

Reading and Comprehension Skills of Primary Learners in Selected Elementary School

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Abstract— The purpose of the study was to determine the reading skills of primary learners in Menzi Elementary School, Isabela City, Basilan Province, Philippines. A descriptive-quantitative research design was used and respondents were selected through stratified random sampling according to gender. There were 80 males and 74 females in primary levels on which 66 males (51.60%) and 62 females (48.40%) were selected as respondents for the study. Out of 128 respondents, 53 learners (41.40%) have self-employed parent or guardian, 39 learners (30.50%) have unemployed parent or guardian, 16 learners (12.50%) have government employee parent or guardian, 13 learners (10.20%) have private employee parent or guardian, and 7 learners (5.50%) have OFW parent or guardian. Most of the respondents are Yakan speaker learners (40.50%), followed by Binisaya speaker learners (25.80%) and the Tausug speaker learners (23.40%), and then the rest are Chavacano (7.80%) and Tagalog (2.30%) speaker learners. The oral reading and silent reading skills of primary learners were both on frustration level, while the listening comprehension of the primary learners are on instructional level. Gender of primary learners are significant but not on learners' parent/guardian occupation on all three areas such as oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension. On mother tongue spoken, it is significant on oral reading but not significant on two areas such as silent reading and listening comprehension.

Keywords— Comprehension Level, Listening Comprehension, Oral Reading, Phil-IRI, Primary Learners, Reading Skills, Silent Reading.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a skill that is critical in the educational success of all individuals. Indeed, reading is a lifelong skill to be used both at school and throughout life. According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson [2], reading is an essential life skill, a cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Without reading well, personal fulfillment and job success opportunities will inevitably be lost.

The Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution emphasizes education as one of the integral components in building a community and a nation eventually. This law stipulates that the state shall promote quality education at all levels. Hence, one of the crucial aspects of the educative process is reading. This skill is an indispensable part of education; student learn many things when they read. Reading widens and deepens the mind and soul of the reader. At the same time, it can significantly contribute to the learning and knowledge of the reader from experience to reflection. Therefore, reading must start with children earlier or younger age. They will certainly acquire an invaluable tool that will enable them to discover priceless treasures in life.

The most challenging in any educational system is reading despite its importance. The National Achievement Test result reveals that percentage gains in the learners' achievement were recorded exceptionally on Science and Math but less on language and reading [24]. This result is coherent with the current situation where a percentage of pupils in the intermediate grades were assessed as slow-readers. Moreover, it is still a reality that children are slow readers or poor in reading [15]. For instance, in Menzi Elementary School, it was observed by the reading teacher that pupils who are in the intermediate grade still need to practice more in reading and monitor their progress. Initial data shows that 7 out of 11 pupils in grade four, 5 out of 7 pupils in grade five, and 10 out of 13 pupils in grade six enrolled in the reading remediation program were observed to be slow readers. It means that they have difficulty in distinguishing letter sounds and would only second guess their answer in comprehension check.

The Department of Education (DepEd) Order 14, series 2018, supports the assertion to make "every child a reader and a writer" at their grade level. Thus, through the Bureau of Learning Delivery-Teaching and Learning Division (BLD-TLD), the DepEd has continued developing programs such as the administration of the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assessment to students in public elementary schools nationwide effective School Year 2018-2019. This classroom-based assessment tool aims to measure and describe the learners' reading performance in English and Filipino languages in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension. Learners will be classified as frustrated, instructional, and independent learners.

Another relevant law on reading is DepEd Order 12 series 2015, which supports the President's Ten-Point Basic Education Agenda, which outlines that "every child should be a reader by Grade 1". This order includes strengthening DepEd's reading program by implementing the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program. The Program will develop Filipino children's literacy and numeracy skills and attitudes, contributing to lifelong learning. More specifically, it aims to improve Kinder's reading and numeracy skills to Grade 3 pupils, following K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, and institute a sustainable and cost-effective professional development system for teachers.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The major problem guiding this study is determining the reading skills of primary learners in Menzi Elementary

School. The following are the three specific research questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Gender,
 - b. Parent/Guardian Occupation; and
 - c. Mother Tongue Spoken?
2. What is the readings skills of primary learners in Menzi Elementary School, in terms of:
 - a. Oral Reading,
 - b. Silent Reading,
 - c. Listening Comprehension?
3. Are there differences in reading skills (oral reading, silent reading, listening comprehension) of primary learners when data are grouped according to:
 - a. Gender;
 - b. Parent/Guardian Occupation; and
 - c. Mother Tongue Spoken?

