

# READING COMPREHENSION INTERVENTION PROGRAM OF UNIVERSITY OF PERPETUAL HELP SYSTEM LAGUNA

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## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to characterize the performance of the students whether there is a significant difference in word recognition, reading accuracy, reading speed, and reading comprehension before and after the implementation of the reading comprehension intervention program. It also ascertain correlations among word recognition, reading accuracy, reading speed and reading comprehension. The study was conducted in Dela Paz Elementary School, Binan city involving forty (40) pupil-respondents. Using descriptive-comparative statistics, the study yields significant difference in the performance in the pretest and posttest scores. However, there is no significant relationship existed in word recognition, reading accuracy, reading speed and reading comprehension. The pupils' strong determination and the program initiatives helped them acquire necessary skills in reading.

*Keywords: word recognition, accuracy, speed, comprehension*

## **Introduction**

The ability to comprehend in written and spoken languages as well as to communicate ideas and concepts are vital in one's growth and progress. Comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate it with what the reader already knows. An individual's ability to comprehend text is influenced by their skills and their ability to process information. Access to knowledge in the various disciplines is made possible through comprehension and communication and through the mastery of the several reading skills, habits and attitudes, one can develop the enthusiasm necessary in the continual persistence of learning.

Reading comprehension is a skill that can be strengthened and improved through more reading practice. Pressley (2013), as cited by Pardo (2014), stated that increasing vocabulary, extensive reading and critical reading are some of the practices that can be used to strengthen and refine the person's ability to comprehend any text. An individuals ability to comprehend any text. An individual ability to comprehend text is influenced by their traits and skills. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read. There are number of approaches to improve reading comprehension, including improving one's vocabulary and reading strategies. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message.

According to Oakhill, Cain & Bryant, 2013. There is a lot going on in reading, from letter and word recognition to understanding meaning at the phrase, sentence and paragraph level. When a beginner reader encounters vocabulary they do not know or do not recognize due to inaccurate decoding, they are likely to skip ahead. The more blanks in a line of text, the harder it is to make meaning and the more cognitively challenging and frustrating the reading task becomes. That is why poor comprehension can result when a student struggles with decoding, has a limited vocabulary or attempts to read a text that is at too high of a level.

In the study of Nicholson and Alicia (2013) on Reading Accuracy is Important for Reading Comprehension - evidence from two countries in support of the simple view of reading where there were 302 participants, 152 from New Zealand and 150 from the United States. Teachers in each school selected 5 above-average, 5 average, and 5 below-average readers from each age group. The present study assessed reading accuracy and reading comprehension. The statistical analysis compared the reading comprehension ages of children with good, average, and below-average reading accuracy to see if the high accuracy group had higher levels of reading comprehension than children with average and below-average accuracy. The simple view of reading explains that reading comprehension can be accounted for with two variables: decoding skill (as indicated by reading accuracy) and listening comprehension. It predicts that where there are differences in reading comprehension, one possible reason to explain this will be differences in reading accuracy. If a child has below-average reading comprehension then it is likely they will also have below-average reading accuracy.

Studies have suggested that reading speed (RS) or fluency should be a component of reading comprehension (RC) models. There is also evidence of a relationship between RS and RC. However, some questions remain to be explored, as the changes in such a relationship may be a function of development. In addition, while there are studies published with English speakers and learners, less evidence exists in more transparent orthographies, such as Portuguese. This study investigated the relationship between RC and RS in typical readers. Objectives included elucidating the following: (1) the contribution of RS to RC controlling for intelligence, word recognition, and listening and (2) the differential relationships and contributions of RS to comprehension in different school grades. The sample of participants comprised 212 students from 2nd to 4th grade. We assessed intelligence, word recognition, word RS, listening, and RC. Performance in all tests increased as a function of grade. There were significant connections between RC and all other measures. Nonetheless, the regression analysis revealed that word RS has a unique contribution to RC after controlling for intelligence, word recognition, and listening, with a very modest but significant improvement in the explanatory power of the model. We found a significant relationship between RS and RC only for 4th grade and such relationship becomes marginal after controlling for word recognition. The findings suggest that RS could contribute to RC in Portuguese beyond the variance shared with listening and, mainly, word recognition, but such a contribution was very small. The data also reveal a differential relationship between RS and RC in different school grades; specifically, only for the 4th grade does RS begins to relate to RC.

