 students in a public Junior High School in Bacolod City.

Results of this study were utilized in developing enhancement-supplementary activity worksheets that seek to improve context clues knowledge in the forms of synonyms, definitions, antonyms and reading, logical inference, and reading comprehension skills in terms of literal, inferential, and critical level in the competencies of English 10 under the K-12 curriculum program.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive, comparative, and correlational research design to address the problem on hand. Descriptive design was used to determine the level of knowledge; comparative design was used to determine whether a significant difference exists when the students are grouped according to class programs, and correlational design was utilized to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the level of knowledge on context clues and reading comprehension skills. The respondents in the study were the 246 Grade 10 students from a public school in Bacolod City selected using stratified random sampling. These students came from the Science Technology and Engineering Program (STE), Strengthened Technical Vocational Education Program (STVEP), and Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) programs.

A researcher-made test and a selection adapted from the Grade 10 reference book was used. The validity of the test was established by subjecting the instruments to 10 experts with a master’s degree in teaching English. Using the C.H. Lawshe validation form, the instrument yielded an average of .911, which means the test is valid. To ensure its reliability, pilot testing was conducted to a randomly selected 30 Grade 10 students that were not included in the
sample population. The data obtained from the pilot testing was subjected to Cronbach’s Alpha formula, which yielded an alpha value of 0.713 for the level of context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills; therefore, the researcher-made questionnaire was reliable at 0.05 level of confidence.

In the data-gathering process, the researcher secured the approval of the Dean of the Recoletos de Bacolod Graduate School on the conduct of the study. Right after, a letter of permission was sent to the Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Bacolod City Division. The Senior Education Program Specialist and Chairman of Planning and Research of DepEd, Division of Bacolod City, approved the request to conduct the study. The researcher administered the test personally to the participants with their subject teachers' permission. She instructed the participants on the accomplishment of the test and clarified some concerns to avoid confusion. After these preliminaries, the participants were given a maximum of an hour to finish answering the questionnaire. When the students were done, the questionnaires were immediately retrieved, and the data were tallied, analyzed, and interpreted by the researcher to suffice the problem with answers and come up with a valid conclusion.

The data underwent a descriptive analysis using the statistical tools Mean and Standard Deviation to determine the level of knowledge. Comparative analysis using the Kruskal-Wallis, Post Hoc, and Dunn's test was applied to determine the significant difference when the students were grouped according to class programs. For the correlational analysis, Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between the level of context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk in the Lilliefors Significance Correction were used for the normality test.

Results and Discussion

**Level of Context Clues Knowledge**

Table 1 shows that the level of context clues knowledge of the Grade 10 students as a whole is average (M=11.09, SD=4.35). This means that the students exhibit acceptable over-all knowledge in context clues, an implication that the Grade 10 students possess moderate, passable, and normal extent of intelligence for context clues. Even though Grade 10 students were divided into three class programs, each group exhibited different levels of context clues knowledge with STE gaining the highest level, which is interpreted as excellent.

Students from the STVEP program ranked second, with results interpreted as a very high level. Students from the BEC program came third with acceptable level, which generally means most of the students were midpoint in context clues intelligence. The disparity in the scores could be attributed to different factors. One is that most Grade 10 students belong to the BEC program: BEC has 17 sections, STE has one, and STVEP has two. Another is that the competencies in the K-12 curriculum for the Grade 10 focus more on literature; hence, most students are unaware of context clues. Another factor is that there are insufficient texts, reference books, and learning materials. Also, teachers may be fixed on traditional teaching styles that might require updated instructional materials, the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and more trainings. Furthermore, BEC students have passive learning behavior. This is supported by the study on an activity based on context clues designed and administered to 40 tertiary level students. The analysis of the students' performance concluded that identifying the meaning of new words using context clues helps the respondents get the meaning of words and retain them (Innaci & Sam, 2017).
When the level was determined according to class programs, the BEC respondents revealed an average level of context clues knowledge (M=10.19, SD=4.03), which means that the students exhibited acceptable over-all knowledge in context clues. This could be attributed to the nature of the Basic Education Curriculum that focuses on the basics of reading so that students can then be ready for lifelong learning. It seeks to cure the inability of students who cannot read with comprehension (DEPED, 2002). Even integrative and interactive teaching-learning approaches are used in the classroom setting, students need more to increase their word meaning skills through context clues. One study rejected the results as extensive reading has positive effects on language learners’ inferencing skills. In terms of accuracy and the use of knowledge sources, extensive readers could choose the appropriate knowledge source when inferring the target word (Niwa, 2019).

