

READING PROFICIENCY AND READING STRATEGIS OF GRADE FOUR PUPILS IN
SELECTED PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: This study determined the reading proficiency level of grade four pupils using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil IRI) and their level of mastery using Comprehensive Assessment of Reading strategies (CARS) in relation to their reading strategies applied in reading.

One hundred eighty-four pupils were selected randomly from six schools in the District of San Leonardo, Division of Nueva Ecija. Phil-Iri identified the reading proficiency level of pupils while CARS determined the reading strategies applied. The results were correlated to establish the relationship of reading level and reading strategies.

The results revealed that the reading proficiency level was Frustration. Their reading strategies ranked from the most mastered to least mastered. As a result, the six most mastered strategies gathered from the six schools both big and small are: recalling facts and details ranked first; distinguishing between real and make believe ranked second; recognizing cause and effect and finding word in context ranked third; understanding sequence ranked fifth, and finding the main idea ranked sixth.

The six least mastered strategy was ranked as: comparing and contrasting, seventh; making predictions, eighth; drawing conclusions and making inferences, ninth; identifying author's purpose, tenth; and interpreting figurative language, eleventh; and distinguishing between fact and opinion, twelfth.

Among the twelve reading strategies, those with significant relationship to the reading proficiency level of grade four pupils were: understanding sequence in lesson one, finding main idea, recalling facts and details, recognizing cause and effect, finding word in context, and identifying author's purpose in lesson two and finding word in context in lesson three.

Keywords: inferences, predictions, comparing, contrasting, frustration

Introduction

Learners with low level of reading proficiency have been a long-lasting and widespread problem among students in the Philippines, particularly among those in elementary levels.

On December 2013, The NSO's 2010 Census of Population and Housing (CPH) showed that of the 71.5 million individuals who are 10 years old and above, 97.5 percent or 69.8 million were literate or could read and write. This is higher compared to the literacy rate of 92.3 percent recorded in the 2000 CPH. Literacy rate of 97.5% is quite an impressive figure but if we will look at the result of the National Achievement Test (NAT) on 2012, Grade 3 students got a Mean Percentage Score of 54.42% in English reading Comprehension. This figure shows that Grade 3 Filipino pupils are considered as average readers in general. It also shows that Filipino Grade 3 pupils have problem understanding what she/he is reading the text written in English.

Reading plays a crucial role in language learning. For many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in learning a second language, particularly English as a second or foreign language (Carrel, Devine, & Eskey, 1998). Adamson (1993) also asserts that of all the language skills, it is accepted that reading is the most important skill for academic achievement when compared with the other language skills.

Obviously, a learner can never be that skilfully competitive, unless he or she has the proficiency to read and comprehend. One cannot grow in excellence unless he has the basic skills of reading.

Aside from these, one of the challenges faced by the teachers is how to motivate students to become involved in the learning process. The researcher decided to discover reading strategies in class which would be more engaging and more effective in getting students to participate in their reading class.

The research was designed in line with the researcher's belief that students need to take a strategic approach to reading. This shift in her teaching attitudes and beliefs opens the door for a new approach to her reading class: reading strategy instruction in a meaningful way. Reading strategy must meet the needs of all learners. It is important to keep in mind, however, that all learners are different in order to address the needs and interests of all learners.

Moreover, researcher wants to discover if there is a strong correlation between reading and proficiency level of learners in elementary level, specifically, in Grade 4 pupils.

With this, teachers must be fully aware of their students' level of proficiency in reading comprehension in looking for better instructional approach and strategy in the teacher-learner relations inside the classroom. It is for this reason that the researcher banks on the premise of evaluating the grade four learners who already underwent tutelage under the new curriculum.

This study aimed to describe and correlated the reading proficiency level and reading strategies of grade four pupils in relation to reading strategies.

1. Identify the reading proficiency level of Grade 4
2. Analyze the reading strategies that the pupils have
3. Determine the significant relationship between the

This idea is anchored on the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI). The informal reading inventory is one such test which is particularly functional in many classrooms because the format parallels the graded feature of a basal series. These instruments can be developed locally and even when an instrument is purchased, testing costs are minimal. An inventory is usually comprised of word lists and passages which are either samples of each reader level of a basal series, or are samples which are approximations of typical basal reader selections.

In summary, the IRI is composed of a series of graded materials, it is used to determine instructional level, and changes in reading level are recognized only when those changes affect reading proficiency.

The primary function of the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) is to provide an estimate of a pupil's proficiency level. Proficiency level is a significant concept because the effects of instruction are said to be maximized for pupils placed at this level (Betts, 1946). The highest-level passage which meets the criteria set for proficiency level is designated as the instructional level. Since passage difficulty relates to the book levels of a basal reader, a pupil would be placed at a specific performance level - first reader level, third reader level, etc.; levels are therefore discrete. To show growth between testings on an IRI a pupil must meet the standards for proficiency level at a higher reader level than recorded for the previous testing.

