Students' English Language Exposure in Relation to Their Interpretative and Application Reading Comprehension Skills

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ABSTRACT

In today's interconnected world, the English language has become a vital skill for academic achievements and individual advancement. Understanding the language extends beyond mere vocabulary and grammar, encompassing the crucial ability to comprehend effectively and interpret written texts. This research study explored the relationship between the students' English language exposure and their reading comprehension skills in one of the Higher Institutions in Ozamiz City for the second semester of the school year 2022-2023. The study utilized the descriptive correlational design. A total population of 154 students selected through random sampling were the participants in the study. A modified questionnaire from Magno (2009) was used to gather the data for the respondents' English language exposure, and a researcher-made questionnaire was used to test their reading comprehension. The results were analyzed and interpreted using Mean and Standard Deviation and Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results revealed that the students fully grasp explicit information within the literary texts. However, there is a need for improvement in higher order thinking and critical analysis skills. The findings also revealed no significant relation between students' exposure to the English language and their reading comprehension skills, suggesting that exposure to English is not a key determinant of students' reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: English, language exposure, reading, comprehension, skills, students

INTRODUCTION

Philippines is recognized as one of the world's major English-speaking countries. (Santos et al., 2022). Since the American colonization of the Philippines, Filipinos have adopted English as a secondary language and have become accustomed to its usage alongside native languages (Esquivel, 2019). Following the conclusion of the Philippine-American war in 1902, the American colonial administration implemented English as the dominant language for governance, business, and education in the Philippines (Santos et al., 2022).

Mallillin and Villareal (2018) stated that one of the main issues students need to improve is their English

proficiency. Even though they acquired some English skills during their early years, non-native speakers continue to struggle due to English being a foreign language. However, in the Philippines, English is considered a secondary language (Turmudi& Hajan, 2020), predominantly utilized for official purposes such as administration, law, business, education, media, and more. Based on the researchers' experience, students demonstrate a need for more proficiency in English. They struggle in constructing English sentences, writing effectively, comprehending texts, and mastering grammar. These difficulties significantly impact their English proficiency (Mallillin& Villareal, 2018).

Language exposure pertains to the learners' level of contact, interaction, and involvement with the language they are attempting to learn (Jabarani, 2019). This contact can take various forms, including spoken or written communication in formal or informal settings and active or passive engagement (Galiansa et al., 2020). Language exposure can occur in different settings. Learning a language, both formal and informal, involves actively engaging with the target language. Formal learning is typically organized by teachers and follows a structured curriculum, whereas informal learning occurs during daily activities (Domingo, 2020).

Mallillin and Villareal (2018) asserted that though students expose themselves in an English-speaking environment, it is crucial to effectively guide them in attaining English proficiency. According to Soriano and Garcia (2021), the lack of foundational knowledge in English has been identified as a barrier to students' comprehension of their English lessons. While English serves as the medium of instruction, its usage is restricted mainly to the classroom, making students uncomfortable employing it in daily conversations. Exposure to a language enhances students' motivation and eagerness to learn (Küçükler &Sulac, 2021). Students must be consistently exposed to the English language beyond the confines of the ESL classroom; hence, both teachers and parents are encouraged to raise learners' awareness and the importance of acquiring English skills through daily language exposure, employing diverse techniques that enhance second language acquisition (Jabarani, 2019).

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2018), the reading achievement of Filipinos was identified as falling below the average of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Despite English being the second language of the Philippines and students being exposed to the English language from their early primary school years, the country scored the lowest mean in reading comprehension and ranked last among 79 participating countries; this highlights that students in the Philippines still need help with reading comprehension skills despite their early exposure to English.

The process of reading, understanding, and comprehending a second language, mainly English, presents significant difficulty for learners, teachers, and parents; this is primarily due to young learners needing more exposure to an environment that supports and encourages linguistic abilities, such as a suitable social setting and proficient peers (Abdulameer Mohammad &Hasbi, 2022). According to Hermida (2009), as cited in Galiansa et al. (2020), the ability to read effectively plays a vital role in attaining academic success. Hermida further suggests that since students are required to handle lengthy assignments of varying levels of difficulty, it is essential for them to master reading skills to excel academically. Students need ample exposure to various reading materials to develop reading skills. This exposure should encompass multiple resources, including printed and electronic books and visual and auditory stimuli (Galiansa et al., 2020).

