



Reading Level of Intermediate Pupils for School Year 2019 - 2020

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ABSTRACT

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This study determined the reading level of intermediate pupils of Tagaytay Elementary School for the school year 2019-2020. The findings revealed that out of 76 pupil-respondents, in the word recognition area, 28 or 37% were at the frustration level, 27 or 36% were at the instructional level, and only 21 or 27% were at the independent level. On word recognition, the intermediate pupils were at the frustration reading level. In the Phil IRI Pre-test result in reading comprehension, out of 76 pupil-respondents, 41 or 54%, were in the frustration level; 21 or 28% were in the instructional level; and 14 or 18%, were in the independent level. In the second part, the results obtained in the Phil-IRI pre-test showed that more intermediate pupils were at the frustration level. There was a reading intervention action plan proposed and a book entitled "On your mark, get set... READ!" based on the results of the study. For the Phil-IRI pre- and post-test results of the intermediate pupils in the area of word recognition level, the following were found: In the frustration reading level, from 37%, it decreased to 20%; in the instructional reading level, from 36%, it increased to 43%; and for the independent reading level, from 27%, it successfully increased to 37% for Phil IRI pre- and post-test results of Intermediate pupils in the area of reading comprehension level. For the frustration reading level, it decreased from 58% to 32%; for the instructional reading level, it increased from 28% to 42%; and for the independent reading level, it increased from 18% to 26%. The statistical comparison proved that there was a significant difference in the Phil-IRI pre- and post-test results of the intermediate pupils. From word recognition to reading comprehension, there was an improvement after the reading intervention was implemented.

KEYWORDS:

reading level,
intermediate pupils,
frustration, reading
comprehension

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Literacy is the ability to read, view, write, design, speak, and listen in a way that allows one to communicate effectively. The power of literacy lies not just in the ability to read and write, but rather in a person's capacity to apply these skills to effectively connect, interpret, and discern the intricacies of the world in which they live.

Today, many children are being called 'digital natives'—just as comfortable online as they are offline. The internet enables endless educational possibilities, with constantly evolving information streams; however, the vastness of the internet can be a hindrance to those children who cannot effectively sift through and interpret the material presented.

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Strong literacy skills are a key tool used when children discern and interpret information. This enables them to utilize the internet to its full potential and make sure that the inevitable 'digital footprint' that children will leave is one that is safe, appropriate, and reflective of their true self. In the Philippines, the ability to read and write is a priority (Bernarte & Digo, 2024). Therefore, any effort to promote literacy by the government, organizations, or even private individuals is celebrated. The Department of Education (DepEd) is strengthening its reading literacy in schools by implementing the program called "Every Child Should be a Reader." It is in line with one of the President's Ten-Point Basic Education Agenda. The program will develop in Filipino children literacy and numeracy skills and attitudes that will contribute to lifelong learning. Recognizing the need to go beyond the traditional notion of basic literacy, the Department of Education (DepEd) continues to push for initiatives that would help improve the present condition of literacy in the country. DepEd Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction Diosdado San Antonio, in his keynote address, said that the challenge, as suggested by their team, is to go

beyond the traditional notion of how or what a literate person is. Traditionally, they just would be happy to say that they know how to read and write, but in this 21st century, in the so-called Industry 4.0, they must go beyond the traditional notion of basic literacy.

In 2015, they introduced the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program (ELLN) to improve reading and numeracy skills of K-3 learners. ELLN strengthened teacher capacity to teach and assess reading and numeracy skills, improved school administration and management, established competency standards, and introduced a school-based professional development system for teachers, the "School Learning Action Cell" (SLAC).

Reading is performed for both pleasure and information. Reading skills are important for the individuals since they foster comprehension in texts or symbols. If students do not have knowledge of reading skills, they cannot be expected to be successful readers. Thus, they cannot achieve the level of comprehension as well required to pass exams in their own departments (Kaya, 2015). Reading is not just translating and decoding text into sounds and spoken words. It includes understanding of the texts, called comprehension.

Reading comprehension involves taking what was just read and deriving meaning from those words. In simpler terms, reading comprehension is the ability to read, understand, process, and recall what was just read (Rutzler, 2017). For an individual to survive in today's world, it is a requirement for him to know how to read with understanding. He should be capable of understanding simple texts such as transportation documents which include travel directions and road instructions, bills, and contracts.

