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Research Article

Early Language Reading Interventions and Reading Skills of Elementary Grade One Pupils in Zambales, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Learning to read and write is crucial in child's development during entering formal schooling in grade one. These skills are identified to as language and literacy skills. It also predicts the child's success later in school as well as in life. Reading and writing were both encompassed in early language literacy which are the foundation skills of a child and it develops as the child grows. This study aimed to determine the effects of the reading intervention strategies used by grade one teachers on the reading performance of grade one pupils in terms of word recognition, reading speed and reading comprehension. The participants in this study were the 23 grade one teachers coming from the 11 schools of the San Antonio District. Findings of the study came up with the following conclusions: Typical teachers of Grade I in San Antonio always use reading intervention strategies in terms of oral language, alphabet knowledge and word recognition, and often use strategies for phonological awareness, fluency and comprehension. The teachers used various activities exclusively for word recognition, fluency and reading comprehension. The learners have a high level of word recognition skills, are fast readers and with an instructional level of comprehension. A positive linear relationship exists between the reading intervention strategies and the learners' level of reading skills. After the investigation on the relationship between the reading intervention strategies and learner's reading skills, the researcher recommends the following actions.

Keywords: Early language reading interventions, Reading skills

Introduction

Learning to read and write is crucial in child's development during entering formal schooling in grade one. These skills are identified to as language and literacy skills. It also predicts the child's success later in school as well as in life. Reading and writing were both encompassed in early language literacy which

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are the foundation skills of a child and it develops as the child grows. These skills were not acquired naturally, however, they can be acquired through careful instruction of an adult which includes parents, teachers, and peers that will help them achieve language and literacy development. The most crucial development of language and literacy is from birth up to the age of 8, it is identified to be included in Kindergarten – Grade 3 (K-3) in the school setting which literally determined as primary grades that develops the foundation of skills of a child.

According to The Programme for International Student Assessment's (PISA), assessment conducted in Reading, Mathematics and Science in 2018 wherein the cumulative outcomes of education and learning at a point at which most children are still enrolled in formal education, the age of 15. Most countries assessed between 4000 and 8000 students. Students selected to sit the PISA assessment received sampling weight so as to represent the entire PISA - eligible cohort. Among the 78 countries assessed by PISA, it turned out that Philippines rank 77th in mean scores in Reading, Science and Mathematics. The aim with PISA was not to create another top-down accountability, but to help schools and policy makers shift from looking outward to the next teacher, the next school, the next country. In essence, the PISA counts what counts, and makes that information available to educators and policy makers so they can make more informed decision.

Duff and Tomblin (2018) stated that learning to read also requires several skills. Early in reading development, children need to recognize letters, be aware of and able to manipulate sounds within words, and use conventions about the relationship between letters and their pronunciation. Children may enter school with poor skills in listening, speaking and/or phonological processing. These are the reasons why this study on the reading intervention strategies used by grade one teachers in teaching language literacy and the reading skills of the Grade One Pupils was conducted.

Methods Research Design

The research design to be used in this study will be qualitative and descriptive survey design with document analysis. Furthermore, this study aims to identify the reading intervention strategies which are being used by grade one teachers and their effects on the reading performance of grade one pupils in terms of word recognition, reading speed, and reading comprehension. The documentary analysis will also be used in the study, whereas the researcher retrieved final grades of pupil-respondents in subjects: MTB-MLE and Mathematics during the school year 2019 – 2020 that will support the reading comprehension skills of pupil-respondents that can be used as reference to this study.

Respondents

The participants of this study, presented in Table 1, were all grade one teachers of San Antonio district composing all eleven public schools in the municipality of San Antonio, Zambales during the school, year 2019 - 2020.

Sampling Technique

The total number of participants in this study was 23 grade one teachers. Each teacher randomly chose ten pupil-respondents from its class to complete the 230 grade one pupil-respondents. Reading levels of grade one pupils will be gathered through survey questionnaire and the retrieval of final grade in MTB-MLE and Mathematics subjects during the school year 2019 – 2020.

Instrument

The primary data gathering instrument to be used in this study will be a four- part questionnaire developed by the researcher and validated by the adviser for proofreading before submitting to the panel of examiners. Once approved, it will be administered to 23 teacherrespondents. The data gathering instrument has four parts.

