



PERFORMANCE IN READING IN ENGLISH OF GRADE 6 LEARNERS: BASIS FOR READING ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

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Abstract:

This study assessed the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 6 learners of Amucao Elementary School, Tarlac East District, Tarlac City Schools Division during the school year 2023-2024 through quantitative-descriptive research design. Using the quantitative-descriptive research design, this study sought to determine the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 6 learners based on Phil-IRI pre-test results in terms of independent reading level, instructional reading level, frustration reading level, and non-readers. It also sought to determine the reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners as well their observed reading behaviors. Based on the findings of the study, a reading enhancement program was proposed to improve the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners. The sources of data in this study came from the English teachers in Amucao Elementary School who provided the information needed on the level of reading performance of Grade 6 learners based on the results of the Phil-IRI pre-tests. The Phil-IRI results were utilized to treat the data statistically.

Summary of Findings: 1.0 Level of Reading Comprehension of the Grade 6 Learners Out of 59 Grade 6 learners enrolled in Amucao Elementary School, 16 or 27.12% belong to the independent reading level; 13 or 22.03% belong to the instructional reading level; 29 or 49.15% belong to the frustration reading level.; and 1 or 1.70% is a non-reader. 2.0 Reading Miscues Committed by the Grade 6 Learners The reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners are the following: Mispronunciation (23 or 51.11%); Omission (15 or 33.33%); Substitution (9 or 20.00%); Insertion (11 or 24.44%); Repetition (19 or 42.22%); Transposition (7 or 15.56%); and Reversal (10 or 22.22%). 3.0 Observed Reading Behaviors of the Grade 6 Learners The reading behaviors observed from the Grade 6 learners are the following: Does word-for word reading (24 or 53.33%); Lacks expression, monotonous tone (11 or 24.44%); Voice is hardly audible (7 or 15.56%); Disregards punctuations (19 or 45.22%); Points to each word with his/her fingers (14 or 31.11%); Employs little or no analysis (17 or 37.78%); and Refuses to read (4 or 8.89%). 4.0 Proposed Reading Enhancement Program A reading enhancement program was proposed to improve the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: 1. Most of the Grade 6 learners belong to the frustration reading level. 2. Generally, the reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners were mispronunciation, repetition and omission. 3. Generally, the reading behaviors observed from the Grade 6 learners were do word-for-word reading, disregard punctuations and employ little or no analysis. 4. The proposed reading enhancement program focused on assessment of reading levels of the learners, orientation on the nature, scope and rationale of the remedial reading, intervention strategies, encouraging a sense of personal responsibility, and evaluation of the improvement of learners' reading proficiency.

On the basis of the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were offered: 1. The proposed enhancement program in reading in English should be considered for use by concerned school authorities to enhance the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners. 2. Incorporate reading materials in all English lessons and learners should be provided with opportunity to read and comprehend varied reading sources. 3. The school should allocate some budget for programs, events and activities: during related reading activities. 4. The DepEd administrators should include in the curriculum in all grade levels the development of learners' thinking abilities by incorporating some reading materials in all lessons including grammar. They should also see to it that the learners are provided with adequate opportunity to read and comprehend the appropriate and varied reading sources. 5. Provide opportunities to reading teachers for professional development by sending them in trainings, seminars, workshops, and synopsis especially designed to enhance teachers' skills in teaching reading and uplifting the reading proficiency of the learners. 6. Future researchers may undertake similar studies on a wider scope to validate the findings of the study.

Keywords: reading, Grade 6 learners, enhancement program

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading plays many important roles in different aspects of human life. Mainly, it is one of the skills needed in acquiring information and making meaning. Moreover, well-established reading ability is perceived to be resulting in a happy, productive, and successful life. This seems to explain why the teaching of reading was, and will still be, an area of concern among academic sectors worldwide. Because of the importance of reading, nations around the world are investing their resources and effort in literacy.

To deal with issues in reading, one of the least mastered skills by Filipino learners, educational stakeholders must put the collaborative effort into reviewing and updating of curriculum. Unless these gaps are identified and addressed, more cases of illiteracy in the country are likely to surface in the near future (Vergel and Valle, 2019).

Reading is a necessary ability and a necessary component of all learning. As learners go through school, language development builds the groundwork for reading and writing abilities. Language development is critical for every child's future success since it is closely linked to academic and professional achievement in the long run. Early reading treatments in elementary school have received a lot of attention in the last decade to develop fundamental reading abilities.

