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Research Article

Unveiling The Teaching of Reading Skills at the Senior High Level: Perspectives from General Santos City Schools

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ABSTRACT

Several data from national and international tests have revealed the continued and unfortunate decline in reading proficiency among young Filipinos. Although many studies have already investigated this matter, few have dared to explore how higher levels of basic education are addressing the issue and preparing young Filipinos to be proficient readers for college. Hence, this qualitative research explored the teaching of reading skills at the senior high level and developed a survey questionnaire based on the themes that emerged from the interview data. Participants in the study included 14 teachers from three prominent schools in General Santos City. With a phenomenological approach, the researcher conducted key informant interviews using a developed and validated semi-structured interview schedule. The qualitative findings revealed three main dominant themes namely; the encountered challenges of the teachers, their practice of certain approaches and strategies in teaching reading skills, and their implementation of several intervention and remediation programs. The Dominant themes, emergent themes, subthemes, and codes, were then used as the basis for developing a survey questionnaire that had undergone reliability and validity testing. With the results, the research recommends revisiting the senior high curriculum and including intervention or remediation programs to aid struggling senior high readers and strengthen the reading skills of senior high students in general. Furthermore, the researcher encourages using the developed survey questionnaire to investigate the phenomenon further in a more generalizable population.

Keywords: *Approaches, Challenges, Interventions, Practices, Reading skills instruction, Remediation*

Introduction

Reading challenges have been a global problem in academia. Data from the United

States reveals a sobering reality: only 35% of fourth graders read at or above grade level, while 64% of eighth graders read below grade

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level (National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance, 2021). Similarly, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Highlights for 2022 underscore the persistent challenges faced by students in achieving proficiency in reading across various states and jurisdictions. With a substantial portion, ranging from 20% to 52%, performing below the NAEP Basic level, public school students nationwide exhibit a concerning trend, with 39% falling below proficiency standards (The Nation's Report Card, 2022).

This problem seems to date back to 2017. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2017), 617 million children and adolescents globally are not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. This alarming figure includes more than 387 million primary school-age children and 230 million lower secondary school-age adolescents. Surprisingly, two-thirds of these struggling learners are in school. Among the 387 million primary-age children unable to read proficiently, 262 million are in classrooms, and about 137 million adolescents of lower secondary age are in schools but still unable to meet minimum proficiency levels in reading. The Covid-19 pandemic seems to have exacerbated the situation. In 2020, the number of children with reading difficulties rose by more than 20%, reaching 584 million. This increase wiped out two decades of educational gains (Armstrong, 2021; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021).

This seems to be the case in the Philippines as well. Unfortunately, the Philippines has experienced a steep decline in English language skills for quite a while now, as seen in the results of various international and local tests conducted on Filipino students from high school to college. An article from EF Education First (2019) reported how the Philippines plummeted to 20th place from 14th place in the English Proficiency Index in 2018. Three years before that, Hopkins International conducted a study showing how the English proficiency level of Philippine college graduates was lower than the target English proficiency of high school students in Thailand and even cab drivers in Dubai (Oducado, 2020). In another recent data from the Programme for International Student Assessment in 2018, the

Philippines landed last in reading comprehension out of 79 countries (Mocon-Ciriaco, 2019). Some people believe that students in senior high or college no longer need curricula or programs that address their reading skills; however, the presented exams and investigations say otherwise.

Recent studies have raised significant concerns about reading skills in the Philippines, revealing a widespread issue of poor reading comprehension among students. Mercado and Manzano (2024) found that most Grade 7 students in their study were at the frustration level of reading comprehension, with only one (1) achieving independence. Similarly, Toyong and Toyong (2021) reported that 75.6% of their class was at the frustration level. Additionally, Tan (2023) further confirmed these findings, highlighting poor reading skills and limited vocabulary among students. Diga (2023) emphasized the impact of the educational attainment of reading facilitators at home and identified a significant correlation between family income and reading development. Furthermore, Galang et al. (2023) presented alarming data on college students, with none rated as independent readers. Taken together, these findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the reading challenges faced by students in the Philippines.

The Department of Education is aware of this problem leading to the implementation of several national and local reading programs that address the general English Proficiency problem of the country. Recent programs like the Every Child a Reader Program, Every Parent a Reading Teacher Program, and The Reading First program (Agao, 2016; Diaz-Sabado, 2021) have been implemented to cater to the reading needs of the students. At the senior high school level, English for Academic and Professional Purposes and Reading and Writing are two subjects that serve as the last straw for these high school students to improve their reading skills before they reach college. In these subjects, students are reviewed with the most basic reading skills and are encouraged to apply them to real-life scenarios to ensure that their skills are ready for college and the world of work.

Moreover, several schools took initiative and implemented effective interventions to address these reading problems. Mara (2024), in her study, emphasizes, improving reading performance by using diverse sources like books and the Internet. This is somehow supported by Moring et al. (2024) who found a strong correlation between reading interest and speed reading among Grade 11 STEM learners indicating that increased interest boosts comprehension, requiring varied and diverse reading materials in schools to cater to different reading interests. Repaso and Macalisang (2024) showed that the contextualized Marungko approach positively impacted Grade 1 reading performance, highlighting the need for contextualization. Using the Collaborative Learning Approach (CLA), Delima et al. (2024) also reported significant improvements in reading proficiency. Lastly, Ambubuyog et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of active listening for language learning, advocating teaching strategies that encourage participation. These studies demonstrate that diverse resources, contextualized materials, collaborative learning, and active listening effectively address reading challenges and improve skills.

Several studies have already evaluated and analyzed the curriculum of various reading programs in the Philippines, and some explored the implementation, practice, and needs of students, specifically in the Reading and Writing subject (Abeberese et al., 2011; Dela Rosa et al., 2018; Urbano et al., 2021). However, only a few studies explored how reading skills are still taught and addressed at the senior high level. Furthermore, even fewer studies used their findings to develop a valid and reliable survey to efficiently gather reliable and generalizable quantitative data regarding the context of teaching reading skills in senior high. Evaluative studies done through meticulous qualitative exploration are essential to understanding a phenomenon holistically. From there, teachers can develop programs to address problems and improve practice.

