

EXPLORING TEACHERS' STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING READING COMPREHENSION IN FILIPINO LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the teaching strategies in promoting reading comprehension in Filipino language instructions. This study employed a phenomenological research design which aims to determine the experiences and perceptions of the eight (8) participants. The emerging themes on the teaching strategies of teachers in promoting reading comprehension in Filipino language instruction were improving inference generation, stimulating background knowledge, and scaffold difficult texts. The emerging themes on teachers coping with the challenges of developing reading comprehension in Filipino language instruction which were utilizing authentic materials, integrating technology, and offering constructive feedback. Lastly, the educational management insights drawn from the experiences of the teachers were assisting colleague, identifying students' needs, and selecting appropriate teaching tools. These themes implied that teachers should empower students to engage with Filipino texts more deeply, make informed inferences, and foster a greater appreciation for the Filipino language and literature. Teachers can create a comprehensive and student-centered approach that promotes lifelong reading habits and nurtures a profound understanding of the rich cultural heritage embedded in the Filipino language. Moreover, the results generated provided comprehensive data in conducting future research with similar scope. This study may be published in a reputable research journal.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, Filipino Language, strategies, challenges, Davao Del Sur

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is considered fundamental to language learning. Many assert that it is the most important skill to master (Anderson, et al., 1983). In light of this, educators world-wide have been prompted to research on best practices to teach reading, which includes reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is one aspect of language skills that must be mastered by the student. To be able to interpret and absorb information from reading material, students should have good understanding ability. Reading comprehension is required in each subject, because each lesson is inseparable from the act of reading. Despite all efforts exerted by the teachers in their desire to help their students read and comprehend, many just cannot cope and could hardly decode the printed words. Thus, this inability to read becomes one of the major causes of failure among them which leads to other problems that are either behavioral or personal in nature. Furthermore, to a student, the inability to read may lead him to nowhere, as the ability to read affects his achievements in school. He may find himself left out of school activities which make him inferior almost all the time. His socialization skills are also affected, and he fails to appreciate the beautiful things life offers. The findings of this study may also add to the limited research addressing Filipino language reading comprehension gap.

Students' Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension, as defined by Snow and Sweet (2003), is the process of extracting and constructing meaning simultaneously. According to Roldan (1993), it is when one comprehends a text when he or she understands the printed symbols in terms that have meaning for the individual. It was once regarded as the result of decoding and oral language; now, it is viewed as a much more complex process that involves inferential and evaluative thinking and not just the literal reproduction of the author's words (Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Based on Roldan's (1993) study, the three levels of comprehension can be summarized as follows: (1) reading the lines, where the reader derives meaning from the sequence of words and their relation to other words and sentences; (2) reading between the lines, where the reader must identify the main idea, interpret clues, and make inferences, and (3) reading beyond the lines, where critical and creative techniques are involved while the reader recognizes implications, draws conclusions, distinguishes fact from opinion, analyzes, and synthesizes the author's thoughts.

Reading Fluency. A student's reading fluency must be sufficient to support comprehension and focus their attention on understanding the meaning of text, rather than on decoding words. Vocabulary and Word Knowledge. Vocabulary impacts comprehension directly with respect to the understanding of text and indirectly because knowing a word's meaning impacts word recognition fluency (Taba, 2000). Syntax and Grammar. Students with comprehension difficulties tend to have more difficulty with word order (Mokhtari & Thompson, 2006) as well as difficulties in correcting sentences or grammatical errors (Cain & Oakhill, 2007). Morphological awareness. Ways in which knowledge of morphology aids student comprehension include increased vocabulary as students make connections

between root words and the new words created by adding prefixes and suffixes; increased knowledge of syntax and grammatical understanding; and increased fluency in reading connected text, which frees up cognitive resources that can then be allocated for comprehension (Biden, 2012). Story Coherence/text Structure Awareness. These elements involve a student's skill in following the organization of a passage, as well as identification of antecedents and referents in text.