Reading is an essential skill and an integral part of all learning. Language development lays the foundation for reading and writing skills in students as they progress through school. Developing language skills is of absolutely significance for every child's progress in later life as it is directly connected to one's success in the long term both academically and professionally.

The development of the reading skill must be given attention for it is a skill that the learners use in acquiring knowledge, context and skills in the target language. In the study of Mutya (2019), he identified issues in reading instruction as repetition, misalignment of teaching guides and learners' materials. According to the study, these overlaps happen when the same learning competency is also found in other grade levels and shares the same objectives of the lesson.

Early reading intervention can influence how children think, learn and perform. Early elementary grades are crucial since learners are building their reading skills and competency throughout this time. Reading treatments delivered in the early elementary grades had a greater average influence on reading outcomes than interventions delivered in the upper elementary. Students who do not acquire reading abilities in line with grade-level expectations in primary school are more likely to struggle with reading throughout their school careers (Bajaj, 2022).

Angeles (2022) states that students that might have difficulties reading can benefit from reading interventions which involve activities that help them improve their reading skills. Without the correct treatments, children who have not mastered reading skills by third grade will continue to fall behind their peers and will likely never catch up. Reading interventions are activities and tactics designed to assist struggling readers in improving their reading skills. Students that struggle to decode words into syllables are considered struggling readers. Students use decoding to sound out unusual words they come across while reading. Reading intervention programs, methods and exercises will help children get back on track in all circumstances.

Teachers may use or may have variety of teaching materials during instruction. There are instructional materials that are aids to teaching and learning which increase the effectiveness of the teacher. They stimulate interest, simplify, clarify subject matter, and increase understanding and motivate the learner to learn. There are tools of the teacher, the amusement of the learners and the catalytic agent that transform interest, curiosity and experimentation into knowledge. Many practical outcomes can be achieved when high quality instructional materials and resource are used as integral part of classroom instruction. They are selected by teachers to help achieve very specific instructional objectives.

Teachers' reading instruction has a huge impact on what happens in the classroom and what children learn. In general education studies, teaching is a cognitive activity and teachers' views have a significant influence on their instructional judgments in the classroom. A teacher should have a thorough understanding of teaching and techniques for dealing with challenges that may arise during the reading process (Nugroho, 2019).

Teaching reading is seen as a complicated cognitive process in second language education. According to Borg as cited by Ildefonso (2022), teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional decisions based on complex, individualized and context-sensitive networks of information, thought and beliefs. Teachers have a wide range of complicated ideas regarding pedagogical concerns, including views about students' mental processes and classroom activities.

Reading is one of the most crucial language skills for students to develop (Wibowo, 2020). The capacity to read allows readers to take control of their own information and as a result, to make decisions about their future. Reading ability will make it easier to comprehend information and knowledge.

Teachers should focus on understanding the components that influence reading achievement since understanding is the primary objective of reading, and reading without comprehension would be a pointless activity. To assist learners' comprehension, English language teachers should provide them with reading skills that will help them read more effectively. When students learn reading skills, they gain the ability to reflect on, evaluate and clarify what they read, as well as distinguish what is relevant to the assignment from what is not. These will improve their drive to read and the teachers' function remains that of a facilitator and guide.

Experienced teachers use a range of literacy perspectives and teaching approaches to help students in all curriculum areas and build a clear link between what they read and what they see in the real world. Rather than explain or deliver knowledge to others, the greatest educational strategy is centered on modeling, demonstrating and mentoring. Teachers provide opportunity for students to develop as problem solvers who are responsible for their own ideas. Teachers must find and expose students to a range of techniques that help them explore, understand and provide meaning to presentations of information to make reading an enjoyable and gratifying activity.

The Department of Education (DepEd) launched initiatives to address learners' reading issues through the use of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). The Phil-IRI is a program of the DepEd's Bureau of Elementary Education that aims to make every Filipino learner a reader. It is based on the Department's flagship initiative "Every Child A Reader," which

aims to enable every Filipino child to speak effectively in both English and Filipino via effective reading education. It is a method for assessing elementary school students' reading proficiency.

Based on the Phil-IRI scale, the learners are categorized into four levels: independent, instructional, frustration, and non-readers. Learners under the frustration reading level tend to withdraw themselves to read by refusing it. In the instructional reading level, the learners can only read when being guided while in the independent reading level, the learners can read alone with ease without the guidance of the teacher.

It is very important to know the reading performance of the learners since this skill is considered the key for gaining knowledge. One reads to attain knowledge that is useful in constructing new knowledge. Comprehension refers to the creation and re-creation of meaning from the printed materials.