STE students revealed a very high level of context clues knowledge (M=17.64, SD=1.45) as a whole, a manifestation that the respondents exhibited excellent over-all context clues knowledge. This implies that students from the STE at the beginning of Grade 7 are already bound to higher learning in Science Technology, Engineering, and Research since the STE class program follows the spiral progression approach and additional research subject (DEPED, 2005). These results contradicted a descriptive study that revealed that it is easy to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar words when contextual clues were provided and that the clues were in synonym rather than in the inference form, and that context clues were closer to the unfamiliar word (Carnine, Coyle, & Kameenui, 1984).

STVEP respondents revealed a high level of context clues knowledge (M=14.36, SD=3.00). This shows that the respondents exhibited very good over-all context clues knowledge. Students in the STVEP program are provided opportunities to develop as a total person equipped with technical-vocational and academic competencies, proper work ethics, discipline, and desirable values. Students must acquire technical vocational employability geared towards academic competence and introduced to training in skilled works. However, even being honed in their skills as students despite their training in their specific specializations, they still have to maintain their grades (Liban & Tagtag, 2007). The results were also supported in the study of Innaci and Sam (2017).

### Table 1. Level of Context Clues Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Context Clues M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Int</th>
<th>Synonym M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Int</th>
<th>Definition M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Int</th>
<th>Antonym M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Int</th>
<th>Logical Inference M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Int</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEC</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>Av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STE</td>
<td>17.64</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>VH</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>VH</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>VH</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>VH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STVEP</td>
<td>14.36</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>Av</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: VL= Very Low, L=Low, Av=Average, Hi=High, VH=Very high

### Level of Reading Comprehension Skills

Table 2 shows that the level of reading comprehension skills of the Grade 10 students as a whole is expanding (M=11.67, SD=3.70). An expanding result is an indication of an acceptable reading comprehension level. This implies that the Grade 10 students are midpoint in their reading comprehension skills. Grade 10 students are divided into three class programs, and each group exhibited different levels of reading comprehension skills. Students from the STE
program gained the highest level, interpreted as excellent. STVEP students ranked second with a very high level, while the BEC students ranked third with a generally acceptable level. Even though both STE and STVEP gained very good scores, the scores of the BEC students affected the overall result. The average result could be attributed to several factors. One is that the majority of the Grade 10 students belong to the BEC program; Grade 10 has 17 BEC sections, one STE section, and two STVEP sections. Approaches in reading in the three classes vary, with STE and STVEP having a positive, focused attitude towards reading. Also, the competencies in the K-12 curriculum for Grade 10 focus more on literature; some students are unaware of the existence of the three levels of comprehension: literal, inferential, and critical. There are also insufficient texts, reference books, and learning materials, teachers may be fixed on traditional teaching styles, and most students in the BEC classes have a passive attitude towards reading.

This outcome was affirmed and contradicted in a study aiming to determine students' reading comprehension ability in terms of literal, inferential, critical, and creative reading comprehension. Results revealed that the ability to read in the literal understanding level of the students was average. In the inferential level, students got low, while in the critical understanding, the level was moderate (Faridahb & Kholiqa, 2019). According to class programs, the BEC respondents have expanding reading comprehension skills (M=11.00, SD=3.55), which means that they exhibited acceptable overall knowledge in reading. The Basic Education Curriculum focuses on the basics of reading so that the students can then be ready for independent learning. It seeks to cure students' inability to read, but with comprehension and those who can read without comprehension (DepEd, 2002). Despite the teacher's many strategies in reading skills, the students still perceive reading as a burden to them. They may be just reading for the sake of accomplishment, tasks, and requirements without much emphasis. This outcome was affirmed and contradicted by the study of Faridahb and Kholiqa (2019).

