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MAGBASA PARA MAY PAG-ASA: A FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE BANNER PROJECT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION UM PEÑAPLATA COLLEGE, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract:

The main objective of the study is to conduct a formative evaluation of the reading program titled "Magbasa Para May Pag-asa" of the Department of Teacher Education of UM Peñaplata College. The researchers used a mixed-method approach to determine the impact of the programs and how to improve their implementation. The researchers used the Phil-IRI tools to quantify the students' reading skills regarding word recognition, oral reading speed, and reading comprehension. Using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, it was found that word recognition, reading speed, and comprehension levels before the program's implementation were frustrating for both Filipino and English. The word recognition and comprehension levels before the program's implementation were instructional, while the reading speed was frustrating for both Filipino and English. For Filipino, there is a significant difference in the levels of oral reading speed and reading comprehension.

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For the English Language, there is a substantial difference in the levels of word recognition and reading comprehension before and after the program; however, no significant difference in the levels of oral reading speed. Further, the program greatly impacts word recognition and reading comprehension. To improve the implementation of the reading program, the volunteer tutors suggested exploring various approaches and techniques, providing individualized support and differentiation, and making the journey meaningful by providing interactive reading materials and games to make learning motivating and engaging.

Keywords: reading programs, Phil-IRI, Filipino and English Reading, Philippines

1. Introduction

The new normal education has shown an observable decline in students' academic performance, as affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The transition from traditional face-to-face to distance learning and now to new normal face-to-face modes has caused immense changes in the educational system and effortful adjustments on the parts of teachers, learners, parents, and all stakeholders of education. Based on teachers' reports, students exhibited superior reading skills in face-to-face learning before the pandemic compared to distance or hybrid learning during the pandemic. The variations in reading competence before the pandemic were linked to disciplinary climate and teacher support, while teacher-directed instruction showed a negative correlation with reading competence during the pandemic (Novita *et al.*, 2023).

In the current position, the Department of Teacher Education (DepEd) is concerned about the condition and status of elementary school students in reading. Even before, reading still became the central issue and concern among all educators, policymakers, and the community, which led to the formation of Philippine-Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). Addressing the challenges of children facing reading difficulties remains a significant concern for the Philippine government. When a child encounters reading difficulties, it may extend to challenges in other academic areas. The performance of learners in reading is closely linked to their overall academic achievement, as effective study habits are built upon proficient reading skills (Balan et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2017). In Island Garden City of Samal, schools strived to overcome the challenges of the transitions of learning modes before, and during, and one is Tagdaliao Elementary School — the adoptive community of UM Peñaplata College since 2018. During the time of the pandemic, when there is a shift of instruction from face-to-face instruction to other forms of learning, such as modular and blended, teaching reading is challenging. In addition, the problem worsens because most parents in the locale cannot read and write. Reinforcing the instruction takes a lot of work. To bridge this gap, the Department of Teacher Education developed a reading tutorial program to make effective, timely, measurable, and adaptive interventions that address reading issues and concerns.

The Teacher Education Department of UM Peñaplata College is dedicated to supporting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Hence, our reading tutorial program centers around the enhancement of reading competency among twenty-two (22) students under frustration level in both English and Filipino language. This program is firmly driven by the belief on the transformative power of reading, which, according to Jo'Rayeva & Xoshimova (2021), is an essential and purposeful skill and activity.

Our collaboration with Tagdaliao Elementary School is a proactive step towards realizing our vision of an inclusive and quality education system. By providing reading tutorials in English and Filipino, we seek to empower our beneficiaries to develop strong literacy skills and enhance their overall educational experience.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the endeavor is to improve the reading ability of the students under the frustration level in the adopted community of the Department of Teacher Education of UM Peñaplata College. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the level of reading speed, word recognition, and reading comprehension in English and Filipino before the implementation of the program among students with reading difficulties?
- 2) What is the level of reading speed, word recognition, and reading comprehension in English and Filipino before the implementation of the program among students with reading difficulties?
- 3) Is there a significant difference of the reading speed, word recognition, and reading comprehension in English and Filipino before and after the implementation of the program among students with reading difficulties?
- 4) What can be done to improve the tutorial program of the Department of Teacher Education?