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Reading Skills

The National Council of Teachers of English (2004) defined reading as “a complex and purposeful socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistics process in which readers simultaneously use their knowledge of the verbal and printed dialect, their knowledge of the topic of the text, and their knowledge of their culture to construct meaning with text.” Children with normal or above average language skills learn reading in a relatively predictable way. Children have experience motivating early childhood and making it possible to deal with literacy. Through the opportunity to learn letters and understand the internal structure of spoken language, you will learn about the nature of pressure and explain the contrast between spoken and written language (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). However, from the psycholinguistic point of view, reading is not primarily a visual process but also includes the non-visual process. The visual approach is information from the printed pages, and the non-visual comes from the reader's brain (Ngabut, 2015). Reading impacts literacy attainment (Clark & Akerman, 2006) and an important gateway to personal development and social, economic, and civic life (Holden, 2004).

Reading is one of the most inspiring parts, specifically at the primary level. The learners' attitudes influence their reading ability, but teachers can help through proper reading strategies [14]. These attitudes and beliefs are necessary to understand the thinking process [4]. However, the teacher's views about the content and method of teaching are deeply embedded in teachers constituting a solid background for their instructional behavior [4].

According to Sanacore [22], reading is predicated on developing a love of reading. Furthermore, some studies show that promoting reading can significantly impact children and is positively related to literacy benefits. For example, reading has a positive correlation with reading attainment and writing ability, text comprehension and grammar [8], breadth of vocabulary [11], reading attitudes [11], greater self-confidence as a reader [11], and pleasure reading in later life [1].

Moreover, reading also increases the general knowledge [10], understanding of other cultures [16], community participation [7], and insight into human nature and decision-making [5].

Oral Reading vs. Silent Reading

Oral reading is an act of reading printed or written text aloud. It is the ability to read connected text quickly, accurately, and with expression [21]. Teachers used oral reading to assess students' reading accuracy, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, and understanding of punctuation. On the other hand, silent reading is an act of reading printed or written text silently, that is, reading with the mind without uttering the words. Silent reading develops students' understanding because it helps them concentrate on reading rather than the pronunciation of individual words. Silent reading may form as mental pictures of the topic being discussed. Also, encouraging the students to read silently, will help them develop the strategies they need for reading fast and with better comprehension. Silent reading efficiency help your students to read any text with maximum attention to meaning. Silent reading also helps develop reading skills for a purpose of understanding the content without paying attention to the pronunciation [3].

There is controversy for professionals in reading about the benefits of oral reading vs. silent reading instruction but the dichotomy of oral and silent reading was. It was pointed out that teachers shouldn't just focus on silent reading but should also find ways to increase oral reading effectiveness for Learners. Therefore, therapeutic balance on oral and silent reading instructions should be placed [6].

Comprehension Skills

The comprehension skill is about acquiring the correct meaning, analyzing the author's point of view and applied the learning into real-life situations. Comprehension skill is a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with the text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experiences, information in the passages, and the reader's standpoint about the text [20].

Now-a-days, students are very much exposed to different ideas and viewpoints rapidly increase whenever society changes. In the Philippines, as a nation, almost everybody enjoys a high literacy rate. But, unfortunately, not all Filipinos have good reading and comprehension skills who can derive meaning from written material. Thus, good reader must possess the ability to interpret the facts beyond its meaning.