Given this, the researcher developed an interest in exploring the scenario of reading instruction at the senior high level. The focus of

the exploration was on aspects such as the student's current reading status, the practices of teachers/schools in teaching reading skills, and the needs of both teachers and students in teaching and learning reading. Furthermore, the findings from the exploration served as the basis for crafting a quantitative survey questionnaire that gathers broader and more generalizable data related to the phenomenon of interest. The results of this study could provide insight into the importance of continued emphasis on reading development in senior high and the need for reading remediation for senior high students.

Objectives

This qualitative research explored the teaching of reading skills at the senior high level and developed a survey questionnaire using the themes identified from the exploration. Specifically, the researcher aimed to answer the question;

1. How do the teachers describe the teaching of reading skills at the senior high level?
2. Based on the findings, what survey questions can be developed from the themes and codes?

Scope and Delimitation

This study focused only on the teaching of reading skills at the senior high level using a phenomenological research design. The researcher delimited the participants to 14 teachers from three of the biggest schools in the General Santos City Metro Area namely; General Santos City National Secondary School of Arts and Trades, Irineo L. Santiago National High School of Metro Dadiangas, and Dadiangas North High School. The selected participants were chosen as they satisfied the inclusion criteria, which were the following: they are senior high teachers from the mentioned schools, they are English subject teachers, and they have been teaching for at least three (3) years. Furthermore, the researcher only conducted key informant interviews with a semi-structured interview schedule to gather the qualitative data. The conduct of the research was also delimited only to the school year 2022-2023.

Significance of the Study

The themes identified in this study and the survey questionnaire developed from the findings could be beneficial to the following:

DepEd | Division of General Santos. Using the developed survey crafted in this study, the Department of Education Division of General Santos can easily and quickly gather significant insights regarding the status of teaching reading skills in senior High. Furthermore, the data from that survey can be the basis for crafting effective programs, interventions, projects, and curriculum revisions for the teaching of Reading skills in senior High.

Curriculum Developers. The data collected from this study could be the basis for curriculum developers at the local and national levels to revisit and reflect on the current Reading and general English language curriculum implemented at the senior high school level.

Senior High School Faculty. Schools, particularly their senior high school faculty, can use the data to get insights regarding teaching reading skills in their school. Furthermore, with the crafted survey from the identified themes, senior high faculty and schools can quickly assess and evaluate the teaching of reading skills in their schools.

English Teachers. With the study's findings, English teachers can have a basis for assessing performance in teaching reading skills to their senior high school students. Furthermore, with the identified themes on teaching reading skills to senior high students, teachers can evaluate or compare their experiences teaching reading skills in senior High.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Kintsch's Discourse comprehension Theory. Insua and Fadic (2020) elaborated this theory as a reading development model that starts with a bottom-up process and, in the later stages, adheres to the top-down model. The theory posits that integrating background knowledge about the topic, lived experiences, and reading comprehension techniques and strategies is essential for developing readers to advance into higher reading stages and comprehend higher-level reading materials. The principles stated in this theory are very relevant to the study to serve as a basis to confirm if the gathered qualitative data agree with the tenets of this theory. The theoretical paradigm (figure 1) utilizes the symbol of a magnifying glass signifying how the anchor theory is utilized to clarify the phenomenon. Magnifying glass is used if one is interested in critically analyzing a surface. With its metal or plastic frame and thick glass, the scenario or status of the specimen can be clarified. In this study, the frame of the magnifying glass represents the foundation of the ideas explored which is Kintsch's Discourse comprehension theory. The glass clarifies and specifies the aspects being explored while the center signifies the focus of the exploration. Furthermore, the elements in the glass part of the paradigm which are the challenges, approaches and strategies, and intervention and remediation, are theorized to clarify the phenomenon of teaching reading skills at the senior high level.

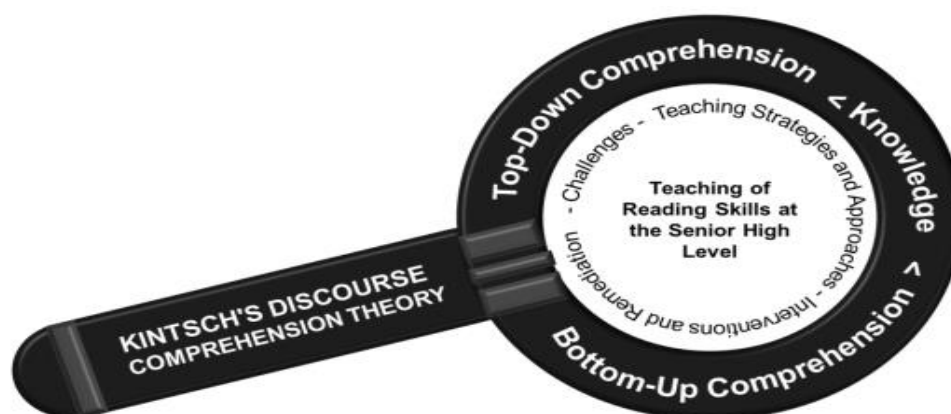


Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm of the Study

Methods

The research design of the study is a Phenomenological research design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) defined this design as a qualitative research design that aims to explore the phenomenon through the lived experiences of the participants. In this study, the researcher, described the status of Teaching Reading in the Senior High School, through the lived experiences of the participants.

Research Locale

The study was carried out in three public high schools in Metro Gensan: Dadiangas North High School, General Santos National Secondary School of Arts and Trades, and Irineo L. Santiago National High School of Metro Dadiangas. Despite having the smallest population, Dadiangas North High School thrived under Principal Wilhelm M. Sales. Irineo L. Santiago National High School is recognized for its Journalism Program, winning several competitions. General Santos National Secondary School of Arts and Trades is renowned for its exceptional vocational programs in the city and the region.

