WORD READING, READING COMPREHENSION, AND ENGLISH PERFORMANCE AMONG ELEMENTARY PUPILS: BASIS FOR DESIGNING INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

The issues and concerns regarding the reading competency of the majority of elementary school students have long been a source of contention in public schools. In order to meet the Department of Education's reading competency target for all primary grades, teachers have faced significant obstacles in implementing the innumerable strategies that have been developed. As evidenced by the large number of studies that demonstrate a link between reading competency and other findings such as academic achievement, literacy, and other factors, developing reading skills is perilous for learners' cognitive education. It is the teacher's instinctive strength in dealing with these problems in the broad sense of learners' reading competency and its relationship with their academic performance that is taken into consideration, including things like word reading, reading comprehension, and academic performance in English. This study investigated the levels of word reading and reading comprehension of Grade IV students as measured by the Phil-IRI assessments, and the relationship between these levels and their academic performance. This research was conducted among 201 Grade 4 students enrolled in schools in the Northern District of Nueva Vizcaya, who were identified using the G*power calculator as being from the study's target population. The data came from the Phil-IRI assessment tools, which focused on the students' word reading and reading comprehension skills, together with the students' overall academic performance in English, which was collected through interviews. Independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels were identified in the students' reading abilities. The researcher used descriptive and inferential approaches to examine the data, which included weighted mean, frequency, and percentage. In order to show the students' levels of word reading and reading comprehension, as well as their academic performance in English, descriptive approaches were chosen. The correlational methods were used to investigate the relationships between the factor variables. The findings revealed that the majority of students chose to read independently and comprehend the texts they were given. Only a few of them experienced feelings of frustration. The vast majority of them performed admirably. Furthermore, there were statistically significant positive relationships between the variables. Given the fact that the variables were positively related to one another, an intervention program to close the gap was proposed.

Keywords: Phil-IRI, English Performance, Reading Comprehension, Word Reading

INTRODUCTION

Reading skills are the ability to grasp written words and to apply them in a practical setting. It is highly suggested that this skill be developed at a young age, during one's primary education. The reading-comprehension skills are ready to be executed when easily integrate or recognizing written words and then incorporating their ability to apprehend with their prior understanding. When it comes to student performance, rather than their family's

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socioeconomic status, it is more valuable that they appreciate reading for happiness. Additionally, engaging children in reading from an early age has a quantity of other significant advantages. The advancement of reading skills is imperative for future success in both academic and professional undertakings. When parents encourage their children to read in their leisure moments at all stages of development, they can help to ensure that they are equipped with the skills they will need to succeed in later life.

Filipino children should be stimulated to read by implementing the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), a program run by the Department of Education's Bureau of Learning Delivery. The *Every Child a Reader Program* aims to turn every Filipino child into a reader and writer by the time they reach the eighth grade. When used in grouping with other reliable assessment tools, however, it can provide a comprehensive picture of students' reading abilities. The assessment's results will be used to help students' reading performance at school and this will be used as a foundation for developing, designing, or restructuring the school's reading programs and activities (DepEd Memorandum No. 324 s.2004).

Reading is essential since, through pattern and creative layouts, it provides access to learning resources in a condensed format, and as a result, it is regarded as the primary achievement ability for educational purposes in most countries. There have been numerous reading strategies created to assist learners in overcoming language obstacles such as terminology and sentence structure. Teaching reading strategies is proposed as a cost-effective method of providing a teaching-learning environment experience that is centered on learners in order to encourage learner individuality and the development of their language abilities. In order for language learners to hurdle language obstructions, they must become more aware of the ability to comprehend the learning skills of the vocabulary, as well as develop proficiency in reading text. This is especially true for students who have had little exposure to English outside of the classroom. It is possible to accomplish this through the use of reading strategies, and instruction on reading methods, and it should be

encompassed in English programs and curriculums (Raqqad and Ismail, 2020).

As Meniado (2016) points out, comprehension of text is a cognitive process that requires a great deal of effort. To better understand how to help students build this skill, educational researchers looked at a variety of contexts and factors to see what works best. Developing and nurturing a child's capacity for reading comprehension is crucial for academic success, both at home and at school. The majority of students who struggle in school have comprehension issues.