A student can succeed in all their educational goals if they can read comprehensively. When a learner encounters a problem in Mathematics, understanding this problem can help them solve the problem. In the Philippines, many of the University and high school entrance examinations have questions based on testing learners' ability to read comprehensively and come up with new interpretations by making analyses and synthesizing the given data in the many research tasks.

Comprehension is a communication process of getting the author's thoughts into the reader's mind. It is a complex process because the transmission of an idea passes through

several defective media. For instance, the author has a clear picture in his mind and then reduces the idea to written and printed language, and then, the reader will read at the printed word and forms an opinion.

Listening Comprehension

The ability to receive, understand, interpret and respond to verbal and non-verbal messages from the other person is called listening. Communication skills are more comprehensive, and listening comprehension is part of it with multiple comprehension processes in language that are connected to the cognitive development of memory, attention, vocabulary, and grammar. Thus, listening is about the interpretation of spoken language. However, listening is not about hearing. Hearing is a physiological order, while listening is an interpretative order. Hearing is a passive process that perceives sounds, but listening is an active process that interprets sounds from verbal and non-verbal actions. This means that listening is about the information received from hearing that is analyzed and interpreted, creating your concepts, opinions, and comments on what is heard. Listening comprehension skills can be distinguished into four types. The first is about connecting and recognizing the components of a message. The second is about selecting the essential words in the statement. The third is about interpreting or understanding the information heard [19].

Informal Reading Inventory

The informal reading inventory (IRI) is an example of classroom reading assessment commonly used to measure students' comprehension [26]. The IRI is a leveled text containing a group of vocabulary ranging from easy to difficult [23]. This reading assessment method is used to determine the reading level of the learners composing of leveled passages based on the learner's context. For example, the teachers may use the appropriate selection for each student using word lists, and then the teacher will ask the learners to read the passages either loudly or silently. In some cases, the teacher may read the passage and ask the student several questions which require the student to recall information to assess the listening comprehension [18]. Thus, the student's understanding is determined based on their ability to answer questions in listening comprehension. There are many advantages to using the IRI. First, it allows the teachers to identify the instructional level of each learner so that the most appropriate instruction will be provided [18]. Second, it helps the teachers assess students' reading interests and background knowledge about the topic [13]. Third, it provides the teachers with the necessary data to prepare and apply instructional interventions. Lastly, it serves as contributing factor for teachers to identify the educational needs of the learners.

In particular, the DepED adopted the IRI and developed the so-called Phil-IRI. The Phil-IRI can be used to determine the reading level of the whole class and identify specific students that need assistance in performing the reading task. There are three types of literary functions in Phil-IRI: Oral Reading, Silent Reading, and Listening comprehension. The Phil-IRI is administered individually to all students in grades 3

to 6 using the Group Screening Test (GST) in Filipino and English for grades 4 to 6 (The Phil-IRI Manual 2018).

IV. METHODOLOGY

This research will be using the Descriptive-Quantitative Research Design. The subject of the study will be the primary learners at Menzi Elementary School, Isabela City, Basilan Province, Philippines, specifically those learners in grade two and grade three levels. This school has a total population of 556 learners, of which 154 belong to the primary level.

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is a tool to measure and describe learners' reading and comprehension performance at the Elementary level (The Phil-IRI Manual 2018). The Phil-IRI is a tool to determine whether the students reading abilities are the same, above or below their grade level. It is not intended for remediation but as oral reading diagnosis test. The diagnostic results will guide the teacher in performing appropriate interventions. The Phil-IRI reading test uses a predetermined set of criteria to identify each student's reading level for each passage. These criteria include the percentage of word recognition accuracy and correct answers to comprehension questions. Table 1 shows the criteria of scoring the Phil-IRI.

TABLE I. Phil-IRI Oral Reading Score

Level	Word Reading Score (in %)	Comprehension Score (in %)
Independent	97-100%	80-100%
Instructional	90-96%	59-79%
Frustration	89% and below	58% and below

The Phil-IRI instrument is a national standardized reading assessment tool that all public elementary schools have utilized since 2013. Experts have validated this instrument and is suited for elementary learners throughout the country. Thus, the reliability of this instrument has already been established.