Murdock, 2011. The school too, just like the home, plays an important part in the reading and comprehension of English. In schools, teachers and students' peers all contribute to the learning of English, either positively or negatively. Most of the waking hours of schoolchildren are spent in school, surrounding people may have impact on the child's ability to learn. Many teachers do not use the English Language within the school compound. It is only isolated to English classes where they can write, speak or listen and comprehend to discussion. There is limited opportunity that the student be exposed to the English language and a limited opportunity to practice reading comprehension. They also refrain from speaking in English to students in the assumption that they would not be understood. Teachers of English too, sometimes set very high targets for their students. Students, who cannot meet this target get demotivated and remain where they are. They do not improve their reading and comprehension skills. Peers, too, tend to tease students when they attempt to speak or read in English and this causes them to shy away

from the language. Urban secondary school students, on the other hand, have confidence and motivation to learn on their own. The community where the student lives also affect. Exposure to environment has a great influence over the interest and the desire of the child to learn new language.

According to Keith Lenz, Ph.D.,2012 University of Kansas, reading comprehension is an area of reading which requires understanding of the strategies that contribute to its development. It is suggested to teach reading comprehension skills and strategies at all levels of reading development. Teachers at every grade level and every subject area should always be planning how reading assignments will help students develop and practice skills and strategies. Students need teachers to teach and draw attention to appropriate strategy use in textbooks, especially in content areas where there are many reading demands. A reading comprehension skill is a developed ability to construct meaning effectively, immediately, and effortlessly with little conscious attention. A reading comprehension strategy is defined as an overt process consciously selected and used by a reader to aid the process of constructing meaning more effectively and efficiently. Once a student uses a strategy effectively, immediately and effortlessly with little conscious attention to construct meaning, it becomes a reading skill. Most planning for comprehension instruction is targeted at teaching comprehension strategies and then developing practice activities that help the student become skilled in the use of the strategy so that it is unconsciously selected and used in a variety of situations.

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky's theoretical framework: social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a certain time span that he calls the zone of proximal development. Zone of proximal development refers to the gap between what a given child can achieve alone, their potential development as determined by independent problem solving, and what they can achieve through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

This theory advocates exposing children to concepts that require the assistance of others in an effort to steer them toward independence and mastery of a skill. Moreover, the struggling reader must have the opportunity to read text within their instructional level. The Vygotskian approach "advocates responsiveness to children's current capacities yet aims to move development forward".

The study was conducted to characterize the performance of the students with reading

## **Methods**

The intervention program was conceptualized by University of Perpetual Help System Laguna (UPHSL) External Affairs Office and College of Education in partnership with Couples for Christ (CFC) WEST-1 organization. The program is named, "UPHSL-CFC Cornerstone" which aims at helping the grade 2 pupils to read and comprehend in English. The program begins in the month of July up to March following the school calendar of a particular school year. The program participants are selected based on the recommendation of the teacher and the school principal. Once the pupil enters the program he/she is given a pretest in reading and in comprehension using Dolch Sight Word Inventory and DepEd Phil\_Iri Reading Passage both are standardized test. After the determination of the reading levels, students are then directed to attend the tutorial program. Parents are being informed about the status of their child in reading and seeking their approval if they are willing to participate to the intervention program.

Classes are held in Dela Paz Elementary school every Saturday for two (2) hours between 8:00am-10:00am. One on one teaching strategy was used. Pre service teachers from the College of Education served as volunteer teachers.

