



The Phobia of Secondary School Students in Reading English Language in West Bengal

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Abstract

Background: In contemporary education, English proficiency is a cornerstone skill that transcends academic success, influencing various aspects of students' personal and professional lives. However, it has become increasingly evident that a significant number of secondary school students grapple with a pronounced phobia when confronted with English language materials, particularly in the realm of reading. Through a comprehensive exploration of the background, this study seeks to contribute valuable perspectives to the ongoing discourse on language education and student well-being in secondary schools.

Objectives: The primary objective of this study is to comprehensively investigate and understand the phobia experienced by secondary school students in reading English language materials. The study seeks to explore the coping mechanisms employed by students in response to reading phobia.

Methodology: The study is qualitative type. The researcher selected various articles and documents related to phobia of students related to phobia of secondary students in English Readings. It is concerned with capturing the richness, complexity, and contextual details of the subject matter under investigation.

Conclusion: In conclusion, this study delved into the intricate dynamics of the phobia experienced by secondary school students when engaging with English language materials. Through a qualitative exploration, various contributing factors, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of reading phobia. The coping mechanisms employed by students highlighted a range of strategies. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of promoting a positive mindset toward learning, emphasizing that mistakes and challenges are integral parts of the educational journey.

Keywords: Reading phobia, Secondary school students, English language education, Language-related challenges, Coping Mechanisms.

1. Introduction

English language proficiency is a fundamental skill for students worldwide, playing a pivotal role in academic success and broader communication. However, a noteworthy challenge faced by secondary school students is the development of a phobia towards reading English language materials, particularly article titles. This phobia manifests as anxiety, fear, or apprehension when confronted with the task of comprehending and interpreting titles of English language articles. Understanding the factors contributing to this phobia is crucial for educators and researchers alike, as it directly influences students' overall language learning experiences and outcomes. The complexity of English language article titles, both in terms of vocabulary and abstract concepts, often poses a significant hurdle for secondary school students. The fear of failure, coupled with the perceived difficulty of understanding these titles, may lead to a reluctance to engage with English language reading materials. Additionally, the cultural and linguistic diversity within secondary school populations can contribute to feelings of alienation and confusion, further exacerbating the phobia. It is imperative to explore these challenges comprehensively to devise effective strategies that alleviate the anxiety associated with reading English language materials. This research aims to delve into the various dimensions of the phobia experienced by secondary school students when confronted with English language article titles. By identifying the root causes and examining the impact on students' learning experiences, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the field of language education. The outcomes of this research can inform educators and policymakers on the implementation of targeted interventions, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for secondary school students navigating the intricacies of English language reading. Through a comprehensive exploration of this issue, researcher aim to pave the way for improved teaching methodologies and enhanced student engagement in English language education.

1.1.Statement of the Problem

This study entitled as “**The Phobia of Secondary School Students in Reading English Language in West Bengal.**”

1.2.The Research Questions

2. What are the underlying factors that contribute to the development of phobia among secondary school students when it comes to reading English language materials, particularly article titles?
3. What specific language-related challenges do secondary school students encounter while attempting to read English language materials, and how do these challenges contribute to the development of reading phobia?
4. How do secondary school students cope with the phobia associated with reading English language materials? What coping mechanisms do they employ to navigate the challenges posed by article titles and other linguistic aspects?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of the study were delineated below:

O₁: To identify the underlying factors contributing to the phobia of secondary school students in reading English language materials.

O₂: To uncover the specific language-related challenges faced by students of secondary school in reading English language materials.

O₃: To explore the coping mechanisms employed by students of secondary school when faced with the phobia of reading English language materials.