The Phil-IRI, as the assessment tool of DepEd was anchored on these standards and has set the reading level into four, namely: (1) Independent; (2) Instructional; (3) Frustration, and; (4) Non-reader.

The participants in this study were subjected to the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Test (Phil-Iri) so that their reading level were identified whether Independent, Instructional or Frustration.

The Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS) was administered and the result of the CARS was further evaluated in order to find out what reading strategies the grade four pupils have most mastered and least mastered.

To check if there is a correlation between reading proficiency level and reading habits. After having established the reading proficiency level and the reading strategies employed by the respondents, the relationship between the reading level and reading strategies was identified to improve their comprehension of reading texts and mastery of reading strategies will be designed and implemented.

The targeted respondents were 184 Grade 4 pupils enrolled during School Year 2018-2019. This study was administered during the last quarter of the academic year in selected six schools (big and small) in the District of San Leonardo, Division of Nueva Ecija.

This study is delimited to the response based on the reading proficiency levels of grade pupils as to: independent, instructional, or frustration using Phil-IRI test and also to determine the reading strategies they have most mastered and least mastered in terms of finding the main idea, recalling facts and details, understanding sequence, recognizing cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, making predictions, finding word meaning in context, drawing conclusion and making inferences, distinguishing between fact and opinion, identifying author's purpose, interpreting figurative language, and distinguishing between real and make-believe by answering the 36 item-test of C

Reading

Reading is defined as the level of understanding of a text or message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text or message (Rayner, Foorman, Perfitti, Pesetsky & Seidenberg, 2001). Reading is a skill that can be strengthened and improved through more reading practice. Pressley (2003), as cited by Pardo (2004), 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. However, reading fails for several reasons. One of the reasons is the lack of knowledge base. This deals on how much knowledge a reader has about the subject he or she is reading. When the reader is more familiar with the happenings in the text because they likely are similar in many ways to his or her own life experiences then he or she can easily generate the necessary inferences from the text.

According to Badrawi (1992, p. 16), "Reading is a helpful language skill needed for obtaining information, fostering and reacting to ideas, developing interests, and finally deriving pleasure by reading through understanding or comprehension."

Reading involves the use of various strategies that assist readers to understand the reading materials (Carrel, 1991). Reading strategies are very useful and important in reading comprehension. As Song (1998) points out, reading strategies are important because they help learners to improve their reading comprehension, and to enhance efficiency in reading.

Reading is said to be one of the most important and complex cognitive skill and such importance has resulted into extensive studies over years (Baddeley, Logie, & Nimmo-Smith, 1985). Reading has been defined as a process of interaction involving one's knowledge of print, vocabulary, and comprehension. Its five essential components include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition, Fitzgerald and The Assessment Handbook, Vol. 9, 2012ISSN 2094-1412, PEMEA, December 2012 3Fitzgerald (1965) included word recognition and sentence understanding as components. They further stated that the components involve discovery, comprehension, reflection, reasoning, appreciation, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, organization, and application. This would mean that when one is reading, one is thinking about the meaning conveyed and at the same time integrates his own knowledge to get the meaning of the symbols written by the writer. Though the concept of reading is broad and comprises several components, the focus of this research would only be on the areas of vocabulary and reading comprehension in line with the view that an approach to studying and assessing fluency in

reading is to focus in specific reading tasks that will allow individual components of the reading process to be isolated and studied (Baddeley, Logie, & Nimmo-Smith, 1985).

Butler, et.al., (2010) found out that more than half a century of researches dedicated to reading established that there is a strong correlation between those who learn to read early and easily and ended up yielding academic success.

The teaching of English as a foreign language occupies an important place in the Philippine education system. Although it is not the sole medium of instruction in elementary and secondary stages, accessing key information at higher education in a great variety of fields is often dependent on having reading ability in English. Reading is, therefore, the most important skill for foreign language learners, because they have little exposure to the target language outside the classroom and most of the information in English comes through reading (Boss, 2002).

In the study of Al-Tamimi (2006), he stated that reading is a source of difficulty for second language learners. The problems that they encounter are due to a number of factors including lack of appropriate reading strategies, lack of background knowledge related to the topic of the target language or lack of attitudes toward reading, to name a few. Nevertheless, given enough time, learners can overcome their difficulties when they receive the appropriate training.

Reading is the main source of the comprehensible input for the learners, and instruction mostly takes place through reading (Afflerbach & Cho, and Huey, 1908; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002).

Protacio (2013) in her research “A Case Study of Reading Instruction in a Philippine Classroom” found out that reading in the classroom are emphasized on pronunciation rather than comprehension. That, pupils are regarded proficient when they can pronounce the words correctly despite low level understanding of what they have read.