Reading becomes more meaningful if one can comprehend the content being read. Comprehension is essential for compelling reading (Galiansa et al., 2020). Suppose students merely concentrate on reading words accurately without grasping their meaning. In that case, their pronunciation skills may improve, but

their ability to confidently and proficiently utilize new words in unfamiliar contexts—their overall proficiency—will remain limited. Reading comprehension encompasses several components, including comprehending vocabulary, identifying connections between words and concepts, organizing thoughts, discerning the author's intent and purpose, evaluating the context, and forming judgments (Al Qunayeer, 2021).

Alghonaim (2021) stated that comprehension lies at the core of reading, encompassing how meaning is effectively extracted from written passages. In today's literacy standards, students are expected to possess the ability to self-adjust, self-manage, and self-monitor their reading, enabling them to become strategic readers who can extract relevant information, think logically, and engage in critical reflection while reading (Alghonaim, 2021).

Li et al. (2022) stated that cognitive factors are better facilitated if an English learner is placed in an environment where they are exposed to the English language, making them use English as part of their daily communication. Exposure to English would then enable the English learner to improve their ability to express the English language and eventually become more proficient, specifically in reading comprehension (Li et al., 2022). Students exposed to English language learning from an early age tend to develop better reading comprehension skills because exposure to the language helps students build vocabulary, grammar, and language structure, which are essential for a more adequate reading comprehension. In contrast, students with limited exposure to English may struggle to comprehend English texts, which can impact their academic achievements and future career opportunities (Küçükler &Kulac, 2021).

The correlation between English language exposure and reading comprehension skills among students is an essential study area. Several research studies have been undertaken in various nations to explore this relationship, focusing on countries where English is considered a foreign language. However, the Philippines presents a unique setting for this study, as English is not only a foreign language but also the country's second language and one of its official languages.

This study aimed to determine whether there is a correlation between the amount of English language exposure Filipino students receive and their reading comprehension skills. By focusing on a country where English is prominent in the educational system and society, this study can offer valuable perspectives on the influence of language exposure on reading comprehension within the local context. The findings of this research can contribute to a better understanding of how English language exposure influences the development of reading comprehension skills among Filipino students. It may shed light on the specific aspects of language exposure, such as the frequency and quality of English instruction, the use of English in daily life, or exposure to English media, which are most strongly associated with reading comprehension skills.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to know the student's learning environment and their perception of listening comprehension among the education students in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of students' exposure to the English language at home, with friends, at school, and in media;

2. Determine the level of students' reading comprehension skills to identify strengths and areas for improvement.; and

3. Determine the significant relationship between students' English language exposure and reading comprehension skills.

METHODS

Research Design

The researcher used a quantitative approach and a descriptive-correlational research design to conduct the study. The descriptive correlational design is used in research studies that provide static pictures of situations and establish the relationship between different variables (McBurney & White, 2009). This method was deemed appropriate in determining the students' reading comprehension skills regarding their literal reading comprehension, interpretative reading comprehension, critical analysis, and application reading (comprehension) regarding their language exposure at home, with friends, at school, and in media. The researcher's main objective was to describe the connections or associations between the variables. It described the variables and the relationships that occur naturally between and among them (Sousa et al., 2007).

Research Setting

The research was conducted in a privately owned setting, a non-sectarian higher educational institution in Misamis Occidental, offering Bachelor of Elementary Education and Bachelor of Secondary Education programs. The school currently provides Junior High School, Senior High School, College, and Graduate programs. It is currently the only Autonomous University granted by the Commission in Higher Education (CHED) ISO 9001:2015 Management System Certified by Det Norske Veritas-Germanischer Lloyd Business Assurance. It was also awarded by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation, which has the highest number of certified programs in the area.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study were 154 students who were enrolled in one of the Higher Education Institutions during the second semester of the school year 2022-2023. The 154 students were selected through stratified random sampling. The 60 respondents were from first-year students, 48 from second-year students, and 46 from third-year students.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The data was acquired utilizing the following instruments:

English Language Exposure Questionnaire.

