

Contextualized Lessons, Tangible Turn-taking Technique and the Reading Comprehension of Grade Seven Students

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Grammar Test: 91/100

Originality: 96/100

Gunning Fog Index: 12.50

Flesch Reading Ease: 38.58



ABSTRACT

The 2018 and 2019 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed the Philippines' below-average reading score. Hence, this study aimed to determine if contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique, when used as interventions, can increase Grade 7 students' reading comprehension level. It also sought to explain statistical results through focus group discussions of research participants. Selected through cluster sampling, 115 Grade 7 students answered standardized Reading comprehension tests. Nine of these students were selected through purposive sampling to take part in the focus group discussion. Mean and paired sample t-test revealed that contextualization as intervention made no significant difference to pre and posttest scores. Tangible turn-taking technique, when used alone, made a significant difference but did not affect students' reading comprehension level. Combining the two interventions raised students' reading comprehension level from Frustration to Instructional. Thematic analysis showed that teachers used videos as a springboard for contextualization and improvised their tangible turn-taking technique through cut-outs of relevant objects. Teachers also used rereading, understanding and familiarization of content as techniques to supplement the research interventions. Insights gained by students had the themes: negative emotion during the intervention, applicability of lessons to real life and request for relevant, tangible techniques.

Keywords: *Education, contextualization, tangible turn-taking technique, reading comprehension, descriptive design, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Educational researchers have found a significant link between reading and academic success. Proficient reading skills are crucial for problem-solving, critical thinking, writing, researching, reasoning, and creativity. Hence, good readers are more likely to do well in school and pass exams than weak readers (Calderon, 2014).

Unfortunately, the 2017-2018 National Achievement Test (NAT) results revealed that students in the Midsayap Public Secondary Schools performed below Mastery Level. The Mean Percentage scores (MPS) of students is merely 40.27%. Data shows that Midsayap Public Secondary Schools ranked thirteenth (13th) out of the seventeen municipalities in Cotabato Division (Mauricio, 2019).

This shockingly dismal result has also been shown at the national level. The 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed that 15-year

old Filipino students ranked last (79th) in reading comprehension and second lowest in science and mathematics out of the 79 countries that participated in the international assessment. Filipino students' scores were all below the minimum proficiency level. Only one out of five Filipino students achieved the minimum proficiency level in the three domains. Most of these students are in private schools and the cities (Mateo, 2019). Alarming, this below average reading score was retained by the country in the 2019 PISA (Ciriaco, 2019).

To address the reading comprehension concern, a School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) was held in Dilangalen National High School. Contextualization and Tangible Turn-taking Technique were discussed to teachers for them to use these as interventions. Contextualization is the "educational process of relating the curriculum to a particular setting, situation or area of application to make the competencies relevant, meaningful and useful to the learners" (Torres, 2015). Through it, learners interact in a customized environment where they manipulate and adapt to diverse learning opportunities and resources within the community. On the other hand, teachers created text-based objects for students to hold to facilitate turn-taking in class discussions about various reading selections.

To enhance the reading comprehension level of Grade 7 students, we, researchers, conducted this study. We let the research participants take a standardized pre-test and posttest to investigate on the effectiveness of contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique as interventions. To clarify or reinforce the statistical results, we did focus group discussions with the participants. By mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods, we offset each research design's weaknesses to find appropriate and meaningful interventions for our learners.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

Contextualization

Contextualizing reading comprehension instruction makes students learn in a vivid, meaningful and authentic manner. Contextualization can be conducted by ensuring that reading lessons and activities highlight the learners' field of interests and environment (Bongancisco, 2016). Studies have shown a positive link between contextualization and the rise in reading comprehension level. Hence, Bongancisco (2016) recommended the use of contextualization not only to BSIT students but to other courses provided that learners' reading attitudes will also be addressed.

The flexibility of the K to 12 curriculum permits curriculum enhancement in consideration of the learners' diverse backgrounds. The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533). Sec. 5 states that the Department of Education

shall make the basic education curriculum “flexible enough to enable and allow schools to localize, indigenize and enhance the same based on their respective educational and social contexts. The production and development of locally produced teaching materials shall also be encouraged.” (Department of Education Leyte, 2016).

Tangible Turn-taking Technique

“A turn is a time when a speaker is talking and turn-taking is the skill of knowing when to start and finish a turn in a conversation. It is an important organizational tool in spoken discourse. A speaker may signal a finished turn by dropping the pitch or volume of their voice at the end of an utterance” British Council (n.d.).

