

# The SHS Learners' Level of Reading by Acquisition: A Guide for the Formulation of Reading Intervention Program

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.803193S>

Received: 21 June 2024; Revised: 05 July 2024; Accepted: 10 July 2024; Published: 16 August 2024

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research aims to determine the reading level by the acquisition of the SHS learners and create a reading program that would help learners improve and develop their reading skills.

**Design/ Methodology/ Approach:** The study is qualitative-descriptive. The respondents were grade 11 senior high school learners. It is the only grade 11 section in the school. A purposive sampling was used, and a survey was conducted to collect data.

**Findings:** It was found that one of the major causes of their poor reading level by acquisition was because of phonemic awareness, the other factor was their poor performance in the second level, which is reading with comprehension. It also shows that self-confidence hinders them from reading properly and more in reading with acquisition. Both reading with comprehension and acquisition revealed that learners “need improvement.” They also mentioned other factors that cause their poor performance in acquiring what they read, such as internal and external factors.

**Research Limitation:** The generalization of the research is considering the respondents. Results apply only to Grade 11 learners of Talon Integrated School.

**Originality/ Value:** The study will help the teachers, syllabus, and curriculum designers focus on approaches and strategies to help learners improve and develop their reading skills, especially comprehension and acquisition. The proposed reading program is highly recommended and suggested.

**Keywords:** Reading Comprehension, Reading Acquisition, Metacognition

**Types of Approach:** Descriptive-Qualitative/ Action Research.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the five (5) macro skills that a learner must develop and improve is their skill in reading. “In the 2019 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Philippines, among 79 participating countries, scored the lowest in reading comprehension. Introduced in 2019 under then Education Secretary Leonor Briones, the 3B initiative underscores the six elements of reading—oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—that students must understand and use to learn how to read (Bautista, 2022).” This is, therefore, a big challenge both for teachers and learners in developing the latter’s reading skills. As Dr. Briones continues to respond to this problem, by having its so-called 3B, it remains a test in the teaching-learning system.

The reading level of the students on “how to read it literally” is important and the main goal especially in the early stage. Likewise, in middle adolescence and beyond aside from knowing how to read the letters and words literally or having phonemic awareness; reading with comprehension and acquisition is also important. Reading with comprehension and acquisition as defined and explained by experts and researchers: “Reading is the basis for the acquisition of knowledge, for cultural engagement, for democracy, and success in the workplace (2018). Reading is “an interactive process in which the reader’s prior knowledge of the world interacts with the message conveyed directly or indirectly by the text” (Smith, 2016). Reading is a process. As such, it has various stages (before-, during-, and after-reading) at which different tasks need to be performed (in Rochester Institute of Technology). Reading comprehension is one of the most complex behaviors in which humans engage (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). On the other hand, the acquisition must also be given importance to reading in Senior High School learners. “Reading is a language skill — it’s oral language in a visual format. Therefore, it makes sense that reading acquisition processes run through language development and dexterity. It’s the foundation and bedrock of reading proficiency (Gemm Learning).” Hence, reading will help us build our vocabulary, understand the context, and most importantly apply and create new language and language communication.

There is no doubt that Senior High School learners are all independent readers who can read the ABCs, words, phrases, sentences, or texts in reading. Unfortunately, the problem in reading with comprehension and acquisition is still a dilemma. Thus, this study.

### **Action Research Questions:**

This study aims to create a reading program that would help learners obtain what they read; hence, the researcher formulated the following questions:

1. What is the oral reading level of SHS learners?
2. What is the reading acquisition level of SHS learners?
3. What causes reading acquisition difficulties of the SHS learners?
4. What activities can be used and created in formulating a reading (intervention) program?

### **Proposed Innovation, Intervention and Strategy**

This study was guided by “The Reading Acquisition Framework” of Hover & Gough (2009). Also, the reading acquisition occurs in a stage-like progression (Chall, 1983).

