Reading Strategies Employed by English Teachers In Rizal Elementary School in Bansalan East District, Davao Del Sur

KAREN F. BELARMINO
Teacher I
Master of Arts in Educational Management
Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc.
Karen.belarmino@deped.gov.ph

Abstract — One of the most difficult aspects of pedagogy is teaching reading. This study looked into the pre-, during, and post-reading strategies used by English teachers in an elementary school, as well as the obstacles they experienced when teaching reading. This study used a mixed-methods approach, with a survey-questionnaire to collect quantitative data and a semi-structured interview used to collect qualitative data in Rizal Elementary School, Bansalan East District, Davao del Sur. The research included eighteen (18) elementary school English teachers. Teachers utilize pre-, during-, and post-reading methods extensively, according to the findings. Teachers invite students to generate questions about the topic during pre-reading exercises. Teachers use during-reading strategies such as asking students to identify the main concept of the reading material and asking questions to evaluate their understanding. They ask students to complete a task (as a post-reading strategy), and the semi-structured interview reveals that the respondents' top challenges are students' vocabulary size and teachers' lack of training. Based on the findings of this study, supplementary reading material was developed to assist English language teachers in teaching reading in their respective classes.

Keywords — Language Teaching, Mixed-Method, Pedagogy, Vocabulary, Teachers Training

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected education, and teacher education, in various ways. As a result of the closure of universities and schools, teachers and students had to rapidly adapt to remote teaching. Education systems must confront issues of inequity front and center. They must also prepare multi-modal responses, capitalizing on existing infrastructure utilizing a combination of different learning mediums to ensure students are engaged and learning can ensure that students continue learning through a variety of avenues. As such, education systems need to consider alternative ways for students to continue learning when they are not in school, like in the current Covid-19 crisis (World Bank, 2020).

Consequently, the shift from face-to-face class to modular distance learning demanded better reading and writing skills as there is less to no oral interaction between the teacher and the students. One of the most important aims in education is the students' reading comprehension to

be developed. The goal of the curriculum emphasis on students' constructing knowledge, higher order thinking skills and information processing skills (Tavera & Casinillo, 2020).

The researcher came up with the assumption that the teachers need to learn new strategies in teaching reading in pandemic situation. These are useful in developing better skills that could help to improve their teaching strategy and the educational system. Specifically, the researcher came up with the research topic since there is a need to imply new strategies in teaching reading that could improve students reading comprehension.

This study aims to determine the reading strategies of English teachers in Rizal Elementary School in Bansalan, Davao del Sur during the COVID 19 pandemic for the school year 2022-2023. All the elementary teachers are involved in this study being elementary teachers are generalist in their specialization.

Reading is one of the most crucial language skills for students to develop (Wibowo et al., 2020). The capacity to read allows readers to take control of their own information and, as a result, to make decisions about their future. Reading ability will make it easier to comprehend information and knowledge (Nugroho et al., 2019). Furthermore, Levine et al. (2000) and Hall (2005) emphasize that in the ESL setting, reading skill is an essential approach to learning the language because most English learners may only need to talk or listen a little to native English speakers, but they must read a lot in that language for a variety of reasons. Reading is undeniably the most crucial ability to achieve for many ESL students. Knowing how to read successfully in the target language, while not a simple feat, provides ESL students with a genuine opportunity to acquire and utilize the language. Wibowo et al. (2020) said that the learner becomes an active participant in generating an engagement with the text's writer through the process of reading by anticipating, analyzing, summarizing, and employing other reading methods.

Given this situation, it is critical that teachers focus on understanding the components that influence reading achievement (Kinzer, 2019). This should be the case since understanding is the primary objective of reading, and reading without comprehension would be a pointless activity. To assist learners' comprehension, English language teachers should provide them with reading skills that will help them read more effectively. When students learn reading skills, they gain the ability to reflect on, evaluate, and clarify what they read, as well as distinguish what is relevant to the assignment from what is not. They may also critically assess, compare, and contrast new learning with previous information, as well as support and implement the lessons learned. All of this improves their drive to read, and the teacher's function remains that of a facilitator and guide (Macaro, 2020).