A “talking stick” or a doll can be used as a prop “to demonstrate turn-taking from tactile, visual and auditory modalities.” A learner’s turn to participate in the conversation is signaled when they hold the tangible turn-taking object. “Passing the item back and forth helps make an abstract content more concrete and easier to understand” (Barret, 2019).

Reading Comprehension

Developing an effective design to educate public school learners and assessment are crucial to know their reading proficiency status. “Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is one of the assessment tools. Based on the Phil-IRI scale, the students are categorized into four levels: Nonreader, frustration, instructional and independent. Learners under the frustration reading level tend to withdraw from reading 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” (Marual-Gillaco, 2014).

FRAMEWORK

Berns and Erickson (2001) stated that “contextual learning theory assumes that learning makes sense if the learner can deal with novel data with their frame of reference. Through this learning approach, the learner’s mind will look for the meaning of the text within the context, that is the reader’s mind will associate what is written on the page to his/her previous knowledge and experiences so that the text will be valuable.”

On the other hand, Sacks et al. (1974) provided the first and still most influential model of the regularities underlying conversational turn-taking. On their model, the organization of turn-taking is governed by two complementary

principles: turn-construction, or knowing when one speaker has completed his or her turn, and turn-allocation, the implicit procedures for determining what happens once a turn is considered complete.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The descriptive study was to find out if contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique when used as an intervention can increase Grade 7 students' reading comprehension level. It also sought to explain statistical results through focus group discussions of research participants.

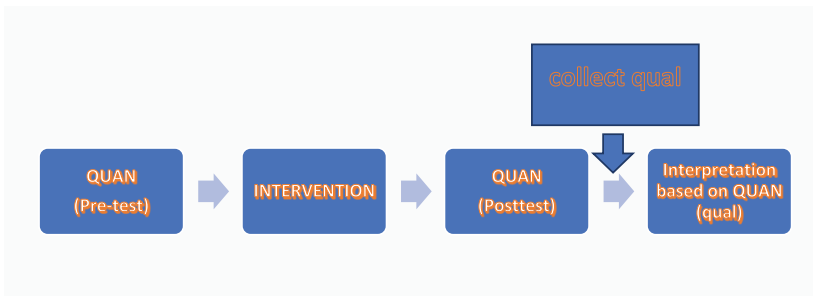


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a descriptive design. The quantitative method was quasi-experimental utilizing pre- and posttests among three groups. An intervention was conducted. Subsequently, the researchers facilitated a focus group discussion among students to elicit qualitative data to further explain the statistical results.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in a public secondary school in Midsayap, North Cotabato.

Research Participants

This study's participants were the 115 Grade Seven students chosen through cluster sampling. They were all enrolled in the academic year 2018-2019 at a public secondary school in Midsayap, North Cotabato. Nine of these students (three per section) were chosen through purposive sampling to take part in the focus group discussion.

Intervention

Pursuant to the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533). Sec. 5 letter h. which promotes contextualization of lessons, we, researchers, first conducted a School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) wherein we presented an exemplar lesson plan which is not only culturally meaningful at the national and local level but also relevant for 21st century learners. Then, we encouraged the teachers especially the ones who will handle the intervention to develop contextualized lessons as well as consider tangible turn-taking technique done through relevant objects that learners can manipulate while interacting. Due to time constraint, the intervention was done for just three weeks after the pre-test.

The three conditions as intervention for reading comprehension were the following:

Section X would have contextualization only.

Section Y would have both contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique.

Section Z would have tangible turn-taking technique only.

Data Collection

We, researchers, first sought the approval of the two principals of the school. Then, we distributed the parents' consent form and assent form to the Grade 7 students of the 3 selected lowest sections. When we have gathered the signed forms, we administered the Reading Comprehension tests before and after the intervention of contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique. Subsequently, we formulated guide questions based on the research questions. We then set the date for the focus group discussion (FGD) to further explain the statistical results.

Research Instrument

For the quantitative reading comprehension tests, we used four 10-item tests from the Daily Teaching Tools of Chad Manis (2012). We chose the test items at the level of Grade 7 students. These test items covered author's purpose, context clues, noting details, conclusion, main idea, inference, sequence, functional text and cause and effect.

Data Analysis

The Mean was used for the level of reading comprehension of students. Paired sample t-test was used to determine the difference between the pre-test and posttest scores of the three sections that were labeled as X, Y and Z.

The thematic analysis technique of Braun & Clarke (2006) was used to “identify themes at the semantic level and ensure that analysis moves beyond describing what is said to focus on interpreting and explaining it. We further used the latent level to look beyond what has been said and ‘...start to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations – and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Analysis

Before the teacher used contextualization, the reading comprehension of Section X was at a Frustration Level of 29.11% based on the reading comprehension scale of “Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). It means that they had a difficulty understanding the words. After the intervention, their mean percentage score improved at 35.96% but it is still at the Frustration Level. The computed t value of 1.79 is lower than the table value of 2.040 at the alpha level of 0.05 so the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in their pre-test and posttest scores. Hence, using only contextualization as intervention is not effective.