Reading skills are critical in the educational success of all individuals. Without adequate reading skills, students struggle in many subject areas. Reading is an important skill needed. Subjects, other than reading or literature, where skills are significantly important include science, social studies, and math. In the area of science, research indicates that many students lack prior knowledge and reading strategies to generate inferences, thus, the students comprehend science texts poorly. It is also found out that the students lack the specific reading strategies to generate inferences that aid in the understanding of science texts (Best, Rowe, Ozura, and McNamara, 2005)

A study called Improving Reading through Vocabulary (Berg, Cressman, Pfan, 1998) focused on using vocabulary to improve reading. This study was conducted to examine if the use of games and other study methods would improve vocabulary knowledge: therefore, improve reading comprehension and reading levels.

Imperial, PTRF (2012) in her presentation of Reading, said that reading comprehension is important because the job market now demands a workforce that is merely educated than ever. She further stated that people are not reading as much as anymore and yet the need for reading. In the thesis of Dorkchandra (2010) entitled Enhancing English Reading through a Text Structure Reading Strategy CALL Program, employing experimental technique, it was found out that those slow readers who took the program resulted to higher scores in the post test as compared to those who did not take the program.

Lopez (2012) in a presentation entitled Reading Skills argued that comprehension relies on a mastery of decoding. Children who struggle to decode find it difficult to understand and remember what has been read because their efforts to grasp individual words are so exhausting, they have very little mental energy left for understanding.

Reading according to Basaraba (2013) is a complex process that requires different building-block skills. One model of reading proposes that understanding what we read is really the result of three levels of skills: literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and evaluative comprehension.

In addition, reading is the true backbone of most learning. Everything starts with the written word — whether it's math, science or even home economics. As students go up the educational ladder, more reading is usually required as subjects become denser and challenging. (Philippine Star, 2010).

In a 2007 interview, Dr. Yolanda Quijano, then head of the DepEd's Bureau of Elementary Education, attributed "reading problems as the main culprit for the poor performance of some students in the NAT." Her observation is indeed alarming. Hence, if a student's reading comprehension is poor, chances are his or her performance in other subjects will be compromised (Philippine Star, 2010).

Also, one of the best ways to increase reading comprehension among students is the question-answer technique where it enables students to prepare for reading and to understand while reading (Hendricks, et al., 1996). Thus, questioning technique can also be supported using higher order thinking skills (HOTS) to increase reading comprehension among students.

Department of Education Secretary Br. Armin A. Luistro (2012) said that it is important to assess the reading capability of students because reading is the foundation of all academic learning. He added that if a pupil fails to master basic reading skills at the outset, it will be a constant struggle for them to get through other disciplines successfully, thus depriving them of the chance to become literate and productive individuals.

Reading Proficiency

Reading proficiency and reading comprehension are reciprocal components of effectively gaining meaning from texts. When one reads proficiently, one's ability to comprehend improves. This is since one's brain is more capable of processing text meaning when it is able to read fluently. Therefore, when a reader automatically identifies words, he or she is more capable of comprehending the text completely (Talada,2007). Improving reading proficiency entails motivating and driving the pupils to actively participate through techniques (Mix-Thibault,2008) By purposely easing students into active reading, by situating them in texts that hold an intrinsic interest for them - something relating to their backgrounds, reading becomes an interesting activity.

Williams (2013) in her thesis entitled Building Reading Proficiency: Foundational Skill Activities for Primary Readers indicated that "using differentiated, explicit, and systematic activities targeting specific skills, students could make academic gains in all areas of reading."

Reading Strategies

Varying techniques proved to be effective in improving both reading proficiency and comprehension. White (2015) in her qualitative two-group research entitled Instructional Level Texts on Reading Comprehension and Motivation Pupils who participated in her research gained improvement in reading comprehension more than the expected output.

Reading proficiency and reading comprehension strategies are directly relational. Baier (2005) in her research titled "Reading Comprehension and Reading Strategies" hypothesized that, students who use reading comprehension strategies while reading retain more information and comprehend the text better. It was also hypothesized that students who have good reading comprehension skills perform better on reading comprehension tests. Her prediction was founded having determined that pupils performed better on post – test where self-questioning was used.

In an article entitled Developing readers' comprehension strategies published in Literacy Online (2010), authors have maintained that "there is a need to explicitly teach individual comprehension strategies within the context of purposeful reading but also develop students' awareness of how these strategies are used in increasingly complex combinations as they read more complex texts."

Goettelman (2012) utilizes a one-on-one technique in improving the reading proficiency of pupils in her study. This approach proved that varying techniques and flexibility yielded higher metacognitive ability among the pupils. She recommended that "teachers should hold students accountable for their learning to help them become metacognitive of their strategy-use. When students take responsibility for their learning, they are able to transfer their knowledge across various domains."

PHIL-IRI

Tongson, Jr. (2005) as cited by Nangleg (2007) attests to the deterioration of reading skills of the pupils in the country when Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) has been implemented and the Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE) supports this program by developing the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI).