Teaching Strategies in Promoting Reading Comprehension in Filipino Language Instructions

Comprehension ability is complex, as it relies on various linguistic abilities, cognitive processes, and knowledge sources. This complexity makes it challenging to determine which specific components of comprehension should be targeted for instruction (Perfetti & Adlof, 2012). To identify the components that are worth measuring, it is important to identify the ones that serve as "pressure points." These pressure points are the components that, if changed, would have a significant impact on students' comprehension ability. They should be essential for reading comprehension, differ among individuals, and be suitable for instructional intervention. With these considerations in mind, we will briefly discuss four components of reading comprehension (inference, knowledge, vocabulary, comprehension monitoring) that are prominent in various theories of reading comprehension. These components are crucial for understanding text and have the potential to be modified through instruction. It is important to note that while this review focuses on higher-order comprehension skills, the foundational role of efficient word recognition in reading comprehension is also acknowledged.

Improving Inference Generation. Inference generation, the ability to integrate information within or across texts using background knowledge to fill in information not explicitly stated, is an essential component of language comprehension. Inference generation is a general skill important for communication and learning at all stages of development. When prompted, even preschool age children can generate causal inferences about events. Inference ability has been shown to be a unique predictor of reading comprehension across developmental stages (Barth, Barnes, Francis, Vaughn, & York, 2015). Comparing good and poor comprehenders (matched on decoding and vocabulary) shows differences on inferential tasks at the word, sentence, and passage level.

Stimulating Background Knowledge. A reader's background knowledge is necessary in building a coherent representation of a text. Well-connected memory storage facilitates quicker retrieval and use of relevant information. Prior content knowledge supports relevant comprehension and learning. Readers with more prior knowledge consistently outperform readers with less, indicating that increased background knowledge in an area may help less skilled readers compensate for a general comprehension deficit. Prior knowledge of a domain predicts text recall for students across development and supports the ability to make inferences (Recht & Leslie, 1988) and learn new words (Kaefer, Neuman, & Pinkham, 2015).

Scaffolding difficult text. In the Philippines, the poor reading comprehension of students has been linked to inadequate and unavailable reading tools, economic factors, and language development. Scaffolding difficult text can be an effective strategy to promote reading comprehension among Filipino students. By breaking down complex texts into smaller, more manageable parts and providing support, teachers can help students to better understand the material and improve their reading comprehension skills (Manlapig, 2020).

Comprehension Monitoring and Strategy Instruction. Comprehension monitoring is a metacognitive skill that refers to readers' ability to reflect on their understanding of a written text (Language and Reading Research Consortium & Yeomans-Maldonado, 2017). Strategic monitoring of text understanding matters. The ability to monitor comprehension correlates with reading comprehension and increases over development. Young readers and less skilled readers demonstrate weaknesses in detecting inconsistencies within a text. Readers must be able to monitor and use fix-up strategies when comprehension breaks down.

Developing Vocabulary. Vocabulary is a robust predictor of reading comprehension across development. Children acquire vocabulary at an astounding rate, on average 2 to 8 root words per day (Biemiller & Slonim, 2001). Once children start independently reading, vocabulary acquisition becomes dependent on exposure to print, not oral language or instruction.

Coping with the Challenges of Developing Reading Comprehension in Filipino Language Instruction

Utilizing authentic materials. According to Boyacı, Ş & Güner-Özer, Mediha. (2018) it is clear that the most significant component of the 21st century educational approach is the synergy between the real world and the school environment. This component is essential due to the significance of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior acquired by the students at school level in the real world. One of the skills that are acquired at school is literacy skills which are intertwined with daily life. Integrating technology. In today's digital era brings rapid impact toward the changes of the role of teachers,