Whereas the metacognitive view:

“According to Block (1992 in Vaezi, 2006), there is now no more debate on “whether reading is a bottom-up, language-based process or a top-down, knowledge-based process.” It is also no more problematic to accept the influence of background knowledge on both L1 and L2 readers. Research has gone even further to define the control readers execute on their ability to understand a text. This control, Block (1992 in Vaezi, 2006) has referred to as metacognition.”

This is because acquisition refers to metacognition which shall be given focus on the reading level of the SHS learners. In this study, the researcher revised the stages of reading into three to make sure that acquisition will not be neglected.

Hence, three stages are referred to:

Stage 1 – Reading –read literally (phonemic awareness)

Stage 2 – Reading with comprehension – (purpose, form of text, etc.)

Stage 3 – Reading with acquisition – (metacognition)

The researcher, therefore, proposed an intervention program called: R-C-A which stands for “*Read-Comprehend-Acquire*”. In this program, three (3) stages of reading will be implemented.

Stage 1, which refers to the learner’s knowledge and skill of reading the text literally or its phonemic awareness, includes the following: 1. the learner can read properly; 2. the learner can work with individual sounds; 3. the learner can recognize which words in a set of words begin with the same sound; 4. The learner can isolate and say the first or last sound in a word; 5. the learner can combine, or blend the separate sounds in a word to say the word; 6. the learner can break, or segment a word into its own separate sound.

The next stage, which focuses on the purpose, form of text, etc., are: 1. the learner can draw on prior knowledge and experience to help them understand what they are reading; 2. the learner can “read between the lines” and draw inferences; 3. the learner can notice every word in a sentence and is aware of how a single word can subtly shift the meaning of a sentence or even a passage.; 4. The learner can monitor his/her understanding, adjust reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text, and address any comprehension problems it may have.

And lastly, the reading with acquisition, or simply acquiring what has been read by the learner and thinking beyond what they have thought about the text (metacognition) refers to the following: 1. the learner can form mental pictures, or images, as they read; 2. the learner summarizes and retell; 3. the learner can notice how a text is organized or structured; 4. the learner can decode the words in the text; 5. the learner can understand and acquire the language the text is written in.

The researcher found out more activities and other techniques that can be formulated to help learners in reading with a great skill in comprehension and acquisition which also depends on the needs and suggested activities of the learners as per their survey interview questions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **A. Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information**

The participants of this study were in purposive sampling. All Grade 11 Senior High School Learners in Talon Integrated School were the respondents. These respondents were the learners of the researcher of this study and the only grade 11 section in SHS department.

### **B. Data Gathering Methods**

This action research gathered data during the 3rd Quarter of S.Y. 2022-2023. The Reading Assessment Tool of McGinitie, Self-Assessment, and Survey Questionnaire were used in this research. The self-assessment and survey questionnaire were validated by three (3) English teachers with Postgraduate Degrees.

First, the researcher and teacher of this study conducted an oral reading (one-to-one) assessment last April 25, 2023, to find out their reading level as per stage no.1 with the use of a formulated rubric. Next, the reading assessment tool of McGinitie, Chall, and Block were used for their reading comprehension and acquisition level which was conducted on the following day. Lastly, the self-assessment and survey questionnaire were utilized in the study. The self-assessment in reading is divided into three (3) parts: reading literally (phonemic awareness), reading with comprehension (purpose, form of text, etc.), and

reading with acquisition (metacognition) on the same day. With this, suggested activities for a new intervention program were created and used in the following school year.