Phil-IRI is an assessment tool that evaluates the reading proficiency level of elementary school pupils. It is the first validated instrument that intends to measure the pupils' reading comprehension level. The pupil's word recognition and comprehension ability as well as his/her reading speed are informally assessed quantitatively and qualitatively through stories and passages. (<http://www.depedMuntinlupa.com/images/gallery/22.pdf>).

DepEd Memorandum 345, series of 2010, titled "Maximum Utilization of Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Results to Improve Pupils' Performance", is the legal basis of the Phil-IRI. In the said directive, it was reiterated that "every child must be a reader after grade 3 level."

Section 2 of the said memorandum further states that the DepEd enforces Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) making the Phil-IRI as the assessment component of the program. In section 4, "it is strongly urged that the pre-test results shall be utilized by the teachers and school head in planning a sound school-based reading program to improve the reading proficiency of the pupils." It is important that reading interventions shall be implemented after the results of the pre-tests.

Madrid (2012) summarized the background of the inventory into three major categories such as: (1) it is an assessment tool that evaluates the reading proficiency level of elementary pupils; (2) it is the first validated instrument that intends to measure the pupil's reading comprehension level; (3) the pupil's word recognition and comprehension ability as well as his reading speed are informally assessed quantitatively through stories and passages.

In press release from the Gazette, the official publication of the Philippine Government, the Secretary of Education, Armin Luistro, FSC (2012) has said that "it is important to assess the reading capability of students because reading is the foundation of all academic learning. If a pupil fails to master basic reading skills at the outset, it will be a constant struggle for them to get through other disciplines successfully, thus depriving them of the chance to become literate and productive individuals." In relation to this, the DepEd Memo 143, series of 2012, states that: the teacher is still required to accomplish the pupil's individual reading profile and consolidate reports for the school's profile, despite the launching of the K to 12 Curriculum.

In a report by Juan Miguel Luz of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism entitled "Literature and Literacy", he reported that based on a population of 80 million, 6.6 percent illiteracy translates into 5.3 million Filipinos who cannot read or write; a number that grew by about 1.6 million over the past decade. This means that low level literacy comes poor reading skill. His data is taken from results of 2003-2004 Phil-IRI tests. Poor reading is also a reflection of poor language proficiency, whether this be in English or in the national language. One sees this immediately in the language proficiency of public-school teachers, he further asserts. In conclusion, he advocated that a system-wide approach to literacy, reading, and learning must be implemented if we are to claim true literacy and become a nation of readers.

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS)

The Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS) is another world known assessment tool developed by Academic Associates. It promotes the assessment of twelve reading strategies considered in this research. Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies is the diagnostic component of a reading program that spans from diagnosis to assessment. This diagnostic tool identifies reading strategies that are understood, as well as those that need further study and reinforcement. The organizational design of the CARS Series is grounded in several areas of research: reading comprehension, metacognition and self-assessment, and effectiveness of classroom assessment. (Hawker Bronlow Education, 2009)

Hawker Bronlow Education, its publisher further asserts that “the self-questioning in each student assessment in CARS provides an awareness of the student’s knowledge about a concept or strategy. Students must sort, organize, and consolidate their thoughts about their reading performance through self-evaluation and monitoring” (2009).

Adcock (2003), who authored the CARS Series asserted that “students become more successful in reading after they have assessed their own performance against known standards. Student self-assessment also helps teachers gain insight into a student’s measure of performance.”

Cullen (2012) affirmed that when assessment of information is properly used, it shows significant result on the performance of learning. He further stated that Assessment is a social process that involves gathering, analysing and using relevant and valid information about the learner, citing the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2003.) In the same study entitled “Assessment for Better Learning: A closer look at reading assessment,” she claimed that the very purpose of assessment is to improve instructions for children.

Oakley (2012) in her study, The assessment of reading comprehension cognitive strategies: Practices and perceptions of Western Australian teachers stated that effective assessment is necessary in order to plan appropriate teaching.

However, assessment tools and instruments cannot just be taken as it is. There is a need of evaluating the evaluation and assessment measures for them to be more valid and reliable. For instance, Carlson, et.al., (2014) has scrutinized the Multiple-choice Online Cloze Comprehension Assessment (MOCCA) in their research entitled Development of a New Reading Comprehension Assessment: Identifying Comprehension Differences Among Readers. They were able to establish that the assessment itself can yield reliable results. The study’s respondents are from grades 3 to 5 levels in the elementary.