According to the results of the PISA 2018 reading test, the Philippines received the lowest score among the 79 countries and economies that took part in the study. According to the findings, more than 80% of students did not achieve the bare minimum level of reading ability, representing one of the highest proportions of low performers among all PISA-participating countries and economies. Furthermore, 19% of students demonstrated at least Level 2 proficiency in reading skills. Conversely, almost no student was a top performer in reading, which means that they achieved a PISA reading score of Level 5 or 6 in the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) reading exam. According to a report published in PhilStar Global on December 3, 2019, the country had an average reading score of 340, which was more than 200 points lower than China's (555) and more than 100 points lower than the OECD's (487) overall average. Despite the fact that the PISA 2018 results were unsatisfactory, DepEd sees this as an opportunity for further improvement and evaluation of the current standing of Filipino learners.

Despite the fact that many reading programs have been adopted by public schools, this issue continues to be a source of contention among students. Aside from that, only a few researchers had focused on the utilization and assessment of students' reading fluency and comprehension skills. Elementary school students are given the Phil-IRI administration. Students in Grades 4 to 6 are evaluated on their ability to read English fluently and efficiently. As a result, the researcher had become interested in determining the extent to which the Phil-IRI assessment tools: word reading

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and reading comprehension were used among Grade 4 students, as this was the highest grade level to receive the evaluation that will have a great impact on teacher's teaching strategy and it is included in the program and curriculum (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to determine the levels of word reading, reading comprehension skills, and academic performance in English of Grade 4 students in order to answer the objectives below:

1. determine the levels of the pupil's word reading, reading comprehension skills, and overall reading based on PHIL-IRI.

2. assess the academic performance of Grade 4 students in English.

3. determine the relationship between and among the levels of the pupils' word reading, reading comprehension skills, and academic performance in English; and

4. propose an intervention program based on the Phil-IRI assessment of Grade IV students.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the Descriptive-Correlational Research Design. Students in Grade 4 completed the PHIL-IRI assessment, which measured their ability to read words and comprehend what they read. Similarly, the researcher used the same method to determine how well their English class students performed academically. Descriptive studies are observational or correlational in nature; they are used to observe and describe a research topic or problem without affecting or controlling the variables in any way. Surveys, interviews, correlation studies, observation, and content analysis are all used to collect data (J.Gate, 2018).

Correlational research, on the other hand, is typically used when investigating the relationships among variables in a research study. It is an effective design for determining the magnitude of a relationship between two variables. Correlation in research can be positive, negative, or zero. A positive correlation indicates a change in the same direction, whereas a negative correlation indicates that an increase in one variable causes a decrease in another (Correlational Research Overview, 2019).

The Nueva Vizcaya Schools Division is divided into two major districts: the Southern District and the Northern District. The 10 districts that fall under the jurisdiction of the Northern District were taken into consideration for this study. These have at least 10 member-schools each, incuding the Bayombong I and Bayombong II districts in Bayombong province, Ambaguio in Quezon province, Bagabag I and Bagabag II in Bagabag II in Quezon province, Diadi in Villaverde province, and Ambaguio in Ambaguio province. The Department of Education Memorandum No. 43 s. 2017 was used as a guide in categorizing the schools. Small, medium, large, and mega schools were classified as follows based on the number of teachers they have: 9 and below, 10 – 29, 30 – 50, and 51 and above, for small, medium, and large schools respectively.

Stratified random sampling was used in the selection of schools in Nueva Vizcaya's Schools Division's Northern district. Small, medium, large, and mega schools were among the strata considered. The researcher chose medium and small schools at random in each district, as well as two mega schools in the province. The G*power calculator with 0.9503 actual power was used to determine the actual number of respondents. Following that, proportionate sampling was performed based on the populations of the schools, which were classified as small, medium, large, and mega schools. The respondents were chosen at random from the schools that had been chosen.

Review of Philippine K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum and DepEd Order No. 16 s. 2017 DepEd Research Management Guidelines pursuant to the existing guidelines of DepEd was made basis regarding the conduct of research projects in schools. It was assumed that the observance of health protocols being implemented by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) was strictly followed.

A request letter was forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools Division through the

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District Supervisors. A copy of the letter was distributed to the various school principals, school heads, teachers-in-charge, and school caretakers for their consideration and endorsement. Following approval by the school heads, both the PHIL-IRI assessments and the academic performance of the Grade 4 students in English were obtained from their respective advisers. The required data were statistically treated, analyzed, and interpreted with the help of appropriate statistical software.