3. Project Description/ Deployment

The tutorials were conducted on January–May 2023. There were 10 sessions (with 2 hours per session), which included pretest, tutorial sessions, and posttest. Within the duration, reading tutorials were conducted from Monday to Friday at 1:50-2:50 for English and 3:00-4:00 for Filipino. There were 22 volunteers in this program. Teacher Education faculty and students collaborated in the conduct of the reading tutorials.

The Teacher Education faculty members observed full ethical consideration during the whole duration of the program implementation, such as securing letters of approval and assent, and orientation. Participants were free to withdraw anytime during the implementation.

3.1 Evaluation Strategy

To evaluate whether the reading program objectives were met, we conducted intensive monitoring, assessment, and evaluation of the learners' reading progress. In doing this, we individually assess the learners given the agreed schedules with their teachers. At this moment, we conducted religious monitoring, assessment, and evaluation using Phil-IRI tools just to ensure that the program was implemented to its fullest and addressed the learners' reading difficulties. The researchers utilized median, mean, and standard deviation to describe the levels of reading skills in terms of word recognition, speed, and comprehension. T-test for dependent samples and Cohen's d was used to determine the effectiveness of the programs. Further, the researchers used textual analysis to analyze the beneficiaries' responses to improve the reading program.

4. Findings

Shown in Table 1 is the descriptive reading performance of the students before the implementation of the program. The reading competencies are measured in terms of word recognition, speed, and comprehension. For Filipinos, the level of word recognition is 68.44, which is considered a frustration level, indicating that the individual may struggle with accurately identifying and understanding words. They struggle to recognize and comprehend written text, hindering their reading abilities. They may experience frustration as they encounter words they cannot recognize or understand, leading to a slower reading pace and potential difficulties in comprehending the overall meaning of a text.

Similarly, the mean oral reading speed is 43.44, also classified as a frustration level, suggesting that the individual reads aloud slower than their peers. The reduced reading speed could be attributed to challenges in word recognition and processing and fluency, and oral expression difficulties. The frustration level indicates that the individual might feel impatient or dissatisfied with their reading performance, particularly when reading aloud.

Furthermore, the reading comprehension level of 67.61, classified as a frustration level, implies that the individual may encounter obstacles in understanding and interpreting written information. They might struggle to extract the main ideas, connect different text parts, or comprehend complex sentence structures. This frustration level suggests that while they may possess some comprehension skills, they face difficulties fully grasping and retaining the meaning of what they read.

For the English Language, the level of word recognition is 71.00, categorized as a frustration level, suggesting that the individual may struggle with accurately identifying and understanding words while reading in English. It indicates difficulties in recognizing and comprehending written text, potentially leading to frustration and challenges in overall reading comprehension.

The oral reading speed is 41.22, also classified as a frustration level, indicating that the individual reads English text aloud slower than their peers. The reduced reading

speed might stem from challenges in word recognition, processing, and fluency in spoken English. The frustration level suggests that the individual may experience impatience or dissatisfaction with their reading performance when reading aloud.

Additionally, the reading comprehension level is 64.44, classified as a frustration level, implying that the individual may encounter obstacles in understanding and interpreting written English texts. They may struggle to extract the main ideas, connect different text parts, or comprehend complex sentence structures. This frustration indicates that while the individual may possess some comprehension skills in English, they face difficulties in fully grasping and retaining the meaning of what they read.

Areas	Competencies	Median	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Filipino	Word Recognition (% correct)	77.50	68.44	30.52	Frustration
	Oral Reading Speed (Words/Minute)	45.00	43.44	26.90	Frustration
	Reading Comprehension (% correct)	69.00	67.61	20.88	Frustration
English	Word Recognition (% correct)	75.00	71.00	28.06	Frustration
	Oral Reading Speed (Words/Minute)	36.00	41.22	36.24	Frustration
	Reading Comprehension (% correct)	67.00	64.44	22.13	Frustration

Table 1: Descriptive Reading Performance of the Students before the Implementation of the Program

These frustration levels in word recognition, oral reading speed, and reading comprehension indicate that the individual may face challenges in various aspects of English reading. These difficulties could impact their reading experience, leading to frustration and potentially affecting their academic performance or daily activities requiring English language proficiency. It is essential to provide appropriate support and resources to help improve their English reading skills and alleviate frustration.

After the implementation of the reading program, the teachers observed an increase in the students' performance in terms of reading speed and reading comprehension. Shown in Table 2 is the descriptive reading performance of the students after the implementation of the program. For English, the level of word recognition at 80.56, classified as an instructional level, indicates that the individual demonstrates a reasonably good ability to identify and understand words while reading in English. This suggests that they can generally recognize and comprehend written text without significant difficulty, which is considered an average performance in this aspect of reading.

