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Reading Fluency of the Grade One Pupils

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Abstract - For many years, educators have recognized the importance of fluency in reading. Reading experts concur. Fluency is one of the critical building blocks of reading, according to over 30 years of research, because fluency development is linked to comprehension. This research was anchored on the Department of Education's flagship program, "Every Child A Reader," which aims to make every Filipino child a reader at his or her grade level and is specifically designed to equip elementary students with strategic reading skills to help them become independent young readers. Thus, this study aimed to assess the reading fluency level of the grade 1 pupils of St. Paul University Surigao based on the results of their reading fluency assessment pretest conducted this school year 2021-2022. Results have shown that the majority of the participants are female and are under the category of advanced learners. According to the findings, the most common error committed by the participants is mispronunciation or drop endings, while skipped words and omission are the least common errors. Findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the variables mispronunciation or drop endings, skipped words, omissions, substitutions, repeated words, and inserting words that are not in the passage respectively. There is, however, a significant difference between the participants' grades and their reading fluency levels. This means that the reading fluency of the participants varies by grade. Based on the finding of the study, it is highly recommended that the necessary intervention be implemented to assist those students that belong to the instructional level, particularly the frustration level. As a result, teachers will incorporate fluency programs that could help students improve not only in reading but also in other subjects.

Keywords: Reading Fluency Assessment, Reading, Fluency, Every Child A Reading Program

Introduction

Literacy is one of the priorities of the Department of Education (DepEd) which is the most fundamental skill a child can learn: to read. This skill is the foundation for all academic learning which is crucial to a child's success in school and in later life. Hence, teaching children to read fluently and comprehend a text is one of the main goals of early childhood education. This enables the teachers and families what they can do to support their children's development at this stage. This study is anchored on the Department of Education's Every Child A Reader Program or (ECARP) wherein it is a national program that supports the thrust of the Department of Education (DepEd) to make

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every child a reader and writer at his/her grade level. It is supporting the attainment of Education for All (EFA) target of universal school participation and elimination of dropouts and repetition in the first three- grades.

Identifying the pupils' reading fluency is to recognize their ability to read accurately, smoothly and with expression which helps them comprehend better. Hudson, et. al (2005) define it as a "made up of at least three key elements: accurate reading of connected text at a conversational rate with appropriate prosody or expression." Correlational studies have identified phonemic awareness and letter knowledge as the two best school-entry predictors of how well children will learn during the first two years of instruction (Report of National Reading Panel NICHDEunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, n.d.) However, non-fluent readers suffer in at least one of these aspects: either they make many mistakes, they read slowly, or they don't read with appropriate expression and phrasing. If they are not efficient in these skills, they will face more difficulty with fluency in the future

Part of assessing the pupils' reading fluency is to identify the pupils' common reading errors in order to provide corrective measures to pupils for reading intervention. According to Hernandez (2017), these are the following common reading errors:

- Mispronunciation or dropped endings

This means that the reading material might be too hard for the pupils to read or could be in a form of carelessness. Hence, a teacher should begin teaching word analysis, phonetic analysis and even context clues so the pupils may be exposed to seeing and reading the words.

- Omissions and Skipped Words (Skipped lines count as one mistake)

Oftentimes, pupils fail or skip to read some words with which may lead them to have problems with comprehension just because they read too fast or they quickly glance without fully understanding the whole content. To correct this, a teacher should let the pupils start with silent reading or have them use their index fingers in pointing to some words while reading orally.

- Substitutions and Inserting words that are not in the selection/passage

In this part, pupils oftentimes substitute or insert words which changes the whole meaning of a reading content. To set it right, a teacher may ask questions that demand exact response. In this manner, more attention is given to the finer details in the reading text.

- Repeated Words

This means that the reading material is too difficult to read or the pupils have limited vocabulary. Therefore, a teacher should give an extra effort to build the pupils' sight vocabulary.

By identifying the reading error analysis can provide insight into a pupils' ability to decode unfamiliar text and can act as a basis for diagnosis for error types and provide a blueprint for effective intervention planning.

Framework

This study was anchored on the flagship program of the Department of Education: "Every Child A Reader Program," which aims to make every Filipino child a reader at his/her grade level and is specifically design to equipped elementary pupils with strategic reading to make them independent young readers.

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In line with the K to 12 Program and the goal of making every child should be a reader, the Department of Education (DepEd) is strengthening its reading program through the implementation of the Early Language and Literacy Program.

To deliver Reading Recovery and Every Child a Reader, the school is required to appoint and train a designated 0.6 experienced teacher to deliver the programme. Reading Recovery is a programme accredited by the Institute of Education, University.

This is led by skilled Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders who have key roles in the Teaching and Learning Consultant Team and offer schools and other settings a range of evidence based interventions for children struggling to read and write in primary schools and promote the wider Every Child A Reader approach.