The information gathered was subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The frequency and percentage distributions, as well as the mean, were used in this study to determine the levels of word reading, reading comprehension, reading level, and academic performance of the participants. When performing inferential statistics, the Spearman rho coefficient was used to assess the strength of the relationship between word reading and reading comprehension skills, between word reading and academic performance in English, and between reading comprehension skills and academic performance in English, among other relationships.

The respondents to the study were made up of 47 public elementary schools and 201 pupils both from northern districts of Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. The researcher chose medium and small schools at random in each district, as well as two mega schools in the province. The G*power calculator with 0.9503 actual power was used to determine the actual number of respondents. Following that, proportionate sampling was performed based on the populations of the schools, which were classified as small, medium, large, and mega schools. Prior to investigating the various sampling methods, it is worth noting what sampling entails and why researchers were likely to choose a sample. Sampling is the method of selecting a population or a sampling frame. It can be used to induce inferences about a population or to generalize from before the theory. In essence, this is determined by the sampling technique used (Taherdoost, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. To determine the levels of the pupil's word reading, reading comprehension skills, and overall reading based on PHIL-IRI

Table 2
Reading Level of Grade IV students in Phil IRI

Phil IRI	Reading Levels					
	Independent		Instructional		Frustration	
	%	f	%	f	%	
Word Reading	114	56.72	61	30.35	26	12.94
Reading Comprehension	94	46.77	73	36.32	88	43.78
Overall Reading	84	41.79	88	43.78	29	14.43

According to Table 2, the majority of Grade 4 students were independent in terms of word reading (56.72 percent) and reading comprehension (46.7 percent). There were 114 Grade IV students who could read and 94 who could comprehend what they had read on their own. However, the overall reading level of the students (43.78 percent) was instructional, which can be inferred as that they still require assistance. It should be noted that these were PHIL-IRI post-test assessments.

In general, an improvement from one level is observed across the assessments when compared to the PHIL-IRI assessments' pre-test. However, some students remained frustrated in terms of word reading (12.94 percent), reading comprehension (43.78 percent), and overall reading frustration level (14.43 percent). These students required guidance when engaging in reading activities as they cannot read on their own. These findings revealed that Grade 4 students performed best in word reading and worst in reading comprehension.

Literacy is the capacity to decipher and make sense of what is being said and being written. A lot of knowledge, experience, thinking, and teaching goes into it. For students to understand, remember, and interact with others about what they are reading, a set of skills and

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knowledge instruction is necessary. Reading comprehension skills are built on a foundation of rich vocabulary and early exposure to text. Supported with the study of Clemens et al. (2017), it was found out that students with low reading comprehension but adequate reading scores make up a very small representative sample, according to their findings. A reader's ability to comprehend text is significantly hampered when they were having difficulty distinguishing words in a text.

2. To assess the academic performance of Grade 4 students in English

Table 3
Level of Academic Performance of Grade IV Pupils

Grading Scale	f	Percentage	Descriptor
90 – 100	26	12.94%	Outstanding
85 – 89	73	36.32%	Very Satisfactory
80 – 84	67	33.33%	Satisfactory
75 – 79	33	16.42%	Fairly Satisfactory
Below 75	2	1.00%	Did Not Meet Expectations
TOTAL	**201**	**100.00%**	

Overall Mean: 84.12

The frequency and percentage distributions, as well as the mean, of the academic performance of Grade 4 students in their English subject during the third grading period are shown in Table 3 of this document. The DepEd grading system was used to develop the descriptors and grading scale.

Based on Table 3, academic performance in English was described as "satisfactory" for the 201 students in Grade 4. Table 3 shows that the majority of students perform satisfactorily or

extremely satisfactorily in their English classes. A total of 73 students (36.32%) has English grades between 85 and 89, while 67 students (33.33%) have English grades between 80 and 84. Only 12.94 percent of respondents had excellent English skills, meaning their scores ranged from 90 to 100. On the other hand, there were two students, or a one percent failure rate, which fall short of the standards. As a result, they received a grade that is less than or equal to 75. In other words, they were unable to pass the subject of English during the third grading period.

According to the findings of the study conducted by Zheng and Shan (2017), academic motivation is extremely important to students' academic performance. In terms of learning achievement, it has a positive impact not only on English but also on their performance in their other academic subjects. The reasoning behind all these facts may become even more beneficial in the long run when it comes to understanding the teaching and learning environment. As a result, the researcher looked into why some students had significantly higher academic performance motivation than others, which resulted in them having enhanced learning performance as a result. The sexual identity of the students, as well as their previous levels of academic achievement, were taken into account. It was discovered that there was a correlation between students' educational performance and their levels of motivation.