Participants of the Study

Senior high English teachers were the study's participants from the total population of 14 active teachers in the three schools, the researcher decided to ask all of them to participate in the study. The researcher used purposeful sampling to select the study's informants, specifically homogeneous sampling. To achieve homogeneity, the researcher made sure that the following inclusion criteria were satisfied by the informants: they are senior high teachers from the mentioned schools, they teach English subjects, and they have been teachers for at least three years.

Instruments

The researcher utilized a carefully designed semi-structured interview schedule to conduct key informant interviews. This schedule, comprising three main sections, aimed to establish rapport, conduct the interview, and conclude the session. Validity checks involving three reading studies experts ensured the schedule's appropriateness.

Data Gathering Procedures

Upon the board's approval, the researcher wrote a letter (request letter) to the school heads of the three schools, requesting permission to interview the teachers from their institution who qualified for the inclusion criteria. Upon agreement, the researcher identified the participants and sent them informed consent.

With a phenomenological design, the researcher conducted the qualitative phase by exploring the teaching of reading skills of fourteen (14) senior high school teachers from three big schools in Metro Gensan namely Dadiangas North High School, General Santos National Secondary School of Arts and Trades, and Irineo L. Santiago National High School of Metro Dadiangas. The participants were sampled using purposeful homogeneous sampling where all of them satisfied the following inclusion criteria; they are senior high teachers from the mentioned schools, they teach English subjects, and they have been teachers for at least three years. The data gathered was subjected to analysis using the Thematic analysis model of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Lastly, The researcher then developed a survey questionnaire from the themes that surfaced in the interview data. The developed questionnaire was also subjected to validity checking by four (4) expert validators, member checking (Triangulation) by some of the participants and two validators, and reliability testing using Cronbach Alpha.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the gathered qualitative data, the researcher used the six-stage-process thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). After transcribing the recorded data, the researcher then (1) familiarized the data by reading and re-reading highlighting important aspects of the interview data for a better understanding of the responses. The next stage of the analysis is the (2) coding stage. In the coding stage, the researcher labeled each answer of the participants in a way to describe the essence of their content.

Once the coding stage is done, polished, and revisited, the coded data was subjected to (3) sorting into their respective categories grouping them based on the patterns and similarities

between the codes. Once this stage is done, further sorting was conducted to classify the data under broader classifications called themes and the central concept that underpins these themes which is called the dominant theme. (4) The identified dominant themes, themes, categories, and codes were then reviewed. In this stage, some informants and two additional validators were invited to review the themes and share their suggestions and recommendations.

(5) Defining and naming themes was the fifth stage of the process which involved developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out their nature, and determining possible stories for each. The last stage is the (6) Writing up. In this stage, the themes, analytical narratives, and data extracts were contextualized weaved, and discussed together in the light of existing literature (Caufield, 2023).

Result and Discussion

The thematic analysis conducted on the key informant interview data has revealed several themes about the teaching of reading skills at the senior high level, The table 2 below presents the dominant themes, themes, and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data. Furthermore, the Cronbach Alpha reliability test result from the developed survey questionnaire is presented following the presentation of themes.

The dominant themes identified surrounding the central phenomenon of the teaching of reading skills at the senior high were Encountered Challenges, Practice of Strategies and Approaches, and Implementation of Intervention

and Remediation. Under the dominant theme Encountered Challenges, four themes emerged; these are Student Cognitive and Behavioral Challenges, Teacher-Specific Challenges, Student Reading Skill Specific Problems, and the Necessity of Intervention and Remediation. Furthermore, under the dominant theme of Practice of Approaches and Strategies, two themes emerged; Improving Reading skills with Dynamic Techniques and Implementing Holistic Approaches to Reading Instruction. Lastly, under the dominant theme of Implementation of intervention and remediation two themes emerged, these are School-Based Interventions and Teacher-Tailored Interventions.

Moreover, the diagram in Figure 1 presents an analysis of the relationship between identified themes and sub-themes. The central aspect of the framework revolves around the primary focus of the study, which is the teaching of reading skills at the senior high school level. Surrounding this central phenomenon are the sub-phenomena that have been explored, namely the challenges, practices, and interventions. The practices are illustrated as a cyclical process that revolves around the central phenomenon. However, the challenges, represented by a rectangular box emanating from the center, act as obstacles that impede the successful completion of this process. The arrow outlined with dotted lines signifies the absence or incomplete implementation of interventions, which could potentially assist in facilitating the completion of the teaching or reading skills process.

Table 1. Themes and Subthemes on the Teaching of Reading Skills at the Senior High Level

DOMINANT THEME	MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES
1. Encountered Challenges	1.1 Student Cognitive and Behavioral Challenges	1.1.1 Technology caused negative student Behavior
		1.1.2 Weak Processing of Ideas and Cognition
		1.1.3 Negative Emotional Drive for reading
	1.2 Teacher Specific Challenges	1.2.1 Demand for Emotional Control
		1.2.2 Burden of Teaching Demands
		1.2.3 Unmet Expectations of Students' Reading Performance
	1.3 Student Reading Skill Specific Problem	1.3.1 Basic Pronunciation and Reading aloud Problems with few extreme cases
		1.3.2 Weak Reading Comprehension

DOMINANT THEME	MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES
		<p>1.3.3 Needs improvement for Vocabulary, Grammar, and Mechanics</p> <hr/> <p>1.4 Necessity of Intervention and Remediation</p> <hr/> <p>1.4.1 Disregard of Reading intervention's the Significance to struggling senior high students</p> <hr/> <p>1.4.2 Missed positive opportunity of reading intervention impacts</p> <hr/> <p>1.4.3 Curriculum Limits the conduct of reading interventions and reading skill improvement</p> <hr/> <p>1.4.4 Curriculum Needs on Reading Skill Development</p>
<p>2. Practice of Approaches and Strategies</p>	<p>2.1 Improving Reading Skills with Dynamic Techniques</p> <hr/> <p>2.2 Implementing Holistic Approaches to reading instruction</p>	<p>2.1.1 Improving comprehension through Reading comprehension strategies</p> <hr/> <p>2.1.2 Improving vocabulary through interactive and cooperative activities</p> <hr/> <p>2.1.3 Improving Pronunciation through Active monitoring and scaffolding</p> <hr/> <p>2.2.1 Integration of teaching reading skills within and beyond english subject contexts</p> <hr/> <p>2.2.2 Using Dynamic and Interactive Learning Activities</p> <hr/> <p>2.2.3 Implementation of Differentiated Instruction</p> <hr/> <p>2.2.4 Active Usage of relevant Learning materials</p> <hr/> <p>2.2.5 Curricular Provisions on Reading Skill Development</p>
<p>3. Implementation of Intervention and Remediation</p>	<p>3.1 School Based Interventions</p> <hr/> <p>3.2 Teacher-Tailored Interventions.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Targeted Reading Interventions</p> <hr/> <p>3.1.2 Creating School Reading Culture</p> <hr/> <p>3.2.1 Individualized Reading Support</p> <hr/> <p>3.2.2 Personalized Interventions</p>