Reading instruction is a collection of processes aimed at increasing student knowledge of reading methods and providing systematic practice, reinforcement, and self-monitoring of reading competence while completing reading assignments. When students are introduced to strategies and given opportunities to employ them, their capacity to process information improves, which leads

to better learning. Cohen et al. (2021) emphasizes the relevance of reading methods, stating that learners who lack the ability to dissect a text when reading in English have difficulties. They often avoid intentional engagement in class and out of class activities and assignments, and their reading abilities are hampered. Streiner (2022) agrees that the primary focus of reading instruction should be on achieving reading competency in the target language. To succeed in one's studies, one must improve one's reading methods in order to face the many sorts of reading necessary in one's course.

Traditionally, English language education has been characterized in terms of what teachers do in the classroom, i.e., the activities and behaviors that teachers engage in and their impact on students (Hall, 2019). The fundamental component of the knowledge base for teaching reading in ESL is teachers' implicit views about English language teaching and learning (El-Okda, 2020). The ultimate objective of reading teaching should be to read a text selection with understanding. To do this, English language teachers should provide chances for all children to learn, and teachers may inspire all students to believe in themselves and realize their full potential in reading competence by using proper scaffolding and motivation. Students' self-esteem should be boosted by the way the possibilities are presented.

Every country today, including the Philippines, strives for technical progress. This means that students must be exposed to suitable reading practices in order to assist the development of reading competence required of them as they go through their professional careers. This is because, as societies become more complicated and sophisticated, it becomes increasingly vital for its citizens to have reading skills in order to cope with and adapt to technological developments in their daily lives. The researcher conducted a study on reading comprehension at Catholic universities in Davao City. The collected data indicated that the Education students' overall reading comprehension is Satisfactory, with a descriptive level of Moderate. This indicates that with less supervision, students may comprehend challenging reading materials on literal, interpretative, evaluative, and creative levels.

Casinillo and Guarte (2018) used a total of 23 randomly selected teachers and 294 students to evaluate the teaching tactics of teachers at the Hilongos National Vocational School. Computer aided classes, peer tutoring, modeling and teaching demo, oral recitation and reporting, and group work are among the five teaching styles used by 11 academic teachers. There are also 12 vocational teachers that use the same teaching methodologies as well as lecture with laboratory. All of the instructional tactics received high or strong approval from the students. Modeling, teaching demo, oral recitation, and reporting are successful teaching tactics for both academic and vocational teachers, in addition to computer aided classes and peer tutoring. Academic achievement under an academic teacher and student perceptions of peer tutoring are favorably connected. Furthermore, no link was seen between students' perceptions of teaching tactics and their academic achievement under vocational teachers.

Despite the fact that a number of studies have focused on how reading is reinforced in language acquisition in the setting of an ESL classroom, the situation in the Philippines remains

problematic, which is why this study was conducted. Given the different curricular modifications in language pedagogy over time, a plethora of 21st-century instructional adaptations have been created but are still understudied. This might be attributed to the fact that communicative language teaching is the primary focus of language instruction. CLT prioritizes productive language acquisition abilities like speaking, writing, and presenting, whereas receptive skills like listening and reading come last, at least in the country. This case calls into question how CLT should be used. Its main concept is that in order to achieve communicative competence, all abilities in language acquisition must be taken into account. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched initiatives to address pupils' reading issues through the use of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is a program of the Department of Education's Bureau of Elementary Education that aims to make every Filipino learner a reader. It is based on the Department's flagship initiative, "Every Child A Reader," which aims to enable every Filipino child to speak effectively in both English and Filipino via effective reading education. It is a method for assessing elementary school students' reading proficiency. It is the first validated instrument to assess students' reading comprehension abilities. Through stories and passages, the student's word identification and comprehension abilities, as well as his or her reading speed, are informally examined numerically and qualitatively. The researchers chose to look at the pre, during, and after-reading teaching tactics used by English language teachers in a Senior High School as well as the obstacles they face when teaching reading, in order to add to the body of knowledge on the subject.