teaching strategy and reading material itself. Many researchers claimed on the advantages of technology in reading comprehension classes. Most of the benefits of technology on reading class perform in the aspects of motivation, interactivity, authentic material, learners' autonomy, automatic feedback, and thinking skills (Ahmed, 2015). Educational software and other digital tools are far more sophisticated than those that were available even a decade ago. Use of these tools in the classroom offers new avenues for increasing efficiency, individualization, and student motivation (Boyle et al., 2016). Offering constructive feedback. Providing ample opportunities for application and practice helps students consolidate their learning and apply the feedback they have received, reinforcing their reading comprehension abilities over time. In addition to providing feedback, educators should encourage students to engage in self-reflection. Actively involving students in the feedback process, they become more aware of their own reading comprehension strengths and weaknesses. Students can self-assess their understanding, evaluate their progress, and set personal goals for improvement. Fostering self-reflection, educators empower students to take ownership of their learning and develop strategies that work best for them (Peterson, 2018).

2. METHODS

Philosophical Assumptions of the Study

The philosophical assumption was a framework used to collect, analyze and interpret the data collected in a specific field of study. It established the background used for the following conclusions and decisions. Typical philosophical assumptions have different types were elaborated below.

In this study, the researcher relied on voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes, themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different perspectives. The answers of the participants to the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct for the commonality and discreteness of responses. It is made sure that the responses of the participants were carefully coded to ensure the reliability of the result. The researcher upheld the authenticity of the responses and precluded from making personal bias as the study progresses.

In this study the lived experiences of teachers in promoting reading comprehension in Filipino language instructions was investigated, particularly those participants from Matanao Central Elementary School, Matanao 1 District, Davao Del Sur. The researcher's droved in knowing the deeper meaning of their experiences became the basis for doing qualitative research, a means of which is considered helpful in looking for meanings and motivations that underline cultural symbols, personal experiences and phenomena.

This study employed a qualitative approach to research specifically a phenomenological research design since it focused on the lived experiences of teachers in promoting reading comprehension in Filipino language instruction. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches were as based on the paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasized the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. The ethical considerations are significant in the design of this research study. The researcher needed to consider several ethical issues about the research participant in this fieldwork. These are: Social Value, Informed Consent, Vulnerability of Research Participants, Risks, Benefits and Safety, confidentiality of Information, Justice, Transparency, Adequacy of Facilities, Community Involvement, and Plagiarism and Fabrication as the researcher.

The participants of this study were the eight (8) teachers of Matanao Central Elementary School, Matanao 1, Davao Del Sur. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 3 years- regardless of age, sex, marital status and ethnicity; and (2) must have a very satisfactory rating in the new normal IPCRF, (3) must be an advisory teacher for at least 3 years.

The researcher utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It is also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996). In gathering data, the researcher utilized an in-depth interview questionnaire. The researcher developed the interview questionnaire and was answered by the participants orally. These researcher-made interview questionnaire developed upon consultation and validation by the experts and undergone several processes to accommodate their suggestions. The components to be validated include the language and the conceptual levels of questions if suited to the participants' level of understanding, the suitability of the items to the research design in which there should be no leading questions, and the alignment of the interview questions to the objective of the study. The researcher has a responsibility to uncover, transfer and exploit knowledge for the benefit of educational institutions. To do so, the researcher takes up the following roles in the course of the study: Facilitator and Promoter of Unbiased Research, Expert in qualitative method, Collector and Keeper of data, Analyst of data and Organizer and presenter of data.

The following will be the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed. Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent, Asking permission from the school heads, Obtaining consent from the participants, Conducting the interview, Transcribing the responses of the interviewees and Data Coding and thematizing.

3. DISCUSSIONS

The teaching strategies of teachers in promoting reading comprehension in Filipino language instruction which were improving inference generation, stimulating background knowledge, and scaffold difficult texts. These themes implied that by employing these strategies, educators empower students to engage with Filipino texts more deeply, make informed inferences, and foster a greater appreciation for the Filipino language and literature. Educators can create a comprehensive and student-centered approach that promotes lifelong reading habits and nurtures a profound understanding of the rich cultural heritage embedded in the Filipino language.