Using descriptive-evaluative research design, the performance of forty (40) Grade 2 pupils were characterized before and after undergoing intervention in reading comprehension. Learners were given Pretest at the beginning of the program and posttest at the end of the program using similar set of questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of the Dolch Sight Words Inventory (Part I) in determining word recognition level of the learners. Part II contains the short passage from Department of Education Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (DepEd Phil-IRI) for the determination of reading speed and reading accuracy. Part III, contains the short passage from DepEd Phil-Iri for silent reading test and comprehension check questions administered orally by the researcher and volunteer-teachers. In determining the reading speed, the number of words per minute (WPM) the learners can perform within a specific time were taken. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to characterize the word recognition, accuracy, speed, and comprehension. T-test was undertaken to identify the significant difference in the performance before and after attending the intervention program. The correlations of reading abilities was identified using Annova.

Prior permission and parents' consent were required to every pupil-respondents to participate in the conduct of this study.

## **Results and Discussion**

**Table 1**  
Word Recognition

LEVEL	Pretest		Post test	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Third Reader	0	0	8	20
Second Reader	7	17.5	32	80
First Reader	22	55	0	0
Primer	11	17.5	0	0
Pre-Primer	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	40	100	40	100

The data shows the respondents' ability to recognize words is at the level of "First Reader" while there are some respondents who are in the "Primer" level which is below the age and grade level of the respondents. The pupils are incapacitated to perform other tasks related to words because of inability to recognize words. In addition, the learners display lower level skills in reading that does not match to the grade level which is frustrating to a child. While The modal word recognition level of the respondents is "Second Reader" which has the percentage of eighty percent (80%) while the modal proficiency of the respondents is "Third Reader" which has the percentage of twenty(20%).Generally, the modal proficiency level of the learners in word recognition is second reader. There is an improvement in word recognition in which the learners moved from "first reader" to "second reader" to "third reader". The learners' development is seen as a positive behavior that indicates learning. That was after attending the intervention program wherein they were provided with various learning activities where the learners manipulate words. The constant meeting and learning allowed the students to become familiar with words and enrich one's vocabulary. Thus, this implied that the learners can now read more words increasing one's vocabulary. In addition, vocabulary is central to English language learning.

According to Oakhill, Cain & Bryant, 2013 There is a lot going on in reading, from letter and word recognition to understanding meaning at the phrase, sentence and paragraph level. When a beginner reader encounters vocabulary they do not know or do not recognize due to inaccurate decoding, they are likely to skip ahead. The more blanks in a line of text, the harder it is to make meaning and the more cognitively challenging and frustrating the reading task becomes. That's why poor comprehension can result when a student struggles with decoding, has a limited vocabulary or attempts to read a text that is at too high of a level.

**Table 2**  
Reading Accuracy

LEVEL	Pretest		Post test	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Independent	0	0	4	10
Instructional	0	0	36	90
Frustration	40	100	0	0
TOTAL	40	100	40	100

This data reveals that in reading accuracy the respondents are in the frustration level. This shows that the learners lack capacity to read since they do not recognize words and cannot read accurately especially when letters are combined to form words. The learners have insufficient amount of vocabularies reaching the point of not recognizing the word/s. One attributes to this deficit is the lack of mastery of the sounds of letters in the alphabet since this is prerequisite skill in reading and the inability to recognize sounds of words creates confusion when learners are to read word/s. Generally, the modal proficiency level of the learners in reading accuracy is instructional. This clearly shows that the learners have improved its accuracy level from “frustration” to “instructional” to “ independent” level. Listening is essential to achieve accuracy along with reading. The principle of Scaffolding was applied, that is, it is believed that the learners have the ability to perform on their own and the learners’ ability to perform with the assistance and help of others. The guidance of the teachers during the intervention process enable the learners to improve their skills in accuracy, they were exposed to several reading materials and drills. Thus, this implied that the learners have reached the accuracy level which is desirable in their grade level.

In the study of Nicholson, Tom, Ritter, Alicia (2013) on Reading Accuracy is Important for Reading Comprehension - evidence from two countries in support of the simple view of reading (2013) where there were 302 participants, 152 from New Zealand and 150 from the United States. Teachers in each school selected 5 above-average, 5 average, and 5 below-average readers from each age group. The present study assessed reading accuracy and reading comprehension. The statistical analysis compared the reading comprehension ages of children with good, average, and below-average reading accuracy to see if the high accuracy group had higher levels of reading comprehension than children with average and below-average accuracy. The simple view of reading (Gough, 2012) explains that reading comprehension can be accounted for with two variables: decoding skill (as indicated by reading accuracy) and listening comprehension. It predicts that where there are differences in reading comprehension, one possible reason to explain this will be differences in reading accuracy. If a child has below-average reading comprehension then it is likely they will also have below-average reading accuracy.

