Challenges teachers face in teaching reading among elementary pupils

Lu, Hayden ✉
University of Mindanao, Philippines (iamhaydensity@gmail.com)

Abstract

This study aimed to find out how important it was for instructors to be able to teach reading to elementary pupils. An in-depth interview (IDI) and focus- group discussion (FGD) was conducted to 14 teachers, 7 for in-depth interviews and 7 for focus group. The respondents were elementary teachers where there were twenty-one pieces of data collected from research question number one, as well as three themes that arose from the findings for research question number two and three themes for research question number three. The data obtained from the study were coded and analyzed using the data reduction, thematic analysis, drawing conclusions and verification. The analyzing of data from research number one showed that the inadequacy understanding reading, deficiency reading development, underdeveloped sounds and words recognition, difficulty attending student's need and insufficient reading materials. It seems that all of it is the challenges faced by the teacher in teaching reading to the pupils. In teachers coping mechanism in those challenges they are three major themes appeared from the data collected on the experiences of the study participants such as consistent updates on reading progress, extension of patience and attend students' participation. In terms of the participant's insights to teachers on the importance of teaching reading to elementary pupils, the extend teaching reading motivation, value reading and teach reading gradually are the three key themes that emerged during the interviews. In summary, this aids the development of topics to focus on in order to better understand how to teach reading to students and how to deal with obstacles.

Keywords: teacher's challenges, reading and pupils, phenomenology, Philippines

Challenges teachers face in teaching reading among elementary pupils

1. Introduction

Nowadays, educators especially in primary levels are now integrating new ways on how to effectively teach reading on the learners. As early days at school is a crucial stage of learning, likewise teaching reading to the pupils is a challenging part of teaching (Moktari & Velten, 2015). Most educators in elementary classrooms today remain committed to being part of inclusive school communities that the value of ideals of belonging, nurturing, and educating all children, despite students' differences in background, gender, language, ability, class, and ethnicity (Pei, 2018). There are some ways on how to increase the ability of reading. Educator needs reading materials or instruction tools that gives them a phase in order for them to be an active thinker. Educator should be an active thinker at first hand in teaching reading (Van der Boom, 2017). Moreover, reading should include the use of metacognitive strategies (Gannaio, 2017). In fact, educators who can practice metacognition by thinking aloud and sharing their connections orally, they can use these ways to engage students in making their own connections and thinking about how these help them comprehend better (Simpson, I., C., Moreno-Perez, 2020).

Across the United States, school districts, state departments of education, and colleges of education are recognizing the necessity of providing practices and persevere educators with tools that help pupils acquire and learn on their courses especially in reading. The program began in 2004 and runs through seven years with an aim to teach kindergarten learners to start their reading skills. Also, they have helped teach the school's kindergarten to third-grade teachers how to better teach students to read. The sheltered instruction approach is one model that has gained widespread use and developed pupils to be an independent learner. Moreover, from this program, they discovered a profound benefit of reading not only to their child's development but also the rate of country's literacy (Bloomquist, 2017).

Speaking of literacy, based on the 2019 report by United Nations, the Philippines has the highest literacy rate of 97.97 percent among Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Brunei, and Indonesia. Literacy most especially amongst the children and youth, is one of the key factors that determines how well a country progresses in this rapidly changing world (Fuerte, 2019). Nevertheless, in Zamboanga del Norte, the World Vision reported that the government generously donated and partnered with the local government unit to help repair the school classrooms and increase reading facilities for the students. This was complemented by a culture of reading programs where parents were trained to better care for and support their children's learning. Also, educators or teachers were trained to further incorporate skill-building for the students (Maluyo, 2019).

2. Methodology

Qualitative research method was used in this investigation and the researcher observed, interviewed, recorded, described, evaluated, and appraised environments as they are, they contribute to the process of generating research knowledge (Eisner 1991: 145). Its information originates from a group of people who are well-versed in a particular organization or event. Furthermore, because it deals with an individual's experiences, a phenomenological approach will be the ideal fit for our research. A phenomenological study, according to Patton (1990), is one that focuses on describing what people experience and how they experience it.

When studying a phenomenon, it is necessary to consider it from two perspectives: those who have experienced it and those of us who are interested in it. In evaluating the data, it is critical to be mindful of the fact that personal perspectives are infused with the responses of the respondents, even though it appears hard to separate the researchers' personal views from the data. "We can only know what we experience," according to Husserl (1992), serves as a reminder to researchers to strike a balance between subjectivity and objectivity.

Patton (1990) enumerates the procedures to acquire the essence: similarities on human experiences in order to eliminate bias. Epoche, phenomenological reduction, bracketing, textural depiction of each topic, and structural synthesis are all part of it.