Results and Discussion Early Reading Intervention Strategy

Early Reading Intervention Strategies Used by Teachers

Early learners need to understand why people read and write in order to be motivated to excel in their own literacy development. Teachers utilize reading intervention activities and strategies that help struggling readers develop their ability to read like phonological awareness, oral language, alphabet knowledge, word recognition, fluency, and reading comprehension. Table 3 presents the mean analysis on the frequency of early reading intervention strategies applied by teachers as summarized from Appendix D which shows the use of the reading intervention activities.

Reading Intervention Strategies Used by Teachers

Phonological Awareness. This relates to the ability to think about the sounds in a word rather than just the meaning of the word; an understanding of the structure of spoken language that it is made up of words and words consists of syllables, rhymes, and sounds. The teachers Often (3.45) used this strategy which includes phoneme drills (3.83), letter sounding games (3.83), guided reading (3.78), common sounds identification (3.57) and decoding of sounds (3.57) that are all qualitatively interpreted as Always. They Often use activities such as give me a word (3.22), rhyme analogy (3.00), word wall (3.35), initial-middle-last sound games (3.48) and sound deletion (2.91). These activities helps the level of phonological awareness of the learners which is one of the strongest predictors of future reading success. Berril (2018) stated in his study that early intervention is crucial and can make a real difference to students with limited levels of phonological awareness.

Oral Language. This is the knowledge of the structure, meanings and uses of oral language. It is the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings. The teacher respondents Always (3.52) use this intervention strategy which includes encouragement of conversation (3.96), speaking articulately and clearly (3.78), maintain eye contact (3.70) and pair-think-share

game (3.52) that are all qualitatively interpreted as always. They Sometimes (2.30) use Mr. and Ms. Q &A and Often use mimicking (3.26), speaking loudly (3.35), question a day game (3.04), song/poem recitation (3.39) and roleplaying (3.13). Developing oral language means developing skills of early learners that go into listening and speaking.

Alphabet Knowledge. This is the ability to recognize, name, and sound out all the uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet. The teachers Always (3.61) utilize this strategy for early reading intervention. Particularly, they Always use naming letter (4.00), singing the alphabet (3.70), letter hunt (3.52), letter matching (3.65), spelling drills (3.74), letter-a-day activity (3.70), give-me-a-word (3.52) and sound drill (3.74) and they Often use alphabet bingo game (3.09) and identifying initial, middle and final sound (3.48).

Word Recognition. This is measured as a matter of speed, such that a word with a high level of recognition is read faster than a novel one. The teachers Always (3.59) use the word recognition strategy for early reading intervention. With this early reading intervention strategy, the teachers Always incorporate guided reading (3.83), cite-a-word-a-day (3.61), spelling (3.70), repeated reading (3.65), word drill using flashcards (3.91), syllabication (3.87) and word blending activity (3.57). They Often use word wall (3.43), word listing (3.43) and word bingo game (2.87) to improve the reading skills of early learners.

Fluency. This is the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. The teacher Often (3.37) utilize early reading intervention to improve the fluency of learners. They Always conduct reading aloud activity (3.91), repeated reading (3.91), individual reading (3.83), and guided reading (3.91) for early learners fluency in reading. They Often utilize silent reading with follow up question (3.17), group reading (3.35), phrasing (3.35), echo reading (3.09), listen-and-follow audio recordings (2.78) and reader's theater activity.

Reading Comprehension. This is the ability to understand and make sense of written text; a complex and active process requiring vocabulary development and intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text. The teacher respondents Often (3.45) used early reading intervention strategies to improve the reading comprehension of the learners. They Always conduct repeated reading (3.78), story sequencing (3.61), guided reading with Q&A (3.70) and use of pictures to aid storytelling (3.96). Moreover, they Often use retelling and summarizing (3.22), inferencing (3.35), little story-teller activity (3.22), peer teaching with Q&A (3.35), comprehension race (2.96) and close reading activity (3.35) to improve the reading comprehension of early learners.

Actual Use of Reading Intervention Strategies

The teachers were asked on how are the reading intervention strategies use in the teaching-learning process that targets the level of reading skills in terms of word recognition, fluency and comprehension.