On the other hand, the oral reading speed at 43.56, categorized as a frustration level, suggests that the individual read English text aloud at a slower pace than their peers. This slower reading speed might be attributed to challenges in fluency, oral expression, or other factors. The frustration level indicates that the individual may experience impatience or dissatisfaction with their reading performance when reading aloud.

Regarding reading comprehension, the level of 77.67, classified as instructional, suggests that the individual has a reasonably good ability to understand and interpret

written English texts. They can likely extract main ideas, connect different text parts, and comprehend complex sentence structures satisfactorily. It indicates an average level of comprehension skills in English reading.

Overall, while the level of word recognition and reading comprehension falls within the average range, the frustration level in oral reading speed suggests that the individual might encounter challenges reading aloud or expressing themselves fluently in English. It is important to provide support and resources to help improve their oral reading skills and reduce frustration in this area. Building on their solid foundation in word recognition and reading comprehension can further enhance their overall English reading abilities.

On the other hand, for the Filipino Language, the level of word recognition is 76.22, classified as an instructional level, suggesting that the individual demonstrates a reasonable ability to identify and understand words while reading in Filipino. It indicates that they can generally recognize and comprehend written text in the Filipino language without significant difficulty, which is considered an average performance in this aspect of reading.

However, the oral reading speed is at 49.67, categorized as a frustration level. This indicates that the individual reads Filipino text aloud slower than their peers. This slower reading speed might be attributed to challenges in fluency, oral expression, or other factors. The frustration level suggests that the individual may experience impatience or dissatisfaction with their reading performance when reading aloud in Filipino.

Regarding reading comprehension, the mean is 87.28, classified as an instructional level, which suggests that the individual has a reasonably good ability to understand and interpret written Filipino texts. They can likely extract main ideas, make connections between different text parts, and comprehend complex sentence structures satisfactorily. It indicates an average level of comprehension skills in Filipino reading.

Students after the implementation of the Program								
Areas	Competencies	Median	Mean	SD	Interpretation			
Filipino	Word Recognition (% correct)	86.00	76.22	27.27	Instructional			
	Oral Reading Speed (Words/Minute)	56.50	49.67	29.14	Frustration			
	Reading Comprehension (% correct)	100.00	87.28	16.41	Instructional			
English	Word Recognition (% correct)	86.00	80.56	19.57	Instructional			
	Oral Reading Speed (Words/Minute)	45.00	43.56	24.07	Frustration			
	Reading Comprehension (% correct)	83.00	77.67	28.44	Instructional			

Table 2: Descriptive Reading Performance of the Students after the Implementation of the Program

Overall, while the level of word recognition and reading comprehension falls within the average range, the frustration level in oral reading speed suggests that the individual might encounter challenges reading aloud or expressing themselves fluently in Filipino. It is essential to provide support and resources to help improve their oral reading skills and reduce frustration in this area. Building on their solid foundation in word recognition and reading comprehension can further enhance their overall Filipino reading abilities.

To determine the effectiveness of the program, the researchers conducted a prepost analysis. Shown in Table 3 is the test of significant differences before and after the implementation of the program. For Filipino, the t-test for dependent samples revealed a significant difference in word recognition before and after the reading program. It indicates that the reading program positively impacted improving word recognition skills. The effect size of 0.627, which is categorized as an average impact, suggests that the improvement in word recognition is noticeable and has a moderate influence on the participants' performance.

However, the t-tests found no significant differences before and after the reading program for reading comprehension and reading speed. It implies that the reading program did not have a statistically significant effect on these two aspects of reading. The effect sizes of 0.438 for reading comprehension and 0.469 for reading speed, categorized as average impacts, indicate that any improvements in these areas, although not statistically significant, still have a noticeable but moderate influence.

For the English Language, the t-test for dependent samples revealed several significant findings regarding the effects of the reading program. Firstly, word recognition was significantly different before and after the reading program. It indicates that the program had a substantial impact on improving participants' word recognition skills. The effect size of 0.98, categorized as high impact, suggests that the improvement in word recognition is noticeable and strongly influences the participants' performance. Secondly, there was also a significant difference in the reading comprehension level before and after the program. It indicates that the inprovement in difference in the reading program significantly positively affected participants' reading comprehension skills. The effect size of 0.944, categorized as high impact, suggests that the improvement in reading comprehension is substantial and has a powerful influence on the participant's ability to understand written texts.