2. The Review of Related Literature

- **Misra, S. (2021).** English language classroom anxiety and its impact on Academic Performance in Second language English: A study on Secondary School students. *KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES*, 7(1), 224. The test was administered upon the students, consisting of two different sub groups, urban-rural and boys-girls. For quantitative data analysis, t- tests, Pearson's coefficient of correlation and simple regression and prediction method were conducted. The result shows that a high negative correlation exists between classroom anxiety and academic performance in English. From regression and prediction analysis, anxiety proved to be a significant predictor for the English language acquisition of the adolescent learners. Significant gender difference shows between the girls and boys in their English language classroom anxiety whereas in case of academic performance in English, urban students show better results than the rural students in the same issue.
- **Suchona, I. J., & Shorna, S. A. (2019).** Speaking problems in English and solutions: scrutinizing students' perspective. *International Journal of English*, 8(1), 34-41. The survey shows, in many cases, anxiety, fear and hesitation and performance pressure hinders the speaking of individuals, whereas, if the speaking situation is friendly and provide a platform to uninterrupted speaking with constructive feedback, it may facilitate learners speaking. In the end, analyzing the results, the researchers have discussed some effective solutions from their experiences to overcome these affective states among adult learners.
- **Alsaleh, A. K. (2018).** Investigating Foreign Language Reading Anxiety among Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University and Majma'ah University English Language Major Students. *Arab World English Journal*. The results revealed that students in both universities experienced a moderate level of language anxiety and reading anxiety. In addition to the investigation of the level of reading anxiety, the main sources of foreign language reading anxiety, according to the students, were the difficulty in understanding the meaning of new words in a reading passage. There was also difficulty in pronunciation, reading long passages, the fear of making mistakes in front of the teacher and the classmates, unfamiliar scripts and the feeling of shyness.

- **Kabir, M. H. (2015).** Addressing English Phobia among the Secondary School Students in the Rural Area of Bangladesh. This study, therefore, investigates the causes behind English phobia among the students of the rural areas of Chittagong, Bangladesh. Here, through this study, it seek to explore the challenges of our learners and to find a solution to this problem. In order to find out the causes behind English phobia, researcher used mixed method research. The analysis of the data shows that the phobia is caused by students' lack of motivation, confidence and aptitude resulting from the inefficient teaching methodologies.

2.1. Research Gap

There is a dearth of research related to “**The Phobia of Secondary School Students in Reading English Language in West Bengal.**”

3. Methodology of Study

In conducting a qualitative study focused on the phobia of secondary students in English readings, the researcher has chosen a methodology that aims to capture the richness, complexity, and contextual details of the subject matter. Qualitative research is particularly suited for exploring the intricate nuances and varied experiences associated with reading phobia, allowing for a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The research process involves the careful selection of articles and documents that shed light on the phobia of secondary students in English readings. These materials serve as valuable sources of information, providing insights into the multifaceted aspects of students' fears and anxieties related to English language materials. By drawing on a diverse range of literature, the researcher aims to build a comprehensive foundation for exploring the subject matter from different perspectives. Qualitative research is inherently concerned with delving into the subjective experiences of individuals, and in this study, it seeks to understand the thoughts, emotions, and coping mechanisms of secondary students facing reading phobia. By selecting articles and documents that offer qualitative insights, the researcher is positioning the study to uncover the underlying factors, challenges, and coping strategies employed by students in the realm of English readings

4. Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis and interpretation of the study were conducted based on the objectives of the study.

O₁: To identify the underlying factors contributing to the phobia of secondary school students in reading English language materials.

The phobia of secondary school students in reading English language materials is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors. Understanding these underlying factors are crucial for developing effective strategies to alleviate reading phobia. Here are detailed descriptions of some key factors contributing to this phobia:

Vocabulary Complexity: The intricate vocabulary were found in English language materials, overwhelm

secondary school students. Unfamiliar words, complex sentence structures, and abstract concepts contributed to a sense of inadequacy and fear of not comprehending the content.

Fear of Failure: The fear of failure is a common psychological barrier. Students worry about not understanding the material, leading to poor performance or judgment. This fear create a negative association with reading English language materials, including article titles.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Secondary school student populations consist of individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. English language materials include references or idioms that are unfamiliar to some students, creating feelings of alienation and confusion.

Test Anxiety: The association between English language materials and assessments lead to test anxiety. The pressure to perform well in exams intensify the fear of reading, making students apprehensive about encountering the materials in a testing context.

Limited Exposure to English: Some students have limited exposure to the English language outside the classroom. A lack of immersion or opportunities for independent reading hinder language development, contributing to anxiety when faced with English language materials.

