Unraveling Proficiency: Contextualized Instruction's Impact on Grade 10 Reading Mastery

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Abstract— The abstract serves as a comprehensive overview of the study's key components, findings, and implications. It begins by defining English language proficiency and its importance across various language skills. The abstract highlights the challenges in reading proficiency faced by the Philippines, as evidenced by assessments like PISA 2022 and Phil-IRI, emphasizing the urgent need for interventions and reforms in the educational system. The impact of these challenges on students' academic success and lifelong learning is discussed, emphasizing the significance of addressing reading proficiency for their future prospects. Furthermore, the abstract delves into the role of contextualized instruction in enhancing Grade 10 reading mastery, emphasizing its impact on motivation, comprehension, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary learning. The implications of the study's findings for educational stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, parents, and students, are highlighted, emphasizing the importance of crafting effective reading interventions and providing guidance for improved performance. Overall, the abstract underscores the critical importance of addressing reading proficiency challenges and implementing strategies like contextualized instruction to empower students and foster a culture of literacy in the Philippines.

Keywords— Reading, proficiency, Contextualization, comprehension, Grade 10.

INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency is defined as an individual's ability to use the English language effectively and accurately. Proficiency levels are measured across various language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A person with high English language proficiency can comprehend and express ideas fluently, demonstrating a strong grasp of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Proficiency levels can range from basic to advanced, with assessments such as standardized tests used to gauge and categorize individuals' language skills. To add, reading is necessary in all learning. It is the primary means by which all ideas and information were taken in by people in school; instruction largely depends on the ability of learners to read well. Unfortunately, lacking a motivating and interesting approach to teaching is a problem, Imus & Resultay (2020).

Accordingly, UNESCO (2021) reveals that more than 100 million more children than expected are falling behind the minimum proficiency level in reading, due to COVID-related school closures. The number of children who were illiterate prior to the pandemic was anticipated by the survey to decline from 483 million to 460 million by 2020. However, the number of children experiencing hardship surged to 584 million in 2020, a rise of more than 20% and the erasure of educational advances made during the previous 20 years. In the study conducted by Sijali (2016) in Nepal which aimed to investigate the proficiency level of English language of higher secondary level students

regarding gender, nature of institution, medium of instructional and stream, he found that the English language proficiency level of higher secondary level students in Nepal was poor. Similarly, with the published article of UNICEF (2019) the reading achievement of low-performing children across the Asian countries varied considerably. In some countries, the lowest performing 25% of children from the national reading score distribution. Included a large proportion in middle or higher bands of the SEA-PLM reading proficiency scale, while other countries had a large proportion of children in the lowest bands. In addition, with the study of Sattaphong (2018) in year 2009, Thailand was evaluated the reading literacy of Thai students at lower score than the international average 421 at tier 2 meant the students were basic level of reading proficiency that could read and describe content when they were obviously direct meaning and citing summation or contrast or linkage to the low of existing knowledge.

Moreover, as presented from the results of the PISA 2022 showed a trend of decline in terms of mean scores or averages for reading across 81 countries. Philippines, while having a lower average score in reading in 2022 (347) compared to 2018 (353), ranked higher, moving up four spots, at 75th, as it was able to score a 6.9 percentage point hike in reading. Likewise, the country was previously ranked the second lowest during the 2018 edition of PISA. Furthermore, the functional literacy rate among Filipinos aged 10 to 64 increased in 2019, hitting 91.6%, according to the Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). According to a definition of "basic literacy," reading and writing "with the understanding of simple messages in any language or dialect," there are an estimated 90.8 million Filipinos who are literate at the basic level, out of a total population of 96.8 million, or about six million adults over the age of five who are illiterate (Angeles et al., 2022). Consequently, it is observed that while Filipino is gaining headway, English is lagging behind. Further, it is said that the English of Filipinos has deteriorated. Thus, this deterioration is manifested in the inability to use grammatically correct English in oral and writ-ten discourses, the lack of language frequency, the poor reading comprehension skills caused by the lack of interest in reading and the poor or incoherent writing (Soriano, 2022).