Reading comprehension is an essential skill for learners of English. For most of learners it is the most important skill to master in order to ensure success in learning. With strengthened reading skills, learners of English tend to make greater progress in other areas of language learning. Reading should be an active, fluent process that involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning.

Realizing the value of full development among Grade 6 learners of Amucao Elementary School, Tarlac East District, Tarlac City Schools Division in preparation for the performance of their learning tasks, the researcher decided to conduct a study with the end view of developing enrichment materials that can improve the reading comprehension skills of the Grade 6 learners during the school year 2023-2024.

It is in line with the need to improve the reading comprehension skills of the Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School, Tarlac East District, Tarlac City Schools Division that the researcher proposed a reading enhancement program to improve the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners.

Statement of the Problem

This study assessed the level of reading performance of the Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School, Tarlac East District, Tarlac City Schools Division during the school year 2023-2024.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the profile of Grade 6 learners in terms of their level of reading in English:
 - 1.1 Independent reading level;
 - 1.2 Instructional reading level;
 - 1.3 Frustration reading level; and
 - 1.4 Non-readers?
2. What are the reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners?
3. What are the observed reading behaviors of the Grade 6 learners?
4. What reading enhancement program may be proposed to improve the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, the sources of data, instrumentation and data collection, and the tools for data analysis.

Research Design

This study assessed the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School, Tarlac East District, Tarlac City Schools Division during the school year 2023-2024 through quantitative-descriptive research design.

Using the quantitative-descriptive research design, this study sought to determine the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 6 learners based on Phil-IRI pre-test results in terms of independent reading level, instructional reading level frustration reading level, and non-readers. It also sought to determine the reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners as well their observed reading behaviors.

Based on the findings of the study, a reading enhancement program was proposed to improve the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners.

Sources of Data

The sources of data in this study came from the English teachers in Amucao Elementary School who provided the information needed on the level of reading performance of Grade 6 learners based on the results of the Phil-IRI pre-tests.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

To gather the data needed, the researcher used the results of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) pre-test. Based on the analysis of the results, the level of reading performance of the Grade 6 learners was determined in terms of independent level, instructional level, frustration level, and non-readers.

Tools for Data Analysis

The following tools were used to treat the data statistically.

1. Results of Phil-IRI

This study used the results of Philippine – Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) tests in assessing the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 6 learners to answer sub-problem number 1.

• Computing the Oral Reading Score per Passage (Phil-IRI Manual, 2018)

The computation of the oral reading score involves counting the number of miscues during oral reading. Each miscue carries equal weight, regardless of whether it affects the meaning of the passage or not.

Oral Reading Score = $\frac{\text{the number of words} - \text{number of miscues}}{\text{number of words}} \times 100$

• Computing the Learners' Comprehension of the Passage (Phil-IRI Manual, 2018)

After the learner has read the passage, the teacher reads the comprehension questions and records the learner's responses.

No. of correct answers $\times 100 = \% \text{ of comprehensions}$

No. of questions

- Analysis and Interpretation of Word Reading and Comprehension Level**

The Phil-IRI reading test uses predetermined set of criteria in identifying the reading level of each learner for each passage. These criteria include the percentage of word recognition accuracy and the percentage of correct answers to comprehension questions (adapted from Johnson, Kress and Pikulski as cited in the Phil-IRI Manual, 2018).

The following is the interpretation for the level of reading comprehension.

Computed Value of Comprehension	Levels of Reading Proficiency
90-100%	Independent Level
75-89%	Instructional Level
74% and below	Frustration Level

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data gathered and their analysis and interpretation to answer the sub-problems raised in the study.

Level of Reading Comprehension of the Grade 6 Learners

This section presents the level of reading performance of the Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School, Tarlac East District, Tarlac City Schools Division in terms of independent reading level, instructional reading level, frustration reading level, and non-readers based on the results of pre-tests in the Phil-IRI to answer sub-problem number 1.

The data are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Reading Levels of Grade 6 Learners

Reading Levels	f	%
Independent Reading Level	16	27.12
Instructional Reading Level	13	22.03
Frustration Reading Level	29	49.15
Non-Readers	1	1.70
TOTAL	59	100%

Independent reading level is the highest level at which a reader has adequate background knowledge for the topic and can access text very quickly and with very few errors. The learner's independent reading level is usually determined from books in which he/she can read with no more than one error in word recognition in each 100 words and has a comprehension score of at least 90 percent. At this level, the learner reads orally in a natural tone, free from tension. His silent reading will be faster than his oral reading (Franz, 2019).