The emerging themes on teachers coping with the challenges of developing reading comprehension in Filipino language instruction which were utilizing authentic materials, integrating technology, and offering constructive feedback. The integration of these emerging themes enhances teachers' coping strategies in developing reading comprehension in Filipino language instruction. By utilizing authentic materials, teachers expose students to culturally relevant texts and promote engagement with the content. Integrating technology expands access to a wide range of resources and provides interactive learning experiences that support reading comprehension development. Offering constructive feedback guides students' learning process, helping them identify areas of growth and make meaningful progress. The combination of these themes creates a comprehensive approach that addresses students' diverse needs, leverages technology tools, and fosters a supportive learning environment.

The emerging themes on the educational management insights drawn from the experiences of the teachers which were assisting colleague, identifying students' needs, and selecting appropriate teaching tools. These emerging themes provide a framework for educational managers to support teachers in implementing evidence-based strategies, addressing individual student needs, and utilizing appropriate teaching tools to enhance reading comprehension. Through effective educational management, teachers can facilitate meaningful learning experiences and promote the development of strong reading comprehension skills in the context of the Filipino subject.

In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered data. The researcher analyzed the answers of the participants from the conducted interviews with the use of Creswell's Model specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012) themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database. These are Familiarization, Coding, Searching for themes, Reviewing themes and Writing-up.

The framework analysis of this research was flexible to allow the researcher to either collect all the data and then analyze it or do data analysis during the collection process. In the analysis stage the gathered data was sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes. This involves a five-step process: (1) familiarization; (2) identifying a thematic framework; (3) indexing; (4) charting; and (5) mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Teaching Strategies of Teachers in Promoting Reading Comprehension in Filipino Language Instructions. Reading comprehension plays a vital role in developing language proficiency and critical thinking skills. In the context of the Filipino subject, promoting reading comprehension is crucial for nurturing a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Filipino language and literature. This section presents the teaching strategies of teachers in promoting reading comprehension in Filipino Language Instructions. Their responses were narrowed down into one to generate themes and subthemes. These were carefully analyzed and formulated based on what came from informants' accounts and reflections.

Improving Inference Generation. Reading comprehension is not solely about understanding the explicit information presented in a text; it also involves the ability to generate inferences and draw meaningful conclusions. For the participants, Inference generation plays a vital role in developing critical thinking and analytical skills of the students. For them, they must explicitly teach students the skills required to draw logical conclusions from the textual clues.

Stimulating Background Knowledge. Reading comprehension in the Filipino subject goes beyond decoding words; it involves making connections, interpreting cultural nuances, and drawing on background knowledge. For the participants, stimulating background knowledge is a powerful strategy to enhance reading comprehension. In Filipino subject, background knowledge plays a critical role in understanding Filipino literature, historical contexts, societal issues, and cultural references. By activating and expanding students' background knowledge, educators facilitate a deeper comprehension of Filipino texts.

Scaffold difficult texts. Reading difficult texts can be a challenging task for students, but with appropriate support and scaffolding, it becomes an opportunity for growth and enhanced reading comprehension. Scaffolding difficult texts involves providing targeted assistance and guidance to students as they navigate complex content. For the participants, scaffolding difficult text promotes reading comprehension because it provides support to readers, making it easier for them to understand complex texts.

Teachers Coping with the Challenges of Developing Reading Comprehension in Filipino Language Instruction. Teachers face numerous challenges when it comes to developing reading comprehension in Filipino language instruction. These challenges can hinder students' progress and create barriers to effective learning. However, dedicated educators find ways to cope with these challenges and implement strategies to foster reading comprehension skills. This section presents the coping strategies of teachers in developing reading comprehension in Filipino Language Instructions. Their responses were narrowed down into one to generate themes and subthemes. These were carefully analyzed and formulated based on what came from informants' accounts and reflections.

Utilizing authentic materials. According to the participants integrating authentic materials, such as newspapers, short stories, poems, and literary works written in Filipino, can enhance reading comprehension. These materials expose students to real-life language use and cultural contexts, enabling them to develop a richer understanding of the Filipino language and literature. Authentic materials also encourage students to connect with the content emotionally and intellectually, thereby enhancing their reading comprehension abilities.