1. DOMINANT THEME 1: Encountered Challenges:

In examining the encountered challenges, the study identified several noteworthy issues affecting both students and teachers in the context of teaching and learning reading skills at the senior high school level.

1.1 Student Cognitive and Behavioral Challenges:

The students usually experience cognitive and behavioral challenges, affecting their reading skills. Teachers shared in the interview that although technology could be very useful in the teaching and learning process, it could also be one of the causes of disrupted learning, as the data shows that overuse of such could lead to a short attention span, low learning motivation, and low reading interest.

School 1. Informant 2. And then I do not let them use mobiles or cell phones. They have to bring the book because in doing. So nawawala ang attachment nila sa technology so they have to browse and they have to read the meaning of the certain word. (I encourage students to bring books instead of relying on mobile phones. This helps them disconnect from technology and encourages them to browse and understand the meaning of words while reading.)

School 2. Informant 1. The third one is because of social media, we are catering to 21st-century students, and they are involved so much in cell phones. So social media internet. Their...what do we call this one? (The third problem is the influence

of social media and the prevalence of internet usage among 21st-century students. They are highly engaged with their cell phones and various social media platforms.)

1.2 Teacher Specific Challenges:

Students are not the only ones who face challenges in teaching reading skills but also the teachers. Challenges such as the demand for emotional control, the added burden of reading teachers, and their unmet expectations of students' reading performance could be some of the factors that impact the teachers' ability to enhance students' reading skills effectively. The data also implies the need to deeply understand these challenges and develop strategies to create a more conducive environment for teachers to navigate the demands of their roles successfully.

School 1. Informant 2. *One of my main challenges is being able to lengthen my patience because in essence, as they are already senior high school, they have gone through how many faces of English almost ten years of English in their life. (One of my main challenges is maintaining patience as the students have already been exposed to English for almost ten years, especially in senior high school.)*

School 2. Informant 1. *It's challenging. Since we cater to different students, diverse students, their English skills or capabilities differ from each other. Since we are in a trade school we have technical vocational and academic students. So the academic expected, they are - what do we call it, they are on English subjects skilled in English. (Teaching English can be challenging because we have a diverse range of students with varying English skills and capabilities. In our trade school, we have both technical vocational, and academic students. The academic students are expected to be proficient in English subjects.)*

1.3 Student Reading Skill Specific Problems:

Pronunciation, comprehension, and vocabulary are the specific areas the students require focused instruction to enhance their overall

reading proficiency. The teacher somehow shared that the pandemic could be one of the causes of the students' reading skill-specific challenges. By tailoring their teaching strategies with the identified themes, teachers can successfully provide appropriate support to facilitate their growth in these critical areas of their reading skills.

School 1. Informant 2. *From pronunciation to context clues analysis, they find it hard to read, especially reading and writing. (From pronouncing words correctly to analyzing context clues, students often struggle with reading, especially when it comes to comprehension and writing.)*

School 2. Informant 1. *So, the problem is, that they still lack vocabulary. The grammar, the mechanics there, the use of punctuation, so many that we need to go back to junior high school. (The problem is that they still have a limited vocabulary and struggle with grammar, mechanics, and punctuation, which requires revisiting concepts from junior high school.)*

1.4 Necessity of Intervention and Remediation:

Teachers believe these needs exist because there is somehow disregard for reading intervention's significance in aiding struggling senior high readers. Furthermore, teachers believe that perhaps by addressing this need, the education sector must recognize the positive impacts this intervention can provide. In the interview, teachers shared that the current curriculum structure is the biggest reason why it is difficult for them to conduct these interventions and highlighted that the curriculum itself needs to strengthen its aspects that enhance students' reading skills.

School 3. Informant 2. *parang doon na sila they already assumed that these students who already in senior high school know or are already readers, yun yong assumption kasi galing na a junior, but they don't know that if only that we have in our competency okay that there should be a maybe a short on the vocabulary and then there must be on phonemic awareness, then there's comprehension siguro for one*

month. (There seems to be an assumption that senior high school students are already proficient readers, based on their previous education in junior high. However, it's important to recognize that there may be gaps in their vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and comprehension skills. It would be beneficial to dedicate at least a month to address these areas to support their reading development.)

School 2. Informant 2. *So we need to have interventions and it is also necessary because they will be graduating, they will be in college. Still, there's reading. No. It also helps the student to become productive and confident when they can speak like this they can communicate. Well, can speak the language very well because, through reading, they will learn. So it is very necessary for us teachers, who are teaching reading and English objects. (Interventions are crucial for students' reading skills as they approach graduation and college. Reading continues to be important for their confidence and communication abilities. As teachers, we must prioritize these interventions to support their language proficiency and overall growth.)*

2. DOMINANT THEME 2: Practice of Approaches and Strategies:

Under this Dominant theme, two main themes emerged regarding the practices of teaching reading skills to the senior high level; Improving Reading skills with Dynamic Techniques and Implementing Holistic Approaches to reading instruction.