Area	Competencies	Before		After		p value	Effect Size	95% CI for Effect Size		Interpretation
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			Lower	Upper	
Filipino	Word Recognition	68.444	30.518	76.222	27.267	0.024	0.627	0.194	0.856	Average Impact
	Oral Reading Speed	43.444	26.897	49.667	29.137	0.118	0.438	-0.071	0.766	Average Impact
	Reading Comprehension	67.611	20.881	87.278	16.409	0.112	0.469	0.024	0.951	Average Impact
English	Word Recognition	71.000	28.058	80.556	19.571	0.019	0.980	0.155	1.767	High Impact
	Oral Reading Speed	41.222	36.238	43.556	24.068	0.426	0.102	-0.556	0.754	Low Impact
	Reading Comprehension	64.444	22.131	77.667	28.439	0.017	0.944	0.167	1.789	High Impact

Table 3: Test of Significant Difference Before and After the Implementation of the Program

However, the t-test did not find a significant difference in reading speed before and after the reading program. It suggests that the program did not have a statistically significant effect on improving reading speed. The effect size of 0.102, categorized as low impact, further supports this finding, indicating that any improvements in reading speed, although not statistically significant, have a minimal influence on the participants' overall reading abilities.

4.1 Qualitative Results on How to Improve the Implementation of the Reading Programs

• Instructional Approaches and Techniques

This technique focuses on exploring various instructional approaches and techniques that can be employed to enhance oral reading speed. It involves examining different strategies, such as repeated reading, timed reading exercises, or explicit instruction on fluency techniques and their effectiveness in improving reading speed. The participants said that:

"I think incorporating explicit instruction on reading fluency techniques, such as chunking or using punctuation cues, could help us read faster." (P001)

"Including activities that focus on phrasing and expression can improve our oral reading speed. It helps us break down the text into meaningful chunks and read with better flow. (P002)

• Individualized Support and Differentiation

This technique explores the importance of providing individualized support and differentiated instruction to address the unique needs of learners in improving oral reading speed. It involves understanding how tailoring instruction, setting personalized goals, and providing targeted interventions can effectively enhance reading speed for each learner. Participants expressed that:

"Having one-on-one sessions with a reading specialist or teacher to address our specific needs would be beneficial. They can provide personalized strategies and feedback to help us improve our oral reading speed." (P001)

"Differentiating instruction based on our current reading speed levels would be valuable. It would allow us to work at our own pace and receive targeted support to accelerate our reading speed" (P002)

• Motivation and Engagement

This strategy examines the role of motivation and engagement in improving oral reading speed. It explores strategies to enhance learners' basis, such as incorporating gamified elements, utilizing technology, or integrating interactive and engaging reading materials. It also investigates how fostering a positive and supportive learning environment can contribute to increased motivation and sustained engagement in reading activities. Participants expressed that:

"Incorporating games or interactive activities that focus on reading speed could make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable." (P001)

"Providing incentives or rewards for achieving reading speed goals can motivate us to work harder and improve our oral reading speed. (P002)

5. Discussion

For Filipino area, the findings of the t-test for dependent samples revealed a significant difference in word recognition before and after the reading program showing average impact with an effect size of 0.627. For English, the t-test results for dependent samples revealed significant differences in word recognition and reading comprehension before and after the reading program. These findings indicate that the program positively impacted these aspects of reading, as evidenced by the effect sizes of 0.98 and 0.944, respectively. The high effect sizes suggest substantial improvements in the participants' word recognition and reading comprehension skills.

The results are indeed relevant as it is undeniably true that word recognition is essential in enhancing reading skills. This is supported by Gunobgunob-Mirasol (2019) who emphasized that word recognition is a key component for a reader to be deemed proficient. The development of word recognition skills, in turn, influenced reading comprehension. The significant difference in word recognition aligns with previous research highlighting the effectiveness of reading programs in improving decoding skills and sight word recognition (Shaywitz *et al.*, 2020). Hence, the significant improvement in word recognition observed in this study suggests that the reading program successfully addressed this specific aspect of reading proficiency.