Reading is the skill that is most crucial for success in all educational settings (Brown, 2004; Acita et al., 2022). The reading process involves knowing, comprehending, and feeling the content of the book. Reading provides people with the chance to learn a lot about a topic. Both word recognition and comprehension are necessary for reading. Identifying symbols in written text that correlate to spoken language is the process of word recognition (Yang, 2020). Hence, DepEd Order No. 45 s. 2002 or Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) as a national program with a goal that every child will be a reader by the time they finish grade three. Numerous intervention and remediation programs had been conducted by teachers to address the call of DepEd. However, Nunan (2003) asserts that readers must fluently combine a sizable amount of information from the reading text with prior knowledge in order to produce meaning when they read. Understanding is achieved by reading. Reading is, in a nutshell, the process of learning, understanding, and experiencing the content of a text.

One of the challenges the Cordillera faces today, as listed in the 2023 DEP-CAR Basic Education Regional Research Agenda, is the poor reading comprehension of learners based on the Phil-IRI reading assessment tool results in all

grade levels. In the CAR IRI Report on the Reading Assessment Conducted of Ambiong National High School year 2022-2023 revealed that out of 201 learners who undergone the pre-reading assessment from grade 8 to 10. There were 146 learners (72.64%) who fell under Frustration Level,45 (22.39%) Instructional, and 10(4.98%) Independent learners. In conclusion, out of 201 learners who had the pre-reading assessment of Ambiong National High School 72.64% fall under Frustration Level who needs reading remediation.

According to Republic Act 10533, the curriculum must be learner-centered, inclusive, developmentally appropriate, relevant, responsive, contextualized, and global, but it must also be flexible enough to allow schools to localize, indigenize, and improve it in accordance with their unique educational and social contexts. Major improvements and changes have been made to the scientific curriculum from K to 12 (Ligsanan, 2017). Thus, Moghaddas (2013), contextualization is a significant learning process that takes place by linking ideas and principles from other disciplines. This indicates that in order to make learning meaningful to students, teachers must situate the goal skill in an authentic setting. When a teacher organizes, designs, and creates instructional learning activities, context should be considered. Moreover, Dimacali (2018) noted that there are many advantages to implementing or adopting localized materials in our educational system. First, it raises awareness of what is happening, or the status of a particular topic being discussed. Second, because it is more specific and closely related to us, it will inspire students to learn more about it because it has become familiar to them. So, if the subject is a problem, they can easily relate, and it can be a great chance for youngsters to get involved in solving societal issues. There will be a meaningful discussion with each student, and everyone will be urged to participate. Hence, the present study's findings are notable in enhancing English grade 10 proficiency. Besides, it fills the gap in knowledge in related studies as well. This study is beneficial to the school administrator and stakeholders in crafting an effective reading intervention. For the parents and guardians, this enables them to have a guide in their children especially accomplishing the activity and to help them perform better.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Students engaging in learning activities not only consider meaningful for their later endeavors but that is also aligned with their personal interests and values are integrated regulated (Vansteenkiste et al., 2018). Learning activities are now accompanied by a high degree of self-endorsement since the students recognize the content as an extension of their own skills, abilities, and identities. Due to the volitional nature of integrated regulation, it is considered a higher form of autonomous motivation as behaviors are more self-endorsed, allowing students to act truer to themselves (Vansteenkiste et al., 2018). These autonomous forms of motivation are a stark contrast to amotivation, i.e., when a student completely lacks any interest or fails to recognize any value in an activity (Kowal and Fortier, 1999).

Similarly, Jannete et al states that reading comprehension involves much more than readers' responses to text. Reading comprehension is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types). Finally, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from a written text. Therefore, reading comprehension is a complex process by which

a reader tries to reconstruct a message in graphic language by a writer. It is an interaction between reader and author.