3. Results

It was clear that the existing challenges of teachers in teaching reading comprehension to elementary pupils are the Inadequacy understanding reading, Deficiency reading development, Underdeveloped sounds and words recognition, Difficulty attending student's need and Insufficient reading materials. It was found out that the teacher's views on how to cope up with those disputes are the Consistent updates on reading progress, Extension of patience and Attend students' participation. These themes were justified by the participants both in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. On the other hand, participants also advocate their insights about the importance of teaching reading to elementary pupils such as Extend teaching reading motivation, Value reading and teach reading gradually. These insights were agreed by the majority of the participants. Thus, it made the participants mindful on the challenges on teaching reading comprehension to elementary pupils. It is not just simple to handle but they bring the best out of the challenges about teaching reading comprehension that is rampantly happening within.

In general, this chapter documented the themes which generated based on the data gathered from the participants. In this chapter, the researchers were able to present each theme with justifications from the participants. In addition, the participants' profiles were introduced in this chapter, but their names were not revealed.

4. Discussion and conclusion

It was anchored with the theory of Hancock (2007) which its data analysis involves a process designed to condense raw data categories or themes based on valid interference and interpretation. It is also interested in discovering the big picture but use different techniques to find it. For most of the part, this study uses data to describe the phenomenon, to articulate what it means, and to understand it. Generating concepts or variables from the theory or previous studies is also a useful tool for qualitative research, especially at the interception of data analysis (Hancock, 2007).

A phenomenological study is one that focuses on how people perceive what they do and how they do it in different ways (Patton,1990). The term "phenomenological inquiry" refers to the similarities that exist between the respondents as they encounter a phenomenon, in this case, the ethical difficulties that accountants face. Van Manen (1990, p. 177) describes phenomenology as a "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (a "grasp of the very nature of the thing"). To participate in this framework, 14 participants were invited to participate, seven from the in-depth interviews and seven from the focus group discussion, to share their challenges of teaching reading in elementary schools and how they deal with them. In addition, the participants shared their perspectives on the importance of reading among elementary school children. All of the participants were elementary school teachers between the ages of 29 and 35, and they were all of the same gender.

Inadequacy Understanding Reading. They are still having trouble grasping the text of the reading materials, such as making inferences, determining the main idea, and finding a reference. Some of the causes for this include a lack of understanding of how to apply reading comprehension tactics, as well as a lack of concentration when reading. The majority of pupils, on the other hand, have trouble understanding English text from materials such as newspapers, articles, textbooks, and periodicals (Zuhra (2015).

Deficiency Reading Development. Other strategies include, using media images to make it easier to learn, explained orally and repeatedly, an example by modelling, use media that can be touched or palpated, directly asked to ensure understanding can be captured, call the name of the child to pay attention, allow children to use various tools, encourage other students to help each other, support children in many ways, make sure slow

learners sitting in the front row, give extra lessons after school time, provide remedy, assign homework that is simpler than with other students, reduction of duties, providing easier question to slow learners, providing assistance to slow learners, reading assistance, help slow learners to write, giving more time to the slow learners, provides a place for slow learners, provide tasks that can be corrected by slow learners and ask parents to pay more attention to children learning (Ahmad, Awang, & Yunus, 2015).

Underdeveloped Sounds and Words Recognition. The pupils that lack of knowledge in blending sounds within words and there are also signs of interferences in the ability of the pupils to fluently read out words. Joseph (2018) highlight that the most common cause of difficulties in acquiring early word reading skills is weakness in the ability to process the phonological features of language. Lyon (2000) states that deficits in the development of phoneme awareness skills by pupils goes a long way to affect their reading ability. Joseph (2018) concludes by stating that good word reading skills is one of the most critical skills required for effective comprehension of written material.

Difficulty Attending Student's Need. It was observed that the teachers perceived the attention problems that the students experienced during the course mostly as a problem arising from the students themselves while the students associate this problem not only with themselves, but also with other students, teachers and the environment. When not paying attention, there are problems in communication, a minor distraction can cause accidents, and a careless reading may result in misunderstanding. The fact that attention problems are a common problem in every educational level requires teachers to look at themselves and to produce alternatives for this problem. Because the education environment includes variables that teachers can control (Bunce, 2010).

Insufficient Reading Materials. According to Lindner (2008), most pupils have low reading abilities as a result of: primary school teachers' difficulties in moving beginning readers toward immediate reading skills, pupils' lack of exposure to reading strategies and the prevailing attitude among teachers towards reading strategies. Lucas (2011) and Rany (2013) also note that pupils may have low reading ability due to school heads not availing the necessary course books for practice reading, lack of appropriate curriculum to help improve pupils reading abilities and classroom environments that are crowded and noisy for an appropriate teaching pedagogy to be fulfilled.

Consistent Updates on Reading Progress. The readiness of students seen of his willingness to do anything based on the basis of the willingness and the willingness of the students themselves without any coercion or command of others. This readiness to learn is a conditions themselves as prepared to perform an activity. The readiness of the students will make it easier to adjust under any circumstances. A difficult situation will be easier to understand for search and problem-solving solutions. The readiness of the students will make it easier to adjust under any circumstances. A difficult situation will be easier to understand for search and problem-solving solutions (Djamarah, 2002).