Valencia (2011) in her research entitled Assessing and Tracking Progress in Reading Comprehension: The Search for Keystone Elements in College and Career Readiness has argued that progress notwithstanding, we need to exert a lot more conceptual, curricular, and psychometric muscle to get reading comprehension assessment right. We need new models of assessment development that better reflect what we know to be true about reading comprehension—that it (a) is multifaceted; (b) varies in response to a range of skill, cognitive, motivational, procedural, disciplinary, contextual, and pedagogical forces; and (c) is amenable to instructional interventions that themselves deserve to be evaluated by valid, first-rate summative assessments and guided by equally stellar formative assessments. Assessments are needed to determine why readers experience comprehension difficulties in order to develop appropriate instruction to meet their individual needs (Carlson, 2014.)

With the above, the researcher agrees that a lot has to be done in the improvement of pupil’s performance in terms of comprehension and right and appropriate strategies have to be regarded in order for the Filipino learners to be at par with global counterparts.

STUDIES

A study was conducted on reading comprehension and reading strategies by Baier (2013). 14 fourth grade students were given the Qualitative Reading Inventory as a reading comprehension pretests and posttests before and after the six-week long study of the Self-Questioning Reading Strategy.

The Qualitative Reading Inventory is a set of battery tests used to determine the reading comprehension levels at differing reading levels. Subjects read short articles and answered implicit and explicit comprehension questions. They were scored by percentage which indicated the level of comprehension (independent, instructional, frustration) they resided at. This instrument was a standardized test in determining reading comprehension levels.

The findings of the study revealed that after using the reading comprehension strategy, students received higher test scores than before using the reading comprehension strategy. This shows a correlation with the reading comprehension and reading strategies. A study was conducted by Erfanpour (2013) on the effect of intensive and extensive reading strategies on reading comprehension to third grade students. 60 male participants from public

school students were randomly assigned to two equal groups: intensive group and extensive group. There were two instruments were used to collect data which were two sets of reading comprehension tests - one of them was used as the pre-test and the other one as the post-test.

The study revealed that students' reading comprehension is affected by both strategies. That is, when students become familiar with the strategy under their teacher's guidance, it helps them to improve their reading comprehension. This indicated that intensive reading influences the learners' reading comprehension. That is, when they are taught through this strategy their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension will be improved.

The attitudes of students towards extensive and intensive reading were positive. They were eager to be taught through these two strategies. Their viewpoints showed that both strategies can help them to reach to a better understanding of what they read. Therefore, it is recommendable to teachers to persuade students to read extensively along with intensive reading activities. This can be achieved by introducing various reading texts out of classroom and putting them into practice to improve reading habits of students. In other words, teachers can highlight the advantages of extensive reading by providing situations in the classroom in which students are encouraged to go through as many reading texts as possible. It is, therefore, suggested that teachers should not have a constraining role by only expecting students to read the texts thoroughly all the time. By contrast, it's better to give the students the opportunities to engage in different reading materials.

The results also revealed that students were more eager to be taught reading materials extensively because it improved their confidence and motivation and gave them pleasure and enjoyment. It held the participants more positive views about their reading development in terms of reading skills, reading comprehension, getting motivated and reading fluently.

A study was conducted by Memis and Bozkurt (2013) on the relationship of reading comprehension success with metacognitive awareness, motivation, and reading levels of fifth grade students. The study used relational survey model. It was conducted with 577 five-grade students, who were selected randomly in the Province of Zonguldak District of Ereğli, Turkey in Academic Year 2011-2012.

The reading comprehension of students was determined with reading comprehension tests. To measure metacognitive reading comprehension awareness, "Metacognitive Reading Comprehension Awareness Scale" was used. To measure reading motivation, Reading Motivation Scale, which consists of 21 questions was used. To determine reading levels, a 50-item maze reading test was used.

The result of the research revealed that reading comprehension level of independent level readers was high and anxiety level decreases reading comprehension. There is a moderately significant relation between reading comprehension and metacognitive reading comprehension, internal-external motivation and reading level. Metacognitive reading comprehension expresses 33% of total variance including internal-external motivation and reading level variables. According to standardized regression co-efficient, predictor variables on reading comprehension are reading level, metacognitive reading comprehension, external motivation, and internal motivation respectively in significance order.

A study on reading comprehension ability of grade 6 elementary pupils was conducted by Tizon (2013) to determine the levels of the reading comprehension ability of the 21 respondents officially enrolled during the School Year 2010-2011 at Clarin, Misamis Occidental Philippines.

The research instrument used in the study was a 42- item reading comprehension questionnaire composed of three literary selections. Each selection has 4 sets of questions of different levels namely: literal, interpretative, evaluative, and creative. The test took the students 45 minutes to answer.

This study was confined at determining the levels of the pupils' reading comprehension ability and in designing a lesson model to enhance pupils' reading comprehension skills.

It was found out that most of the grade 6 pupils were average in their over-all level of reading comprehension ability. Majority of the pupils had average literal ability; however, their higher level of thinking/ comprehension was very low as reflected in their lowest creative ability, and lower interpretative and evaluative skills. Thus, their higher level of thinking/ comprehension must be enhanced.