Moreover, the enrichment reading program is based on Renzulli's (1976) "Enhanced Triple Model". This model emphasizes that students should be provided with a range of learning strategies and environments complying with their interests and skills so that they can acquire valuable experiences. Enrichment reading programs and applications can be used for gifted children or children having learning difficulties. Through such programs, students are provided with comprehensive reading education, taking their areas of interest and motivation into consideration.

In addition, Motivation theory focuses on students' perceived value of the mode of instruction and development of self-efficacy, which is a key component of CTL. Students are encouraged to reject on their own ideas and the experiences in which the instruction and materials are imbedded. Predmore (2005) shows that thinking about content within real-world experience is important in CTL because "once [students] can see the real-world relevance of what they're learning, they become interested and motivated" (Putting it Into Context, The Success, para. 6)

Contextualization Theory

According to Berns and Erickson (2005), contextual learning theory assumes that learning makes sense if the learners can deal with novel data within their own 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 in the page to his/her previous knowledge and experiences so that the text will emerge valuable (Contextual Learning, n.d). This must be the reason why contextualizing the reading lesson is required in developing reading comprehension skills, because it provides a way to develop not only the content knowledge of the reader but also in improving career-related opportunities, since students will be reading an article based on their field of interest. (Berns & Erickson, 2005).

Moreover, contextual teaching is all about helping learners make the connection between the content they are learning and the context in which it will be used. Learners must first be made aware of how the work they are doing depends on the skills that they already have. Vygotsky, as cited in Hudson et al., (2007) refers to this as the "gap between what is known and what is being learned, the Zone of Proximal Development". Learners draw from previous experiences to give new meaning to what they are learning. Hudson & Whisler (2007) noted that the ideal connection process would be three-fold. Learner's review what they already know related to the new concept; they learn about and practice the new concept; and they tie what they have learned to a real-life scenario.

Nonetheless, the study by Hamdunah et al. (2016) claimed that contextualized learning modules provide summaries of the training, concepts, and material as well as information on how students acquire knowledge. In order to improve and enable the most effective procedures and processes of educational instruction, the

instructional material is also utilized to facilitate, encourage, enhance, promote, and develop teaching and learning activities (Herrera & Dio, 2016).

Nevertheless, Mahabadi (2012), stated that the idea of localization assumes that students learn more effectively when their classroom experiences are meaningful and significant to them. The learning that students engage in and feel a connection to is the learning that sticks. The learning-by-doing, applied learning, and manipulative learning rules must be adhered to in order to implement the technique in education. If children are placed in a real-world learning setting that enables them to control, relate to, and adapt to a variety of learning opportunities and resources accessible in their neighborhood or community, deep learning will be ensured and completed. In the same way, according to experts, the contextualized learning materials developed by the researcher were "very satisfactory" and therefore deemed to be appropriate and suitable for learners. With these findings, Cubillas (2020), like Rivera and Sanchez (2020), also recommended the use of contextualized learning materials.

Furthermore, (Wenger & Lave, 1991) states the importance of knowledge acquisition in a cultural context and the integration in a community of practice. Learning in this sense must not only be planned and structured by a curriculum but also by the tasks and learning situations and the interaction with the social environment of the learner. This is often contrasted with classroom-based learning where most knowledge is out of context and presented de-contextualized. On the one hand the process of contextualization and de-contextualization might be important for abstraction and generalization of knowledge on the other hand in the sense of cognitive apprenticeship (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989) it is reasonable to guide the learner towards appropriate levels and context of knowledge coming from an authentic learning situation.

Interactive Theory

In the study of Durkin's (1992), argued that reading is an active process in which the reader communicates with a variety of factors relevant to himself, the text being read, and the context in which the reading takes place in order to comprehend. This backed up the study because it clarifies how reading materials influence reading comprehension. Consequently, Grabe cited by Carrell, Devine and Eskey (2006) indicates that "interactive models view vocabulary not only as the means to express meaning but also as a condition for the reader to become fluent in the reading process" (p.63). The top-down processing procedure might not resolve for itself all the problems raised by the reader's incapacity to guess adequately the meaning of a given word from the context. The lack of knowledge in vocabulary may result in delaying the process of reading, and then the recognition of useful vocabulary or keywords is crucial to successfully comprehend a text.

