

# Factors Affecting the Reading Comprehension of Grade Six Pupils in the City Division of Sorsogon, Philippines as Basis for the Development of Instructional Material

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**Abstract** - This study probed on the factors affecting the reading comprehension of Grade Six pupils, comprehension level based on pre-test PHILIRI for S.Y. 2013-2014 and training needs of teachers. Results of the study served as basis in the development of instructional material to improve the reading level of the pupils. The researchers distributed the questionnaires in the four districts comprising the City Division. The researchers aptly considered the descriptive-developmental method of research. It described the reading level of the Grad Six pupils and training needs of teachers to efficiently and effectively handle their pupils. A reading module was collaboratively developed by the researches to improve the reading level of the pupils. Findings reveal that in Silent Reading, 5% or 1444 out of 2503 pupils were on frustration level of comprehension, 30% were on instructional and only 302 or 12% were classified as independent readers. In oral reading, 71% or 1789 out of 2503 fell on frustration level, 594 turned out instructional readers while the remaining percentages were categorized as independent readers. This is only 5% or 120 of the pupils tested. Further, it revealed that there were factors affecting the reading comprehension of the pupils. These factors are pupil, language, teacher, school head, school, home and community factors. The researchers recommend the ff. (i) the module that was developed may be utilized to develop not just the level of comprehension but the linguistic competence as well, infusing other interrelated skills such speaking, writing, listening and viewing. (ii) There should be close monitoring of pupil's progress by the parents and school administrators; and (iii) A reading program like peer-pair and remedial reading may be provided.

**Keywords:** Factors, Silent Reading, Oral Reading, PHILIRI, Reading Comprehension

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex process that involves sensation, perception, comprehension, application and integration. It is the process of making and getting meaning from printed words and symbols. Reading as a whole, is a means of communication and of information and ideas. As a matter of fact Aracelo (1994) as cited by Panerio [1] reported that "85% of the things that people do involve reading". Individuals read street signs, advertisements, menus in restaurants and recipes from cook books, dosage of medicine and others.

Moreover, reading is the foundation of academic success and life learning. One article from Philippine Star [2] states that:

"The undeniable fact remains that majority of Filipino students do not possess the ability and motivation to read. In 2007, the Department of Education reported that 70 percent or our learners are incapable of reading within the expected level. This is the situation of reading achievement intensifies in the Philippines as evaluated by Scholastic Inc., the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's book".

Due to the fast evolving world and changing technology it cannot be denied that sometimes reading is taken for granted. Former DepEd Sec. Abad deplored the poor performance of the pupils' assessment test and said that, the low scores in English, Mathematics and Science can be attributed to pupils' lack of ability in basic reading and comprehension. In addition, he said

that one of the major problems in reading is the poor reading comprehension, which leads to poor understanding of printed symbols.

The Department of Education (DepEd) intensifies reading literacy in schools by forcing the program called "Every Child A Reader Program" (ECARP) [3]. The undersecretary said that the new program aims to make every Filipino a reader at the end of Grade III. The undersecretary is expecting that no pupil will be promoted to higher grades unless he/she manifests mastery and basic literacy skills in particular grade [4].

Reading and reading comprehension are interrelated skills. In order for students to be able to comprehend what they are reading, they have to develop comprehension skills in reading. By itself, the concept of reading comprehension is vast in breadth and depth. Comprehension is the ultimate outcome of having read. It is the most important ongoing activity of reading. These statements show bearing to the study insofar as the ultimate objective of the developed reading primer is towards the development of reading comprehension by integrating the other reading skills to ensure permanency in learning.

Jonhston [5] considers reading comprehension as building bridges between the "new and the unknown" and the importance of prior knowledge are vital in the reading instruction. Comprehension simply cannot occur when nothing is already "known" because then there is nothing to which reader could link the "unknown". Indeed, prior knowledge is so necessary for comprehension to freely flow from easiest to the most complicated. In support to the foregoing view, the researcher primarily ignited the schema of the pupils by infusing related portraits in each skill to be developed in the reading primer.