This is a modified questionnaire from Magno (2009) in his study "Assessing the Level of English Language Exposure of Taiwanese College Students in Taiwan and the Philippines." This is composed of four categories: language exposure at home (4 items), language exposure with friends (3 items), language exposure at school (5 items), language exposure in using media (6 items). The questionnaire waspilot-tested

on students who were not included in the study to ensure the validity and reliability of the test. The pilot test exhibited a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8296.

The 5-point Likert-type scale was used to assess the students' language exposure during the pilot test and the actual study:

Responses Continuum Interpretation

5 – Always (A) 4.20 – 5.0Very High (VH)

4 – Often (O) 3.40 – 4.19High (H)

3 – Sometimes (S)2.60 – 3.39Moderately High (MH)

2 – Rarely (R) 1.80 – 2.59Low (L)

1 – Never (N) 1.0 – 1.79Very Low (VL)

Reading Comprehension Questionnaire.

A researcher-made questionnaire was used to assess the respondents' reading comprehension skills. Four college-level stories and specific questions for each category were provided. Assessing their reading comprehension skills were determined in terms of literal reading comprehension (2 questions for each story; 8 questions), interpretative reading comprehension (2 questions for each story; 8 questions), critical analysis (3 questions for each story; 12 questions) and application reading comprehension (3 questions for each story; 12 questions). The questionnaire was pilot-tested on students who were not included in the study to ensure the validity and reliability of the test. The pilot test exhibited a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.7767.

The following scale was used in interpreting the students' reading comprehension skills in terms of their literal and interpretative reading comprehension during the pilot test and the actual study:

Continuum	Interpretation
8	Outstanding
7	Very Satisfactory
6	Satisfactory
5	Fair
0-4	Poor

The following scale was used in interpreting the students' reading comprehension skills in terms of their critical analysis and application reading comprehension during the pilot test and the actual study:

Continuum	Interpretation
11-12	Outstanding

10	Very Satisfactory
9	Satisfactory
7-8	Fair
0-6	Poor

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers asked for authorization from the dean of the College of Education to conduct the study. Once approved, the researchers asked permission from the program head and consent from the teachers to complete the survey in their classes. Before handing the questionnaire to the respondents, the researchers explained the study's aim and the students' role as study respondents. Furthermore, the researchers also demonstrated the instructions for answering the questionnaires. The respondents were given one hour and 30 minutes to finish answering the questionnaire. When the instruments were retrieved, the researchers reviewed the responses to ensure the completeness of the data. The data gathered were tallied, analyzed, and computed for interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

Upon approval from the office of the College of Education, the research questionnaire was administered to collect the data needed for the study. The study's objective was communicated to the participants, and the researchers asked for full consent from the respondents. The protection of the data privacy of the respondents was emphasized. The study ensured the utmost confidentiality of research data, safeguarding the participants' privacy and maintaining the anonymity of individuals and organizations involved.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used in interpreting the results of the data gathered.

Mean and standard deviation. This was used to determine the students' language exposure at home, with friends, at school, and in using media.

Pearson Product – Moment Correlation Coefficient. This was used to explore the relationship between the students' language exposure and reading comprehension skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

English Language Exposure

Table 1 presents the data on the students' English language exposure (n=154). The data revealed that the respondents have an overall high exposure to the English language (M 3.44, SD. 0.71). This means that the respondents have much exposure to the English language at home, with friends, at school, and in the media.

Specifically, the respondents have a high English language exposure in Media (M 3.86, SD 0.67), which indicates that the respondents send and receive texts in English, browse webpages that are written in English, read reading materials written in English, listen to songs in English, and watch movies and tv shows in English. In addition, the respondents have moderately high exposure to the English language at

home (M 2.64, SD 0.82), which implies that some respondents' parents talk in English, the English language is spoken at home, the respondents converse in English at home, and engage in activities where English is used.

