

Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension of Grade Three Pupils of Hacienda Maria Elementary School

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reading comprehension, Grade Three pupils, vocabulary development, instructional strategies, learner engagement

Abstract. This study explored the factors that contribute to the low reading comprehension levels of 20 Grade Three pupils at Had. Maria Elementary School in Hacienda Maria, San Isidro, Leyte. A descriptive research approach was used, with data gathered through classroom observations, surveys, interviews, and online sources. The findings showed that several issues affect pupils' ability to understand what they read. These include limited vocabulary, lack of access to appropriate reading materials, and the limited use of effective reading strategies in the classroom. The results of the study offer helpful insights for teachers who want to improve their teaching practices and support better learning outcomes. By recognizing these challenges, teachers can adjust their approaches and provide more meaningful learning experiences for their pupils. The study also highlights key steps in reading comprehension, such as identifying unfamiliar words, understanding their literal meanings, and interpreting their deeper or implied meanings. In addition, the study presents several practical strategies that can help improve reading comprehension. These include encouraging prediction to engage learners, using text structures like story maps and flowcharts to organize ideas, and applying visual representations to support memory. Other helpful techniques include summarizing texts, asking questions before, during, and after reading, and providing reading materials that match the learners' level. Rereading texts, exploring similar topics, and strengthening vocabulary through engaging activities were also found to be effective. Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of using varied and learner-centered strategies to improve reading comprehension among young learners.

Introduction

Education is commonly understood as the continuous process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and values that help individuals grow and contribute meaningfully to society. Across the world, communities place great importance on educating people, whether through formal schooling or informal learning experiences. Continuous exposure to new ideas is believed to develop individuals into more effective thinkers, workers, and responsible members of society. One of the key goals of education is to ensure that *every child becomes a reader and every reader becomes a learner*. However, a growing concern in many communities is that while children may be able to read words, they often struggle to understand what they read. This raises an important question: can a child truly be considered a reader without comprehension?

In response to this issue, many researchers have examined the different factors that influence children's reading comprehension. Studies have shown that comprehension is affected by several elements, including vocabulary knowledge, reading interest, prior knowledge, and language abilities (Manguilimotan et al., 2024; Kritsotakis & Morfidi, 2024). Additionally, individual and environmental factors such as motivation, family background, and language exposure also play significant roles in shaping reading development (Liu et al., 2022). These findings highlight the need to better understand the underlying causes of poor comprehension in order to design effective interventions that will support young learners in becoming not just readers, but thoughtful and capable learners.

Methodology

Environment

This study was conducted at Had. Maria Elementary School, located in Hacienda Maria, San Isidro, Leyte. The school is part of a rural community where most learners come from modest family backgrounds. Like many public elementary schools, it provides basic education to children with diverse learning needs and varying levels of academic ability.

The focus of the study was on 20 Grade Three pupils who were observed to have difficulties in reading comprehension. Inside the classroom, teaching and learning take place in a typical public-school setting, where resources such as books and instructional materials may be limited. Despite these challenges, teachers continuously strive to support their learners by using different teaching strategies and activities.

The classroom environment is generally interactive, but it also reflects common concerns such as limited vocabulary among pupils, differences in reading abilities, and the need for more engaging and appropriate reading materials. These conditions make the school an appropriate setting for examining the factors that affect reading comprehension.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were 20 Grade Three pupils from Hda. Maria Elementary School in Hacienda Maria, San Isidro, Leyte. These learners were selected because they showed difficulties in reading comprehension based on classroom observations and teacher feedback. The group represented a mix of reading abilities, backgrounds, and learning needs, providing a clear picture of the challenges faced by young readers. The pupils actively participated in surveys and interviews, sharing their experiences and struggles in understanding texts. Their responses helped the researchers identify key factors affecting comprehension and provided valuable insights for improving teaching strategies and supporting their reading development.