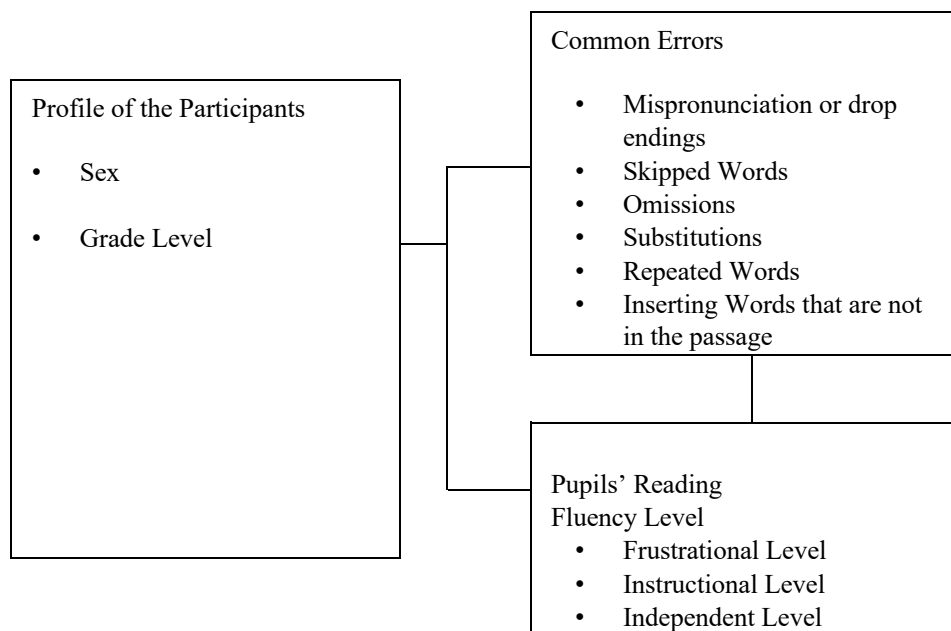


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Reading Fluency Assessment of the Grade-1 Pupils

Results and Discussion

The study determines the profile of the pupils, their common errors, and reading fluency level.

Table 1

Profile of the Participants

Profile Variables	f (n=32)	%
Sex		
Male	14	43.75
Female	18	56.25
Grades		
Proficient	2	6.25
Advanced	30	93.75

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As to the sex, majority of the participants were female which accounts 18 (56.25%). With regards to grades, the majority of the participants were advanced which constituted 30 (93.75%). This means that mostly of the participants who participated in the study have gained an average grade of 90% and above.

Table 2

Common Errors

Common Errors	f (n=32)	%
Mispronunciation or drop endings		
No mistake	5	15.63
1 mistake	6	18.75
2-3 mistakes	13	40.63
4-5 mistakes	6	18.75
8-9 mistakes	2	6.25
Skipped Words		
No mistake	30	93.75
1 mistake	1	3.13
4-5 mistakes	1	3.13
Omissions		
No mistake	29	90.63
1 mistake	2	6.25
2-3 mistakes	1	3.13
Substitutions		
No mistake	24	75.00
1 mistake	5	15.63
2-3 mistakes	3	9.38
Repeated Words		
No mistake	14	43.75
1 mistake	6	18.75
2-3 mistakes	9	28.13
6-7 mistakes	2	6.25
10-12 mistakes	1	3.13
Inserting Words that are not in the passage		
No mistake	16	50.00
1 mistake	7	21.88
2-3 mistakes	7	21.88
4-5 mistakes	1	3.13
6-7 mistakes	1	3.13

Table 2 reveals that most of the participants have 2-3 mistakes in mispronunciation or drop ending which accounts for 13 (40.63%). This means that most of them have encountered difficulty in pronouncing 2 to 3 of the words from the text. Furthermore, the majority of them do not have skipped words 30 (93.75%), omitted words 29 (90.63%), and substituted words which account for 24 (75%). This means that the pupils read all the words from the text completely. In addition, some of the participants do not have repeated words which accounts for 14 (28.13%). However, some of them have read 2-3 words repeatedly from the text which accounts for 9 (28.13%). In addition, most of them did not insert words that are not from the passage. This means that most of them read only the words from the text.

Table 3

Ranking of Common Errors

Common Errors	Mean	Rank
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Mispronunciation or drop endings	2.88	1
Skipped Words	1.13	5.5
Omissions	1.13	5.5
Substitutions	1.34	4
Repeated Words	2.19	2
Inserting Words that are not in the passage	1.88	3

The table above illustrates the ranking of the most common errors made by the grade 1 pupils of St. Paul University Surigao. The table above reveals that mispronunciation or drop endings got the highest mean ($M=2.88$) which ranked first in the common errors the grade 1 pupils committed. This means that majority of the pupils struggled with the proper pronunciation of the words. According to Toçi (2020), lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, bad teaching experiences, lack of direct contact with the language, and lack of self-confidence are all common causes of mispronunciation. Many words in English are frequently mispronounced. Those who are just beginning to learn English as a foreign language, particularly students in primary schools, face difficulties with proper pronunciation.