Moreover, the data revealed that respondents have moderately high exposure to English with their friends (M 3.10, SD 0.73), which indicates that their friends speak in English, talk with their friends in English, and attend social gatherings where English is spoken. The data also revealed that the respondents have moderately high exposure to the English language at school; this means that the teachers speak in English, the activities in school are conducted in English, the school encourages students to speak English, and the medium of instruction used in the classroom is English.

The result of the data is aligned with the study of Galiansa et al. (2020). Based on their results, students' primary English language exposure came from media, accounting for 30.1%. Schools ranked second at 27%, while friends constituted 26.3% of their English language exposure. In contrast, only 16.6% of their exposure to English occurred within their homes.

The result of the data was also confirmed by the study of Küçükler and Sulac (2021), which revealed that both media and school environments acted as crucial means through which the students were more exposed to the English language. In addition, Domingo (2020) stated that exposure to a second language happens mostly at school and with technology when learners read books and other reading materials written in the second language or listen to music.

In recent decades, there has been a notable rise in children's exposure to media consumed via electronic devices, such as radios, televisions (TVs), computers, and, more recently, mobile phones. (Cycyk and De Anda, 2021). Pikhart and Botezat (2021) explained that in the present day, social media has gained immense popularity and accessibility, particularly among the younger generation, with a staggering 2.95 billion users worldwide. Social media platforms have become the main channel for communication and maintaining social relationships (Li & Croucher, 2020).

Muftah (2022) cited studies conducted by Slim and Hafedh (2019) and Thurairaj et al. (2015), which indicate that social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter contribute positively to the overall language learning journey of students. Language learners, particularly young users of social media networks, dedicate a significant portion of their day to actively utilizing and engaging with these platforms, employing their language and communication skills. This linguistic perspective highlights social media opportunities for language learners to interact with abundant linguistic content and acquire language input. (Al Jahromi, 2020). Regarding English exposure, digital media surpasses other platforms in providing the most extensive and diverse language materials. English exposure through digital media offers a greater abundance, variety, and dynamic nature than students typically encounter in schools or formal English classes (Haryanto et al., 2019).

The study implies that the English language needs to be encouraged and developed in and out of the classroom. It is crucial to offer students abundant chances to interact with the English language beyond the classroom. Students' English language exposure, mainly through media, positively impacts their reading comprehension skills. In this era where technology reigns, especially among the youth, the education sector should strengthen the integration of media in students' learning as it can help them understand their lessons,

particularly their readings.

Table 1. Students' English Language Exposure (n= 154)

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Home	2.64	0.82	Moderately High
Friends	3.10	0.73	Moderately High
School	3.15	0.60	Moderately High
Media	3.86	0.67	High
Overall Language Exposure	3.44	0.71	High

Note: 4.21-5.00 (Very High); 3.41-2.20 (High); 2.61-3.40 (Moderately High); 1.81-2.60 (Low); 1.0-1.80 (Very Low)

Reading Comprehension Skills

The data collected through the researcher-made questionnaire assessed the student's reading comprehension skills. The mean score obtained from the collected data reflects the student's performance in terms of their reading comprehension skills. Specifically, Table 2 displayed the results indicating that the respondents have achieved a satisfactory level in their literal reading comprehension skills (M=6.14, SD=1.41) other than the other dimension for reading comprehension. These results demonstrated that the students could understand and interpret explicit information directly stated in written texts. Assessing respondents' comprehension abilities helps educators by analyzing the respondents' reading comprehension skills, which can provide valuable insights into respondents' strengths and areas for improvement.

It was revealed that the respondents can accurately comprehend the literal meaning of words and sentences within a text. Literal comprehension is generally easier compared to inferential comprehension. The result of the data is confirmed by Weber (2019), who explained that this is attributed to the explicit nature of the message. To which it reduces the decoding time and effort required for comprehending information found in the literary text. Since the text explicitly states the information, readers do not need to make extensive inferences or draw conclusions based on implicit cues. As a result, literal comprehension tends to be more straightforward and less time-consuming.

