

IMPROVING THE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF GRADE 5 PUPILS USING LOCALIZED READING SELECTIONS

ABSTRACT

The ability to comprehend from a reading selection has been one of the major problems of language teachers. A lot of teaching methods and strategies has been developed to address the issue. This paper dealt with the use of localized reading selection to improve the reading comprehension skills of grade 5 pupils of San Mariano Elementary School in Sta Marcela, Apayao, Philippines.

The two group pretest-posttest experimental design was used. Results of the study came up with the following findings: The level of comprehension of the experimental group and control group in their pre-test is both developing levels. The level of comprehension of the experimental group in their post-test is proficient level while the control group remains developing level. There is no significant difference in the mean comprehension skills of the experimental and control group in their pre-test. However, during their post-test, their mean comprehension skill is significant.

After conducting the study, the researcher concluded that using localized reading selections is effective to improve the comprehension skills of the grade 5 pupils. It was proven by the mean score of pupils' achievement before and after giving treatment to experimental group.

Based on the indicated findings, the following conclusions were drawn: The level of comprehension of the respondents both control group and experimental group during pre-test were developing level and majority of them were under emerging level. The level of comprehension of the control group during post-test is stagnant to developing level while the experimental groups levelled up to proficient level. Since majority of the respondents in control group were stagnant to emerging level while the experimental group majority of them levelled up to proficient level. Localization of reading selections has a positive effect to the reading comprehension of the respondents.

Keywords: localized reading selection, reading comprehension, Reading comprehension skills

INTRODUCTION

Poor reading comprehension is one of the prevalent problems among teachers in basic education. Reading with comprehension lays the foundation for future learning and understanding across all areas of the curriculum. Without this foundation, pupils will struggle to achieve academically not only in reading and writing, but also in areas such as math, science and social studies.

The Western world of today is said to be a reading world. To be able to enjoy life completely, an individual has to read. Everybody must read to have both mental and cultural

growth for it is believed that most knowledge comes from reading. Eighty percent of the things we do every day involves reading. This is why reading is universally recognized as one of the most important activities in school as well as in life.

Nobody can deny that a pupil who is able to comprehend well has an advantage over the others who are unable to comprehend. A person who is good to read with comprehension has the very essential equipment for acquiring more knowledge. A pupil who cannot comprehend what his reading is blocked in his learning. It is a known fact that one of the most important problems in our school is the improvement of the quality of instruction. Improvement of the quality of instruction depends upon the children's ability to read and comprehend various printed materials. The child's feeling of inadequacy, fear and dread about his comprehension difficulties could be changed to a desire for power to explore, to attain success in school. In Malaysia, [1] Investigated reading comprehensions difficulties among English Foreign Language (EFL) learners in higher learning institutions. Their study employed quantitative method, 100 out of 281 Arab students of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) were selected to participate in responding to the questions. Cross tabulation was used to analyse data from the test. Findings from the test indicated that the major difficulty faced by the Arab EFL learners is inability to recognize the types of text. Therefore, the selected institutions could affect their English language proficiency and academic performance. To find solutions to these difficulties, there is a need for shared efforts of English language teachers, instruction policy makers, public and private bodies responsible for educational policy learning and implementation, and the English Foreign Language (EFL) learners. [2] probed on the Factors Affecting the Reading Comprehension of Grade Six Pupils in the City Division of Sorsogon, Philippines as Basis for the Development of Instructional Material. A reading module was collaboratively developed by the researchers to improve the reading level of the pupils. It revealed that factors affecting the reading comprehension of pupils are: pupil, language, teachers, school head, home and community. They recommended that (i) there should be close monitoring of pupils' progress by the parents and school administrators and (ii) reading program like peer-pair and remedial reading may be provided.