Integrating technology. Integrating technology provides students with access to a vast array of authentic and diverse resources in the Filipino language. Online libraries, digital books, and websites offer a wide range of literature, articles, and texts that align with students' interests and reading levels. This access to authentic resources enables students to explore a variety of genres and expand their comprehension skills in the Filipino language.

Offering constructive feedback. As educators, the participants asserted that it is their responsibility to provide constructive feedback to students, helping them improve their reading comprehension skills. For them, constructive feedback serves as a powerful tool for guiding students towards growth and improvement. When provided effectively, it can enhance their self-awareness, motivation, and engagement with the learning process. Constructive feedback acknowledges both strengths and areas for improvement, creating a balanced approach that encourages students to build on their existing skills and address their weaknesses.

Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Experience of the Teachers. The participants shared their educational management insights, and it was narrowed down into one to emerge the themes. These themes were carefully analyzed and formulated based on what came from participants' accounts and reflections. The subthemes are shown below:

Assisting Colleague. Working with colleagues can improve students' reading comprehension. The participants of the study claimed that encouraging colleagues to collaborate with other teachers in the subject area to share ideas, expertise, strategies, and materials is essential for building a reading culture in school. There is plenty of online resources that colleagues can use to improve student reading comprehension, such as interactive stories, reading games, and comprehension quizzes.

The participant expressed that technical assistance for teachers is essential for ensuring that Filipino language teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate technology in promoting comprehension and other teaching practices. With the rapid advancement of technology in education and diversity of students' needs, it has become increasingly important for teachers to have access to technical support and guidance.

The participants discussed that assisting colleague is so important because technical assistance provides Filipino language teachers with the support, they need to effectively promote reading comprehension with some strategies and technology integration into their lessons. This can help to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

The insights of the participants regarding colleague assistance relate to the growing body of literature on the importance of teacher technical assistance in effective classroom instruction. For instance, in the study of Adigun, Olanrewaju, & Ibukun (2009) stated that teachers who receive technical support from their colleagues are more likely to use technology in their teaching practices. Teachers find it easier to solve problems and continue pursuing challenges with confidence aiming for self and professional improvements.

Identifying students' needs. Identifying students' needs is an essential aspect of effective education. Teachers must take a personalized, ongoing, data-driven, collaborative, and holistic approach to identify and address their students' needs. This can help to ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed academically and socially.

By observing students' needs, teachers can gain valuable insights into their academic and social-emotional needs. This information can help teachers tailor their instruction to support individual students' needs, leading to improved reading comprehension, as well as engagement and motivation among the students

The participants' insights on identifying students' needs in reading comprehension connects to the study of Gambrell & Mandel (2005) that various assessment methods, including digital-assisted tools, provides guidance to the teacher on how to tailor their instruction. The varied ways of assessing the students enable the teachers to be objective to their students. It is important for the Filipino language teachers to be as objective as possible when observing their students in order to avoid bias and for the teacher to identify what intervention or remediation the student really needs.

Selecting appropriate teaching tools. Selecting appropriate teaching tools is crucial for creating a positive and effective learning environment for developing reading comprehension. It helps to engage students, support differentiation, increase achievement, facilitate active learning, and enhance teacher effectiveness. The participants of the study reflected that when it terms to promoting reading comprehension, teachers should be mindful what tool is appropriate for students' reading level and skills.

For the participants, the careful selection of teaching tools enhances students' comprehension skills, nurtures their love for the Filipino language, and empowers them to engage critically with Filipino texts. Ultimately, the thoughtful integration of appropriate teaching tools enhances students' reading comprehension abilities and contributes to their holistic development in the Filipino subject.

The participants' insights regarding selecting appropriate teaching tools is linked to the study of Schumm (2011) that teachers should explore the varied teaching materials to consider student needs and abilities, the quality of the materials, and the alignment with curriculum standards. It is best to select appropriate teaching materials to promote student reading comprehension, rather than focusing on matching teaching style to learning style.

5. REFERENCES

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