**Table 3**  
Reading Speed

LEVEL	Pretest		Post test	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Fast	0	0	10	25
Average	6	15	30	75
Slow	34	85	0	0
Non-Reader	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	40	100	40	100

The data shows that the respondents have difficulty in reading for most of them belong to “slow readers”. There are several factors to consider to slow reading. It can be accounted to physiological factor that is inability of the eyes to see words, he/she is maybe nearsighted or farsighted or the learner has a blurry vision for her/him to see the text. Another factor that can be associated to slow reading is inability to read the words. The learner himself cannot recognize words. And finally lack of practice in reading contribute to slow reading. Generally, the modal proficiency level of the learners in reading speed is average. The data show improvement in speed from “slow” to “average” to “fast” level. The constant practice in the intervention process helped learners developed speed in reading. The coordination of eyes, ears, mouth, brain are optimized via reading exposure. Time is essential factor in the development of speed. Learners were given ample time to read in both oral and silent reading. They were also provided wide range of reading materials for the learners to explore text that will attract them more to read. Thus, this implied that the learners have improved their speed in reading.

Hill,2011 examined a course in 'rapid' or 'effective' reading with advanced students at the university of Leuven in Belgium. Using the program developed by De Leuw & De Leeuw, he showed that his advanced students could achieve an average increase in their reading speeds of 57% over a three year period. In terms of the speed categories used in the course, an average student therefore progressed from the 'slow' band (200 words per minute) through to the 'medium fast' category (314 wpm). Some of his subjects reached speeds of 600 words per minute or better leading him to claim that "students and others who read extensively for professional purposes should aim to cover routine material at speeds between 300 and 600 words per minute".

Table 4  
Reading Comprehension

LEVEL	Pretest		Post test	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Independent	0	0	4	10
Instructional	0	0	36	90
Frustration	40	100	0	0
TOTAL	40	100	40	100

The data show the inability of the learners to comprehend to text, they have poor understanding towards the text they have read. A learner cannot proceed to comprehension without the skill in reading and understanding words. A learner who cannot understand words cannot also find connections to what is being read. Also reading will not be interesting to the learner and eventually

become disconnected to the text and comprehension will not be arrived at. Reading is a skill that requires strong desire from the reader so that he/she will understand what he/she is reading. Another factor that hinders comprehension is the language barriers, in which the learners hardly read and understand text in English. Generally, the modal proficiency level of the learners in reading comprehension is instructional. The data show that the reading comprehension of the learners have improved from “frustration” level to “instructional” and going to “independent level”. This is a product of the intervention applied to them (learners). They were exposed to a one on one teaching which provide them a chance to work on a text. Primarily, the materials, activities and drills provided to them were progressive in nature in order to constantly develop the skill of comprehension. Added to that, learners have become receptive in the process, doing/ performing activities.

Westby,2012. Successful comprehension requires coordination of skills at many levels to extract and construct meaning. The level of difficulty associated with comprehension of certain content depends on the complexity of the language used. There are important differences between the language that we use in everyday conversations and the language used in school, where everyday conversations are originally used to achieve daily tasks and share personal information. Academic language includes a different set of words, more complex grammatical structures and different text organization to express content which describes complex relationships. These two factors aforementioned have significant connection as how students comprehend in general.