Understanding the meaning of text and knowing the author's intentions among others are part of comprehension. Russel [6] claims that comprehension requires knowledge not only of words but their relationships in sentences, paragraphs and longer passages. It involves understanding of the intent of the author and may go beyond literal and recorded facts to hidden meaning or implications. Hence, it entails deep thinking and requires skills to infer and read critically. This finding was confirmed in this study since majority of the pupils were categorized under frustration level of reading comprehension.

Likewise, according to Villamin [7] there are four levels of comprehension. The first level is the literal which means reading lines, getting the information drift, answering questions on: who, what, where and when. The second level is the interpretive or reading

between the lines, combining information and making inferences and comprehending them. In this level, the reader will answer the how and why questions. The third level is the applied or reading beyond the lines, using information to express opinion and form ideas and involves application. The fourth level is the critical level where the reader will answer an open-ended question regarding the behavior of the minor or major character and the style of presentation.

In the same vein, Gray [8] affirms that there are other factors that influence the reading activity. These are comprehension, concentration, memory and personality. The teacher factor must be considered also in the reading process. The teacher chooses her subject and the instructional materials to be used for the students. The foregoing authors stress that the students may do better in reading with proper concentration, quick memory and optimistic personality. This was connected to the outcome of the study that there had been factors related to the reading comprehension of the pupils which include absenteeism, economic status and so forth.

Background knowledge plays an essential role in reading comprehension. In an effort to comprehend a text, students rely on their background knowledge to link what they already know to the text they are reading. Background knowledge includes both a reader's real-world experiences and literary knowledge. Drawing parallels between background knowledge and texts helps students become active readers, improving their reading comprehension [9]. As for Atienza [10] whether or not students have mastered vocabulary skills affects their reading comprehension. Students must be able to comprehend a familiar word and its relationship with other words within a text. Mastering vocabulary includes recognizing a word's part of speech, definition, useful context clues, and how it functions in a sentence. These vocabulary strategies can help improve comprehension. These milieus were considered by the researcher in the development of the reading primer by integrating local events and celebrations in order to establish connection and consider the background knowledge of the readers.

In the long run, this piece of work was confined at determining the factors affecting the reading comprehension of Grade VI pupils and level of comprehension. Included also are some recommendations to improve the reading level of the subject of the study. Other Grade levels such as Grade I to V pupils with English subject were excluded in this study. It is thus limited at providing results on factors and reading comprehension level. Other issues which

may be deemed researchable are left to future researchers.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This basic research envisioned to determine the factors affecting the reading comprehension and level of comprehension of Grade VI pupils. The findings served as a basis to come-up reading module and recommended training needs of teachers. Specifically, this academic pursuit aimed to determine the factors affecting the reading comprehension of the Grade VI pupils as perceived by their teachers; establish how many pupils fall under frustration, instructional and independent level based on pretest PHILIRI of Grade VI pupils; find-out the training needs of English Teachers; and develop instructional material may be developed as an output of the study.

### METHODS

The descriptive-developmental method of research was used in this quest for solution. It described the factors and level of comprehension skills of the pupils. The training needs of teachers were also delineated. These led to the development of an instructional material as an output of the study. The reading module is named as “Read To Learn, Save the World”. It made use of local events and sceneries as reading passages and portraits to establish connection with the pupils.

### The Sampling

The primary sources of data were the Grade VI teachers representing at least 95% of the schools per district to ensure high reliability and validity of the research work. This surpassed the ideal 20% population when using random sampling. These schools could be central, big and small schools chosen randomly thru a fish bowl technique. The remaining percentages of non-respondent schools are situated along coastal areas which deterred the researchers to distribute the questionnaires.

**Table A. The Respondents**

SCHOOL	No. of Teacher Respondents
Sorsogon East District	13
Sorsogon West District	21
Bacon West District	16
Bacon East District	14
$\Sigma = 64$	

### Data Collection

Approval of the Schools Division Superintendent was sought prior to the distribution of questionnaires. Thereafter, the researcher personally distributed the

questionnaires to the respondents. Classmates and friends of the researchers were also instrumental in the retrieval of some accomplished questionnaires. An unstructured interview was also done upon retrieval to supplement the necessary data. Furthermore, pertinent data and information which could enhance this endeavor were gathered from other sources such as school heads, teachers, former professors, colleagues and co – teachers.