Kamagi (2020) generally considered literal comprehension as the most basic or foundational comprehension skill. It involves reading and understanding the lines of text to recognize details and the sequence of events. They defined the literal level of comprehension in relation to textually explicit meaning. This could suggest that the respondents' focus on recognizing and understanding the sequence of events and facts is explicitly stated within the text at this level. They added that literal comprehension involves the ability to accurately answer factual questions based on the information provided in the text. In other words, readers at the literal level primarily engage in surface-level understanding of the text, focusing on the direct and obvious information presented rather than making inferences or interpreting implicit meaning.

On the other hand, another concern arises from the excessive focus on testing respondents' mastery of

details rather than dedicating time to teaching students how to read for more information (Guszak, 1967; Kamagi, 2020). While the literal level of comprehension is the easiest among the four areas to teach, it should not be overly emphasized. As such, other respondents only skim the literary text without further comprehension. In such instances, students encounter difficulties providing a literal explanation of the meaning, including challenges articulating the text's conclusion, the title's significance, and the definition of unfamiliar words encountered in the reading material (Wardhana & Kusumaningsih, 2020).

The results of Mohamed-Amaruch and Rico-Martin (2020) regarded the level of literal comprehension as the most basic and most straightforward dimension for the students. In particular, the results obtained in their study achieved the best scores in terms of their literal comprehension. They explained that the respondents achieved a higher level of literal reading comprehension than the other level of dimension for reading comprehension.

Application reading comprehension obtained a mean score of 6.76 (σ=2.93). This means that the students have a fair level of comprehension questions when extending and applying the information found in the literary text in a real-life situation. While no personal responses are incorrect, most of the respondents could not relate to the content of the text and failed to reflect on the literal understanding of the material accurately. From the results of Domingo (2020), the respondents only repeated information from the text rather than critically connecting what they already know and what they read.

The respondents' critical analysis obtained the mean score of 5.62 (σ=2.09), as indicated in Table 2. This means that the respondents have a poor crucial analysis of reading comprehension. The respondents have a poor ability to read at a higher level, exhibiting critical comprehension. Thus, the respondents' ability to analyze and synthesize information in the literary text is not exemplary.

Domingo (2020) indicated that the respondents failed to use both literal understanding of the text and their knowledge of the text's topic and related issues in terms of the respondents' critical level of reading comprehension. It implies that the respondents either neglected or struggled to apply their comprehension of the explicit meaning of the text, as well as their broader knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. This failure could manifest as an inability to make connections, draw upon relevant background information, or synthesize their knowledge with the information presented in the text. As a result, the respondents ended up with limited or inadequate analysis of the text.

Moreover, the respondents' interpretative comprehension skills obtained a mean score of 3.82 (σ=1.62), interpreted as poor in their interpretative comprehension level. This means they obtained a poor ability to read between the lines. That is, they cannot interpret information that exceeds the text's implicit meaning impressively.

According to the study by Krismadayanti and Zainil (2022), most inference levels for students were considered poorly. Mohamed-Amaruch and Rico-Martin (2020) also implied that inferential statistics was observed to be done poorly compared to the other areas of reading comprehension. Almost half of their respondents struggled with making logical connections between the information provided in a text to understand and interpret it. The respondents for their study found it difficult for the students to answer the questions by analyzing or evaluating them. In addition, other respondents lack the general knowledge as their background information to interpret the text, according to Domingo (2020). As a result, the respondents struggle to construct an appropriate answer because they lack knowledge of a specific field or related literary works.

Similar research from Geva et al. (2021) discovered that respondents still struggle with making inferences even when they have the opportunity to search through the text for information. This suggests that the respondents' difficulties with comprehension were not solely attributed to recalling explicitly specific details stated in the text. Thus, for children who struggle with comprehension skills, their memory capacity becomes especially important in predicting their performance, particularly when making inferences that involve integrating information from sentences separated by several additional sentences.

On the contrary, studies by McCarthy and Goldman (2019) stated that the respondents had impressive results in interpretative reading despite being novice readers. This is because the respondents had general knowledge and sense through extensive reading. The respondents had extensive experience in formal training in remedial instruction.