The K-12 Curriculum mandated that pupils should be instructed in their mother tongue in the Foundation Phase, which includes Kindergarten to Grade 3. Thereafter, Grade 4 onward learning is only available through the medium of English or Filipino. Many problems were raised in the implementation of MTB-MLE instruction especially from kindergarten to Grade 3. Hence [3] analyzed the strategies of teachers in implementing Mother Tongue-Based Instruction in Multilingual Classroom and identified some problems that teachers encounter in implementing them. They used qualitative analysis with interview as the main data gathering. The respondents were teachers purposively selected from the suggested pilot schools of MTB-MLE in Baguio City. Their findings showed that the teachers used strategies such as translation of target language to mother tongue, utilization of multi lingual teaching, utilization of lingua-franca, improvisation of instructional materials written in mother tongue, remediation of instruction, and utilization of literary piece written in mother tongue as motivation. Some problems encountered by the teachers in implementing MTB instruction include absence of books written in mother tongue, lack of vocabulary, and lack of teacher-training. Nevertheless, the study indicated that major attention and effort are still necessary to be given to the approach. Since MTB-MLE period were mostly exposed to their vernacular language reading materials, in the intermediate

phase (Grade 4-onward) faced a problem regarding the comprehension of learners because whereby transition of language happens.

Localized Teaching and Learning is needed since it is known to have a great impact to the pupils' academic performance. It promotes positive learners' engagement and improves learning skills among learners. Background knowledge plays an essential role in reading comprehension. In an effort to comprehend a text, pupils rely on their background knowledge to link what they already know to the text they are reading. Background knowledge includes both a reader's real-world experiences and literary knowledge. Drawing parallels between background knowledge and texts helps pupils become active readers, improving their reading comprehension [4]

According to [5] there are four levels of comprehension. The first level is the literal which means reading lines, getting the information drift, answering questions on: who, what, where and when. The second level is the interpretive or reading between the lines, combining information and making inferences and comprehending them. In this level, the reader will answer the how and why questions. The third level is the applied or reading beyond the lines, using information to express opinion and form ideas and involves application. The fourth level is the critical level where the reader will answer an open-ended question regarding the behavior of the minor or major character and the style of presentation. But how could learners master the four levels of comprehension if they could hardly understand the language used in the reading materials? Reading in this case would simply be following words on a page from left to right while sounding them out. The words on the page have no meaning.

At San Mariano Elementary School where the researcher handled Grade 4 and Grade 5 classes, the researcher found out that the pupils in the identified grade levels have difficulty reading and understanding reading materials in English. Only when a learning material in English is translated into a vernacular the pupils understand that they can have a good grasp of the learning material.

The aforementioned has made the researcher venture into conducting a study on looking into the effectiveness of localized reading selections on the comprehension skills of Grade 5.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study primarily aimed to determine the effectiveness of localized reading selections on the comprehension skills of Grade 5 pupils in San Mariano Elementary School, Sta. Marcela District.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of comprehension of the experimental group (exposed to localized reading selection) and the control group (exposed to conventional reading selection) in their pre-test?
2. What is the level of comprehension of the experimental group (exposed to localized reading selection) and the control group (exposed to conventional reading selection) in their post-test?
3. Are there significant differences in the mean comprehension skills of the experimental and control group in their pre-test and post-test?

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference in the mean comprehension skills of the experimental and control group in their pre-test.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean comprehension skills of the experimental and control group in their post-test.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical underpinnings of this study are Contextual Learning Theory and Social Constructivism.

Contextual learning theory which states that learning happens when one is able link between the content of the text and the context. In other words, the lesson or the reading text must be related to the pupils' interest and are familiar to them. Their instruction must be specific and pupils must relate the content to the world through many different avenues.

Social Constructivism Theory by [6] states that the social environment is responsible in the first conception of one's knowledge. Social constructivists said that, learning is a dynamic process, finding of principles, theories, and realities should be discovered by the learners themselves. Thus, the importance and promotion of critical learning in reading is encouraged. According to [7] constructivists view learning as a dynamic practice that results from self-constructed meanings, a meaningful connection is established between prior knowledge and the present learning activity. They further elaborated that this is anchored on the belief that every learner constructs and reconstructs meanings depending on past experiences. They continue reflecting and evaluating accumulated knowledge with an end in view of constructing new meaning. Social Constructivism Theory relates to the teaching of reading comprehension, focusing on the experience and background knowledge of the students. To understand the text, readers must also rely on prior knowledge to fully grasp what the text is trying to say [8].