### Data Analysis

The quantitative method of analyzing data was utilized in this research. This involves frequency counts and percentage to determine the most common answers to the foregoing questions. Ranking was likewise employed to determine the measure that will be proposed as an output of the study to address the prevailing problems. Tabular and graphical presentations helped to accurately show the outcome of this piece of work. Moreover, related literatures and studies could be used to support the findings of the research. The previously cited literature could anchor the findings of the endeavor.

### Ethical Issues

This research was undertaken in response to DepEd’s call for research intensification and also systematically finding answers to the challenges encountered by teachers relative to the implementation of K to 12 curricula and is not categorically divulging the incompetence of the respondents or the low academic performance of pupils featured in this masterpiece. As a matter of fact, Schools Division Superintendent approved the pursuance of this research; hence, respective school heads, teachers, and parents of the minor pupils concerned were also notified. In the process of research, the data and information that were taken from the respondents had been held with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Ensuing research ethics and rules had also been aptly observed by the researcher to circumvent future problems relative to plagiarism, intellectual dishonesty and the like. Cited references were accordingly affirmed.

The Table 2 indicates that Grade VI pupils have poor study habit, not motivated to read, commits absences and are nutritionally-challenged. In fact, according to research conducted by the U.S. National Institutes for Child Health and Development, [11] there is one overriding reason above all others that is the root cause of the unacceptably high percentage of individuals who struggle as readers. These individuals

have not been taught scientifically-based reading instruction with a comprehensive and systematic phonics component. According to their findings, struggling readers have difficulty identifying, discriminating, and isolating sounds—foundational skills for fluent reading.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

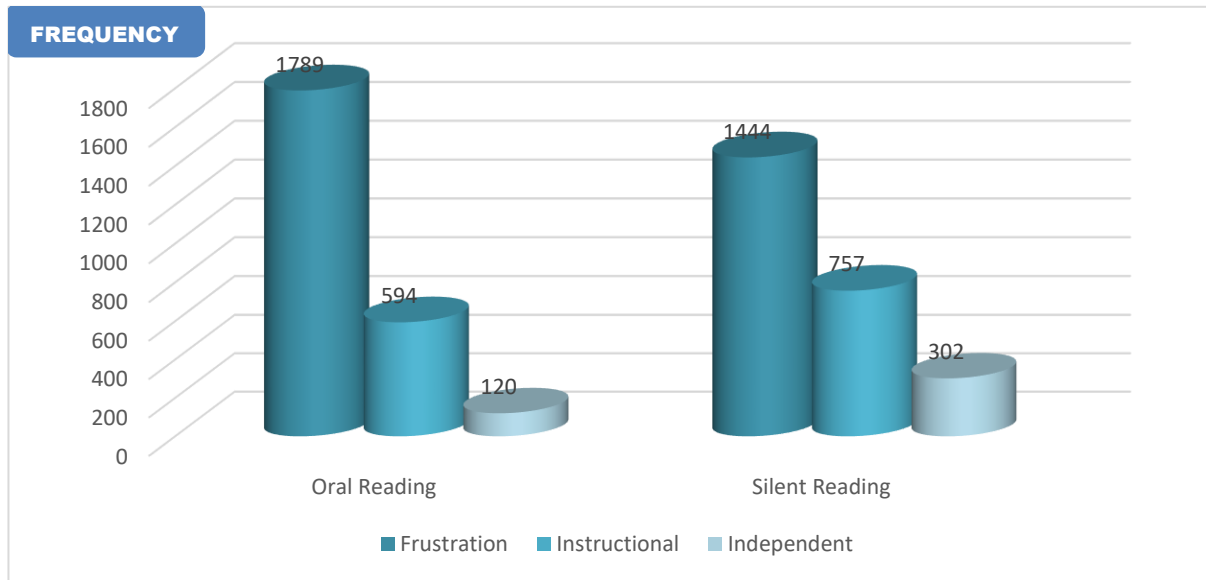
As for the language factors, it turned out that pupils have limited vocabulary, poor grammar and spelling and are low in finding the main ideas of what is being read. Added factor is language immersion which is necessary to expose the pupils to the target language. This findings is supported by Benton [12] who points-

out that reading is one of the components of reading skills that should be taught and developed among the pupils. He further claims that spelling, grammar and immersion play a key role in the academic performance of the clientele.