2.1 Improving Reading Skills with Dynamic Techniques:

The teachers focus their reading instruction on the three specific reading sub-skills of comprehension, pronunciation, and vocabulary development. The themes identified also further imply that the improvement of reading skills in senior high students is achieved through comprehensive strategies. To improve comprehension, teachers shared that they introduce

outlining, noting details, summarizing, questioning, and inferencing, above all else. Unlocking difficult words, encouraging the use of a dictionary, and crafting group activities are some strategies teachers shared in developing the student's vocabulary. In terms of improving pronunciation, teachers use reading-aloud activities and models of proper pronunciation to scaffold actively and remediate students' pronunciation needs.

School 1. Informant 1. *I give them specific questions that would lead them to understand the text in particular. So for example, for this day I am just going to focus on noting details. So that's the only time that the students will be able to get the details of the true story. (I provide students with specific questions to help them understand the text better, focusing on noting details. This allows them to extract specific information from the true story.)*

School 3. Informant 1. *First, before reading, I have to give them guide questions and then because they have already the word list with the meaning under the vocabulary development. So, it would be easier for them to understand, the details of the text am presenting. And with that with a guide questions that I give, they will be able to anticipate. What would be the discussion all about? (Before reading, I provide students with guide questions and a word list with meanings to aid their understanding. This helps them grasp the details of the text more easily. The guide questions also allow them to anticipate the upcoming discussion.)*

2.2 Implementing Holistic Approaches to Reading Instruction:

Reading teachers recognize the significance of Integration, collaboration, and recognizing diversity to create more comprehensive and effective reading skill instruction. These themes suggest that the teacher realizes the potential of other students in helping their classmates advance their reading level by allowing them to tutor or collaborate with them in their reading activities. Furthermore, teachers shared that to

improve their students' reading skills, they encourage other teachers, regardless of subject, to consider incorporating reading strategies in their lessons and assessments. Moreover, as teachers from different subjects recognize the reading needs of the students, they are also keen to consider the students' diversity in terms of level, culture, learning style, and interest by providing differentiated instruction.

School 2. Informant 1. *Sometimes we intervention there are interventions, which are integrated into different subjects. So we asked the subject teachers if they are allowed to integrate reading subjects or reading practices or strategies so that continuous learning in reading. (We integrate reading interventions into different subjects and encourage subject teachers to incorporate reading practices and strategies. This ensures that students have continuous opportunities to improve their reading skills across various subjects.)*

School 3. Informant 1. *So, during that activity, sir during the activity, in reading, reading writing lessons, I have some strategies which are also used by some, like cooperative learning collaborative or some would say that is reciprocal teaching that you would be assigning in a small group. (During the reading and writing lessons, I employ strategies such as cooperative learning and collaborative activities. In some cases, I assign small groups to engage in reciprocal teaching.)*

3. DOMINANT THEME 3: Implementation of Intervention and Remediation:

Despite the general lack of intervention in the senior high curriculum, the informants shared some practices that could pass as some kind of intervention. These practices emerged into two main themes: School-based intervention and Teacher-Tailored Interventions.

3.1 School-Based Interventions:

Schools offering senior high programs somehow recognize the significance of implementing specific actions that support students' reading skills. Teachers shared that their schools somehow instruct them to identify

students with extreme reading needs and conduct interventions based on the diagnostic results. They perhaps only do this targeted intervention instead of having an approach with a larger reach because of the rigid structure of the senior high curriculum, limiting them from expanding the scope of the intervention to students with minor reading needs. Furthermore, other informants shared how their schools try to holistically improve students reading culture by implementing school-wide reading programs. They do this by systematically Implementing Peer Mentoring, Scheduling Reading times, Providing Reading Corners, and Integrating Reading Skills Improvement Across Subjects.

School 1. Informant 1. *So that's why in our, in our area, in the senior high school, we have this what we call reading corner where we put all the books, researches and all so that ourselves will be able to have that time to read. (In our senior high school, we have a reading corner where we keep books and research materials for the students to have dedicated time for reading.)*

School 3. Informant 3. *Na Let's say parang hindi naman nonreaders no parang not so proficient readers. Meron kasig reading programs din dito So if necessary. Na irefer sila they will be refereed there Yeah. Pero sa senior so far wala naman. (Let's say some students are not highly proficient readers, but we have reading programs in place to support them. If necessary, we can refer them to these programs for additional assistance. However, at the senior level, there hasn't been a need for such referrals so far.)*

3.2 Teacher-Tailored Interventions:

The teachers' crucial role in providing personalized support and interventions to address the specific reading needs of their students. Teachers shared that even though the curriculum does not require them, they still provide individualized reading support by calling students for individual one-on-one reading by providing reading enhancement schedules during the vacant time. They also share that they go the extra mile personalizing this

intervention by differentiating reading activities for struggling readers and appropriating reading materials to their needs. It could be inferred that teachers do this because the reading problems they see among their students demand the calling of their profession.

School 2. Informant 1. *But for myself as a teacher. Yes, I do it, especially in the technical vocational. Especially for the semester. What I do is I use the recess time. So for students that need intervention, okay, all of you I'm going to call their attention. So see me, I will be on the schedule, and we will have an intervention. (As a teacher, I take the initiative, particularly in the technical vocational subjects during the semester, to utilize recess time for intervention. I gather the students who require additional support and schedule specific intervention sessions with them.)*

School 2. Informant 2. *Now, we do a personal intervention if that student cannot read we give materials reading materials so that we or she can really read or comprehend well, sometimes our intervention is intervention, which is integrated into different subjects. (We provide individualized support to students who struggle with reading. We offer reading materials and extra assistance to help them improve their reading and understanding.*

These interventions are integrated into different subjects to ensure ongoing support and progress.)

Overall, the qualitative findings presented the landscape of teaching reading skills at the senior high level. The discovered dominant and emergent themes imply the continued practice of reading instruction even at the senior high school level. Furthermore, contrary to common belief, teachers are still concerned with the student's reading skills and employ strategies and approaches to improve them amid the challenges they and their students face. Moreover, it can be inferred from the data that there is a need to revisit the current senior high curriculum and add intervention and remediation programs at the senior high level, which could benefit struggling learners.