When tested according to class programs, the STE respondents have accomplished reading comprehension skills (M=16.43, SD=1.74), which means that they have very good reading comprehension skills. STE students at the beginning are bound to higher learning in the areas of Science Technology, Engineering, and Research. STE Program follows a spiral progression approach and additional research subject (DepEd, 2005). This is contradicted on the study that compared the critical thinking ability in English reading of students of different genders, majors, and grades. The result shows that the critical thinking ability of University non-English majors in English reading is weak; most students lack critical thinking ability in English as a Foreign Language reading class, which requires relevant training urgently (Yuan, Yuhong, & Zhou, 2015).

The STVEP respondents have expanding reading comprehension skills (M=14.21, SD=2.41); this means that the students exhibited acceptable reading comprehension skills. Students in the STVEP program are provided the opportunities to develop as a total person equipped with technical-vocational and academic competencies. Students must acquire technical-vocational, employability, and other life skills to cope with the rapid change of technology in a knowledge-based economy. Not only are the students geared towards academic competence, but also they are introduced to training in actual skilled work (Tagtag & Liban, 2007). Being honed in their skills, this attitude brought them to balance academics, training, and discipline. These are some of the reasons why students resulted in very high performance in reading comprehension. In addition, observation on STVEP in English classes based on attendance and class records shows
that only very few students are absent in class. This outturn was both agreed upon and contradicted by Faridahb and Kholiqa (2019).

Table 2. Level of Reading Comprehension Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>BEC</th>
<th>STE</th>
<th>STVEP</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>16.43</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>14.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Level</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.44</td>
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<td>0.96</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Pr</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>Ex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** E=Emerging, Pr=Progressing, Ex=Expanding, Ac=Accomplished, S=Superior

**Difference in the Level of Knowledge of Context Clues**

Kruskal-Wallis was used to determine the significant difference in the level of knowledge of context clues and reading comprehension of students when grouped according to the class program.

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in the level of knowledge of context clues \( \chi^2(2)=54.273, p=0.000 \) and in the form of synonym \( \chi^2(2)=20.148, p=0.000 \), definition \( \chi^2(2)=43.065, p=0.000 \), antonym \( \chi^2(2)=29.677, p=0.000 \), and logical inference \( \chi^2(2)=44.346, p=0.000 \). In the Post hoc test, using Dunn’s Test, it was revealed that the STE students have a significantly higher level of knowledge of the context clues in general and in logical inference in particular than students from STVEP and BEC. Meanwhile, in synonyms, definitions, and antonyms, students from the STE and STVEP have a significantly higher level of knowledge than students from the regular class.

The results imply that since students STE are equipped with additional research subjects since Grade 7, they have higher intelligence in context clues, specifically in logical inference, such as making conclusions and reasoning. Since they are equipped with more readings, they could learn a vast amount of difficult words. On the other hand, both STE and STVEP have higher knowledge in synonym, definition, and antonyms, for both classes have grades that need to be maintained. One motivation for them to be high in context clues is the academic performance and result. This result contradicts a study conducted to the students of business management of various programs that were taught context clues strategies. Results indicated that most participants depended on a variety of context clues strategies. Overall conclusions indicated a degree of successful language learners who self-direct themselves in learning how to utilize suitable context clues strategies in a continuous effort to improve the skills (Ahmad, Muhammad, & Kasim, 2018).