To develop an effective design to educate public school pupils with reading skills, assessment is done to find out the status of their reading proficiency. One of the assessment tools used is called the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). It measures the reading proficiency of pupils through word recognition and reading comprehension in English and in Filipino, specifically, by getting the percentage of word recognition accuracy and percentage of correct answers to comprehension questions based on the set of criteria for reading levels. Based on the Phil-IRI scale, the students are categorized into four levels: Nonreader, frustration, instructional, and independent. Pupil under the frustration reading level tends to withdraw himself to read by refusing it. In the instructional reading level, the pupil can only read when being guided, while in the independent reading level, the pupil can read alone with ease without the guidance of the teacher.

In the Division of Sorsogon, the administrators and teachers give due emphasis on the reading performance of children. Teachers attended trainings and formulated different reading strategies to develop the pupil's reading ability. Furthermore, reading activities conducted by different

reading coordinators in schools bring opportunities to youngsters to discover their strengths and weaknesses in reading.

The researcher who is a class adviser encountered a problem in the reading ability of their intermediate pupils. Some of the Grade VI pupils from last school year, now studying in the secondary schools, struggled in their studies, and the pupils in the class that they belong to attend remedial reading. This problem in their reading had a great impact on the pupils, not only on their academic performance but also on them psychologically. Therefore, the researcher solicits full support from among the teachers at their respective schools since the pupils favor only academic activities, and reading activities were taken for granted. Thus, this led her to determine the reading level of intermediate pupils to address the pupils' reading needs.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used the descriptive method. Calmorin (2007) cited that this method seeks the real facts in relation to a current situation. Furthermore, this also involves describing, comparing, contrasting, and interpreting conditions that exist. The study investigated the participants' level of word recognition and reading comprehension to find out their reading profile, which was the basis in designing a reading program that would cater to their reading needs.

The Sample

The respondents of the study were the total population of Intermediate pupils' of Tagaytay Elementary School enrolled for School Year 2019-2020 under the regular curriculum. The respondents were 22 Grade IV, 28 Grade V, and 26 Grade VI pupils. The total respondents who took the Phil IRI pretest in English were 76.

The Instrument

To determine the reading levels of Intermediate pupils the primary sources of data used were adopted from the DepED Memorandum No. 196 S. 2008. In this study, tests were used as the instruments. These were the Phil-IRI Pre-and Post-test. The Pre-test and Post-test have two parts: Part I deals with word recognition in terms of pronunciation, miscues, and reading speed. Part II deals with reading comprehension. For word recognition, the research instrument used was Dolch's list of basic sight words with a checklist for the pupils' responses. For reading comprehension, there was a three-page test composed of a 375-word reading selection, which was read silently by the pupils, and the reading comprehension test, which was used to measure the four levels of comprehension, specifically, the literal, interpretative, critical analysis, and application and creation.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Sorsogon Province to conduct this research. Then, a letter from the

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Schools Division Superintendent informing the school's involvement in the research was sent to the school head of the school under study. Letters of similar content were also given to class advisers of the student respondents.

Before the conduct of the study, the researcher met with the 3 advisers of Grades IV-VI for the orientation on the data gathering procedure and schedule. For Part I, in word recognition, each child was exposed to the Dolch's list of basic sight words. The responses of the pupils were observed and listed in a checklist. Specifically, the checklist includes the pronunciation of the words, miscues, and oral reading speed. For Part II, in measuring the reading comprehension, the adviser asked the pupil to silently read the selection. The teacher's role was to time the silent reading and to facilitate in answering the comprehension test, which was known to the pupils as a quiz. The researcher did not administer the Phil IRI pre-test but instead used the secondary data taken by the teachers of Grades IV to VI of Tagaytay Elementary School. The respondents will use the total population of grades III to VI of the said school.

The students' Phil IRI Pre-test results were obtained from the advisers. Likewise, the researcher considered the result in the Phil IRI Pre-test because pupils were not yet involved in any reading interventions. The validity of the research instrument, Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil IRI), was established by the curriculum makers of the Bureau of Elementary Education Department of Education. All instruments were DepEd-approved. No validation and reliability were further needed.