The mean percent of 74.48 for teacher factors and 54.69 for school head factors would imply that teachers are doing their part in order to teach their pupils. Respondents are faced with multifarious extra functions which steal the supposedly in contact time with pupils. For the school head factors, the respondents considered these factors as merely trivial due to the many-sided functions too of their principals.

Table 2. Factors Affecting the Poor Reading Comprehension of Grade VI pupils S.Y. 2013-2014

Factors Affecting The Reading Comprehension	Frequency	Percent	Mean Percent
<b>1. Pupil Factors</b>			
a. Nutritional Status	53	82.81	
b. Pupils are not motivated to read	57	89.06	<b>83.75</b>
c. Pupils read stories, selections and essays selectively	49	76.56	
d. Pupils' poor study habit	64	100	
e. Absenteeism	45	70.31	
<b>2. Language Factors</b>			
a. Pupils' poor/limited vocabulary	61	95.31	
b. Pupils poor grammar and spelling	42	65.63	<b>84.06</b>
c. Low comprehension level	64	100	
d. Selection contain unfamiliar words	40	62.5	
e. Pupils are not immersed to English	62	96.88	
<b>3. Teacher Factors</b>			
a. Lack of appropriate strategies and approaches to foster love for reading	35	54.69	<b>74.48</b>
b. Lack of skills in preparing reading materials	45	70.31	
c. Overlapping teaching loads and extra functions	63	98.44	
<b>4. School Head Factors</b>			<b>54.69</b>
a. Lack of seminar in teaching reading	45	70.31	
b. Poor supervisory scheme	25	39.06	
<b>5. School Factors</b>			
a. Class size	60	93.75	
b. Lack of catchy reading materials	55	85.94	<b>78.91</b>
c. Substandard classroom for learning with inadequate facilities	48	75	
d. Absence of functional library	39	60.94	
<b>5. Home Factors</b>			
a. No follow-ups at home	62	96.88	
b. Less motivation by siblings to study	60	93.75	<b>83.75</b>
c. Low educational background of parents	45	70.31	
d. Pupils are forced to work for an extra income	42	65.63	
e. Absence of reading materials at home	59	92.19	
<b>6. Community Factors</b>			
a. Lack of support from the Brgy. Council	45	70.31	<b>64.06</b>
b. Lack of support from external stakeholders	43	67.19	
c. Non-functional learning resource center (LRC)	35	54.69	



Graph 1. No. of Pupils Classified under Frustration, Instruction and Independent Level

Highlighted also in the above table are the school factors which have to do with class size, lack of instructional materials and absence of functional library. These, according to the respondents, affect the reading comprehension of the pupils. Furthermore, home factors earned a mean of 83.75. This would mean that when pupils go back their respective home after class, they are seldom monitored by their parents; hence are less motivated to study. The low educational background also poses a challenge to the pupils. Surprisingly, some pupils are made to work in order to help family's finances.

Delineated in graph 1 found in the next page are the no. pupils who were classified under the three levels of reading comprehension according to PHILIRI. These are frustration, instructional and independent level determined by respondents during the reading assessment.

It is noticeable that in oral reading test 1789 or nearly 71% of the Grade VI pupils are under the frustration level of reading comprehension while 24% or exactly 594 of the pupils are classified as instructional readers. Pupils show withdrawal from reading situations crying or refusing to read. They commit errors in reading such as reversal, repetition, substitution, insertion, mispronunciation and inability to interpret punctuation marks.

Pupils' score range are 89% and below in word recognition and 59 to 79% in comprehension. The instructional readers are those who could do simple recall of the content of the selections they have read.