Table 3. Difference in the Level of Knowledge of Context Clues in the Form of Synonym, Definition, Antonym, and Logical Inference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synonym</td>
<td>BEC</td>
<td>2.80a, (1.32)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STE</td>
<td>3.93b, (0.92)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STVEP</td>
<td>3.71b, (0.94)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>BEC</td>
<td>2.30a, (1.30)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STE</td>
<td>4.07b, (0.47)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STVEP</td>
<td>3.64b, (1.16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonym</td>
<td>BEC</td>
<td>2.67a, (1.32)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STE</td>
<td>4.64b, (0.47)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STVEP</td>
<td>3.68b, (1.16)</td>
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</table>
Logical Inference

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1.55)</th>
<th>(0.63)</th>
<th>(1.19)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>44.346*</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.41)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
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Context Clues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(4.03)</th>
<th>(1.45)</th>
<th>(3.00)</th>
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<th>0.000</th>
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<tr>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>17.64</td>
<td>14.36</td>
<td>54.273*</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4.03)</td>
<td>(1.45)</td>
<td>(3.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *the difference is significant when p<0.05  Means that share a letter are not significantly different.

**Difference in the Level of Reading Comprehension Skills**

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in the level of reading comprehension \( \chi^2(2)=45.521, p=0.000 \) and in terms of literal \( \chi^2(2)=11.178, p=0.000 \), inferential \( \chi^2(2)=32.564, p=0.000 \), and critical levels \( \chi^2(2)=38.457, p=0.000 \). Post hoc test (Dunn's test) revealed that students from STE and STVEP have significantly higher reading comprehension in general and literal and inferential levels in particular than students from regular class.

The quality of students in the STE and STVEP programs leads to higher intelligence in literal and inferential since given the nature of their curriculum, wherein there is an emphasis on the English subject. The comprehensive, challenging, and intricate competencies. Both class programs can identify literal and inferential since this group of students is given additional activities that could promote a high level of reading comprehension skills, especially in literal and inferential.

This contradicts the study investigating two levels of reading comprehension, literal and inferential, in EFL learners. The results demonstrated that the participants meaningfully outperformed on the expository texts at the literal comprehension level from an inter-text-type angle. As to inferential comprehension, there was no significant difference between the two text types. The results from an intra-text-type perspective also revealed that literal comprehension meaningfully outweighed inferential comprehension in the expository texts, while no significant difference was observed between literal and inferential comprehension in the narrative texts (Tavakoli, 2017).

In terms of the critical level, students from STE have significantly higher reading comprehension than STVEP and BEC class programs. Critical level means the understanding of both explicit and implicit meanings. It is reading that involves higher-order thinking skills and allows the students to analyze the pros and cons and form well-reasoned opinions. This involves technical reading skills which students must have a good grasp of the nuances of language and how words are used. The critical level also involves figurative language, which can be particularly difficult for BEC students.

This finding conforms to studies determining what variables are associated with higher critical thinking performance for students enrolled in various community colleges. The results showed consistent significant predictors associated with higher critical thinking performance, a positive relationship between critical thinking performance, and the frequency of using critical thinking in college courses. Results also suggested emphasizing critical thinking skills across various community college programs and non-STEM-focused programs (Roohr & Burkander, 2020).
Table 4. Difference in the Level of Reading comprehension in terms of Literal, Inferential, and Critical Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BEC</td>
<td>STE</td>
<td>STVEP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>11.178*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.70)</td>
<td>(0.80)</td>
<td>(0.96)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>32.564*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.48)</td>
<td>(1.25)</td>
<td>(1.21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Level</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>38.457*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.42)</td>
<td>(0.96)</td>
<td>(1.40)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>16.43</td>
<td>14.21</td>
<td>45.521*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.55)</td>
<td>(1.74)</td>
<td>(2.41)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *the difference is significant when p<0.05

Relationship between Context Clues Knowledge and Reading Comprehension Skills

Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills. Table 6 shows a significant relationship between context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills \[ \rho (244)=0.657, p=0.000 \]. The higher scores in context clues knowledge manifest higher reading comprehension abilities as revealed in the three-class programs, both in the level of context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills. This is supported by an experimental study that sought to implement a context clues strategy to help students conclude word meaning in reading text. The correlation between vocabulary and reading comprehension is undeniable. A strong base vocabulary or lack of vocabulary will determine reading comprehension (Spears, 2000 cited in Herinovita, Delfi, & Aruan, 2015). To support this study, using context clues strategy helps students infer the meaning of unknown vocabulary and improve their reading skills (Erdiana, Mauliza, & Samad, 2019).