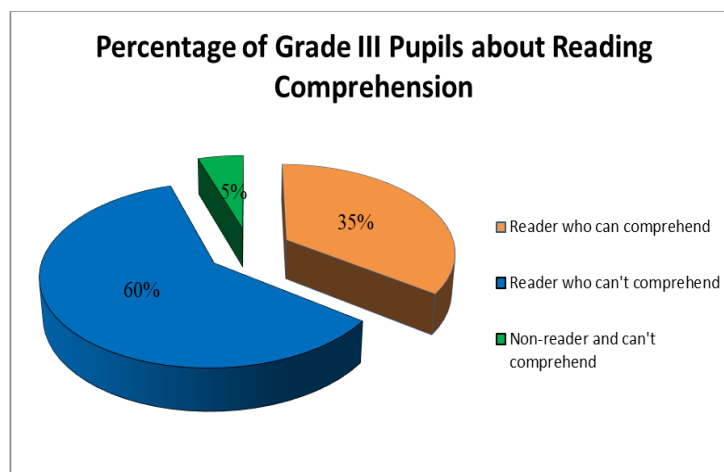


Figure 1. Percentage of Grade III Pupils about reading Comprehension.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used in this study was a researcher-made questionnaire designed to better understand the reading comprehension difficulties of the Grade Three pupils. The questionnaire included simple and clear questions suited to the learners' level, focusing on their vocabulary knowledge, reading habits, and the challenges they experience when reading. To support the data gathered, the researchers also used classroom observation checklists to closely monitor pupils' reading behaviors and participation during lessons. In addition, short interviews were conducted to give pupils the opportunity to express their thoughts and experiences more freely. These tools, together with selected online references, helped ensure that the data collected were meaningful, reliable, and reflective of the pupils' actual reading situations.

Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study were gathered through a step-by-step and organized process. First, permission was secured from the school head and the class adviser to conduct the study among the selected Grade Three pupils. After approval, the researchers conducted classroom observations to see how pupils read and participate during reading activities.

Questionnaires were then distributed to collect information about their reading experiences and difficulties. This was followed by short interviews to allow pupils to express their thoughts more openly. Additional information was also gathered from online sources. All collected data were carefully reviewed and organized to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the questionnaires, observations, and interviews were carefully organized and analyzed to better understand the reading comprehension difficulties of the pupils. Responses from the questionnaires were said and summarized using simple descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage to identify common patterns. Observation notes were reviewed to see how pupils behaved during reading activities, while interview responses were grouped into themes to highlight shared experiences and challenges. These different sources of data were compared and combined to ensure a clearer and more accurate interpretation. Through this process, the researchers were able to identify the key factors affecting comprehension and suggest practical strategies to address them effectively.

Results and Discussion

Results

The findings of the study revealed that the Grade Three pupils experienced noticeable difficulties in reading comprehension. Most of the learners struggled due to limited vocabulary, which made it hard for them to understand unfamiliar words and grasp the meaning of texts. It was also observed that many pupils had limited access to appropriate and engaging reading materials, affecting their interest and exposure to reading. Overall, the results highlighted that both learner-related factors and instructional practices play an important role in shaping pupils' reading comprehension and must be addressed to improve their learning outcomes.

Discussion

The study examined the factors affecting the reading comprehension skills of 20 Grade Three pupils at Hda. Maria Elementary School in San Isidro, Leyte. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected through classroom observations, surveys, interviews, and online references. The discussion of findings shows that pupils' difficulties in understanding texts are mainly caused by limited vocabulary, insufficient reading materials, and the inconsistent use of effective reading strategies in the classroom. These challenges suggest that learners need stronger language support and more engaging instructional practices. The study also emphasizes that comprehension can be improved through structured steps such as word recognition, understanding literal meaning, and interpreting deeper meanings. Moreover, learner-centered strategies like prediction, summarization, questioning, and visual aids were identified as effective ways to enhance understanding and engagement in reading activities among young learners.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Pupils need to comprehend what they read in order to learn about the subjects they study, and the factors that affect reading comprehension in grade five pupils are: 1. Context Matters, 2. Reader's Characteristics, 3. Text Features, and 4. Academic Language Challenges. I undergone survey tests for my grade three pupils and interviewed those pupils who have difficulty in reading to complete this research study. Readers bring their skills and background knowledge about the topic with them. They need to remember and make sense of what they're reading, connecting the new understanding to the old. But this can be a tricky process.

For those pupils who have difficulty in reading comprehension, it takes collaboration with the pupil, teacher, and the parents of the pupil. The pupil must help himself to do activities that will help develop his reading comprehension. The teacher will guide and facilitate if the activities he did was right. Most specially, the parents must encourage, guide and support their child so that the child will feel inspired to do good in class because he feel that he is loved.

Through this action research, it will help bring improvement in my practice: (1) improve on my own teaching, and (2) bring desired modification in the behavior of my students.

Acknowledgement

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.