Data Analysis Procedures

Since the researcher considered the total population, it made use of the following: Frequency distribution, which shows the different scores of the respondents in both tests in word recognition and reading comprehension; The mean was used in order to give a summary of the characteristics of the reading level of the participants; In computing the word recognition, reading speed and reading comprehension the following formulae were applied:

a. For word recognition, the formula was: $WR = \frac{\text{No. of miscues}}{\text{No. of words}} \times 100$

The percentage of the number of miscues with the total number of basic sight words was computed. The number of miscues was the pupil's mispronounced words. It was needed to find out how many words were pronounced properly.

b. For reading speed (RS), the formula was applied:

In Oral reading using the Dolch's Basic Sight Words

$RS = \frac{\text{No. of words in the passage}}{\text{Reading time (min)}}$ (220 words)

In Silent reading:

$RS = \frac{\text{No. of words in the passage}}{\text{Reading time (min)}}$ (375 words)

Reading speed was computed by dividing the total number of the words in the list of Basic sight words and the selection, which were specifically 220 words and 375 words,

respectively. This was done to measure the speed of reading by the individual participants.

Table 2. The criteria for reading speed (adapted from Phil-IRI)

Grade Level	FAST	AVERAGE	SLOW
I	70 – above	31 – 69	30 – below
II	100	61 – 99	60
III	120	91 – 119	90
IV	140	111 – 139	110
V	170	141 – 169	140
VI	190	161 – 189	160

Table 2 was used as the basis for the reading speed of Grade IV - VI pupils. It is shown that a pupil who could read 140-above words per minute (WPM) is considered fast, 111-139, as average, and 110-below as slow.

c. Reading comprehension (RC) was computed using:

$RC = \frac{\text{Total correct answers}}{\text{Total number of questions}} \times 100$

The reading comprehension of the respondents was the percentage of the total correct answers versus the total number of items. This was done to find out the level of understanding of the participants in reading the selections according to the literal (Test I), interpretative (Test II), creative analysis (Test III), and application and creation (Test IV) levels of comprehension.

The following tables are the basis for interpreting the individual reading profile of the respondents from the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI).

Table 3. The test criteria for word recognition and comprehension (adapted from Phil-IRI)

	Word Recognition	Reading Comprehension
Independent	97 – 100	80 – 100
Instructions	90 – 96	56 – 79
Frustration	89 – below	58 - below

Table 3 is the basis for interpreting the scores garnered by the pupils from the word recognition (oral reading) and the reading comprehension (silent reading). Once the scores were interpreted. Table 4c was referred at to identify the reading level of the respondents.

Table 4: The criteria for oral reading (adapted from Phil-IRI)

Word Recognition	Reading Comprehension	Reading Level
Independent	Independent	Independent
Independent	Instructional	Instructional
Independent	Frustration	Frustration
Instructional	Instructional	Independent
Instructional	Independent	Instructional
Instructional	Frustration	Frustration
Frustration	Independent	Frustration
Frustration	Instructional	Frustration

Frustration Frustration Frustration

If the set of participants is independent in word recognition and independent also in comprehension, then he or she is independent, while if the set of participants is independent in word recognition and instructional in comprehension, the respondent is considered instructional in reading level and so on.

Table 5. The criteria for silent reading (adapted from Phil-IRI)

Reading Speed	Reading Comprehension	Reading Level
Fast	Independent	Independent
Fast	Instructional	Instructional
Fast	Frustration	Frustration
Average	Independent	Independent
Average	Instructional	Instructional
Average	Frustration	Frustration
Slow	Independent	Instructional
Slow	Instructional	Instructional
Slow	Frustration	Frustration

In terms of silent reading, the reading level of the participants is based on the reading speed, which was computed using the number of words read in a particular time and the reading comprehension, which was based on the scores in the test. If the reading speed is fast and the comprehension is independent, then the respondent is independent. If the respondent was fast and their comprehension level is instructional, then he/she is instructional.

III. RESULTS

The presentation and analysis of data cover the pupils in the frustration reading level, reading intervention materials to address the pupils' reading difficulties, and pupils' reading levels after the implementation of the intervention.

1. Pupils in the frustration reading level.

Presented in table 6 is the word recognition level, and table 7 is the reading comprehension. These two tables are areas and instruments adapted in Phil-IRI that show the reading level of pupils. The data revealed in Table 6, which is Phil IRI Pre-test Part I about word recognition level for Grade IV out of 22 pupils, 9 of them were in the frustration level, 7 of them were in the instructional level, and there were only 6 of them in the independent level. For Grade V pupils, out of 28 pupils, 10 of them were at the frustration level, 10 were in the instructional level, and 8 were in the independent level. For Grade VI pupils, out of 26 pupils, 9 were in the frustration level, 10 were in the instructional level, and only 7 were in the independent level. Therefore, out of the 76 pupil-respondents, 28 or 37% were in the frustration level; 27

or 36%, in the instructional level; and only 21 or 27%, in the independent level.