Contrary to expectations, there was no significant difference before and after the program in reading comprehension for Filipino area with an effect size of 0.438, and in reading speed for both Filipino and English areas, with effect sizes of 0.469 and 0.102, respectively. These findings may be attributed to various factors, including the duration and intensity of the reading program, the specific instructional strategies employed, and the characteristics of the participant population. In addition, Smith *et al.* (2021) emphasized that background knowledge holds a pivotal role in reading theories, and Martina *et al.* (2020) claimed that time constraints significantly influence the reading comprehension of learners. Meanwhile, regarding reading speed, Mariano *et al.* (2020) concludes that a ten-week intervention with Extensive Reading can help students transition from being slow and frustrated readers to becoming fast and instructional readers.

It is worth considering that the lack of significant improvement in reading speed may not necessarily undermine the overall success of the reading program. The program's focus on word recognition and reading comprehension, which showed significant improvements, indicates a positive impact on essential reading skills. The lack of significant improvement in reading comprehension and reading speed observed in this study suggests that the reading program may require further refinement in targeting these specific areas. Moreover, it's crucial to highlight the significance of collaboration among parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in supporting and encouraging students' reading engagement activities at home, with parents providing encouragement and support (Abril, 2022).

Nonetheless, future iterations of the reading program could consider incorporating additional strategies or activities specifically designed to enhance reading comprehension, such as Fix Up Strategy, Extending Concept through Language Activities (ECOLA) technique, Jigsaw technique, metacognitive training and critical thinking awareness-raising, and Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) with mobile Learning (Muhassin *et al.*, 2021; Haerazi, H. & Irawan, L., 2020); Namaziandost *et al.*, 2020; Mohseni *et al.*, 2020; Maruf & Anjely, 2020).

6. Conclusions

In the light of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The levels of word recognition, reading speed and comprehension before the implementation of the program were frustration for both Filipino and English.
- The levels of word recognition and comprehension after the implementation of the program is instructional while the reading speed is frustration for both Filipino and English.
- For the Filipino, there is a significant difference in the levels of word recognition before and after the program however, no significant difference in the levels of oral reading speed, and reading comprehension. For the English Language, there is a significant difference in the levels of word recognition and reading comprehension before and after the program however, no significant difference in the levels of oral reading speed. Further, the program has a high impact on word recognition and reading comprehension.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the provided information, here are some recommendations:

- 1) Focus on Reading Speed Improvement: Since reading speed remains a frustration for both Filipino and English after program implementation, consider implementing targeted interventions to improve reading fluency. This could involve incorporating activities that promote automaticity and fluency in reading, such as timed readings, repeated readings, and guided practice with appropriate texts.
- 2) Tailor Instruction for Reading Comprehension: Although reading comprehension has improved for both languages after the program, it's essential to ensure that instructional materials and strategies are effectively promoting comprehension skills. Consider implementing explicit comprehension instruction techniques, such as teaching comprehension strategies (e.g., summarization, questioning,

visualizing) and providing ample opportunities for guided and independent practice.

- 3) Continue Targeted Support for Filipino Word Recognition: While there's a significant difference in word recognition for Filipino after the program, it's crucial to maintain and reinforce these gains. Consider implementing ongoing word recognition activities that are culturally relevant and engaging for Filipino learners. These could include activities that focus on phonics, vocabulary development, and word analysis skills.
- 4) Sustain Gains in English Word Recognition and Comprehension: Since there are significant improvements in word recognition and comprehension for English after the program, it's essential to continue providing support to maintain these gains. This could involve incorporating scaffolded instruction, differentiated learning experiences, and ongoing assessment to ensure that English learners continue to progress in their literacy skills.
- 5) Explore Strategies for Oral Reading Speed Improvement: While there's no significant difference in oral reading speed for both languages after the program, it's still a point of frustration. Consider implementing instructional strategies that specifically target oral reading fluency, such as modeling fluent reading, providing opportunities for repeated readings with feedback, and incorporating technology-based tools for tracking and monitoring fluency progress.
- 6) Monitor and Adjust Program Implementation: Regularly monitor the effectiveness of the program through ongoing assessment and feedback from teachers and students. Use data to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement, and be prepared to adjust program implementation accordingly. Additionally, consider soliciting input from stakeholders to ensure that the program meets the needs of diverse learners effectively.

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I have no personal, financial, or other interest that could or could be seen to, influence the decisions or actions we are taking or the advice we are giving during my research for this.

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