As presented in Table 1, out of 59 Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School, 16 or 27.12% belong to the independent reading level. These are the learners who could independently read with ease without the help or guidance of their teachers. Independent reading helps increase learners' reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, spelling facility, understanding of grammar, and knowledge of the world.

Instructional reading level is the next level at which a reader is not independent, but has adequate background knowledge for a topic, and can access text quickly and with no or few errors. The instructional reading level is usually determined from books (or other material) which the learner can read with no more than one word-recognition error in approximately 20 words. The comprehension score should be 75 percent or more. At this level, the learner reads orally, after silent study, without tension. Silent reading is faster than oral reading (Franz, 2019).

As presented in Table 1, out of 59 Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School, 13 or 22.03% belong to the instructional reading level. These are the learners who were actually taught by the teachers to read with only a small amount of assistance.

Frustration reading levels include text for which a reader does not have adequate background level for a topic and/or cannot meet the criteria for instructional levels of accuracy and rate. The frustration level is marked by the book in which the learner obviously struggles to read. Errors are numerous. The learner reads without a natural rhythm and in an unnatural voice. Franz (2019) said that no learner shall be asked to read at his frustration level, but the teacher needs to know that this level does not exist for him/her.

As presented in Table 1, out of 59 Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School, 29 or 49.15% belong to the frustration reading level. These are the learners who are struggling to read and that errors are numerous.

Non-readers are those who do not or cannot read or who are slow in learning to read (Merriam-Webster). Out of 59 Grade 6 learners, only one or 1.70% is a non-reader, also called non-decoder.

These results show that most of the Grade 6 learners are taught at their frustration levels which indicate that there are Grade 6 learners who are still struggling to read.

These results imply that there is a need to enhance the reading comprehension of the Grade 6 learners.

Reading Miscues Committed By the Grade 6 Learners

This section presents the reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School, Tarlac East District, Tarlac City Schools Division to answer sub-problem number 2. The data are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Reading Miscues Committed By the Grade 6 Learners

Types of Miscues	f	%
1. Mispronunciation	23	51.11
2. Omission	15	33.33
3. Substitution	9	20.00
4. Insertion	11	24.44

5. Repetition	19	42.22
6. Transposition	7	15.56
7. Reversal	10	22.22
*multiple results obtained from learners' records		

Miscue analysis is a means to use a running record for diagnosis to identify learners' specific difficulties. It is a great way to get some authentic information about a learner's reading skills, and a means to identify specific weaknesses (Watson, 2019).

Based from the data in Table 2, the Grade 6 learners committed different types of miscues. Mispronunciation is on top with a total of 23 or 51.11% as obtained from the Grade 6 learners' records where they tend to pronounce certain words in a different sound variation from the word in the text. Repetition (19 or 42.22%) is next where the learners repeat a word or portion of the text. Lots of repetition may indicate that the text is too difficult. Sometimes learners repeat when they are uncertain and will repeat the word(s) to keep the words coming as they regroup.

Omission (15 or 33.33%) was also committed by the Grade 6 learners who omitted a word, thus, changing the reading of the sentence. When words are omitted, it may mean weaker visual tracking. Omission can also be the result of not focusing or reading too fast. It may also mean the sight vocabulary is weaker (Watson, 2019).

Instead of reading the word in the text, the learners substitute (9 or 20.00%) a word that may or may not make sense in the passage. Insertion (11 or 24.44%) is another type of miscue committed by the Grade 6 learners who added a word that is not in the text. Transposition (7 or 15.56%) was committed by the Grade 6 learners where the transposition error most likely indicated note reading of basic words that are oftentimes switched up in stories to make the text less repetitive, but do not affect sentence meaning. Finally, the learners also committed reversal (10 or 22.22%) where they reverse the order of the print or the word.

These findings imply that the learners should be given the opportunity to read and support them so that they will read more, thus, their confidence with reading will increase.

Observed Reading Behaviors of the Grade 6 Learners

This section presents the observed reading behaviors of the Grade 6 learners in Amucao Elementary School to answer sub-problem number 3. Table 3 presents the data.