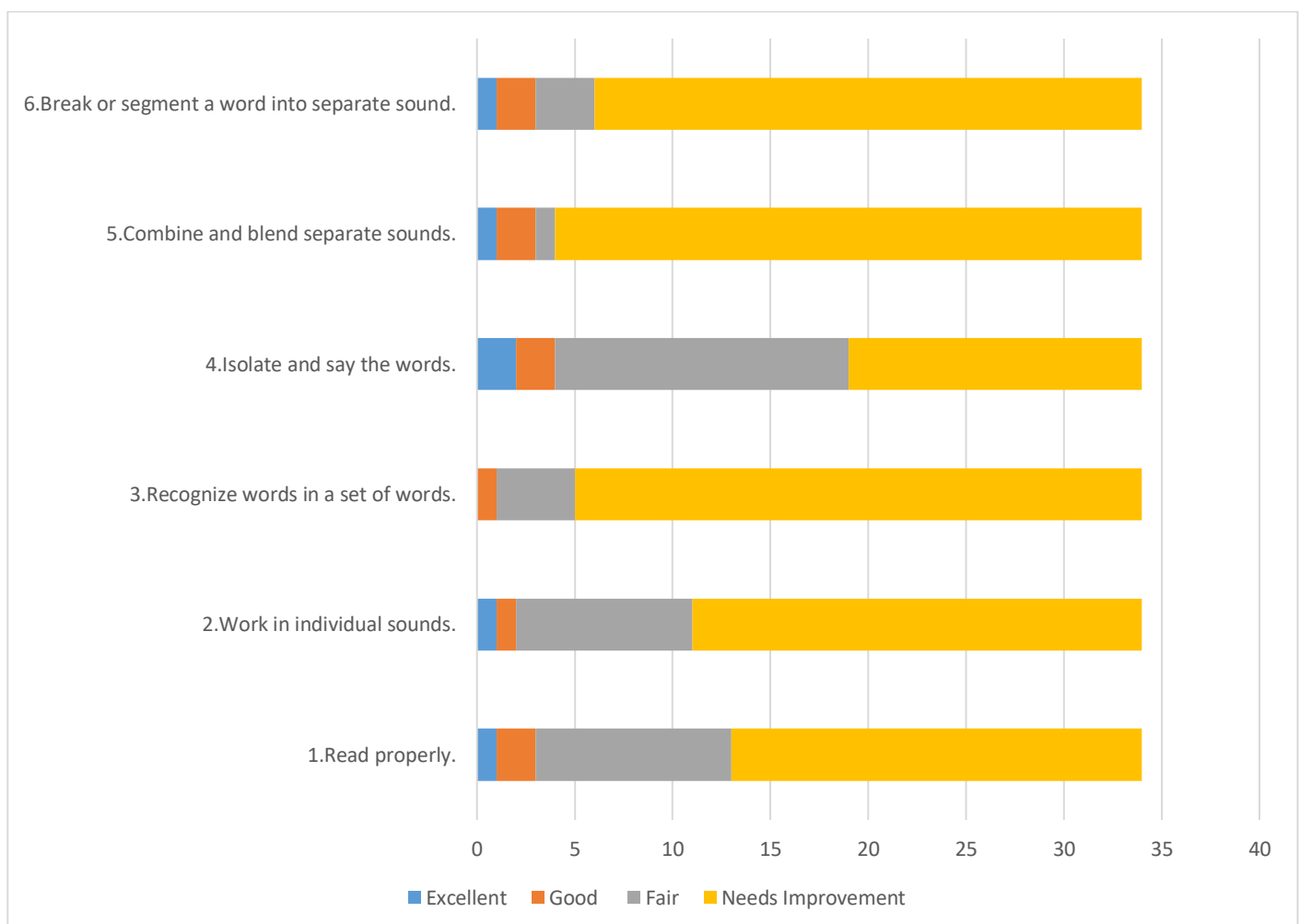
### C. Data Analysis Plan

The researcher administered a reading assessment to find out the reading level of the learners both in oral and in comprehension and acquisition; and surveyed self-assessment to know the other causes of their poor comprehension and to identify activities to be needed in developing and improving their reading skills.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows the total number of learners in each criterion of oral reading.

Figure 1 SHS Learners' Level of Oral Reading



The figure above shows that item no. 5 has the highest number of learners who need improvement while item no. 3 is next to it, which proves that it may affect the extent to which the learners understand what they read and have poor performance, which needs much attention in teaching reading and/or in intervention. This also proves that phonemic awareness also needs to be improved among the three levels of oral reading by the learners. Phonemic awareness is one of the major components of reading instruction, which focuses on individual sounds or phonemes in words (Rice, et al., 2023). It can also be concluded that mastery of phonemic awareness may cause poor comprehension and acquisition by the learners. Thus, these three (3) levels or stages of oral reading have their own importance and interconnection with each other.