The themes that emerged from the study are congruent with the results of the study by Urbano et al. (2021) where he also explored the phenomenon of reading instruction in the senior high context. Similarly, his study also identified problems with grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary among the students of Metro Manila and suggested explicit instruction, a text-based approach, and the inclusion of authentic and collaborative tasks to address the identified challenges - techniques and strategies that also surfaced as themes in this study.

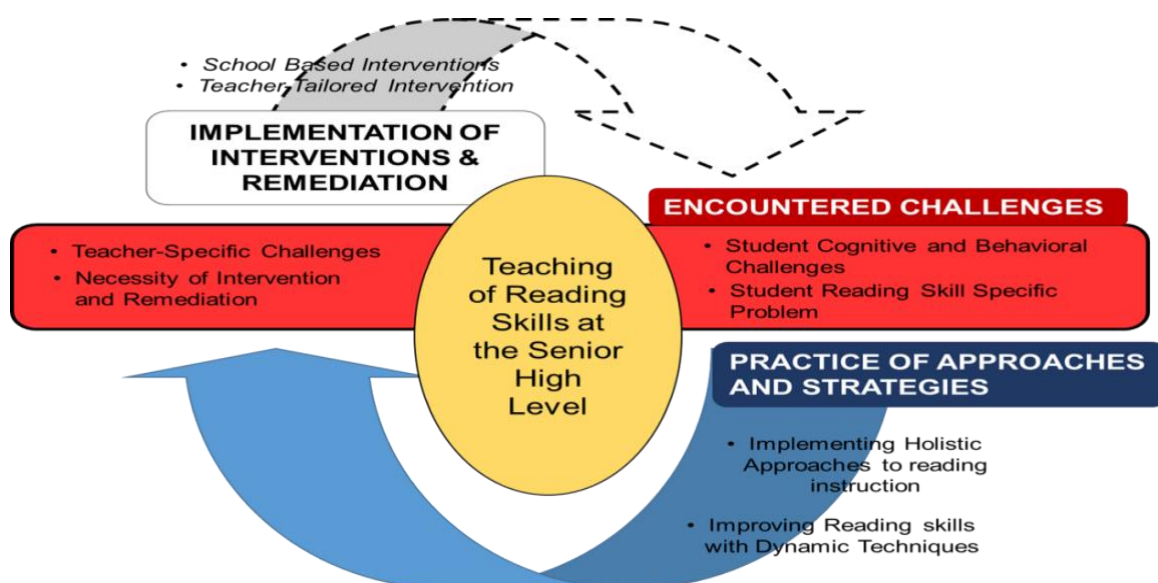


Figure 2. Simulacrum of the Study

Developed Survey Questionnaire Reliability Testing Result

The researcher developed a survey questionnaire based on identified qualitative themes, subthemes, and codes. This is done to allow further investigation of the phenomenon in a statistical approach and to encourage other schools to conduct their research-based assessments regarding their practice of teaching reading skills in their schools. This questionnaire, with two (2) main sections and three (2)

subparts, and a total of 40 items, used a 5-point Likert scale, addressing the challenges encountered, strategies and approaches practiced, and interventions implemented in teaching reading skills at the senior high school level. Two parts were combined in one section due to their focus on teachers' performance in teaching reading skills. The table below presents the relationship of the dominant themes, Main Themes, subthemes, and codes.

Table 2. From the Themes to the Developed Survey Questions

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1				
	MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES	CODES	Developed Survey Questions from the Themes
CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY TEACHERS	Student Mental and Behavioral challenges	<i>Technology caused negative student Behavior</i>	1. Students show too much reliance on the internet and social media	1. I observe that senior high students exhibit excessive reliance on technology and the internet, displaying a negative dependency.
			2. Students prefer more audio-visual material than textual (reading) because of technology	
		<i>Weak Processing of Ideas and Cognition</i>	3. Difficulty in summarizing and paraphrasing	2. I notice that the senior high students' ability to process higher-order thinking skills, such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating is often found to be lacking.
			4. Comprehension is limited to literal comprehension	
			5. Tends to perform literal translation	
			6. Inability to perform higher-order thinking functions	
		<i>Negative Emotional Drive for reading</i>	7. Students easily get bored reading	3. I observe a notable lack of interest in reading for leisure among senior high students.
			8. Low reading motivation	
			9. Weak reading practice	4. I see that senior high students rarely engage in reading to learn.
			10. Low reading interest	
	Teacher Challenges	<i>Demand for Emotional Control</i>	11. The emotional burden of maintaining patience	5. I frequently encounter difficulties in maintaining patience because of the amount of senior high students with reading difficulties.
			12. The challenge to sympathize and empathize with the students' reading struggles	
				6. I find it hard to sympathize with senior high students who experience reading difficulties.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1

MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES	CODES	Developed Survey Questions from the Themes
	<i>Burden of Teaching Demands</i>	13. Difficulty finding reliable teaching materials 14. Considering the all-encompassing impact of teaching reading skills 15. Considering student diversity (interest, strand, skill, level)	7. I greatly feel the burden of addressing the academic demand to enhance the reading skills of diverse and complex senior high learners.
	<i>Unmet Expectations of Students' Reading Performance</i>	16. Students are expected to successfully perform higher-order reading comprehension 17. Most students should have good pronunciation and enunciation 18. Most students should have a good vocabulary 19. Skill expectation based on the currently taken subject is unmet 20. Unmet teacher expectations	8. I can say that the actual performance of senior high school students falls short of my expected reading performance.
Student Reading Skill-Specific Problem	<i>Basic Pronunciation and Reading aloud Problems with few extreme cases</i>	21. Problematic pronunciation 22. Rare but very problematic pronunciation cases 23. Ethno-linguistic factored pronunciation problems 24. Extreme non-reading cases 25. Improper intonation 26. Problematic syllabication and stress	9. I can attest that critical pronunciation issues persist among the majority of senior high students when reading aloud.
	<i>Weak Reading Comprehension</i>	27. Most comprehensions difficulty starts at the phrasal level 28. Limited comprehension because of limited background knowledge 29. Limited comprehension because of limited vocabulary 30. Limited to literal comprehension	10. I can say that senior high students frequently encounter challenges with reading comprehension. 11. I observe that most senior high students just interpret the texts literally.
	<i>Needs improvement for Vocabulary, Grammar, and</i>	31. Needs improvement in vocabulary 32. Needs improvement in grammar	12. I notice that senior high students demonstrate weakness in their vocabulary, struggling to grasp