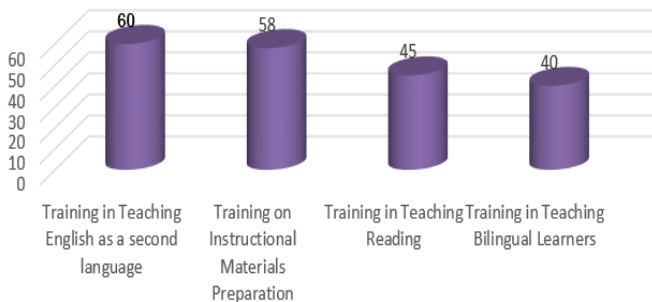
Pupils' score 90 to 96% in word recognition and 59% to 79 in comprehension. Fortunately, there are 120 pupils who made it to the independent level as revealed in the previous graph. They are those pupils with highest level of reading who could independently read with ease without the help or guidance of the teacher. The pupils in this level are free from tension, finger pointing or lip movement. The pupils read with rhythm and with conversational tone and interpret punctuation correctly. Scores range from 97% to 100% in word recognition and 80% to 100% in comprehension.

On the other hand, shown also in the above graph is the turn-out for the silent reading assessment. This reading assessment used a standard reading selection to be read by the Grade VI pupils silently. Thereafter, series of questions were given to gauge whether they have understood the selection given or the other way around. As seen in the foregoing graph, there are 1444 or 58% who fell under frustration level, 30% out of 2503 were on instructional level, and only 302 or 12% survived to the independent level of reading comprehension. These pupils were able to answer the questions perfectly based on the selection given by the PHILIRI.

The aforementioned findings seem to link with Russel [6] who claims that comprehension requires knowledge not only of words but their relationships in sentences, paragraphs and longer passages. It involves understanding of the intent of the author and may go beyond literal and recorded facts to hidden meaning or

implications. Hence, it entails deep thinking and requires skills to infer and read critically.

In the same vein, according to Villamin [7], there are four levels of comprehension. The first level is the literal which means reading lines, getting the information drift, answering questions on: who, what, where and when. The second level is the interpretive or reading between the lines, combining information and making inferences and comprehending them. In this level, the reader will answer the how and why questions. The third level is the applied or reading beyond the lines, using information to express opinion and form ideas and involves application. The fourth level is the critical level where the reader will answer an open-ended question regarding the behavior of the minor or major character and the style of presentation.



Graph 2. Training Needs of Teachers

Reflected in the graph 2 are the training needs of teachers. Out of the five (5) identified trainings, the training in teaching English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language ranked the first which is 93.75% of the respondents. Training on instructional materials preparation earned a frequency of 58. Conversely, training in teaching reading obtained a frequency of 45 or 70.31% of the total no. of teacher respondents. The least chosen training according to the respondents is the training in teaching bilingual learners which garnered a frequency of only 40 which is 62.5%.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This undertaking has been conceptualized in order to give light to the intervening factors affecting the pupils. English teachers and school administrators, therefore, may consider the results of this study in the teaching-learning process in order for their clientele to be linguistically inclined. School heads and faculty members, on the other hand, shall clasp their hands together in crafting school intervention programs and projects that will cater to the needs of their end recipients such as Reading Remediation Programs, Literary measures and the like. Considering the

upshots, the researcher concluded that there were factors which affected the reading comprehension of Grade Six pupils in the City Division of Sorsogon. Majority fell under frustration level both in Oral and Silent Reading.

Eventually, it is recommended that commended that effective teaching strategies and other activities may be devised by teachers to improve the level of reading comprehension. The developed reading primer that was developed may be utilized to develop not just the level of comprehension but the linguistic competence as well, infusing other interrelated skills such speaking, writing, listening and viewing. There shall be close monitoring of pupil's progress by the parents and school administrators. A reading program like peer-pair and remedial reading may be provided. If necessary, the module can be mass-produced to partially solve the inadequacy of instructional materials. A training of Grade VI teachers on Instructional Materials Preparation, Seminar in Teaching Reading and Training in Teaching Bilingual Learners should be conducted.

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