**Table 2**

**Significant Difference in the Reading Ability of the Learners Before and After the Implementation of the Program**

	t-value		df		Mean Difference		Verbal Interpretation	Decision
	Pre-test	Post test	Pre test	Post test	Pretest	Post test		
Word Recognition	23.27	43.69	39	39	97.33	168.12	Significant	Reject Ho1
Reading Accuracy	18.39	30.77	39	39	39.50	69.31	Significant	Reject Ho1
Reading Speed	15.43	42.12	39	39	35.17	84.38	Significant	Reject Ho1
Reading Comprehension	14.77	39.56	39	39	33.44	81.42	Significant	Reject Ho1

The data show that there is significant difference in the reading abilities of the learners before and after the implementation of the intervention program. The performance of the students improved after the eight -month period of intervention. The significant difference in the performance can be attributed to the

thorough implementation of the program and continuous monitoring in the learners' performance. The receptiveness as well as the eagerness of the learners of the learners are important factors in their improvement. They were participative and cooperative in the conduct of the program.

In a South African context, the need for a reading strategy instruction should be seen against the poor reading performance of the learners at primary, high school and tertiary level. According to Pretorius (2012), reading is a powerful learning tool, a means of constructing meaning and acquiring new knowledge. Moreover, reading is the cornerstone of instruction for all learners regardless of their ability level because it sets the foundation for future progress and success in virtually all other facets of life. However, poor reading comprehension is cited as a fundamental feature of academic underperformance in South Africa (Pretorius 2012; Granville 2011). Many learners in the high schools demonstrate a low level of strategy knowledge and lack of metacognitive control.

Table 5

**Relationship in Word Recognition, Reading Accuracy, Reading Speed and Reading Comprehension**

	Pearson r	p value	Interpretation	Decision
1. Word recognition and reading accuracy	-.205	.205	Not significant	Accept Ho
2. Reading accuracy and reading comprehension	.053	.745	Not significant	Accept Ho
3. Word recognition and reading comprehension	-.099	.543	Not significant	Accept Ho
4. Reading Speed and Reading Comprehension	-.103	.325	Not significant	Accept Ho

The said findings clearly illustrate that each particular ability in reading is not interdependent with each other especially in determining factors that contribute to the development of comprehension. This means that word recognition, reading accuracy, and reading speed are not determinants of reading comprehension. Hence, word recognition is not also determinant of reading accuracy in the same way as reading accuracy is not a determinant of reading speed. The aforementioned skills are independent with each other and has its own characteristics to affect learning. Though statistically, the result of the study was also affected by a few number of respondents (40). The distribution was scattered to result at no significant relationship. Though abilities like word recognition, accuracy and speed and comprehension contribute much to the overall ability of the learners to read.

The findings support findings of the study undertaken by Peer and Miller (2012), whose study revealed that reading skills such as word recognition and accuracy in reading are not predetermined factor

in predicting the ability of the pupils in comprehending text. Geiner and Pullan (2012), who identified the factors that impact on students' comprehension; lack of focus, lack of experience and training, poor reading materials and lack of teachers' training were identified factors that contribute to the difficulty of the learners to comprehend while an intervention program is necessary to address the need of the learners and eliminate pain in the classroom experience.

## Conclusion

In the Pre-test, the learners' level in word recognition, reading accuracy, speed and comprehension is below their Grade level, such as First Reader, Frustration, Slow, and Frustration level respectively. Positive results were derived during Post-test, the learners' level in word recognition, accuracy, speed and comprehension is at the learners' Grade level, such as Second Grader, Instructional, Average, and Instructional level respectively. Furthermore, there are learners who gained one step higher level in their Grade level. It also showed significant difference in the reading ability of the learners before and after the implementation of the intervention program. However, there was no significant relationship existed in word recognition, accuracy, speed and comprehension.

## Future Directions

A number of important research implications emanates from this research. The richer the vocabularies a student acquires, the easier it will be to recognize them in reading. Teachers can provide a glossary alongside a text or pre-teach key terms before the reading begins. As learning words in context provides additional depth in meaning, teachers might also consider providing instruction on contextual guessing. Repeated exposure to high frequency terms that are common across children's books and school worksheets can help children save their cognitive energy for decoding harder and less frequent vocabulary. Spell to reinforce them, can help learners read more quickly and efficiently. Learners should maintain its ability by finding time to read and by trying other reading materials to intensify reading . The improved learners can also serve as motivation to other learners and can be part of the program as a peer group. Moreover, those improved learners must contain their skills by constantly reading until they develop the habit and love for reading supported by school and home environment.

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