Word Recognition. The teachers start with mastering of letter sounds along with guided reading-syllabication until the learners can read words independently. Word recognition starts at the beginning of the school year. Teachers use printed reading materials and the first skill that learner should have is familiarization with the letters of the alphabet then syllables, words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Learners who are having trouble with word recognition underwent remedial through one-on-one reading session. This happens when at the beginning of the school year; the child is identified as at risk reader. As reading teachers, they start in letter and sound recognition. Children were expected to master the sound of each letter and let them practice as the school year starts. Mastering the sound of letters involves simple to complicated words.

After conducting a pre-assessment on reading, to identify my pupils reading ability, various reading materials were given depending on pupils needs like flashcards, marungko, booklets, claveria technique (picture reading). They utilized flascards, word wall, word drill and even makes use of picture clues which is a good strategy to confirm whether a word makes sense or not. Repeated reading as well is one way for early readers to learn and recognize words by sight as they see the words more often.

Fluency. Reading fluency is practiced through flashcards and charts starting to from the most common or easy words to complicated words, phrases and paragraphs. Constant practice is important to develop reading a speed and fluency. It was practiced throughout the school year. Learners who are coping in reading were always given schedule for one by one reading using phrases and short story according to their level and were recorded to trace learners' improvements. The teachers use books and reading passage and are given chance to read independently. Scanning is a quick way to specific information in a text without reading every single word. Skimming is searching the sentences of a page for does to the main idea. Remedial lesson were also given to learners with minimal fluency in reading.

Rewards such as stars, stickers and food were provided to motivate reading speed of learners. Start-If the learners have mastered word recognition. Throughout the duration of reading using flashcards and charts, recognitions were given to learners and session ends when the child had already developed reading speed and fluency. Using stopwatch during reading drills works for improving reading speed, which is also a major part of fluency while asking a child to read a given passage in a set time frame.

Comprehension. During the first and second quarter, teachers read stories to learners daily and let them answer questions about the story. Sometimes, teachers gave activities like retelling the story and sequencing events. In the last 2 quarters readers read stories and answer questions independently. Teachers continue reading to learners who have difficulty in reading independently and let them answer questions orally. The key to improve reading comprehensions is, understanding what is read. The art of questioning also helps enhance reading comprehensions. Reading comprehension starts when there are passages to be read to practice learners by asking questions even it is only a sentence so that it comes to their mind that simple sentences are understood. Telling a story, teachers also ask questions until learners

become independent reader and were able to comprehend.

Level of Reading Skills of Learners

The reading skills of early learners is their ability to understand written texts. It includes word recognition, speed and comprehension of the learners. Table 41presents the level of reading skills of early learners measured separately using different scale and rubric.

Word Recognition. This is the ability of learners to identify a written word by sight or by deciphering the relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters in written language. It can be seen on Table 4 that the learners have High (3.30) level of word recognition. This indicates that given the high level of word recognition skills, the goal of phonics is not that children be able to state the "rules" governing letter-sound relationships as mentioned in the article of Chard and Osborn (n.d.). Rather, the purpose is to get across the alphabetic principle, the principle that there are systematic relationships between letters and sounds.

Reading Speed. This is the rate at which a person reads written text (printed or electronic) in a specific unit of time. Reading speed is generally calculated by the number of words read per minute. Reading speed is determined

by a number of factors, including a reader's purpose and level of expertise as well as the relative difficulty of the text. The learners attained a Fast (3.26) level of reading speed as shown in Table 4. This indicates that with the use of the reading intervention strategies greatly contributed in enhancing the reading speed of early learners.

Reading Comprehension. Comprehension builds on vocabulary knowledge by allowing the reader to combine the meanings of the individual words to understand the overall text. The learner garnered a mean percentage score of 89.23 which indicates that they are on an Instructional level of comprehension. It implies the fast level of reading and high word recognition of learners contributes to their level of reading comprehension. Brown (2015) stated the reading requires the mastery, integration, and application of numerous skills and knowledge. Reading or learning to read is a combination of phonemic awareness; phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension which make it difficult to teach them in isolation. Learning to read is a developmental process. Most children follow a similar pattern and sequence of reading behaviors as they learn how to read from appreciation for and awareness to print to phonological and phonemic awareness to phonics and word recognition.

