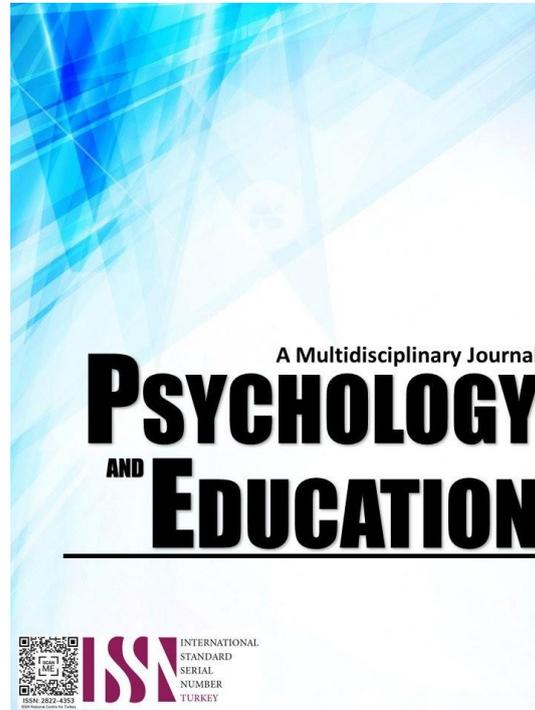


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The Assessment of Reading Comprehension Proficiency of Grade School Learners as Basis for Remediation Program

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was assessment of the reading comprehension proficiency of grade school learners in terms of the following variables: getting the main idea, noting details, and sequencing of events among the 35 learners of Yusop Dais Elementary School enrolled. The data were gathered through a Reading Comprehension Proficiency Test (RCPT) developed by the researcher. This instrument underwent validation by a panel of experts and pilot testing for reliability analysis where an acceptable coefficient of 0.77 was found. The study found out the significant difference in the level of proficiency along the aforementioned variables. Moreover, study revealed that the level of proficiency was less proficient in the three variables tested and the overall level of proficiency was also less proficient, they have not fully acquire the reading proficiency necessary for them to comprehend the reading materials used. Meanwhile, there was no significant difference in the level of proficiency along the variables, thus the null hypothesis is accepted. The outputs of the study, would give substantial insights for the teachers to develop teaching reading techniques in the grade school level therefore, it is recommended that development of reading remediation program be implemented.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, assessment, proficiency level, remediation program*

Introduction

The ability to read and comprehend are essential skills for students to survive and understand how society works because most information are presented through text. (Van, 2009; Yasen, 2013) Reading is one of the most important and useful skill necessary in the learning process of a learner. The development of reading proficiency is of great emphasis especially during the formative years of learning because it is a pre-requisite needed for the preparation and development of higher order thinking skills (HOTS) among the learners. Thus a rigid foundation of this skill can result to a better use, understanding and acquisition of knowledge.

Moreover, according to Rionda (1996), reading is one of the most basic tools in acquiring knowledge not just knowledge but also information and entertainment. Reading is an effective means of learning for we learn as we read and through reading we can explore the vast knowledge that awaits us. The foundation of reading skills must be well developed as early as possible at an early age. Educators nowadays see to it that learners are fully equipped with the skills needed for higher education thru developing remediation programs that cater the reading deficiency as early as in the basic level.

Grade school learners struggle to comprehend the text they are reading. In the Philippine setting, the Philippines scored lowest in reading in the 2018

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) out of 79 countries that participated. Furthermore, results showed that one out of five Filipino learners aged 15 achieved at least the minimum proficiency level in Overall Reading Literacy (Felipe, 2022). With this, one of the Philippine Senators Gatchalian said that the government should prioritize programs and interventions that would improve Filipino learners' proficiency in reading. This current situation in the Philippine's context of reading should really need to be addressed and take into consideration by having interventions that would ease the dilemmas Filipino Grade school readers face.

Ma. Thinker and Ma. Gullough (1963) aptly defined reading as involving the identification and recognition of printed or written symbols which show stimuli for the recall of new meaning through the reader's manipulation of relevant concepts already in his possession. One's reading comprehension can significantly influence by his past experiences and prior knowledge embedded in his mind. Furthermore, Villamin et. Al (1981) said that reading means many things to many people. It can be one of the most rewarding pre-occupations of an individual, expanding his horizon and making it possible for him to partake of man's accumulated experience and achievement through the ages. Moreover, according to Lowell (1981) reading is the key which will admit us to the world of thought, allows us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears and listen to the sweet voices of all types.