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1

MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES	CODES	Developed Survey Questions from the Themes
	<i>Mechanics</i>	33. Students have a weak vocabulary 34. Students have difficulty in word recognition of common words	and use a wide range of words effectively. 13. I think that senior high students demonstrate problematic grammar skills and knowledge of writing mechanics.
Necessity of Intervention and Remediation	<i>Disregard Reading intervention's Significance to struggling senior high students</i>	35. Reading interventions are only given to the junior high level 36. Diagnosing reading difficulty for intervention is emphasized in junior high school only 37. Lack of reading intervention program despite the need	14. I think that because of the unsatisfactory reading performance of the senior high students, other academic skills are also affected. 15. I observe no diagnostic assessments for students with reading difficulties at the senior high school level. 16. I can say that the importance of conducting school-based reading interventions for senior high school students is often disregarded.
	<i>Missed positive opportunity for reading intervention impacts</i>	38. Improvement of reading skills could have assisted other subject matters 39. Interventions could have successfully aided the acquisition of student's future college reading skill needs 40. Reading intervention is needed because of reading problems 41. Reading intervention is needed because reading improves other language aspects	17. I can say that because of the lack of reading intervention at the senior high level, an opportunity to impact the other skills of students is missed.
	<i>Curriculum Limits the conduct of reading interventions and reading skill improvement</i>	42. The curriculum has a limited time frame 43. Activities and assignments in the curriculum are controlled and structured 44. Curriculum requirements are too difficult	18. I think that the implementation of school-based and teacher-initiated reading interventions at the senior high level is hindered by curriculum-related challenges.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1

MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES	CODES	Developed Survey Questions from the Themes
		for most student's current skills	
		45. Curriculum Stranding makes intervention and teaching Reading skills more difficult.	
	<i>Curriculum Needs on Reading Skill Development</i>	46. There is a necessity for appropriate reading materials for students	19. I notice many senior high students with a great need for reading intervention.
		47. There is no reading intervention and remediation for senior high school	20. I can attest that there is a great need to incorporate reading interventions at the senior high level.
		48. Needs of objective assessment of reading skills to undergo students through reading interventions	
		49. Necessity of reading interventions for students with extreme reading needs.	
		50. Needs for Reading Intervention because of the pandemic.	

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PART 2

MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES	CODES	QUESTIONS FOR THE SURVEY BASED ON THE THEMES
PRACTICE OF STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES	<i>Improving Reading skills</i>	1. Noting Details	1. Teachers aim to enhance students' comprehension skills by instructing them to summarize texts and identify the main idea. 2. Teachers provide instruction on creating graphic organizers, outlining techniques, and note-taking strategies to facilitate a better understanding of texts and lessons. 3. Teachers offer guidance through the use of guide questions or by encouraging students to ask questions about the lesson or
		2. Outlining	
		3. Graphical Representations	
		4. Getting the Main Idea	
		5. Summarizing	
		6. Paraphrasing	
		7. Asking Questions	

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PART 2

MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES	CODES	QUESTIONS FOR THE SURVEY BASED ON THE THEMES
			reading materials, promoting deeper processing of their meaning.
	<i>Improving vocabulary through interactive and cooperative activities</i>	8. Identifying Context Clues 9. Using of dictionaries 10. Unlocking Of Difficulties (discussion of difficult words) 11. Cooperative Vocabulary Learning	4. Teachers introduce difficult words in texts before reading, ensuring students are familiar with them to facilitate comprehension. 5. Teachers consistently remind students to use dictionaries to expand their vocabulary and learn new words. 6. Teachers use creative and engaging activities to help students learn new words effectively.
	<i>Improving Pronunciation through Active monitoring and scaffolding</i>	12. Improving phonics instruction through reading aloud 13. Polishing phonemic awareness through in-class oral reading 14. Remediating pronunciation through modeling	7. Teachers actively correct students when they mispronounce words, assisting them in improving their pronunciation skills.
Approaches to reading instruction	<i>Integration of teaching reading skills within and beyond English subject contexts</i>	15. Integrating reading into assessments 16. Integration of reading activities to different topics 17. Integrating reading into different subjects	8. Teachers in subjects unrelated to English also contribute to the improvement of students' reading skills. 9. Teachers in other subjects help students with reading difficulties by providing assistive activities.
	<i>Using Dynamic and Interactive Learning Activities</i>	18. Implementing Peer-Instruction 19. Peer Tutoring 20. Group Reading 21. Guided Collaborative Learning 22. Collaborative Reading 23. Multi-Staged Activities	10. Teachers implement interactive reading development strategies like Peer Tutoring and Guided Collaborative Reading. 11. Teachers use many activities for a single lesson to encourage collaboration and help develop their reading skills.
	<i>Implementation of Differentiated Instruction</i>	24. Interactive class discussion 25. Students' involvement in choosing teaching	12. Teachers cater to the different interests of students by offering a variety of activities to enhance their