This study hypothesizes the question on the effectiveness of localized reading selections on the comprehension skills of Grade 5 pupils in San Mariano Elementary School in Sta. Marcela District. Looking into this, it is assumed that the localized reading selections have something to do to enhance the reading comprehension of Grade 5.

Research Paradigm

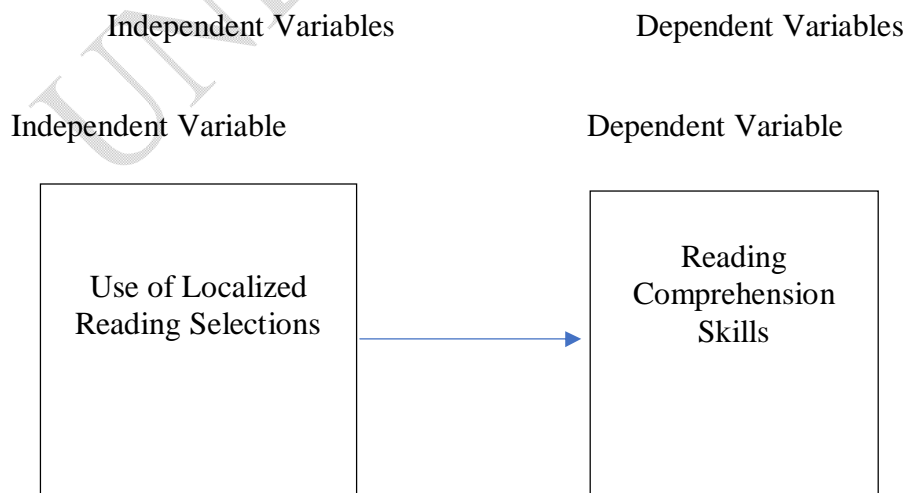
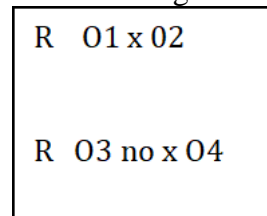


Figure 1. The diagram showing the paradigm of the study.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a two-group experimental research design. These involved two groups, the experimental group which used localized reading selections and the control group which used conventional reading selections. Pre-test and post-test were used to determine the effectiveness of the reading selections on the pupils' comprehension skills. The design is presented below:



Experimental groups

Control group

Where: R involves randomization of respondents

- O1 - pre-test of the experimental group
- x - the use of localized reading selection
- O2 - post-test of the experimental group
- O3 - pre-test of the control group
- O4 - post-test of the control group

LOCALE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted at San Mariano Elementary School of Sta. Marcela District, Division of Apayao. It is a complete elementary school from kindergarten to Grade 6, headed by a School Head.



Figure 2: This figure shows the locale of the study.

RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents of the study were the Grade 5 pupils of San Mariano Elementary School in Sta. Marcela District, Province of Apayao for the school year 2019-2020.

A total of 30 pupils were involved in the study. These were divided into two groups consisting of 15 each assigned in the experimental and control group. In assigning pupils in the experimental and control group, the researcher list down the pupils per ability level (high, average and low). Each of these categories, the researcher assigns pupils to the experimental and control by draw lots or systematic random sampling technique.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instruments used in this study were various reading selections in the pre-test and post-test. The reading selections used in the experimental group were the localized reading selections such as: *Ti Mangidaulo a Bao ken Panglakayen a Bao*, *Ti mangngayo ken ti Wasayna*, *Panangiyam-ammu kadagiti Aso iti makunkuna nga Hotel*, *Ti mangidaulo nga Bao*, *Wagas ti panagluto iti Kahoy nga Bibingka*, *Riribuk iti Pannangan ti Pangrabii*, *Misterio ti Pannakadadael tay Bibingka*, *Ti Nagaget a Kawitan* and *Ti Umuna nga Aldaw*. These translated reading selections were validated by the adviser and an expert at Apayao State College. While in the control group were the conventional reading selections such as: *The Leader Rat* and the *Elderly Rat*, *The Woodcutter and His Axe*, *Introduction to Hotel for Dogs*, *The Leader Rat*, *How to Cook Cassava Cake*, *Dinner Disaster*, *Mystery of the Broken Rice Cake*, *The Hardworking Rooster* and *First Day*. Both comprised 50 items.