Perceived Irrelevance of Content: If students perceive the content of English language materials, as irrelevant to their interests or daily lives, they struggle to find motivation to engage with the material. This perceived irrelevance contributed to disinterest and, subsequently, reading phobia.

Technology Distractions: Digital distractions, such as smartphones and social media, can divert students' attention from focused reading. The constant connectivity to technology impact their ability to concentrate on English language materials, exacerbating reading phobia.

Teaching Methods and Classroom Atmosphere: The teaching methods employed and the overall classroom atmosphere play a significant role. If the teaching approach is rigid or lacks inclusivity, students feel intimidated or disengaged, contributing to a negative association with reading English language materials.

Previous Negative Experiences: Past negative experiences, such as struggling with comprehension or receiving criticism, leave a lasting impact on students. These experiences create a fear of repetition and hinder their confidence in approaching English language materials.

Lack of Reading Comprehension Skills: Students lack essential reading comprehension skills necessary to navigate and understand English language materials. A deficiency in these skills can lead to frustration and avoidance of reading tasks, contributing to the development of reading phobia.

By understanding these factors, educators and researchers tailor interventions and strategies to address the specific challenges contributing to the phobia of secondary school students in reading English language materials.

O₂: To uncover the specific language-related challenges faced by students of secondary school in reading English language materials.

Students in secondary school encounter with specific language-related challenges when reading English language

materials. These challenges vary among individuals, but some common issues include:

Unfamiliar Vocabulary: English language materials, especially articles, contain vocabulary that is unfamiliar to students. Complex words or technical terms impede comprehension, making it challenging for students to grasp the meaning of the text.

Abstract Concepts: Many English language materials introduce abstract concepts or ideas that creates difficulty for secondary school students to visualize or understand. Abstract language can create confusion and hinder overall comprehension.

Complex Sentence Structures: The use of complex sentence structures, including compound and complex sentences, can pose a challenge. Students struggle to follow the flow of the text, leading to difficulties in extracting key information from English language materials.

Idiomatic Expressions: English language materials include idiomatic expressions or figurative language that not have direct translations in students' native languages. Deciphering the intended meaning of idioms can be a barrier to comprehension.

Lack of Contextual Understanding: Understanding the context in which certain words or phrases are used is crucial for comprehension. Students face challenges in grasping the contextual nuances of English language materials, leading to misinterpretations.

Ambiguity in Language: English language materials contain ambiguous or vague language, requiring students to infer meanings based on context. Ambiguity create uncertainty and hinder accurate interpretation of the text.

Inference and Critical Thinking Skills: Engaging with English language materials requires students to make inferences and apply critical thinking skills. Some students struggle with these higher-order cognitive processes, affecting their ability to extract deeper meanings from the text.

Limited Exposure to Diverse English Language Content: Students with limited exposure to a variety of English language content find it challenging to adapt to different writing styles, genres, or registers. Exposure to diverse materials is essential for developing a broad understanding of the language.

Difficulty in Discerning Main Ideas: Discerning the main ideas and key points within English language materials create challenges. Students may struggle to identify the central themes or arguments, affecting their overall comprehension of the text.

Cultural References and Nuances: English language materials contain cultural references or nuances that students from different cultural backgrounds not readily grasp. Understanding cultural context is vital for full comprehension but can pose challenges for students with diverse cultural experiences.

Addressing these language-related challenges involves implementing strategies such as vocabulary-building activities, explicit instruction on language structures, and providing opportunities for students to engage with diverse English language materials. Additionally, creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment can help students feel more confident in navigating these linguistic complexities.

O₃: To explore the coping mechanisms employed by students of secondary school when faced with the phobia of reading English language materials.

Students in secondary school employ various coping mechanisms when faced with the phobia of reading English language materials. These mechanisms vary among individuals, and some common coping strategies include:

Avoidance: Some students cope with reading phobia by avoiding English language materials altogether. This avoidance manifest as reluctance to participate in reading activities or finding ways to circumvent reading assignments.