## Reading Level Results

Table 1 shows the results of the reading level using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Assessment Tool.

Table 1 Number of SHS Learners' in Each Particular Set of Score

Scores	No. Learners who got the score (Vocabulary Level)	No. Learners who got the score (Reading Comprehension Level)
52-48	0	0
47-43	0	5
42-38	0	7
37-33	4	3
32-28	12	10
27-23	8	5
22-18	7	3
17-13	2	0
12-8	1	3
7-3	2	0
2-0	0	0

The table shows the total number of learners who got each set of scores in their level of vocabulary and reading comprehension.

It was revealed in the Gates-MacGinitie's Reading Test that both vocabulary and reading comprehension level got the highest number of learners in the scores of between 32 and 28 which is 60%. It also shows that only 12 learners got an 80% rating in the reading comprehension level, and nobody got an 80% or above in the vocabulary level. On the other hand, there were three (3) learners, both in vocabulary and reading comprehension level, who got twelve (12) and below points. This may be because of the knowledge and mastery in the suggested first stage, which is phonemic awareness, as "reading comprehension requires the coordination of multiple linguistic and cognitive processes, including, but not limited to, word reading ability, working memory, inference generation, comprehension monitoring, vocabulary, and prior knowledge (Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2005 in Elleman, 2019)." Hence, teaching reading and intervention should consider stages that would really help SHS learners in learning and developing reading skills, especially in comprehension up to acquisition. And that SHS learners should still consider having started from the basics up to the acquisition level at which they are applying it in their daily conversations.

## Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Table 2 shows the mean and its interpretation of learners' self-assessment of their level of reading.

Table 2 Weighted Mean of Learners' Self-Assessment in Reading Level

Items	Totally Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Totally Disagree	WEIGHTED MEAN	INTERPRETATION
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. Read properly.	4	25	3	1	1	3.88	A
2. Work in individual sounds.	2	25	4	3	0	3.76	A

3. Recognize words in a set of words.	1	22	11	0	0	<b>3.71</b>	<b>A</b>
4. Isolate and say the words.	0	23	8	0	3	<b>3.50</b>	<b>A</b>
5. Combine and blend separate sounds.	2	19	6	5	0	<b>3.35</b>	<b>U</b>
6. Break or segment a word into separate sound.	1	17	7	1	0	<b>2.82</b>	<b>U</b>
7. Draw on prior knowledge and understand what reading.	4	20	8	1	0	<b>3.71</b>	<b>A</b>
8. Read between the lines.	1	20	8	3	1	<b>3.41</b>	<b>A</b>
9. Notice every word and aware of how single word subtly shift the meaning.	1	17	12	2	1	<b>3.35</b>	<b>U</b>
10. Monitor understanding, adjust reading speed and address comprehension.	3	17	11	3	0	<b>3.59</b>	<b>A</b>
11. Form mental pictures or images.	2	18	5	3	1	<b>3.06</b>	<b>U</b>
12. Summarize and retell.	3	18	12	0	1	<b>3.65</b>	<b>A</b>
13. Notice how a text is organized and structured.	4	17	12	1	0	<b>3.71</b>	<b>A</b>
14. Decode the word in the text.	2	22	8	1	0	<b>3.65</b>	<b>A</b>
15. Understand and acquire the language in the text.	0	18	11	3	1	<b>3.29</b>	<b>U</b>
<b>OVERALL MEAN</b>						<b>3.50</b>	<b>A</b>

As can be seen in the table above, the overall mean is interpreted as “agree” and the learners assessed themselves as totally “agree” in almost all the items above and do not have any statement of “strongly”

agreeing in any of the items. This may mean of their lack of confidence in stating that they are good at reading whether from the very first stage up to the last stage. In fact, the study of Karimi and Saadatmand (2014 in Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020) revealed that “there was a relation between academic achievement in both self-confidence and educational motivation.” Hence, their lack of confidence must also be given much priority when teaching reading to SHS learners.