On the other hand, skipped words and omissions got the lowest mean ($M=1.13$) which ranked last. According to Rippel (2015-2022), there are several other reasons a child may skip words. Children skip words because they read too quickly, their eyes move faster than they can say the words, they may have vision problems, and they may be unable to decode the words.

Table 4

Pupils' Reading Fluency Level

Level	f (n=32)	%
Frustration Level	4	12.50
Instructional Level	13	40.63
Independent Level	15	46.88

Table 4 shows that the majority of the participants belong to the independent level which accounts for 15(46.88%). This means that they can read independently with little or no instructional support. Consecutively, some of the participants belong to an instructional level which accounts for 13 (40.63%). This means that they need instructional support from their teachers or guardians. In addition, there are pupils belonging to frustration level which accounts for 4(12.50%). This indicates that a few of them need extensive reading assistance and instruction.

Table 5.

Significant Difference Between the Profile of the Participants and Common Errors

Profile	Dependent	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	Decision
Sex	Mispronunciation or drop endings	2.87	1	2.87	1.84	0.185	Do not reject H_0
	Skipped Words	0.20	1	0.20	0.64	0.430	Do not reject H_0
	Omissions	0.01	1	0.01	0.04	0.836	Do not reject H_0
	Substitutions	0.42	1	0.42	0.98	0.331	Do not reject H_0
	Repeated Words	0.24	1	0.24	0.11	0.741	Do not reject H_0
	Inserting Words that are not in the passage	1.79	1	1.79	1.59	0.217	Do not reject H_0
Grades	Mispronunciation or drop endings	20.83	1	20.83	21.80	0.000	Reject H_0
	Skipped Words	0.30	1	0.30	0.98	0.331	Do not reject H_0
	Omissions	0.03	1	0.03	0.18	0.672	Do not reject H_0
	Substitutions	0.05	1	0.05	0.12	0.733	Do not reject H_0
	Repeated Words	16.88	1	16.88	10.55	0.003	Reject H_0
	Inserting Words that are not in the passage	2.70	1	2.70	2.47	0.127	Do not reject H_0

As presented in the table above, there is no significant difference between the participants' sex and their mispronunciation or drop endings (p-value= 0.185), skipped words (p-value= 0.430), omission (p-value= 0.836), substitutions (p-value= 0.331), repeated words (p-value= 0.741), inserting words (p-value= 0.217), and skipped words (p-value= 0.331).

Furthermore, there is no significant difference between the pupils' grades and their common errors with it comes to skipped words (p-value= 0.331), omissions (p-value= 0.672), substitutions (p-value= 0.733), and inserted words (p-value= 0.127). However, there is a significant difference between the pupils grades and their mispronunciation or drop endings. This means that the pupils' ability to pronounce words properly vary on their grades.

Table 6.

Significant Difference Between the Profile of the Participants and Reading Fluency Level

Profile	Dependent	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	Decision
Sex	Reading Fluency Level	1.85	1	1.85	4.14	0.051	Do not reject H ₀
Grades		3.85	1	3.85	10.17	0.003	Reject H ₀

As to the significant difference between the participants' sex and the reading fluency level, findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the variables mispronunciation or drop endings (p-value= 0.185), Skipped words (p-value= 0.430), Omissions (p-value= 0.836), Substitutions (p-value= 0.331), Repeated Words (p-value= 0.741), and Inserting Words that are not in the passage (p-value= 0.217 respectively). However, there is a significant difference between the participants' grades and their reading fluency level (p-value= 0.003). This means that the pupils reading fluency level vary in their grades.

Conclusions

Based on the assessment and findings of the study, it can be inferred that sex does not play a significant influence on reading, as there were no statistically significant differences in reading fluency between the two genders, but it will vary in their grades. It is also concluded that the majority of the grade 1 pupils of St. Paul University Surigao can read independently. As a result, teachers should provide enrichment to help pupils expand their reading opportunities and difficulties. However, some pupils need assistance and support from their teachers and parents, so it is highly recommended that the necessary intervention be implemented, focusing on vocabulary practice and building self-confidence in order to help those pupils belong to the instructional level, particularly the frustration level. Thus, teachers will integrate fluency programs into daily classroom routines such as student-adult reading, choral or unison reading, and partner reading that could contribute to pupils' improvement not just in reading but also in the curriculum.

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