The data used in the study were taken from the existing Phil-IRI result recorded by the advisers of Grade 1 to Grade III in Menzi Elementary School. Moreover, the socio-demographic profile of each learner were also taken from the adviser such as gender and mother tongue spoken. However, the additional demographic profile such as parent/guardian occupation was identified or taken using text messages from the adviser. There was no face-to-face contact with the students since the data is available through the adviser of each grade level.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socio-Demographic Profile

The following table shows the frequency distribution of the respondents when they are grouped according to some demographic profile.

The majority of the respondents were males (51.60%). Most of the parent's/guardian's occupation of respondents are self-employed (41.40%) and followed by unemployed (30.50%). Most of the respondents are native speaker which is Yakan (40.60%) followed by those Binasyaya speaker.

TABLE II. Frequency distribution of respondents grouped according to socio-demographic profile

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Gender			
Male	66	51.60%	1
Female	62	48.40%	2
Parent/Guardian Occupation			
Self Employed	53	41.40%	1
Private Employee	13	10.20%	4
OFW	7	5.50%	5
Government Employee	16	12.50%	3
None	39	30.50%	2
Mother Tongue Spoken			
Tausug	30	23.40%	3
Yakan	52	40.60%	1
Binisaya	33	25.80%	2
Chavacano	10	7.80%	4
Tagalog	3	2.30%	5
TOTAL	128	100.0 %	

Reading Skills Level

The following table shows the respondents' mean score distribution on reading skills.

TABLE III. Mean score of the respondents on reading skills

Reading and Comprehension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Oral Reading Level
Oral Reading	68.86	13.86	Frustration
Silent Reading	71.41	12.29	Frustration
Listening Comprehension	72.70	11.75	Instructional

Data shows that the respondents are both on frustration level in oral and silent reading but on instructional level in listening comprehension.

The next table shows the respondents' mean score distribution on comprehension and reading skills when they are grouped according to gender.

TABLE IV. Mean score of the respondents on reading skills and listening comprehension when they are grouped according to gender

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	Oral Reading Level
Oral Reading			
Male	65.76	13.55	Frustration
Female	72.18	13.53	Frustration
Silent Reading			
Male	67.76	12.92	Frustration
Female	75.29	10.34	Frustration
Listening Comprehension			
Male	69.18	12.05	Instructional
Female	76.44	10.25	Instructional

Under oral reading and silent reading, both males and females are on frustration level while on listening comprehension, both males and females are on instructional level.

The next table shows the respondents' mean score distribution on comprehension and reading skills when they are grouped according to parent/guardian occupation.

Similarly, under oral reading and silent reading, regardless of the parent's/guardian occupation of the respondents, they are all on frustration level. However, under the listening comprehension, respondents' oral reading level regardless of

the occupation of their parents or guardian, are all on instructional level.

TABLE V. Mean score of the respondents on reading skills and listening comprehension when they are grouped according to parent's/guardian's occupation

Parent/Guardian Occupation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Oral Reading Level
Oral Reading			
Self Employed	70.06	13.65	Frustration
Private Employee	60.08	11.18	Frustration
OFW	63.00	11.63	Frustration
Government Employee	73.75	15.61	Frustration
None	69.23	13.62	Frustration
Silent Reading			
Self Employed	72.45	12.36	Frustration
Private Employee	67.69	8.95	Frustration
OFW	64.57	9.90	Frustration
Government Employee	72.56	12.46	Frustration
None	71.97	13.33	Frustration
Listening Comprehension			
Self Employed	73.30	11.50	Instructional
Private Employee	69.08	10.18	Instructional
OFW	65.43	11.84	Instructional
Government Employee	75.00	12.22	Instructional
None	73.44	12.20	Instructional

The next table shows the respondents' mean score distribution on comprehension and reading skills when they are grouped according to mother tongue spoken.