Table 6. Pupils in the Frustration Reading Level

Part I. Word Recognition Level (Phil IRI Pre-test Result)

WORD RECOGNITION LEVEL

Frustration (%)		Instructional (%)	Independent (%)
Grade IV	9 (41%)	7 (32%)	6 (27%)
Grade V	10 (36%)	10 (36%)	8 (28%)
Grade VI	9 (35%)	10 (38%)	7 (27%)
Total	28	27	21
Percentage (%)	37%	36%	27%

It is noted also in Table 7, which is the area for reading comprehension results for intermediate pupils. For Grade IV, out of 22 pupils, 12 of them were in the frustration level, 6 of them were in the instructional level, and there were only 4 of them in the independent level, for Grade V pupils, out of 28 pupils, 15 of them were in the frustration level, 8 of them were in the instructional level, and for the independent level, there were only 5. For Grade VI pupils, out of 26 pupils, 14 of them were in the frustration level, 7 of them were in the instructional level, and there were only 5 in the independent level. Therefore, out of the 76 pupil respondents, 41 or 54%, were in the frustration level; 21 or 28%, in the instructional level; and only 14 or 18%, in the independent level.

Table 7

Part II. Reading Comprehension (Phil IRI Pre-test Result)

READING COMPREHENSION

Frustration (%)		Instructional (%)	Independent (%)
Grade IV	12 (55%)	6 (27%)	4 (18%)
Grade V	15 (53%)	8 (29%)	5 (18%)
Grade VI	14 (54%)	7 (27%)	5 (19%)
Total	28	27	21
Percentage (%)	37%	36%	27%

For the Table 7, the results obtained were different from the first part. There were more than half of the pupil-respondents who were at a frustration level. This implies that the school may provide more reading activities, interventions, and plans that will increase the reading level, especially in intermediate pupils. Though these activities need more time and effort, these may lead to the development of the pupils' reading level. On the one hand, they need to consider reading difficulties that should be addressed and may stimulate the pupils to engage in any reading activities.

From the findings of the research conducted by Bacal, oral reading difficulties of pupils can be corrected by providing different activities suited to the pupils' level, employing different techniques for remediation, and

providing intensive supervision of teachers, parents, and school administrators. The teacher's creativity, resourcefulness, and diligence count most in the success of the program and project. The pupil's interest in reading can be developed and enhanced by engaging in different reading materials (Elli & Digo, 2025). Utilization of varied and appropriate instructional materials can facilitate a pupil's understanding of what he is reading (Reantaso & Digo, 2022). Finding the right materials is particularly important for a student who experiences reading difficulties (Bacal, 2005)

In another study, Coyne et al. (2006) reinforced that a lot of support for interventions can be found in looking through several peer-reviewed journal articles. No interventions in the studies show a negative impact on students, although the demographics, interventions, research methods, and quality of the articles vary. In fact, many interventions show a positive effect on all types of students, especially those who are struggling readers. "It is easier to prevent reading difficulties in the early grades before they emerge than to try and remediate them after they become entrenched and intractable."

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn: (1) Most of the intermediate pupils were at a frustration reading level. (2) The reading intervention has an effective impact on the reading level of the pupils. And (3) the Annual Reading Action Plan may be proposed to improve pupils' reading levels, which may lead them to the enhancement of their reading performance.

The recommendations were: Planned and assessed reading interventions may be provided to pupils to enhance their reading skills. Pupils may be motivated to get involved in reading interventions to attain a higher reading level of performance. Different reading activities may be provided to pupils to enhance their reading performances. The proposed annual action plan may be adopted and implemented by the school or by the district. A properly trained reading coordinator may be assigned to manage the different reading activities of pupils to achieve a quality result. Future researchers may conduct other research like the present study in other schools.

VII. DISCLOSURE

The researcher declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to the conduct and completion of this study entitled "Reading Level of Intermediate Pupils." This research was carried out solely for academic purposes and to contribute to the improvement of reading instruction among intermediate pupils. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school administration before the data collection began. Parents or guardians were informed about the study, and participation of the pupils was voluntary. The identities of all participants were kept confidential, and the information gathered was used only for the purposes of this

research. The researcher also confirms that this manuscript is an original work. All sources of information have been properly acknowledged, and the results presented are based on the actual data collected during the study.

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