In addition, Aracelo (1994) as cited by Panerio (2008) reported that 85% of the things that people do involve reading. Every day we encounter signs, labels, advertisements, announcements and medicine dosage that need to be read with comprehension. Hence, training individuals with good literacy who can comprehend and question what they read is one of the most important goals for today's education. (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1982; Moreillan, 2007). On the basis of these premises, this study is conducted to determine the reading comprehension proficiency level of the Grade school learners of Yusop Dais Elementary School as basis for remediation program that would help improve the reading proficiency of the grade school learners.

Research Questions

The study's main objectives was to assess the level of reading comprehension proficiency of grade school learners. Specifically the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of reading comprehension proficiency of the grade school learners in terms of:
 - 1.1 Getting the main idea;
 - 1.2 Noting details; and
 - 1.3 Sequencing of events?
2. Is there a significant difference between the levels of reading comprehension proficiency in terms of:
 - 2.1 Getting the main idea;
 - 2.2 Noting details; and
 - 2.3 Sequencing of events?

Literature Review

On Reading

Reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development (Dadzie, 2008). This implies that through reading one can further develop and improve himself in terms of personal, mental and social aspects. Reading can also be a means of recreation and leisure that may cause a positive psychological effect to the reader. Hence, reading is the key to all types of information and solutions that help us survive in our daily lives.

Moreover, a recent study in 2017 by Sari concluded that reading is very important and helpful to us, not just in English class, but other subjects, such as mathematics and others. With this, reading plays a vital role in one's success in academic and in life. It is one of the most important skills that individuals must

possess because it is a prerequisite to all learning areas and acts as a passport in learning the different subjects because if one has difficulty in reading, he or she may also experience difficulty in other subjects.

Apparently, theories suggest that individuals have a limited amount of attentions available for cognitive tasks. Reading requires students to do two things: decode words and comprehend what they are reading. Thus the attention required for word decoding is not available to be used for comprehension (ERN Admin, 2003).

In addition, Ehri (2001) suggested that children in school are successful with decoding when the process used to identify words is fast and nearly effortless or automatic. As noted, the concept of automaticity refers to student's ability to recognize words rapidly with little attention required to the word's appearance. Therefore, the ability to read words by sight automatically is the key to skilled reading.

On Reading Comprehension Proficiency

Comprehension means getting the main from what we read. It is the heart of reading. Research shows that knowledge of letter-sound relationship of comprehension goes hand in hand. If children can found out the words, but don't understand what they are reading, then they are not reading at all. Children can build their comprehension by learning to use mental plans or strategies, to get the meaning as they read. These strategies include using what they ready know, to make sense of what they read, making predictions, paying attentions to the reading content, creating mental pictures, asking questions and summarizing what is need.(www. epals.com/join).

According to Horowitz (2000), reading involves comprehension. Reading comprehension is a complex process that depends upon a number of ingredients all working together in a synchronous, even automatic way. Moreover, Eliason and Jerkins (1986) stressed out that we cannot read with understanding and comprehension something that we do not understand the meaning ourselves.

Meanwhile, Harris (1963) stresses that the major aspects of a language that are significant to reading comprehension includes the student's vocabularies, mastery of sentence structure and clarity of pronunciation. However, in the study of Muslimin and Imlani (2010) it was found out that the grade school learners regardless of gender needed to be taught further on synonyms, antonyms and especially on structural analysis to improve their reading



comprehension.

In the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA 2018), the Philippines scored lowest out of 79 countries in reading. And achieved at least the minimum proficiency level in the overall reading literacy. Moreover in 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics, on the other hand showed that only 10 percent of the country’s Grade 5 learners achieved the minimum proficiency at the end of primary education and recently, the World Bank estimated that as of June 2022, learning poverty in the Philippines is 90.9 percent. Learning poverty is defined as the percentage of ten-year-old children who cannot read or understand a simple story. (www.philstar.ph)