The study results highlight the students' ability to understand basic facts in the literary text. However, most respondents struggled to understand the more profound meaning and make connections between different parts of the text. This hampers their ability to analyze texts critically and interpret them correctly.

Table 2. Students' Reading Comprehension Skills (n= 154)

Constructs	No. of Items	M	SD	Remarks
Literal Reading	8	6.14	1.41	Satisfactory
Interpretative Reading	8	3.82	1.62	Poor
Critical Analysis	12	5.62	2.09	Poor
Application Reading	12	6.76	2.93	Fair

Note: 8 (Outstanding); 7 (Very Satisfactory); 6 (Satisfactory); 5 (Fair); 0-4 (Poor)

Note: 11-12 (Outstanding); 10 (Very Satisfactory); 9 (Satisfactory); 7-8 (Fair); 0-6 (Poor)

Relationship Between Students' English Language Exposure and their Reading Comprehension Skills

As shown in Table 3, there is no significant relationship between English language exposure at home and the respondents' literal comprehension. The findings indicated no substantial correlation between English language exposure at home and respondents' literal reading comprehension level ($r=0.00$, $p=0.97$). Similarly, there was no significant relationship observed for interpretative comprehension ($r=0.15$, $p=0.06$), critical comprehension ($r=0.01$, $p=0.87$), and application analysis ($r=0.06$, $p=0.44$). This means that the level of English language exposure at home does not significantly impact how well individuals understand the explicit meaning of written material. In consequence, the researcher did not reject the hypothesis.

Analogously, the results of the study conducted by Martinez et al. (2020) align with the findings, suggesting that reading comprehension of learners who speak Spanish as their dominant language did not exhibit any difficulties when reading English materials in a school setting. It implies that these learners can comprehend English texts effectively without significant obstacles or limitations due to being dual learners.

Drawing from the results outlined in Table 3, a significant relationship was found between the respondents'

application analysis in reading comprehension and their English language exposure with friends, as indicated by a mean score of 0.19 (σ=0.02). In contrast, the results showed no significant impact on students' literal comprehension (r=0.09, p=0.25), interpretative comprehension (r=0.11, p=0.18), and critical comprehension (r=0.07, p=0.39). This means that when students have more exposure to the English language through interactions with friends, their ability to apply the information with the literary text to a real-life situation is affected significantly. However, it also implies that English language exposure with friends may not significantly affect their understanding of the explicit meaning of texts, their ability to interpret and infer meaning, or their critical thinking skills regarding reading comprehension.

English language exposure with friends had an impact when it comes to reading English materials in a school setting (Leona et al., 2021). The study reveals a correlation between English language usage among friends and enhanced proficiency in the English language. As a result, there has been a significant improvement in their reading comprehension. Likewise, the study of Bin-Hady and Al-Tamimi (2021) indicates that exchanging English language media files among friends has aided their adaptation to the language. This influence has encouraged them to engage in more English conversations together. This has significantly impacted their ability to comprehend English reading materials in school.

The study conducted by Wagley et al. (2022) asserted that even though individuals interacted with friends in Spanish, their English proficiency remained strong and did not hinder their capacity to comprehend English reading materials. Furthermore, significant exposure to Spanish at home did not disrupt their reading comprehension.

As implied in Table 3, the study found no significant relationship between the students' English language exposure in school and the respondents' application level of reading comprehension (r=0.16, p=0.05). Similarly, there was no significant relationship observed for interpretative comprehension (r=0.10, p=0.23), critical comprehension (r=-0.07, p=0.38), and literal comprehension (r=0.14, p=0.07). This implies that the English language exposure students receive at school alone does not have a substantial impact or is insufficient to improve their reading comprehension skills. They emphasize the significance of taking other factors into account and instructional approaches to foster students' reading comprehension skills beyond the classroom setting.