Schemata Theory

According to Shen (2008), the process of interpretation is guided by the principle that input is mapped against some existing schema and that all aspects of that schema must be compatible with the input information. This principle results in two basic models of information processing. Which are called bottom-up and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing is evoked by the incoming data and is also called date driven, because the data enters the system through the best-fitting, bottom level schemata. Top-down processing takes place as the system

makes general predictions based on higher level, general schema, which means background knowledge in reading comprehension. In the Schema theory, skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world. Readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign its membership to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in the memories. During the reading process, the reader brings information, knowledge, emotion, experience, and culture to the printed word to make decisions about what something" means".

Moreover, comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge. As Anderson (1977, p.369) points out, "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well. Similarly with the study of Ding & Zhu, that in high school English reading teaching, combined with schema theory, to enhance students' language recognition skills. Cognitive psychology thinks that students cognitive process of knowledge, which is also a process of information processing. In English learning, according to the pictorial theory, students can recognize the hierarchical structure of English reading teaching. They can also internalize the language through English reading illustrations and interpret English reading teaching activities.

DISCUSSIONS

The challenges in reading proficiency faced by the Philippines are evident from its poor rankings in assessments like PISA 2022 and Phil-IRI, where the country scored notably low in reading comprehension compared to other surveyed nations, highlighting the critical need for interventions to tackle this issue (Philippines Statistics Authority, 2022; Angeles et al., 2022). Research underscores the importance of adopting a holistic approach to reading comprehension, considering factors such as decoding skills, text engagement, and content exposure, signaling the necessity of comprehensive strategies to enhance reading proficiency (Brown, 2004; Acita et al., 2022). Additionally, studies reveal that Filipino students not only struggle with understanding science content but also lack the necessary skills for proficient reading, leading to subpar performance in subjects like Science and Mathematics (Ligsanan, 2017; Moghaddas, 2013). With a significant portion of students falling below the mastery level in reading comprehension, urgent attention is required for targeted interventions and curriculum reforms aimed at improving reading skills, particularly among grade school learners (DEP-CAR, 2023; Soriano, 2022).

The literature review further emphasizes the challenges faced by Filipino learners in comprehending texts, with a considerable proportion failing to achieve minimum proficiency levels in Overall Reading Literacy, underscoring the imperative of prioritizing programs and interventions to boost reading proficiency (DEP-CAR, 2023; Dimacali, 2018). Moreover, the study highlights the importance of well-defined competencies and qualifications for remedial reading teachers, stressing the need for advanced literacy education skills and graduate degrees in literacy education to effectively address students' reading difficulties (Nunan, 2003; Yang, 2020). Furthermore, involving classroom teachers in planning and assessments is suggested as a means to enhance literacy skills across subjects, emphasizing the pivotal role of educators in promoting reading proficiency (DEP-CAR, 2023).

The implications of the challenges in reading proficiency for the educational system and students' reading performance are far-reaching. Firstly, addressing these challenges requires significant resources and efforts from educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders. Targeted interventions, curriculum reforms, and teacher training programs need to be developed and implemented to enhance reading skills effectively (Brown, 2004; Acita et al., 2022). For the educational system, these challenges highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to literacy education. Curriculum reforms should prioritize the development of reading proficiency across subjects, integrating reading strategies and comprehension skills into various disciplines (Ligsanan, 2017; Dimacali, 2018). Additionally, investment in teacher training programs that equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to support students' reading development is crucial (Nunan, 2003; Yang, 2020). Furthermore, the educational system must ensure equitable access to resources and interventions, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or marginalized communities.