It was recommended that teachers should use methodologies, strategies and activities that will develop their pupils reading ability most particularly their higher comprehension skill. Moreover, DepEd administrators should include in the curriculum in all grade levels the development of students' thinking abilities by incorporating some reading materials in the all lessons even in grammar. The designed lesson model should also be used to help improve students' higher order thinking skills.

Reading proficiency level of pupils with frustration level will lessen, when pupils have solved difficulties in sounding and recognizing words, identifying meaning of words, and read with comprehension will lead to increase proficiency level. Also, appropriate reading strategies must meet the needs of the pupils to develop different skills in reading. A reading remediation program may help pupils to create motivation and escape from being tangled from their reading difficulties.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive normative type of research, descriptive nominative combines two research methods, gathering the information to describe the object of the study as it is having been or viewed (descriptive method): and critiquing of the object to identify ways to improve it (normative method).

In this study the following were describe: the reading proficiency level of grade four pupils, the reading strategies that the pupils have most mastered and least mastered and the significant relationship between reading level and the reading strategies of the grade 4 pupils

This study was conducted in six schools three big and three small schools namely: Central School, C.I. Villaroman Elementary School and Mallorca Elementary School, Castellano Elementary School, Nieves Elementary School, and San Roque Elementary School in the district of San Leonardo, Division of Nueva Ecija.

The number of respondents in each school is determined by G-power statistical software. A total of 184 Grade 4 pupils from big and small schools, namely: Central School Big school: total number of pupils is 155, total Respondents is 47, C.I. Villaroman Elementary School Big school total number of pupil is 130 total number of Respondents is 39, Mallorca Elementary School Big school total number of pupils is 132 total number of respondents is 40, Castellano Elementary School Small school total number of pupils is 69 total number of respondents is 21, Nieves Elementary School Small school total number of pupils is 61 total number of respondents is 18, and San Roque Elementary School Small school total number of pupils is 62 total number of respondents is 19 in the District of San Leonardo were chosen to participate in this study.

The instruments utilized in this study were: The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) and the Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS).

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) was used to gathered data to identify the reading proficiency level of Grade 4 pupils.

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), the standard instrument being used by the Department of Education at the beginning and ending of the school year, is intended for the purpose of assessing the pupils' reading proficiency to determine their reading ability level as to Independent, Instructional, Frustration and Non-Reader.

The Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS) was used to gather information on the reading strategies that the pupils have most mastered and least mastered.

The Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS) is a six-level diagnostic series for evaluating mastery of 12 reading strategies at each level by students in Grade 3 through Grade 8, as well as allowing for their metacognitive self-assessment (Ashton, 1999). This diagnostic tool identifies reading strategies that are understood, as well as those that need further study and reinforcement. The CARS was used to measure what reading skills are mostly mastered and least mastered. Its author, Deborah Adcock, is a developer of curriculum material in reading, language, and mathematics. This was developing internationally known group Curriculum Associates International (2010).

The procedure of the study was divided into three phases described as follows.

Initial Phase

This phase of the study planned the data collection procedure and complied with some ethical issues before the actual conduct of data collection. Permission to conduct the study has been sought from the Division Superintendent of the Schools Division of Nueva Ecija. Proper coordination with school heads of the elementary schools included in the study was also made. The schedule of the administration of the instruments agreed upon.

Actual Data Collection

The researcher personally administered the instruments to the grade 4 pupils after proper coordination with the school principals was made. A schedule of administration and retrieval of the instruments was prepared by the researcher to have a smooth and orderly manner of data collection. In some instances, data analysis was made simultaneous with data collection.

After Data Collection

In this phase, the researcher organized the instruments by sorting these by big and small schools. Encoding of data was also done in preparation to the statistical analysis of data.

Data Analysis

1. The reading proficiency level of Grade 4 pupils were identified as: Independent, Instructional and Frustration. Pupils under independent level scored 8, pupils under instructional level scored 6-7, and pupils in frustration level scored 5 and below.
2. The reading strategies that the pupils have most mastered and least mastered in terms of the 12 reading strategies namely: Finding main idea, recalling facts and details, understanding cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, making predictions, finding word in context, drawing conclusion and making inferences, distinguishing between fact and opinion, identifying author's purpose, interpreting figurative language, and distinguishing between real and make-believe.
3. The relationship between the reading proficiency levels and the reading strategies of Grade four pupils were identified using the Pearson Product-moment correlation to measures the strength between variables and relationships.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The reading proficiency level of grade four pupils, the strategies that they mastered, developing mastery and least mastered, and the correlation of reading proficiency level with their reading strategies they applied and the interpretation of the results to answer the specific problems.