Extension of Patience. They are patience; concern for their students; willingness to adapt, and; knowledge of the subject being taught. If these characteristics are lacking, a teacher cannot be an effective educator. You must cultivate patience a lot because the students in the classroom are always distracted often that would certainly take to anger but becoming aware of the fact is must so that your presence in the class helps the students learn better. Being patience with the students is another important virtue a teacher must inculcate in the teaching profession (Ameriks, 2007).

Attend Students' Participation. Teachers' behavior, traits and skills are the most important factors that affect the students to participate actively in the classroom. The teachers' traits such as supportive, understanding, approachable, friendliness through positive nonverbal behavior; giving smiles and nodding for acknowledging students' answers (Siti Maziha, Nik Suryani, & Melor, 2010); affirmative and open- mindedness (Dallimore, Hertenstein, & Platt, 2004; Fassinger, 1995; 2000) act as motivators for students and foster their active participation in the classroom.

Extend Teaching Reading Motivation. It is important that as teachers we find what motivates students and

work to reach all readers. We must restore the love and interest for reading in today's adolescents. Many teachers embrace the same goal fortheir students and that is for them to want to read (Johns & Lenski, 2005). Incentives can offer one way of doing this. Some might argue whether or not setting up incentive programs for students actually promotes or hinders learning and motivation (Cameron & Pierce, 2002; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001). Regardless of the controversy, many teachers and professionals working in schools feel that rewards and incentives ignite students" motivation to read (Cameron, 2004).

Value reading. A gorgeous precept from Francis Bacon's (1993: 129) one of the essays, 'Of studies' affirms that reading makes a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man. Reading is a complex cognitive activity which is indispensable for the kind of knowledge society that one envisions in the globalized context. So the students of today's world must know how to learn from reading and toenter the present literate society.

Teach Reading Gradually. Reading comprehension is described as a two-stage process that begins with "lower processes" that focus on the word level, such as word recognition (phonics, sight words), fluency (rate, accuracy, and expression), and vocabulary (word meanings). Reading comprehension is a critical learning skill for all students (Clarke, Truelove, Hulme, & Snowling, 2013; Wong, 2011), as it is "the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction."

This research aids in the development of topics to focus on in order to better understand how to teach reading to students and how to deal with obstacles. We alsocreated this research to see how teachers teach reading to elementary students and to learn more about how they do it. This study also describes the morals, values, and expertise of our teachers as participants. Our goal is to learn about the obstacles thatinstructors face as well as their perspectives on the value of teaching reading to students through personal interviews and data analysis in this research.

5. References

Ahmad, A. R., Awang, M. M., & Yunus, T. M. (2015). Senior teachers' perception on the roles and Responsibilities of middle managers in schools. *European Journal of Scientific Research, 132*(3), 278-291.

Ameriks, J. (2007). Measuring self-control problems. *The American Economic Review, 97*(3), 966-972.

Bacon, F. (1993). *Francis Bacon's essays* (6 ed.) Madras: Macmillan.

Bloomquist, C. L. (2017). *An examination of the relationship of oral reading fluency, silent reading fluency, reading comprehension, and the Colorado state reading assessment* (Order No. 10260868). Available from ProQuest Central. (1883375778).

Bunce, D. M. (2010). How long can students pay attention in class? A study of student attention decline using clickers. *Journal of Chemical Education, 87*(12), 1438–1443. https://doi.org/10.1021/ed100409p

Clarke, P., Truelove, E., Hulme, C., & Snowling, M. (2013). *Developing reading comprehension*. Hoboken: Wiley.

Djamarah, S. B. (2002). Strategi belajar mengajar. Rineka Cipta, Jakarta. *Factors influencing classroom participation: a case study of Malaysian undergraduate.*

Gannaio, J. E. (2017). *A comparison of verbal and written metacognitive strategies used by high school students in a language arts classroom* (Order No. 10636760). Available from ProQuest Central. (1984326030).

Johns, J. L., & Lenski, S.D. (2000). *Improving reading: Strategies and resources* (4th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kenda.

Joseph, K. T. (2018). *Catch them before they fall: Identification and assessment to prevent reading failure in young children.* [Online]. Available at http://www.readingrockets.org/article/

Pei, L. (2018). *Impact of virtual literature circles on Chinese university EFL students' independent English reading* (Order No. 10748481). Available from ProQuest Central. (2082259917).

Van der Boom, E. H. (2017). *An investigation into factors that differentiate reading comprehension skill profiles of young adolescent students* (Order No. 10635293). Available from ProQuest Central. (1999377051).

Zuhra. (2015). Senior high school students' difficulties in reading comprehension. *English Education Journal, 6*(3), 424-441.