TABLE VI. Mean score of the respondents on reading skills and listening comprehension when they are grouped according to mother tongue spoken

Mother Tongue Spoken	Mean	Standard Deviation	Oral Reading Level
Oral Reading			
Tausug	71.30	11.73	Frustration
Yakan	71.40	11.05	Frustration
Binisaya	62.73	15.55	Frustration
Chavacano	63.00	18.43	Frustration
Tagalog	87.67	10.97	Frustration
Silent Reading			
Tausug	70.23	11.86	Frustration
Yakan	71.56	10.85	Frustration
Binisaya	70.42	15.01	Frustration
Chavacano	73.60	11.90	Frustration
Tagalog	84.00	2.65	Frustration
Listening Comprehension			
Tausug	71.27	11.79	Instructional
Yakan	72.87	10.70	Instructional
Binisaya	72.24	13.06	Instructional
Chavacano	73.60	13.15	Instructional
Tagalog	86.00	4.00	Independent

Data shows that regardless of mother tongue of the respondents, under the oral and silent reading, they are all on frustration level. However, under the listening comprehension, those Tagalog mother tongue speaker respondents are on independent level while other mother tongue speaker respondents are on instructional level.

Difference on Some Demographic Profile On Gender of the Respondents

A Shapiro-Wilk Test has been computed to determine the normality of the data set. The next table shows the findings for

normality test of the data set when they are grouped according to gender.

TABLE VII. Computed Shapiro-Wilk Test for test of Normality of the Data when grouped according to gender

Comprehension and Reading Skills	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Oral Reading	0.924	128	0.000
Silent Reading	0.890	128	0.000
Listening Comprehension	.890	128	0.000

Because the p-value (Sig.) are less than 0.05 for oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension, it follows that for the three areas, the the data set are not normally distributed. Thus, t-test cannot be used to test the significant difference between the score of respondents when they are grouped according to gender. Hence, the Mann-Whitney U-test is the most appropriate test for the given data set.

The next table shows the U-value and p-value of the comprehension and reading skills score of the respondents when they are grouped according to gender.

TABLE VIII. Computed U-value and p-value of the reading skills scores of the respondent when they are grouped according to gender

Comprehension and Reading Skills	U-value	p-value	Interpretation
Oral Reading	1529.50	0.014	Significant
Silent Reading	1326.50	0.001	Significant
Listening Comprehension	1317.50	0.000	Significant

The p-value for all areas are less than 0.05 which shows significant difference between male and female on all areas of the comprehension and reading skills of the respondents. As shown in Table 4, female respondents have higher score compared to male respondents in all areas such as oral reading, silent reading, listening comprehension. While the oral reading level of both male and female are the same but there is slight difference on the score on which female is quite better than the male in all areas such as oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension.

On Parent/Guardian Occupation of the Respondents

A Shapiro-Wilk Test has been computed to determine the normality of the data set. The next table shows the findings for normality test of the data set when they are grouped according to parent/guardian occupation.

TABLE IX. Computed Shapiro-Wilk Test for test of Normality of the Data when grouped according to parent/guardian occupation

Comprehension and Reading Skills	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Oral Reading	.924	128	0.000
Silent Reading	.890	128	0.000
Listening Comprehension	.890	128	0.000

Because the p-value (Sig.) are less than 0.05 for oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension, it follows that for the three areas, the the data set are not normally distributed. Thus, ANOVA cannot be used to test the significant difference between the score of respondents when they are grouped according to parent/guardian occupation.

Hence, the Kruskal-Wallis H test is the most appropriate test for the given data set.

The next table shows the H-value and p-value of the comprehension and reading skills score of the respondents when they are grouped according to mother tongue spoken.

TABLE X. Computed H-value and p-value of the comprehension and reading skills scores of the respondent when they are grouped according to parent/guardian occupation

Comprehension and Reading Skills	H-value	p-value	Interpretation
Oral Reading	6.965	0.138	Not Significant
Silent Reading	5.271	0.261	Not Significant
Listening Comprehension	5.979	0.201	Not Significant

The p-value for all areas are greater than 0.05 which shows no significant difference between respondents' parent/guardian occupation on all areas of the comprehension and reading skills. Thus, regardless of the parent/guardian occupation of the respondents, the comprehension and reading skills of the primary students are the same.