Table 5. Relationship between Context Clues Knowledge and Reading Comprehension Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context Clues x Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>0.657*</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *the correlation is significant when p<0.05

Conclusion

The findings revealed a significant relationship between context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills. The study has proven that a relationship exists between the two variables, and each one influences the other. The use of context clues in the forms of synonym, definition, antonym, and logical inference prepares the Grade 10 students to enhance their reading skills in the literal, inferential, and critical level. The nature of the program of the respondents has also influenced the outcome of the study. The emphasis on academic performance, especially in English, and the inclusion of research subjects and a spiral progression approach, have contributed to the STE students' performance. Meanwhile, the training and adherence to maintaining academic performance in English contribute to the results of the STVEP students. Although the BEC curriculum deals with basic reading skills and
utilizes a rigid teaching-learning process, the students still showed weaknesses that must be enhanced and developed through enhancement or supplementary activities and materials. The findings have severe implications for the Grade 10 English instruction and curriculum. It is then a ground that even the lessons focus more on reading, the STE and STVEP have no difficulty in recognizing context clues and in reading comprehension. Meanwhile, the BEC students need more knowledge on word meaning and are unaware that context clues exist in every reading material and selection. Although the competencies and curriculum provide numerous challenging tasks in reading, students find it a burden in word meaning recognition and reading selection cognizance. In the classroom setting, the teacher provides the same style in teaching even without reference to the kind of program. The STE students revealed higher intelligence among the three-class programs, followed by STVEP and BEC on context clues knowledge. The findings have implications for the Grade 10 students, language teachers, school administrators, English supervisor, curriculum developers, and future researchers in addressing second language issues. Grade 10 teachers are encouraged to utilize instructions and a descriptive approach to determine the effectiveness of the activities to create a more accurate picture of the relationship between the context clues knowledge and effectiveness of reading comprehension. To further fill the gap in the literature of this research topic, researchers are encouraged to conduct studies to determine other factors that contribute to the effectiveness of word meaning and reading activities in the Grade 10 instruction, especially in the new normal. Moreover, the knowledge of context clues highly contributes to the effectiveness of reading comprehension as perceived by the students, since there is a significant relationship between two variables.

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**Recommendations**

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby advanced:

Grade 10 English teachers in the subject English for Academic and Professional Purposes must use the result of this study in the incorporation of competencies on context clues knowledge on vocabulary development and reading comprehension skills. Therefore, they are encouraged to utilize the enhancement worksheets designed by the researcher as learning and instructional materials.

It is suggested that English teachers assigned to the subject English for academics must provide students with word and reading activities that are effective in preparing students for the next level. Teachers are advised to use the result of this study in maintaining the incorporation of competencies on context clues knowledge on vocabulary development and reading comprehension skills at the start of Junior High School that is Grade 7.

School administrators must come up with a remedial class as an intervention for word recognition and reading comprehension needs. As the direct supervisors and observers of the teachers' delivery of lessons, the school administrators should implement interventions, recommend the proposed instructional materials, and develop policies or programs that will involve all non-English teachers in strengthening the word meaning and reading comprehension skills.

Education Program Supervisor (EPS) in English are advised to utilize the results of this investigation to assess the needs of the Grade 10 students and all teachers in English in terms of classroom instructions basis for curriculum and competency-based assistance, initiate a division-wide seminar for the dissemination of this study, endorsement of the enhancement/supplementary activity worksheets designed by the researcher and the profiling of students from Grade 7 to Grade 10 through Philippine Reading Inventory (PHILIRI) during enrolment at the start of the school year in every class.

Curriculum developers should utilize the result of this study in enhancing the curriculum for Grade 10 learners by focusing on developing their context clues knowledge and reading comprehension skills to prepare them for senior high school, college, and future professions. Future researchers are encouraged to utilize an experimental approach to determine the effectiveness of instruction. They can also investigate a study, especially correlating the context clues knowledge and reading comprehension.
REFERENCES