3. To determine the relationship between and among the levels of the pupils' word reading, reading comprehension skills, and academic performance in English

In Table 4, it can be seen that the levels of word reading and reading comprehension of the Grade IV students had a strong and statistically significant positive relationship (r = 0.662, p 0.001). This indicates that a higher level of word reading corresponds to a higher level of reading comprehension. Students who have independent reading fluency, for example, may also have independent reading comprehension, as evidenced by their reading comprehension at the independent level. Students who have a difficult time reading texts, on the other hand, will

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eventually have a poor comprehension level as a result. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation (r = 0.168, p = 0.017) between students' academic performance in English in Grade 4 and their word reading ability.

Table 4
Relationship of PHIL IRI Assessment and Students' Academic Performance in English

PHIL IRI Assessments and Academic Performance	r	Sig
Word Reading – Reading Comprehension	0.662**	<0.001
Word Reading – Academic Performance	0.168*	0.017
Reading Comprehension – Academic Performance	0.176*	0.013

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance
**Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Reading at a higher level assumes better academic performance in English 4 because the subject covers both language and reading. Reading is a crucial skill to develop when learning English because it is a language in and of itself. It is the quickest and easiest way for students to improve their knowledge and understanding. Lastly, there was a significant link between reading comprehension and academic performance (r = 0.176, p = 0.013). It implies that a more advanced level of reading comprehension is expected to produce better academic results.

Knowing and understanding what is being read is one of the most difficult behaviors that humans can engage in. According to SVR (Simple View of Reading), reading comprehension is the result of word decoding and linguistic comprehension working together. Individual differences in these two components have been found to explain differences in reading comprehension across a wide range of languages, (Elleman & Oslund, 2019).

To note, the results of the present study support the study conducted by Catts (2018), which demonstrated that students struggle with reading comprehension primarily as a result of word-level problems, comprehension issues, or simply being a poor reader in general. Reading comprehension, in particular, demonstrates that it is the result of the interaction between the reader, the text, and the task identity inside one cultural context. It is important to note that reading on its own without comprehension is not sufficient because students must read texts in order to process them and comprehend their meanings.

4. The Proposed Intervention Program

This intervention program is designed to help participants improve their oral reading skills while also increasing their vocabulary and improving their comprehension. As a result, three activities were included in this intervention program. The central concept of this intervention program is repetition in order to gain mastery of a skill.

Oral Reading. This activity will take approximately five minutes to complete. The teacher writes 10 words on the board in advance. Oral reading is carried out by reading aloud in a group setting. The word is read aloud by the teacher, and the students repeat it. This activity will be completed every morning before the first official subject of the day begins.

Vocabulary Development and Expansion. This activity will take five minutes to complete and will be graded. The teacher provides a total of ten words. The students will be required to copy the words, and it is recommended that they look up the meaning of the words in a dictionary before doing so.

Reading Comprehension Exercise. Instructions for administering this reading comprehension exercise are provided in five minutes. One reading passage is assigned by the teacher. It is possible that this will be completed five minutes before the start of the English class on Day 5. This activity is also intended to allow students to improve their writing skills through repetition.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the findings, the following conclusions are reached:

1. The majority of Grade 4 students are self-sufficient in terms of word reading and reading comprehension as measured by the PHIL-IRI assessment.
2. The overall level of academic performance of the 201 Grade IV students in their English subject is satisfactory.
3. There are statistically significant positive relationships among and between the levels of word reading and reading comprehension and the level of academic performance of fourth-grade students, according to the findings.
4. It has been determined that the proposed intervention program for Grade IV students is necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are made in accordance with the findings of the study:

1. Student evaluation of the Phil-IRI assessment as well as their attitude toward reading may be considered by administrators when developing programs to evaluate students' academic performance in English.
2. Teachers may look into reading strategies that are most effective in helping students improve their word reading and comprehension skills.
3. Coaching and mentoring may be conducted to all Grade IV English teachers and provide Technical Assistance based on the results of the conducted study.
4. The Reading Intervention Program may be adopted and conduct a study examining the effectiveness of the program among Grade 4 students.

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