Surface-level Reading: To cope with the anxiety associated with reading, some students adopt a surface-level reading approach. They focus on quickly scanning the text without delving into deeper comprehension, sacrificing a thorough understanding to reduce stress.

Relying on Translations: Students resort to using translation tools or dictionaries extensively to decipher the meaning of words and phrases in English language materials. While this provide immediate understanding, it hinder the development of independent language skills.

Seeking Peer Support: Collaborating with peers for reading tasks is a common coping mechanism. Students form study groups or seek assistance from classmates to collectively navigate the challenges posed by English language materials.

Using Supplementary Learning Resources: Some students turn to supplementary learning resources such as online tutorials, educational apps, or language learning websites. These resources provide additional explanations and support to enhance understanding.

Highlighting and Note-taking: To cope with information overload, students engage in active reading strategies, such as highlighting key phrases or taking detailed notes. These techniques help in organizing information and can serve as a reference for future understanding.

Breaking Down Texts: Students cope with reading phobia by breaking down English language materials into smaller, more manageable sections. This approach allows them to focus on one part at a time, reducing the overwhelming nature of longer texts.

Engaging with Multimedia: Utilizing multimedia resources, such as audio versions of texts or videos related to the content, a coping mechanism. Visual and auditory aids provide alternative means of comprehension beyond traditional reading.

Setting Realistic Goals: Setting achievable reading goals help students manage their anxiety. By breaking down tasks into smaller, more manageable objectives, students can build confidence gradually and reduce the fear associated with reading.

Self-Reflection and Positive Affirmations: Engaging in self-reflection and positive affirmations can be a psychological coping mechanism. Students consciously challenge negative thoughts, build self-confidence, and cultivate a more positive mindset toward reading English language materials.

Utilizing Learning Support Services: Seeking support from teachers, learning support services, or language tutors is a proactive coping mechanism. These professionals provide guidance, clarification, and additional resources tailored to individual needs.

Understanding these coping mechanisms is essential for educators and support staff to provide targeted assistance to students facing reading phobia. By acknowledging and addressing these strategies, educators work collaboratively with students to foster a more positive and effective learning experience in English language education.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of the phobia experienced by secondary school students in reading English language materials has revealed a complex interplay of factors that significantly influence their learning experiences. Through a qualitative lens, this study delved into the richness of students' perceptions, challenges, and coping mechanisms when faced with English readings. The findings underscored the multifaceted nature of reading phobia, emphasizing the need for a holistic understanding that goes beyond quantitative measures. One key takeaway from this study is the pervasive impact of vocabulary complexity on students' reading phobia. The intricate language structures and unfamiliar terms found in English language materials, particularly in article titles, emerged as a significant barrier. Addressing this challenge requires targeted interventions, such as vocabulary-building exercises and the promotion of dictionary use, to empower students in deciphering complex linguistic elements. Moreover, cultural and linguistic diversity within secondary school populations surfaced as a notable contributor to reading phobia. The study highlighted the importance of fostering an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and respects students' diverse backgrounds. Incorporating materials that resonate with different cultural contexts and providing explanations for cultural references enhance comprehension and mitigate feelings of alienation. The coping mechanisms employed by students in the face of reading phobia revealed both adaptive and maladaptive strategies. While some students sought support from peers, engaged with multimedia resources, or actively broke down texts, others resorted to avoidance or surface-level reading. Recognizing these coping mechanisms is crucial for educators and support staff to tailor interventions that promote positive engagement and resilience among students. In addressing the broader implications of this study, educators can leverage these insights to refine teaching methodologies, curriculum design, and support services. By acknowledging and proactively addressing the identified challenges, schools create more inclusive learning environments that empower students to navigate English language materials with confidence. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of promoting a positive mindset toward learning, emphasizing that mistakes and challenges are integral parts of the educational journey.

In essence, this qualitative exploration sheds light on the intricate dynamics surrounding the phobia of secondary school students in reading English language materials. By recognizing the factors influencing reading phobia and understanding students' coping mechanisms, educators and policymakers can work collaboratively to foster a supportive and enriching English language learning experience for all secondary school students.

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