1. The reading proficiency level of Grade 4 pupils

The reading level of Grade 4 pupils from Big Schools and Small Schools, shows that the respondents in school **A** have a 0.00 percent independent reading level, 25.53 percent instructional reading level, and 74.47 percent frustration reading level; while the respondents in school **B** have 0.00 percent independent reading level, 15.38 percent instructional reading level, and 84.62 percent frustration reading level; lastly, the respondents in school **C** have a 0.00 percent independent reading level, 10.00 percent instructional reading level, and 90.00 percent frustration reading level. Thus, the respondents from the three big schools (school A, B and C) have a 0.00 percent independent reading level, 17.46 percent instructional reading level, and 82.54 percent frustration reading level.

It is implied that most grade 4 pupils from big schools are in the frustration reading level, some are in the instructional level and none is in the independent reading level.

Reading Level of Small Schools

Shows that the respondents in school **D** have a 0.00 percent independent reading level, 14.29 percent instructional reading level, and 85.71 percent frustration reading level; while the respondents in school **E** have 0.00 percent independent reading level, 11.11 percent instructional reading level, and 88.89 percent frustration reading level; lastly, the respondents in school **F** have a 5.26 percent independent reading level, 31.58 percent instructional reading level, and 63.16 percent frustration reading level. Thus, the respondents from the three small schools (school D, E and F) have a 1.72 percent independent reading level, 18.97 percent instructional reading level, and 79.31 percent frustration reading level.

It is implied that most grade 4 pupils from small schools are in the frustration reading level, some are in the instructional level and almost none are in the independent reading level.

Reading Level of Big Schools and Small Schools

Shows that the respondents from big schools have a 0.00 percent independent reading level, 17.46 percent instructional reading level, and 82.54 percent frustration reading level; while the respondents from small schools have 1.72 percent independent reading level, 18.97 percent instructional reading level, and 79.31 percent frustration reading level. Thus, the respondents from both big and small schools have a 0.54 percent independent reading level, 17.93 percent instructional reading level, and 81.52 percent frustration reading level.

It is implied that most grade 4 pupils whether from big schools and small schools are in the frustration reading level, some are in the instructional level and almost none are in the independent reading level. It is implicit that type of schools whether big schools and small schools are not a great factor on the reading proficiency of the grade 4 pupils.

According to Musen (2010), the ability to read proficiently especially in the elementary years is a fundamental skill that affects the learning experiences and school performance of the pupils. Pupils who are proficient readers, as measured by their performance on reading tests, are more likely to perform well not only in language subjects but also in other subjects, such as math and science. However, pupils who have frustration reading level often struggle with their reading in almost all academic subjects. Students with reading difficulties are much less likely to be academically engaged.

Snow, et al (2008) found that when children's reading problems are diagnosed and addressed early, their reading achievement improves. They emphasized that early assessment of reading proficiency helps pupils understand their strengths and weaknesses. Identifying and addressing students' academic challenges early save students' years of struggle and isolation. Likewise, early reading proficiency scores can identify which students are right for early intervention programs.

Based on the researcher's observation and interviews, the teachers of these grade four pupils experienced difficulties in developing enthusiasm in reading among their pupils. They were hardly challenged by reading lessons and

exercises given by the teachers who were trying to help them improve their reading comprehension. The interview with the teachers revealed that they can't tell whether the pupils read the assigned reading lessons and the reality is that some did and some didn't. Aside from this, pupils can't comprehend what they are reading and they do not look up for the meaning of the word they couldn't figure out. Occasionally, they are out of focus, some distraction from outside occurred and seemed they are just reading without comprehending.

It has been observed that most of the pupils who belong to the frustration level have trouble in sounding words and recognizing words out of context. They also have confusions between the letters and the sounds they represent. According to their teachers, they belong to the pupils with slow oral reading rate (reading word-by-word). They read without expressions and ignoring punctuations while reading. Since these are the problems faced, pupils who struggled find it difficult to understand and remember what has been read. Their effort to grasp individual words is so exhausting and they have no resources left for understanding.

During the administration of the instruments, the respondents were asking about the meaning of words and sentences written in text specifically question number one: "According to the selection, what are Filipinos known for?" They cannot connect ideas in the passage especially in question number two: "What is Oplan Kaluluwa?" Also, they could hardly interpret the idea like answering question number eight "How will you help Oplan kaluluwa succeed?" Likewise, they showed difficulty in distinguishing significant information from minor details in answering question number two which is "What are not allowed in cemeteries during celebration?"

Respondents need to look back to the passage time after time to be able to answer the questions accurately. This manifested that they have difficulty in remembering and summarizing what they read, problem in connecting what is read to prior knowledge and they cannot apply the content of a text to personal experiences.

Further, parents' supports are needed to develop pupils' skills and abilities in reading and identify the areas that affect their children's learning in an earlier age.

Respondents with low proficiency levels often faced the dual challenge of developing basic literacy skills as well as proficiency. This study shows that there are important skills to master in order to pursue their highest reading proficiency level.

The reading strategies that the pupils have most mastered and least mastered in terms of the twelve reading strategies.