TABLE 3
Reading Behaviors of the Grade 6 Learners

Reading Behaviors	f*	%
• Does word-for-word reading	24	53.33
• Lacks expression, reads with monotonous tone	11	24.44
• Voice is hardly audible	7	15.56
• Disregards punctuations	19	42.22
• Points to each word with his/her finger	14	31.11
• Employs little or no analysis	17	37.78
• Refuses to read	4	8.89
*multiple results obtained from learners' records		

As shown in Table 3, the Grade 6 learners were observed to have reading behaviors some of which will be easy to change while others may require more training and time. The Grade 6 learners lack expression and read with monotonous tone (11 or 24.44%). They also do word-for-word reading (24 or 53.33%) and voice is hardly audible (7 or 15.56%). They disregard punctuations (19 or 42.22%), finger point to each word (14 or 31.11%), employ little or no analysis (17 or 37.78%) and refuse to read (4 or 8.89%). If the learners understand why it is important to implement good reading behaviors, they are more likely to take on challenges eagerly.

The Grade 6 reading curriculum is for the learners to read increasingly complex texts over the course of the year to prepare them for high school. The learners read a variety of texts and different genres, including fiction, drama, poetry, and non-fiction. As the learners read more complex texts, analyzing and understanding them in deeper ways, they strengthen their knowledge of all subjects.

SUMMARY

This study assessed the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 6 learners of Amucao Elementary School, Tarlac East District, Tarlac City Schools Division during the school year 2023-2024 through quantitative-descriptive research design.

Using the quantitative-descriptive research design, this study sought to determine the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 6 learners based on Phil-IRI pre-test results in terms of independent reading level, instructional reading level frustration reading level, and non-readers. It also sought to determine the reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners as well their observed reading behaviors.

Based on the findings of the study, a reading enhancement program was proposed to improve the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners.

The sources of data in this study came from the English teachers in Amucao Elementary School who provided the information needed on the level of reading performance of Grade 6 learners based on the results of the Phil-IRI pre-tests.

The Phil-IRI results were utilized to treat the data statistically.

Summary of Findings:

1.0 Level of Reading Comprehension of the Grade 6 Learners

Out of 59 Grade 6 learners enrolled in Amucan Elementary School, 16 or 27.12% belong to the independent reading level; 13 or 22.03% belong to the instructional reading level; 29 or 49.15% belong to the frustration reading level; and 1 or 1.70% is a non-reader.

2.0 Reading Miscues Committed by the Grade 6 Learners

The reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners are the following:

- 2.1 Mispronunciation (23 or 51.11%);
- 2.2 Omission (15 or 33.33%);
- 2.3 Substitution (9 or 20.00%);
- 2.4 Insertion (11 or 24.44%);
- 2.5 Repetition (19 or 42.22%);
- 2.6 Transposition (7 or 15.56%); and
- 2.7 Reversal (10 or 22.22%).

3.0 Observed Reading Behaviors of the Grade 6 Learners

The reading behaviors observed from the Grade 6 learners are the following:

- 3.1 Does word-for word reading (24 or 53.33%);
- 3.2 Lacks expression, monotonous tone (11 or 24.44%);
- 3.3 Voice is hardly audible (7 or 15.56%);
- 3.4 Disregards punctuations (19 or 45.22%);
- 3.5 Points to each word with his/her fingers (14 or 31.11%);
- 3.6 Employs little or no analysis (17 or 37.78%); and
- 3.7 Refuses to read (4 or 8.89%).

4.0 Proposed Reading Enhancement Program

A reading enhancement program was proposed to improve the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most of the Grade 6 learners belong to the frustration reading level.
2. Generally, the reading miscues committed by the Grade 6 learners were mispronunciation, repetition and omission.
3. Generally, the reading behaviors observed from the Grade 6 learners were do word-for-word reading, disregard punctuations and employ little or no analysis.
4. The proposed reading enhancement program focused on assessment of reading levels of the learners, orientation on the nature, scope and rationale of the remedial reading, intervention strategies, encouraging a sense of personal responsibility, and evaluation of the improvement of learners' reading proficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were offered:

1. The proposed enhancement program in reading in English should be considered for use by concerned school authorities to enhance the reading performance of the Grade 6 learners.
2. Incorporate reading materials in all English lessons and learners should be provided with opportunity to read and comprehend varied reading sources.
3. The school should allocate some budget for programs, events and activities: during related reading activities.
4. The DepEd administrators should include in the curriculum in all grade levels the development of learners' thinking abilities by incorporating some reading materials in all lessons including grammar. They should also see to it that the learners are provided with adequate opportunity to read and comprehend the appropriate and varied reading sources.
5. Provide opportunities to reading teachers for professional development by sending them in trainings, seminars, workshops, and synopsis especially designed to enhance teachers' skills in teaching reading and uplifting the reading proficiency of the learners.
6. Future researchers may undertake similar studies on a wider scope to validate the findings of the study.

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