In 2001, Abduraja and Hadani found out that the performance of the Grade 5 pupils of elementary schools in Tawi-Tawi where the study was conducted were all below average in the variables tested, thus there was really a need for programs in order to improve the reading proficiency of the learners.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive-quantitative design. It aimed to determine the level of reading comprehension proficiency of Grade school learners of Bongao, Tawi-Tawi. This is quantitative in nature because it used numerical data to determine the level of reading comprehension proficiency of the respondents. The respondents were the Grade IV learners of Yusop Dais Elementary School, a public school in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi upon the approval and consent of the school administrators the data were gathered through a Reading Comprehension Proficiency Test (RCPT) developed by the researcher. It underwent a validation by panel of experts and was pilot tested using Cronbach’s alpha for reliability analysis wherein an acceptable coefficient of 0.77 was found. As for the statistical treatment of the data to determine the level of reading comprehension proficiency along the variables noting details, getting the main idea and sequencing of events the mean scores was utilized while to determine the significant differences the Paired Samples t-Test was utilized.

Results and Discussion

This part is composed of tables for the reading comprehension proficiency related variables of the study. It includes 2 tables (see tables below) presenting

the relevant information regarding the reading proficiency levels of the respondents along the variables tested.

Table 1. Levels of Reading Comprehension Proficiency

Respondents	N	GM1			ND	
		X	S.D. (SEr)	I	X	S.D. (SEr)
Grade IV Pupils	35	3.09	1.22 (0.21)	LsP	3.71	2.49 (0.42)

I	X	S.D. (SEr)	I	\bar{X}	I

The result showed in table 1 that these pupils did not learn enough to develop the three skills. It seemed that they were not subjected and exposed to enough exercises and drills which are basis for reading comprehension. The Grade IV pupils were less proficient in the area of getting the man idea with a mean score of 3.09, less proficient in noting details with a mean score of 3.71 and also less proficient in sequencing of events with the mean score of 2.43. The overall level of reading comprehension proficiency was less proficient with a mean score of 3.08. Although the respondents had a less proficient level in the three variables, they performed better in noting details with a mean score of 3.71 and least in sequencing of events with a mean score of 2.43, this would be due to the fact that in noting details the answers were given, it was just a matter of finding them in the selection. They find sequencing of events quite difficult despite the use of signaling words such as first, then, next and lastly. In getting the main idea, the respondents performed least proficient due to the answers were not given directly, it required reading beyond the lines. This showed that there is a need to be exposed to some drills and exercises through remediation programs that would enhance their reading comprehension proficiency.

Table 2. Summary of *t*-Test Results on Significant Differences between the levels of Reading Comprehension Proficiency

Respondents	N	Comparison	Mean Difference	S.D
Grade IV Pupils	35	GMI vs ND	-0.629	2.777
		GMI vs SE	0.657	3.077
		ND vs SE	1.286	3.486

<i>t</i> -computed value	<i>t</i> -critical value	df	<i>P</i> <0.05	Remark
-1.339	2.030	34	0.189	NS
1.264	2.030	34	0.215	NS
2.182	2.030	34	0.036	S

Table 2 results showed that the scores of the respondents in getting the main idea and noting details did not differ significantly, $t(34) = -1.34$, $p < 0.05$. This implied that the proficiency of the respondents in getting the main idea and noting details were more or less the same level. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. Meanwhile, the scores of the respondents in getting the main idea and sequencing of events did not also differ significantly, $t(34) = 1.26$, $p < 0.05$. This implied that the proficiency of the respondents in getting the main idea and sequencing of events were more or less of the same level too. Thus, the null hypothesis is also accepted; However, the scores of the respondents in noting details and sequencing of events differed significantly, $t(34) = 2.18$, $p < 0.05$. This confirmed that the proficiency of the respondents in noting details was higher than of sequencing of events. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

Reading Comprehension is one of the macro skills that need to be developed earlier among the learners to help acquire higher order thinking skills (HOTS). Reading skills such as getting the main idea, noting details and sequencing of events are relevant in acquiring such. Having reading remediation programs

will enhance the learners' skills in reading.

In this study, the grade school learner's reading comprehension proficiency level along the variables tested is less proficient, this implied that they are not yet fully equipped with the reading skills necessary for them to comprehend the reading materials used. Moreover, teachers should also be exposed to teaching reading techniques to supplement the reading proficiency of the learners. Therefore, there is really a need for a better strategy and approach on the part of the teachers in teaching reading to further develop and improve the reading skills of the pupils.

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