On Mother-Tongue Spoken of the Respondents

A Shapiro-Wilk Test has been computed to determine the normality of the data set. The next table shows the findings for normality test of the data set when they are grouped according to mother tongue spoken.

TABLE XI. Computed Shapiro-Wilk Test for test of Normality of the Data when grouped according to mother tongue spoken

Comprehension and Reading Skills	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Oral Reading	.924	128	0.000
Silent Reading	.890	128	0.000
Listening Comprehension	.890	128	0.000

Because the p-value (Sig.) are less than 0.05 for oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension, it follows that for the three areas, the the data set are not normally distributed. Thus, ANOVA cannot be used to test the significant difference between the score of respondents when they are grouped according to parent/guardian occupation. Hence, the Kruskal-Wallis H test is the most appropriate test for the given data set.

The next table shows the H-value and p-value of the comprehension and reading skills score of the respondents when they are grouped according to parent/guardian occupation.

TABLE XII. Computed H-value and p-value of the comprehension and reading skills scores of the respondent when they are grouped according to mother tongue spoken

Comprehension and Reading Skills	H-value	p-value	Interpretation
Oral Reading	12.871	0.012	Significant
Silent Reading	7.016	0.135	Not Significant
Listening Comprehension	7.033	0.134	Not Significant

The p-value for the two areas such as silent reading and listening comprehension are greater than 0.05 which shows no significant difference between respondents' parent/guardian occupation. However, the p-value under the oral reading is

less than 0.05 which shows significant difference between the mother tongue spoken of the respondents. Thus, the respondents score when they are grouped according to mother tongue spoken, has significant difference. As shown in Table 6, those Tagalog mother tongue speaker students are better as compared to other respondents with different mother tongue spoken. Moreover, Tausug and Yakan mother tongue speaker performed better as compared to Binisaya and Chavacano mother tongue speaker. Furthermore, regardless of the mother tongue spoken of the respondents, their score on silent reading and listening comprehension have no difference.

VI. CONCLUSION

The reading skills of primary learners in Menzi Elementary School are under frustration level while their comprehension skill is under instructional level.

Tested at 95% confidence interval, the findings of the study revealed that there is enough evidence have been established to reject the null hypotheses on the difference between the score of learners in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension when they are grouped according to gender. Thus, it shows that the learners score in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension have significant differences according to their gender. Therefore,

- The scores of male and female primary learners in Menzi Elementary School perceptions on oral reading are the same. Data shows that female learners scored higher than the male learners in oral reading.
- The scores of male and female primary learners in Menzi Elementary School perceptions on silent reading are the same. Data shows that female learners scored higher than the male learners in silent reading.
- The scores of male and female primary learners in Menzi Elementary School perceptions on silent reading are the same. Data shows that female learners scored higher than the male learners in listening comprehension.

There are no enough evidences have been established to reject the null hypotheses on the difference between the scores of learners in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension when they are grouped according to their parent/guardian occupation. Thus, it shows that the learners score in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension have no significant differences according to their parent/guardian occupation. Therefore, regardless of the occupation of the learners' parent/guardian, the score of learners on oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension are the same.

There are no enough evidences have been established to reject the null hypotheses on the differences between the score of learners in silent reading and listening comprehension when they are grouped according to their mother tongue spoken. Thus, on the basis of this findings, it shows that the learners score in silent reading and listening comprehension have no significant differences according to their mother tongue spoken. Therefore, regardless of the occupation of the learners' parent/guardian, the score of learners on silent reading and listening comprehension are the same. However, on oral reading, there is enough evidence established to reject

the null hypothesis on the difference between the scores of the learners when they are grouped according to their mother tongue spoken. That is, mother tongue spoken by the learners indicates difference on their score in oral reading. The data show that Tagalog speakers have better scores compared to others. Yakan and Tausug learners also score better than Chavacano and Binisaya learners.

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