The English language education in the Philippines is frequently faced with low academic performance among Filipino students. This is due to many factors, such as poverty, lack of school facilities, qualified teachers, and learning resources (Madrunio, Martin, & Plata, 2019). Likewise, scholars imply that these unfortunate factors contributed to the low results in functional literacy skills which are apparent in the Program for International Student Assessment data (PISA 2018 results, 2019). Moreover, according to Wa-Mbaleka (2019), English language teachers do not acquire skills necessary for English language teaching as they commit errors in teaching which are transferred to students; thus, the foundation of English language skills is jeopardized. This is further reinforced by Lasaten and Racca (2019), who suggested that teachers of the English language should pursue professional development and update themselves with new teaching methods in teaching the English language. Analysis of the profile of teachers such as age, sex, educational attainment, and length of years in service is necessary to know the quality of a teacher. Also, teaching strategies in order to draw conclusions about the extent to which strategies are linked with the pedagogy of teaching English is vital considering many skills that students need to learn in schools. As such, aspects of teacher's teaching strategies should be emphasized that can be incorporated into students' learning practice (Rice, 2022).

Difficulties with Reading

What mystifies many parents is where and why the reading process breaks down. Although, problems may occur in any area, decoding, comprehension, or retention, the root of most reading problems, in the view of many experts, is decoding (Lauren, Lee, Nathan, 2022).

Constructivism is a learning theory in psychology that describes the process of acquiring and developing knowledge through different phases of learning. According to Bada (2019), constructivism is an approach to teaching and learning based on the principle that cognition is the result of "mental construction." Students learn by accommodating new ideas with their prior knowledge. Hence, it has a direct application to education. However, there is apprehension with the concept of constructivism when it comes to the application considering that many teachers and administrators argue that knowledge is constructed, without understanding the epistemological and pedagogical implications such a claim entails. Furthermore, this philosophy is commonly known as epistemology or approach for teaching and is often regarded as a guideline in developing knowledge among learners. However, in some cases, constructivism is viewed as a method of teaching which involves misconception (Kemp, 2020). This is further reinforced by Akpan and Beard (2019) who claimed that constructivism is a teaching model, not a theory. Thus, constructivism should be referred to as a way of analyzing the teaching and learning process, and that caution in classifying some methods of teaching as constructivist should be taken into consideration.

Specifically, this study aims to sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the extent of the use of reading strategies in teaching reading in terms of the following stages: (a) pre-reading; (b) during-reading; and (c) post-reading?

2. *What are the challenges faced by the teachers in teaching reading?*

II. Methodology

Quantitative-qualitative approach was used in this study. Quantitative research is described as a study in which the researcher uses quantitative techniques or methods in a single study or research program to gather and evaluate data, incorporate results, and draw conclusions (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2019). This study used a survey questionnaire to collect, analyze, and integrate qualitative data in order to determine the demographic profile of respondents and the extent to which reading methods are used in the classroom. Challenges in the teaching of reading used narratives as data to answer the research question. The study involves all the teachers (N=18) of Rizal Elementary School in Bansalan, Davao del Sur. Since the study is quantitative in approach and uses survey-descriptive method, the total population of teachers in the school are involved. Only a small portion was interviewed for the qualitative part. The survey-questionnaire used in the study was adopted from Ligudon and Ildefonso (2022), but modifications were made. The said questionnaire banked on the extent of the use of reading strategies.

Part II to Part IV of the questionnaire was downloaded from Ligudon and Ildefonso (2022). The use of pre-reading, during reading and post-reading strategies were contained in Part II, Part III and Part IV respectively. Part V was extracted from the review of literature of Lauren, Lee and Nathan (2022). A researcher constructed questionnaire was made from this resulting in a list of challenges. To analyze and interpret the data, the researcher also constructed a 4 point-Likert scale. For the qualitative part, thematic analysis was used.