Chart 1: The respondents scores were interpreted using a rubric adapted from comprehensibleclassroom.com with some revisions by the researcher.

Level	Score	Description
Advance	50-40	can identify details from the text; can give insightful evidence to support reader conclusions and to make inferences; can interpret unfamiliar words based on context.
Proficient	39-30	Reader can identify the main idea and details about the text;

		can give evidence from the text to support conclusions; the ability to make inferences is limited as reader understand familiar words but have trouble interpreting new words.
Developing	29-20	Reader can identify the main idea and a few details about the text; has struggle to provide evidence and make inferences; can understand familiar words when they are used in familiar contexts.
Emerging	19-10	Reader's ability to interpret individual words significantly limits understanding of the text; can identify the main idea of the text, but can't give details or textual evidence to support conclusions about the text.
Beginning	9-0	Reader can't understand the words in text well enough to be able to identify the main idea or any details about the text.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Permission was sought from the Public Schools District Supervisor before a request letter was sent to the office of the School Head allowing the researcher to conduct the study in the said school.

The primary sources of data were the pretest scores and posttest scores of the two groups. The researcher himself handled the two classes. This was to minimize the effect of differing teachers. The two groups were taught by the researcher for at least 30 minutes each group per day for 10 days. The experimental group was presented localized reading selections while the control group, conventional reading selections.

Prior the study proper, the researcher conducted first a pre-test to the groups. Then the experimental group was given localized selections to read and tasked to answer questions on the selections read, while the control group was asked to do the same thing but with the conventional selections.

The purpose of the pretest was to compare two groups' background on the topic and see to it that they were comparable at the start of the study.

After which, the same test was administered as a posttest to both groups to measure the extent of learning of the pupils and to compare posttest scores of both groups.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data gathered were recorded, tabulated, summarized, analyzed and interpreted based on the problems and objectives of the study by means of the following appropriate statistical tools.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, mean and standard deviation were used. The t-test for independent sample was also used to test the difference in the mean scores of pupils in the experimental and control group in their pre-test and post-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Level of Comprehension of Experimental and Control Group in their Pre-test

Pupils	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	Pre-test score (50 items)	Interpretative rubric	Pre-test score (50 items)	Interpretative rubric
1	26	D	9	B
2	33	P	19	E
3	44	A	14	E
4	23	D	17	E
5	19	E	10	E
6	21	D	23	D
7	35	P	14	E
8	10	E	11	E
9	12	E	35	P
10	23	D	17	E
11	16	E	20	D
12	17	E	13	E
13	11	E	43	A
14	16	E	26	D
15	15	E	30	P
	21.4	Developing	20.07	Developing

Legend:

A= Advance (50-40)
P= Proficient (39-30)D= Developing (29-20)
E= Emerging (19-10)

B= Beginning (9-0)

Table 1 shows the pretest scores of the respondents in the control and experimental group. The interpretative rubric indicates the level of comprehension of the respondents.

As can be gleaned in the table, both groups were in the developing level of their comprehension with the control group having a mean score of 21.4 and the experimental group 20.07. This means that the respondents are used in using/dealing with conventional reading selections. This limitation was due to lack of reading exposure and inability to relate with the reading texts [9]. To continue enhance the reading comprehension of learners should be given an intensive focus specifically young learner. According to [10] young learners are under concrete operational stage where they need objects and experienced situation to learn better.

Table 1.a. Summary of Level of Comprehension of the Respondents in the Experimental and Control Group in their Pre-test

Level of Comprehension	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	f	%	f	%
Advance	1	7	1	7
Proficient	2	13	2	13
Developing	4	27	3	20
Emerging	8	53	8	53
Beginning	0	0	1	7

Table 1.a shows the summary of the level of comprehension of the respondents in their pre-test.