Table 1. Summary of pre-test and posttest scores of three sections

Group	Pretest Mean	Description	Posttest Mean	Description
X				
Y				
Z				

For Section Y, before the teacher used both contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique, their reading comprehension was at a Frustration Level of 23.99%. It means that they had a difficulty understanding the words. After the intervention, their mean percentage score improved at 63.85% and rose to the Instructional Level. Their computed t value of 16.6 is greater than the table value of 2.026 at the alpha level of 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in their pre-test and posttest scores. Hence, using both contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique as interventions are effective.

For Section Z, before the teacher used tangible turn-taking technique, their reading comprehension was at a Frustration Level of 29.73%. It means that they had a difficulty understanding the words. After the intervention, their

mean percentage score improved at 46.60% but remained at the Frustration Level. Their computed t value of 9.49 is greater than the table value of 2.01 at the alpha level of 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in their pre-test and posttest scores. Hence, using tangible turn-taking technique as interventions is effective.

Qualitative Data Analysis

After carefully reading the focus group discussion's transcript, we, the researchers, paid close attention to the dominant responses of (not their real names) Mia, Ria, Ivy, Ron, Jam, Neo, Lei, Mae and Ted. We chose relevant and significant ideas or experiences mentioned by at least two participants. Then, we highlighted themes through sample narratives or direct quotes. After that, we analyzed and discussed the themes that emerged from the transcribed data.

For the Strategies that Teachers Used to Implement Contextualization and Tangible Turn-taking Technique, participants revealed that teachers used video presentations. This captured students' attention as the teachers contextualized the questions so that students can relate the lessons to what they do in school and at home. Teachers also used cut-outs of objects for tangible turn-taking so that students can actively interact in the assigned topics on garbage segregation and disposal, toxic Asian fish and Google. Hence, the tactile and kinesthetic learners who were not linguistically inclined enjoyed manipulating the turn-taking objects.

Moreover, teachers went the extra mile by giving the learners tips to improve their reading comprehension aside from the intervention. The other techniques were through rereading as well as understanding and familiarization of content.

Table 2. Teacher Strategies used to implement contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique

Main Themes	Thematic Statements
Contextualized ICT integration	video for garbage segregation video for toxic Asian carp video for Google
Tangible Turn-taking Technique	Cut out of garbage bin in lieu of "talking stick" Cut out of toxic Asian carp cutout for gadgets to access Google
Teachers' Tips to Enhance Reading Comprehension	Rereading Understanding and familiarization of content

For the insights of Grade 7 students, they divulged their negative emotions that were mostly triggered from their discomfort due to the presence of the principal during the intervention. They were also nervous and shocked due to the potential harm that the size and toxin in an Asian carp can pose. Despite these, the learners were able to realize the applicability of the lessons to real life like recycling is not only good for the environment but can be a source of extra cash as well. Learners also realized that Google helps them in academic matters and that in the presence of potentially dangerous animals, the flight-or-fight response can be stimulated.

Furthermore, the students requested for access to cuddly metacognitive strategies which I presented during the 2018 Regional Research Congress. The students suggested that these cuddly metacognitive strategies will help them feel relaxed while learning.

Table 5. Insights of Grade 7 students

Main Themes	Thematic Statements
Negative Emotions during the Intervention	Jittery due to the presence of the principal Nervous and shocked due to the dangers posed by the Asian carp
Applicability of Lessons to Real Life	Recycling has environmental and economic benefits Google has educational advantages Flight-or-fight response for dangerous animals
Suggestions to Improve Intervention	Access to cuddly metacognitive strategies

CONCLUSIONS

To lessen students' negative emotions during the conduct of the intervention, principals should balance supervising the teachers while making students feel relaxed with their presence through establishing rapport. They should also appreciate teachers who go the extra mile by giving tips for students to enhance their reading comprehension aside from the intervention they give.

Quantitative data showed that when teachers used both contextualization and tangible turn-taking technique, students' reading comprehension improved from frustration to instructional level. There was also a significant difference in the t-test result which indicates that the intervention was effective and should be adapted by other teachers.

Qualitative data from Grade 7 students revealed that they found the intervention applicable to real life and effective in helping the majority of students learn to read. Nonetheless, teachers should consider the students' suggestions on how to improve the interventions. Teachers must also collaborate with colleagues and with the school administration to ensure that all interventions they implement are research-based.

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