III. Results and Discussion

Among the ten strategies provided, teachers use nine to a very large extent while only one is used to large extent. Pre-reading exercises aid in the development of reading abilities and assist the reader grasp the substance of the books in order to better absorb the material (Marinaccio, 2019). Contextual definitions and word lists, according to Pressley (2021), might aid students with comprehending a reading material, increasing vocabulary knowledge, and increasing reading motivation.

Results indicate that the during-reading activities garnered an overall mean which means that teachers use these strategies during the reading activities. Reading tactics focused on skimming, scanning, generating predictions, and questioning, according to a researcher, assist pupils achieve a respectable reading comprehension level. However, depending on the students' past knowledge and the complexity of the activities, the level of students' comprehension may vary from task to task.

The teachers employ post-reading strategies to a large extent. Post-reading question-generation activities, according to an academician, have a generally good influence on L2 learners' reading skill development and emotional dimensions. Reading instructors should spend enough time offering explicit, thorough instructions for how to develop appropriate, thought-provoking questions when designing a reading instruction including question-generation activities, they added.

One of the issues that the teachers confront in this research is the students' vocabulary. Having a limited vocabulary makes it harder to comprehend the text or topic.

Cooperative learning approaches, as opposed to traditional procedures, allow students to have a more active part in their own education. Cooperative learning activities encourage social engagement, which helps students build language skills and acquire concepts and topics.

One strategy to improve teaching practice is to attend seminars, workshops, and trainings on immersion strategies. This is because research continues to indicate that teacher quality has the greatest impact on student achievement at the school level.

Analysis

The purpose of this study was to learn about the strategies and approaches used by public secondary school English teachers at a senior high school in the Philippines, as well as the obstacles they face in teaching reading. The majority of the teacher responses is new to teaching and has just attended a few trainings on teaching reading. This demonstrates that they are new to teaching reading and have limited expertise with reading techniques. Pre-, during-, and post-reading methods are used by teacher responses. They offer questions, evaluate understanding, and provide activities to their students during the three phases of reading. The different pre-, during-, and post-reading exercises are used by both rookie and expert teachers.

Both student and teacher factors contribute to the difficulties that teachers confront while teaching reading. One of the primary issues teachers face is students' lack of vocabulary, which leads to inadequate understanding. Their lack of understanding of immersion tactics in reading instruction is also considered as a barrier.

IV. Conclusion

The results of this study show that the traditional methods were still widely used in the contemporary era where technology rises. In view of the educational technology, English language teachers are inclined to the technological advancements in teaching. This posits a good practice in teaching, according to (Ayeni, 2011 as cited in Ganyaupfu, 2020); teaching is a continuous process that involves bringing about desirable changes in learners through the use of appropriate methods. As manifested in the profile of the English language teachers, female teachers are dominant who are considered motherly, full of patience, and practiced the profession for 15 years and above. These factors are vital in determining experienced teachers (Drudy, 2018). Moreover, in the report made by Kini and Podolsky (2019), an effective teacher is reinforced by his or her experiences in teaching. The most often used teaching methods such as brainstorming and lecture method encourage students to make the utmost quantity of diverse and creative ideas in a natural way without limitations (Alshammari, 2019). However, the teaching method such as lectures is frequently criticized; nevertheless, this traditional method has managed to survive for so long even in the era of technological advancements. As such, the results of this study suggest that the methods used by the English language teachers were still traditional. Hence, to keep abreast with the new methods of teaching, teachers should have professional development as supported by Kosgei, Mise, Odera, and Ayugi (2021) and Wa-Mbaleka (2019) who remarked that teachers should be trained in the Teaching of English to Speakers of the Languages (TESOL) approaches with experts especially the pre-service teachers to improve the English language education. Accordingly, teachers' professional background and instructional practices in the classroom make a difference in students' academic achievement (Kimani, Kara, & Njagi, 2019) which means the strategies used in the classroom instruction should be effective.

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