Eight (8) or 58 percent of the respondents are in the emerging level in both groups; 4 or 27 percent of the respondents in the control group and 3 or 20 percent in the experimental group are in the developing level; 2 or 13 percent of the respondents in both groups are in the proficient level; 1 or 7 percent of the respondents in both groups is in the proficient level; and none of the respondents in the control group is in the beginning level, however there is 1 respondent in the experimental group in the same level of comprehension.

To sum it up, the respondents whether in control or experimental group, most of them were emerging level of comprehension. This means that both experimental and control group pre-test comprehension result were similar to each other, Hence, [11] confirmed that there was a serious problem in reading comprehension.

Table 2: Level of Comprehension of Experimental and Control Group in their Post-test

Pupils	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	Post-test score (50 items)	Interpretative rubric	Post-test score (50 items)	Interpretative rubric
1	30	P	29	D
2	37	P	27	D
3	48	A	23	D
4	22	D	20	D
5	20	D	35	P
6	22	D	38	P
7	36	P	35	P
8	11	E	16	E
9	15	E	43	A
10	29	D	36	P
11	16	E	32	P
12	20	D	28	D
13	14	E	48	A
14	14	E	38	P
15	18	E	32	P
Mean	23.47	Developing	32	Proficient

Legend:

A= Advance (50-40)
P= Proficient (39-30)

D= Developing (29-20)
E= Emerging (19-10)

B= Beginning (9-0)

Table 2 shows the post test scores of the respondents in the experimental and control group. The interpretative rubric indicates the level of comprehension of the respondents.

Results reveal that during post-test, the control group is stagnant in the developing level of comprehension while the experimental group leveled up to proficient level of comprehension.

It implies that localizing reading selections makes reading more understandable, thus the experimental group improved in their level of comprehension. As stated by the [12] learning English using localized materials such as the utilization of selections about one's place will enable children to connect their heritage while developing their reading skills at the same time.

Table 2.a. Summary of Level of Comprehension of the Respondents in the Experimental and Control Group in their Posttest

	Control Group	Experimental Group
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Level of Comprehension	f	%	f	%
Advance	1	7	2	13
Proficient	3	20	7	47
Developing	5	33	5	33
Emerging	6	40	1	7
Beginning	0	0	0	0

Table 2.a shows the summary of the level of comprehension of the respondents in their posttest.

As indicated, none of the respondents who is under beginning level both control and experimental group; six (6) or 40 percent of the respondents in control group and one (1) or 7 percent in the experimental group are in the developing level; five (5) or 33 percent of the respondents in both groups are in developing level; three (3) or 20 percent of the respondents in the control group and seven (7) or 47 percent in the experimental group are in the proficient level; and one (1) or 7 percent of the respondents in the control group and two (2) or 13 percent of the control group are in advance level of comprehension.

The data affirmed that majority of the control group were still under emerging level while the experimental group majority of them were leveled up into proficient level. Thus, the experimental group substantially improved their comprehension after exposure to localized reading selections. The findings support prior studies stating that the reading of meaningful connected text results in improved reading achievement [13]. Hence, contextualization effects on the comprehension level of the students [6].

Table 3: **Pretest and Posttest mean and standard deviation of the experimental and control group**

Group	Pre-test		Post-test	
	mean	sd	mean	sd
Experimental	20.07 <i>D</i>	9.79	32 <i>P</i>	8.51
Control	21.4 <i>D</i>	9.66	23.47 <i>D</i>	10.47

The table shows that the mean score of the experimental group in their pre-test is 20.7 and in their post-test 32. Whereas the control group's mean score in their pre-test is 21.4 and in their post-test 23.47.

The results reveal that the level of comprehension of both groups in their pre-test is in the developing level. However, after the treatment by using localized reading selection in the experimental group, the level of comprehension leveled up from developing to proficient level but the respondents in the control group where no intervention was used remained under the developing level.