Relationship between Early Language Reading Intervention Strategies and Reading Skills of Learners

Coefficients	Reading Skills		
	Word Recognition	Reading Speed	Reading Comprehension
Pearson Correlation	.807**	.595**	.626**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.001
Ν	23	23	23
Pearson Correlation	.043	.438*	.011
Sig. (2-tailed)	.847	.036	.962
Ν	23	23	23
Pearson Correlation	.522*	.339	.556**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.113	.006
Ν	23	23	23
Pearson Correlation	.513*	.138	.473*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.529	.022
Ν	23	23	23
	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	Coefficients Word Recognition Pearson Correlation .807** Sig. (2-tailed) .000 N 23 Pearson Correlation .043 Sig. (2-tailed) .847 N 23 Pearson Correlation .522* Sig. (2-tailed) .011 N 23 Pearson Correlation .513* Sig. (2-tailed) .012	Coefficients Word Recognition Reading Speed Pearson Correlation .807** .595** Sig. (2-tailed) .000 .003 N 23 23 Pearson Correlation .043 .438* Sig. (2-tailed) .847 .036 N 23 23 Pearson Correlation .847 .036 N 23 23 Pearson Correlation .522* .339 Sig. (2-tailed) .011 .113 N 23 23 Pearson Correlation .522* .339 Sig. (2-tailed) .011 .113 N 23 23 Pearson Correlation .513* .138 Sig. (2-tailed) .012 .529

Correlation between Early Language Reading Intervention Strategies and Reading Skills

Reading Intervention Strategies		Reading Skills		
	Coefficients	Word Recognition	Reading Speed	Reading Comprehension
Reading Comprehen- sion	Pearson Correlation	.251	.578**	.935**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.248	.004	.000
	Ν	23	23	23

**Correlation significant at .01 level *Correlation significant at .05 level

The early language reading intervention strategies of teachers were hypothesized to have a relationship with the reading skills of learners. Table 5 presents the correlation analysis between the two variables.

Reading intervention for phonological awareness has high positive correlation with the learners' word recognition (r=.807, p=.000) and had moderate positive correlation with reading speed (r=.595, p=.003) and reading comprehension (r=.626, p=.001) all significant at .01 level. This indicates that more frequent use of reading intervention strategies targeting the phonological awareness of learners could positively result to higher level of reading skills.

Reading intervention for oral language had a moderate positive correlation with the learner's reading speed (r=.438, p=.036) significant at .05 alpha level. It indicates that the positive linear relationship existing between these variables result to higher level of reading speed of learners.

Reading intervention strategies focusing on learner's alphabet knowledge has a moderate positive correlation with word recognition (r=.522, p=.011) significant at .05 level and reading comprehension (r=.556, p=.006) significant at .01 level. This indicates that frequent use of reading intervention strategies improves the word recognition and comprehension of the learners.

Reading intervention strategies used to improve fluency had a moderate positive correlation with word recognition (r=.513, p=.012), reading speed (r=.437, p=.036) and comprehension (r=.473, p=.022) all significant at .05 level. It indicates that as the teacher use reading intervention strategies for fluency improves the reading skills of learners to a higher level.

Strategies for reading comprehension had a moderate positive correlation with reading speed (r=.578, p=.004) and a very high positive correlation with reading comprehension (r=.935, p=.000) both significant at .01 level. This indicates the reading intervention strategies positively increases the level of learner's reading speed and comprehension.

The researcher therefore concludes that the reading intervention strategies used by the teachers had a significant relationship with the reading skills of learners. Duff and Tomblin (2018) stated that learning to read also requires several skills. Early in reading development, children need to recognize letters, be aware of and able to manipulate sounds within words, and use conventions about the relationship between letters and their pronunciation. Children may enter school with poor skills in listening, speaking and/or phonological processing.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the researcher draws the following conclusions: First, typical teachers of Grade I in San Antonio always use reading intervention strategies in terms of oral language, alphabet knowledge and word recognition, and often use strategies for phonological awareness, fluency and comprehension. Second, the teachers use various activities exclusively for word recognition, fluency and reading comprehension. Third, the learners have high level of word recognition skills, fast readers and with an instructional level of comprehension. *Fourth*, a positive linear relationship exists between the reading intervention strategies and the learner's level of reading skills.

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