It can also be noticed that items nos. 5 and 6 were the two (2) problematics for SHS learners, as they answered “undecided” in the self-assessment. These two (2) items were also shown to have the lowest scores of the learners as found in the oral test. On the other hand, on the level of comprehension and acquisition, items nos. 9, 11, 15 are related to each other and seen to be another problem that learners are encountered as they again answered “undecided.” This may maybe because of their lack of understanding of what they read. Some could be easy to read but difficult to understand. According to Perfetti & Adlof (2012), “many linguistic abilities, cognitive processes, and knowledge sources undergird comprehension ability, complicating which comprehension components instruction should target (in Elleman & Oslund, 2020). Hence, reading comprehension has its pre-components and sub-components as per what to know and develop first until it can successfully comprehend as per stages of development. It is, therefore, important to note that the foundation of reading, as such as phonemic awareness (reading literally) up to knowing the purpose, form of text, etc. (reading with comprehension), is very important before acquiring (metacognition) the text being read.

With these, different techniques and strategies should be considered in teaching and having interventions for reading, such as mouth and oral exercises (MOE), word pronunciation, phrase pronunciation and stressing, sentence intonation, reading through imitating through one-to-one or small group discussion, reading exercises through different strategies, analyzing reading text (comprehension) thru focused group discussion, and acquiring text by using it daily conversations (which can be observed during FGD and formal class discussion). On the other hand, the learners also answered in the survey questionnaire that listening to music helps motivates them to read, reading without any noise (from the surroundings), enhancing their vocabulary skills, and practicing critical thinking by having a reading program that would guide them about the proper way of reading a text to comprehend it deeper and acquire it in their daily communication. Indeed, these techniques would be great for SHS learners in improving and developing their reading skills up to the last level.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, SHS learners, specifically those in grade 11, are expected to be at the highest level or stage of reading (reading with acquisition). Unfortunately, the findings show that this grade level is still in need of assistance from the very first stage of reading up to the last. One of the major causes is due to phonemic awareness, where they were tested to see if they can read properly as such, can work with individual sounds, can recognize which words in a set of words begin with the same sound, can isolate and say the first or last sound in a word, can combine or blend the separate sounds in a word to say the word, and can break or segment a word into its separate sounds. Another factor is their poor performance in the second level, which is reading with comprehension in connection with its purpose, form of text, and understanding of the text. It also shows that self-confidence hinders them from reading properly and more in reading with acquisition. While they also mentioned some other factors that cause their poor performance in acquiring what they read as internal (poor vocabulary) and external factors (noise in the surroundings).

Hence, as mentioned in the above proposal, an immediate implementation of the following reading program:

R-C-A, which stands for “Read-Comprehend-Acquire”. In this program, the three (3) stages of reading will be implemented. In this, the researcher found out more activities and other techniques that can be

formulated to help learners in reading with a great skill in comprehension and more in acquisition, which also depends on the needs and suggestions of the learners as per their survey interview questions. This program falls into three (3) stages:

Stage 1 – Reading –read literally (phonemic awareness)

Stage 2 – Reading with comprehension – (purpose, form of text, etc.)

Stage 3 – Reading with acquisition – (metacognition)

This study was guided by “The Reading Acquisition Framework” of Hoover & Gough (2009). Also, reading acquisition occurs in a stage-like progression (Chall, 1983). Whereas the metacognitive view: “According to Block (1992), ...research has gone even further to define the control readers execute on their ability to understand a text. This control, Block (1992) has referred to as metacognition.” As this intervention focuses on the SHS learners, reading with acquisition is very important, whereas acquisition refers to metacognition. Thus, the researcher revised the stages of reading into three to make sure that acquisition will not be neglected with the suggested activities as per their stages: 1) reading exercises through different strategies; 2) analyzing reading text (comprehension) through focused group discussion; and 3) acquiring text by using it in daily conversations (which can be observed during FGD and formal class discussion).

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