It can be inferred therefore, that localizing the reading selection of Grade 5 pupils can really increase their level of comprehension. This result shows that localization of reading materials has a positive effect to the reading performance of the pupils.

The aforementioned results are supported by the study conducted by [6] on improving reading competence using contextualized teaching and learning of Grade 8 students. [6] showed that the use of Contextualized teaching and learning in increasing reading comprehension has a significant influence on the improvement of reading competence of the students. Moreover, according to [14] contextualized learning approach to teaching provides ways for improving

career-related and educational proficiencies in a greater level which supported the study of [15] on the effect of contextualization on the Iranian EFL learners' performance in reading tasks, his findings show that learners taught in contextualization framework gained better result. It shows that putting the lesson within the interest of the students would mean increase of academic performance. [6], the leading theorist of contextualized education, states that the need to provide a learning environment that will help the students' use their full potential is important because according to him students can function well if they are at ease with the place where they belong.

Table 4: t-test of the pretest and post test scores of the experimental and control group

Pre test				
Group	mean	Computed t	Tabular t (5%)	interpretation
Experimental	20.07	-0.375	2.05	no significant difference
Control	21.4			
Post-test				
Group	mean	Computed t	Tabular t (5%)	interpretation
Experimental	32	2.45	2.05	difference is significant
Control	23.47			

The data on table 4 shows that during pre-test, the value of computed t-test is lower than the tabular t. It indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean comprehension skills of experimental and control group. Whereas in their post-test, the computed t-test is higher than the tabular t, therefore it implies that the difference of the mean comprehension skills of the experimental and control group is significant.

From this comparison of groups based on pre-test and posttest reading comprehension result of the two groups, it could be inferred that there was a convincing development on experimental group respondents' level of reading comprehension after the experimental period. Development in the aforementioned group was attributed to exposure to localized reading selections throughout the experimental period. Therefore, poor reading comprehension level of the control group respondents could be attributed to unexposed to the intervention [9].

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study were summarized according to the statement of the problem stated in chapter 1.

1. What is the level of comprehension of the experimental group (exposed to localized reading selection) and the control group (exposed to conventional reading selection) in their pre-test?

The level of comprehension of the experimental group and control group in their pre-test is both developing levels.

2. What is the level of comprehension of the experimental group (exposed to localized reading selection) and the control group (exposed to conventional reading selection) in their post-test?

The level of comprehension of the experimental group in their post-test is proficient level while the control group remains developing level.

3. Are there significant differences in the mean comprehension skills of the experimental and control group in their pre-test and post-test?

There is no significant difference in the mean comprehension skills of the experimental and control group in their pre-test. However, during their post-test, their mean comprehension skill is significant.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the study, the researcher concluded that using localized reading selections is effective to improve the comprehension skills of the grade 5 pupils. It was proven by the mean score of pupils' achievement before and after giving treatment to experimental group.

Based on the indicated findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The level of comprehension of the respondents both control group and experimental group during pre-test were developing level and majority of them were under emerging level.
2. The level of comprehension of the control group during post-test is stagnant to developing level while the experimental groups levelled up to proficient level. Since majority of the respondents in control group were stagnant to emerging level while the experimental group majority of them levelled up to proficient level.
3. Localization of reading selections has a positive effect to the reading comprehension of the respondents.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher suggested/recommended that:

1. Teachers should consider the localized reading selections or other interventions as reading materials to improve their learners' level of reading comprehension.
2. Comparing the groups on the premise outcomes localized reading selections caused great difference in level of reading comprehension of the experimental group. Thus, learners should continue exposed to reading intervention or undergo similar reading program to continue develop their reading comprehension skills.
3. Teachers should use localized reading selections to develop reading comprehension skills of pupils. For the reason that, it makes the learners interested to read and comprehend well what they are reading. In addition, pupils will have connections to what they are reading if teachers use localized reading selections.

4. English as a subject apart from the Mother Tongue should be included in the different Grade levels in the curriculum of the Basic Education as early as first quarter of Grade 1.

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