In contrast, the study revealed a highly significant relationship between English language exposure in media and reading comprehension skills in the interpretative application levels (r=0.21, p=0.01). This implies that exposure to the English language through media sources, such as movies, TV shows, songs, books, newspapers, or online platforms, positively impacts students' ability to interpret the meaning behind the texts and apply their reading knowledge in practical situations or real-life scenarios. This also implies that media can be a valuable resource for enhancing students' reading skills, especially in understanding, analyzing, and evaluating textual information.

The study by Al-Zoubi (2018) emphasized the importance of regularly exposing students to English by watching English movies and programs, browsing the internet, listening to the radio, and reading English books, magazines, and newspapers. According to him, exposure to the English language significantly impacted language acquisition, with a statistically significant correlation observed between language exposure and the development of the four language skills. This was supported by the study of Jabarani (2019), where his data revealed a clear correlation between intensive language exposure and the development of four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

However, according to the study by Villanueva (2018), students' reading comprehension skills are not

affected by any form or degree of exposure to mass media. This implies that these activities do not impact their reading comprehension skills, irrespective of their time watching television, listening to the radio, or reading printed materials.

The results revealed that various ways of language exposure to English affect students' reading abilities differently. Table 3 shows that most of the results indicate no notable or significant relationship between the respondents' exposure to the English language and their reading comprehension skills. This may imply that English language exposure plays a minor role in determining the students' reading comprehension skills. While language exposure is essential, teaching methods, cognitive abilities, and socio-cultural contexts may be more crucial in enhancing reading skills. These results emphasize the need to explore further the complex factors affecting reading comprehension, as the relationship between language exposure and other elements could be more intricate than expected.

Table 3. Test of Relationship Between the Students' English Language Exposure and their Reading Comprehension Skills

Variables	r-value	p-value	Remarks
Home and			
Literal	0.00	0.97	Not Significant
Interpretative	0.15	0.06	Not Significant
Critical	0.01	0.87	Not Significant
Application	0.06	0.44	Not Significant
Friends and			
Literal	0.09	0.25	Not Significant
Interpretative	0.11	0.18	Not Significant
Critical	0.07	0.39	Not Significant
Application	0.19*	0.02	Significant
School and			
Literal	0.14	0.07	Not Significant
Interpretative	0.10	0.23	Not Significant
Critical	-0.07	0.38	Not Significant
Application	0.16	0.05	Not Significant
Media and			

Literal	0.14	0.09	Not Significant
Interpretative	0.21**	0.01	Highly Significant
Critical	0.09	0.29	Not Significant
Application	0.23**	0.00	Highly Significant

*Note: **p<0.01* (Highly Significant)*; *p<0.05* (Significant)*; p>0.05* (Not significant)

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusion is drawn:

1. The respondents had multiple opportunities to engage with the English language and were regularly exposed to English in various forms outside formal educational settings.

2. The students have a firm grasp of explicit information in the texts and a moderate ability to apply information in real-life contexts. However, there is a need for improvement in higher order thinking and critical analysis skills, as findings revealed that students have poor ability to draw inferences, think critically, and analyze texts at a deeper level.

3. Exposure to the English language at home, with friends, and in school is not crucial to students' reading comprehension skills. However, media exposure enhances the student's understanding and application of reading materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following are the recommendations.

1.Teachers incorporate media-based materials into their teaching methods. This could involve using English language books, articles, or videos aligned with students' interests to enhance understanding and application of reading materials.

2. Students should diversify their reading by exploring various genres and types of texts to enhance reading comprehension skills. While their literal comprehension is satisfactory, there is room for improvement in critical analysis and inferential skills. Engagement with various texts, including those that challenge their ability to infer and analyze deeper meanings, such as literature, news articles, and opinion pieces, and regular practice with different texts can help improve their inferential and critical reading comprehension skills.

3. Teachers may ask students to read one to two stories at each meeting instead of making the students read all four stories and answer each comprehension check in one sitting. This approach keeps them from overwhelming them with information, safeguards their motivation, and sustains their interest in engaging with the literary pieces.

4. Future researchers examine additional factors beyond English language exposure that may influence reading comprehension skills. Consider variables such as socio-cultural background, prior knowledge, or instructional practices to identify other significant factors that impact reading comprehension.

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