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PART 2

MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES	CODES	QUESTIONS FOR THE SURVEY BASED ON THE THEMES
		strategies. 26. Localizing stories to improve the interest of students 27. Simplifying and shortening activities 28. Usage of level-appropriate reading materials 29. Varying teaching strategies based on strand 30. Varying teaching strategies based on subjects 31. Considering learning styles 32. Considering student's level in giving activities 33. Considering students interests	reading skills. 13. Teachers consider the current skills of the students in giving reading materials and reading activities. 14. Teachers vary strategies depending on students' strands and grade level.
	<i>Active Usage of relevant Learning materials</i>	34. Usage Of relevant reading books and references 35. Usage Of technology in the lessons 36. Usage Of dictionary for vocabulary improvement	15. Teachers utilize books, technology, and engaging materials to create a stimulating learning environment for improving reading skills.
	<i>Curricular Provisions on Reading Skill Development</i>	1. The curriculum requires good reading skills to accomplish its target competencies 2. Reading skill development (mostly comprehension) is embedded in the curriculum 3. There is a difference in reading skill performance based on strands 4. Phonemic awareness and phonics are still taught occasionally 5. There is more focus on higher-order thinking skills	16. The school/curriculum has lessons in both English and non-English subjects that are beneficial in the development of their reading skills.
IMPLEMENTATION OF	School-Based Interventions	<i>Targeted Reading Interventions</i>	1. Conducting Interventions only for students with extreme reading needs 17. The school implements a program where struggling senior high readers are identified and are given assistance to improve their

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PART 2				
MAIN THEMES	SUBTHEMES	CODES	QUESTIONS FOR THE SURVEY BASED ON THE THEMES	
		2. Conducting interventions based on reading needs diagnostic results	reading skills.	
	<i>Creating School Reading Culture</i>	3. Conducting FIL-ERI	18. The school fosters a reading culture that encourages students to read by designating reading time, providing ample reading materials, creating reading corners, and others.	
		4. Implementing Peer Mentoring		
		5. Scheduling Reading times		
		6. Providing Reading Corners		
		1. Integrating Reading Skills Improvement Across Subjects		
Teacher-Tailored Intervention	<i>Individualized Reading Support</i>	2. Calling students for individual one-on-one reading	19. Teachers often take the initiative to call upon struggling senior high readers during free time to give additional support in improving their reading skills.	
		3. Providing reading schedules - during vacant time		
	<i>Personalized Interventions</i>	4. Personalizing reading activities for students with reading difficulties		20. Teachers prepare reading materials or reading kits specifically designed for senior high students who struggle with reading.
		5. Providing reading materials for students with reading difficulties		

The survey questionnaire developed to assess the challenges, strategies, and interventions in teaching reading skills at the senior high school level underwent strict validation by four validators, including a psychologist, and

rigorous reliability testing, with results indicating high internal consistency for both sections, as evidenced by the Cronbach's Alpha values presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability Testing Result for the Survey Questionnaire Developed from the Themes and Sub-themes

Sections	Parts	N of Items	CronBach's Alpha	Interpretation
1	A. Challenges Encountered by Teachers Questionnaire	20	.967	Highly Reliable
2.	B. Practice of Strategies and Approaches	20	.941	Highly Reliable
	C. Implementation of intervention and Remediation			

For Section 1, which addresses the challenges encountered by teachers, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.967 was recorded, reflecting an exceptionally high level of reliability. This suggests that the 20 items in this section are

highly consistent in measuring the various obstacles teachers face, demonstrating that the items are well-aligned with the theme and effectively capture the challenges stably and predictably.

Similarly, Section 2, which evaluates the practice of strategies and approaches, also displayed a high-reliability score with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.941. This strong internal consistency indicates that the items effectively assess the strategies and approaches employed by teachers, capturing the diversity and consistency in teaching methods. The reliability scores above 0.9 for both sections affirm that the questionnaire is a valid and dependable tool for measuring the intended constructs, providing a comprehensive overview of the challenges and practices in teaching reading skills.

Overall, the high-reliability scores suggest that the questionnaire is robust and reliable for assessing the specified areas, ensuring consistent and dependable data collection. This consistency in responses underscores the clarity and relevance of the questionnaire items, ensuring that the instrument effectively covers the intended themes. These results support the use of this questionnaire in further research, enabling researchers to gather reliable data and draw credible conclusions about the effectiveness of strategies and the nature of challenges in teaching reading skills at the senior high school level.

Conclusion

In conclusion, contrary to other assumptions, teachers still employ strategies and approaches to improve the reading skills of senior high students because of the reading challenges faced by students and despite the challenges experienced by the teachers. Moreover, there is a need to consider providing intervention and remediation since participants reported minimal practice thereof. Teachers also face significant challenges most importantly on students' misuse of technology, lack of reading interest, student's weakness in language skills, and minimal practice of intervention at schools. Additionally, teachers highly adhere to common teaching practices and strategies among reading teachers, indicating a strong foundation for effective instruction. From the interview data, it can also be seen that the schools and some teachers take significant steps in addressing the needs of struggling senior high

students by providing interventions and remediation. However, there is a need to strengthen this aspect of reading instruction at the senior high level since it is a neglected aspect of the curriculum in general. Despite the personal challenges they face, teachers still do their best to provide proper reading instruction to their struggling students. Some of them even extend effort by providing intervention and remediation even if these were not mandated by the curriculum. Furthermore, the data strongly implies the need to provide school-based interventions to address, once and for all, the reading challenges of senior high students.

Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations emerge. Since the gathered data indicated the need for reading intervention at the senior high school level, policymakers at the division level should try to address this need by first recognizing that there is one and then requiring senior high schools to craft one. Additionally, Curriculum developers from the local and national level could use this research as the basis for curriculum reflection and revision most importantly now when the k-12 curriculum is being revisited. Developers may consider including more and better curriculum provisions on improving reading skills to address the still-existing problem of reading difficulties at the senior high level. Faculties can also use the developed research instrument to assess the status of teaching reading skills in their school and then develop a reading intervention and remediation program based on the results of their assessment. Moreover, English teachers can strengthen their practice of modeling proper reading skills and consider practicing the use of teacher-tailored intervention for struggling readers. Since the data indicates the ongoing presence of reading challenges among senior high students, English teachers must now consider adopting such interventions to aid the performance of these students. Furthermore, future researchers can improve from this study by using the survey questionnaire developed to evaluate the status of teaching reading skills in their schools. The developed survey questionnaire can be revised to

make it appropriate for student and teacher respondents. Moreover, future researchers are encouraged to use the developed questionnaire as a measure for conducting correlations and comparisons in testing for the effectiveness of intervention and remediation programs.

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