On the students' side, addressing reading proficiency challenges can have a profound impact on their academic success and lifelong learning. Improving reading skills not only enhances students' comprehension and critical thinking abilities but also equips them with essential tools for accessing information and engaging with complex texts across different subjects (DEP-CAR, 2023). Moreover, proficient readers are better equipped to succeed in higher education and the workforce, as reading proficiency is a foundational skill for success in both academic and professional settings. Moreover, contextualized instruction has a significant impact on Grade 10 reading mastery. By integrating reading skills and strategies into real-world contexts and relevant content areas, contextualized instruction enhances students' comprehension, critical thinking, and engagement with texts. Research has shown that when students see the relevance of what they are reading to their lives or to other subjects they are studying, they are more motivated to read and comprehend the material (Moghaddas, 2013; Dimacali, 2018).

Furthermore, contextualized instruction allows students to apply their reading skills across different subjects, reinforcing their understanding of reading concepts and strategies. For example, if students are learning about historical events in their history class, contextualized instruction might involve reading primary sources or historical documents to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. This not only improves their reading comprehension but also enhances their understanding of history.

Moreover, contextualized instruction promotes deeper learning by encouraging students to make connections between what they are reading and their prior knowledge or experiences. This helps students build a more comprehensive understanding of the text and enables them to analyze and evaluate information more effectively (Brown, 2004). Additionally, by situating reading tasks in authentic contexts, contextualized instruction prepares students for real-world reading demands, such as reading informational texts, following instructions, or interpreting complex documents (Acita et al., 2022).

Contextualized instruction's impact on Grade 10 reading mastery extends beyond just academic achievement; it cultivates a deeper appreciation for reading and learning. By embedding reading tasks within real-world contexts, students not only acquire essential reading skills but also develop a broader understanding of how reading applies

to their lives outside the classroom. This approach fosters a sense of relevance and purpose in reading, motivating students to engage more deeply with texts and to seek out reading opportunities beyond the classroom (Philippines Statistics Authority, 2022).

Consequently, contextualized instruction promotes interdisciplinary learning, as students encounter reading materials that connect to various subjects and disciplines. This interdisciplinary approach not only reinforces reading skills but also helps students recognize the interconnectedness of different areas of knowledge, fostering a more holistic understanding of the world (Ligsanan, 2017). Additionally, by integrating reading tasks with other subject areas, contextualized instruction encourages students to transfer and apply their reading skills in different contexts, thus enhancing their overall reading proficiency (Nunan, 2003).

Moreover, contextualized instruction fosters critical literacy skills by prompting students to question and analyze the texts they encounter within their real-world contexts. Through discussions, reflections, and activities related to the reading material, students learn to evaluate sources, consider multiple perspectives, and critically assess information—an essential skill for navigating today's information-rich society (Bernardo, 2023)

Overall, addressing reading proficiency challenges in the educational system has the potential to improve educational outcomes, empower students, and foster a culture of literacy (DEP-CAR, 2023). By investing in targeted interventions, curriculum reforms, and teacher training initiatives, educational institutions can create an environment where all students have the opportunity to develop strong reading skills and achieve their full potential academically and beyond. Hence, contextualized instruction has a positive impact on Grade 10 reading mastery by enhancing students' motivation, comprehension, critical thinking, and ability to apply reading skills across different subjects. By providing meaningful and relevant reading experiences, contextualized instruction prepares students to become proficient readers who can navigate and succeed in various academic and real-life contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the pressing issues surrounding reading proficiency, exemplified by the alarming findings of assessments like PISA 2022 and Phil-IRI, underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions and systemic reforms within the educational framework. These challenges are not confined to academic realms but wield significant influence over students' lifelong educational trajectories and ultimate success. Strategic measures, such as the adoption of contextualized instruction, emerge as pivotal tools in addressing these multifaceted challenges, providing a framework to cultivate robust reading skills and unlock students' fullest potential. By integrating reading competencies into authentic, real-world contexts, educators and policymakers pave the way for interdisciplinary connections to flourish, while simultaneously nurturing essential critical literacy skills. Such an approach not only fosters a deeper appreciation for the act of reading but also reinforces its inherent value in lifelong learning journeys. Ultimately, investing in initiatives aimed at bolstering reading proficiency represents an investment in the empowerment and future prosperity of students, equipping them with the resilience and adaptability needed to navigate and thrive in an increasingly intricate and interconnected global landscape.

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