Reading strategies of *Big Schools*

Table 5 shows that the respondents in school A has scored the reading strategy of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS - 87 points, UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 63 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 68 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 65 points, FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 65 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 63 points. This means that school A has *developing mastery* level on the said reading strategies. There are six reading strategies under developing mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies. However, school A has scored FINDING MAIN IDEA – 59 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 35 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 46 points, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPINION – 33 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 38, and INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 36. This means that school A has *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. There are six reading strategies under least mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies.

School B has scored the reading strategy of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS - 72 points. This means that school B has *developing mastery* level on the said reading strategy. There is only one reading strategy level under developing mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies. However, school B has scored FINDING MAIN IDEA – 39 points, UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 49 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 49 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 44 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 43 points, FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 41 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 36 points,

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPINION – 26 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 14 points, INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 20 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 49 points. This means that school B has *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. There are eleven reading strategies under least mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies.

School C has scored the reading strategy of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS - 65 points. This means that school C has *developing mastery* level on the said reading strategy. There is only one reading strategy level under developing mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies. However, school C has scored FINDING MAIN IDEA – 32 points, UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 30 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 42 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 31 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 34 points, FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 33 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 32 points, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPINION – 20 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 18 points, INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 27 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 46 points. This means that school C has *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. There are eleven reading strategies under least mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies.

For the over-all scores of the three big schools, they have scored the reading strategy of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS 224 points. It is implied that all big schools have *developing mastery* level on this reading strategy. This is one out of twelve reading strategies.

However, these three big schools have scored FINDING MAIN IDEA – 130 points, UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 142 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 159 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 140 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 112 points, FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 139 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 114 points, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPINION – 79 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 70 points, INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 83 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 158 points. It is implied that all big schools have *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. These are eleven out of twelve reading strategies.

Reading strategies of *Small Schools*

Shows that the respondents in school D has scored the reading strategy of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS - 48 points while UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 35 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 33 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 31 points, FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 33 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 29 points. This means that school D has mastery level on RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS while *developing mastery* level on UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT, COMPARING & CONTRASTING, FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE. There is one reading strategy under mastery level and there are five reading strategies under developing mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies. However, school D has scored reading strategies such as FINDING MAIN IDEA – 26 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 21 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 24 points, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPTION – 17 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 16 points, and INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 16 points. This means that school D has *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. There are six reading strategies under least mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies.

School E has scored the reading strategy of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS - 40 points while UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 24 points and FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 24 points. This means that school E has mastery level on RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS while *developing mastery* level on UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE and FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT. This means that there is one reading strategy under mastery level and there are two reading strategies under developing mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies. However, school E has scored reading strategies such as FINDING MAIN IDEA – 23 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 21 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 18 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 18 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 8 points,

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPTION – 8 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 18 points, INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 16 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 23 points. This means that school E has *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. There are nine reading strategies under least mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies.

School F has scored the reading strategy of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS - 43 points while UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 25 points and FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 25 points. This means that school F has mastery level on RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS while *developing mastery* level on UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE and FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT. This means that there is one reading strategy under mastery level and there are two reading strategies under developing mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies. However, school F has scored reading strategies such as FINDING MAIN IDEA – 21 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 20 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 12 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 24 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 10 points, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPTION – 14 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 16 points, INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 14 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 24 points. This means that school F has *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. There are nine reading strategies under least mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies.

For the over-all scores of the three small schools, they have scored the reading strategies of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS - 131 points while UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 84 points and FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 82 points. This means that all small schools have mastery level on RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS while *developing mastery* level on UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE and FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT. This means that there is one reading strategy under mastery level and there are two reading strategies under developing mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies. However, all small schools have scored reading strategies such as FINDING MAIN IDEA – 70 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 74 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 61 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 63 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 42 points, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPTION – 39 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 50 points, INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 46 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 76 points. This means that small schools have *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. There are nine reading strategies under least mastery level out of the twelve reading strategies.

Reading strategies of both

Big Schools and Small Schools

Shows that the over-all scores of the big schools and small schools, they have scored the reading strategy of RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS 355 points. It is implied that all schools whether big schools or small schools have *developing mastery* level on RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS reading strategy. This is only one out of twelve reading strategies. However, the big and small schools have scored FINDING MAIN IDEA – 200 points, UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE – 226 points, RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT – 233 points, COMPARING & CONTRASTING – 201 points, MAKING PREDICTIONS – 175 points, FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT – 221 points, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES – 156 points, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPINION – 118 points, IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE – 120 points, INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – 129 points, and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE – 234 points. It is implied that all big and small schools have *least mastery* level on the said reading strategies. These are eleven out of twelve reading strategies.

According to Adler (2011), these twelve reading strategies have research-based evidence for improving text comprehension. They are conscious plans - sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. If these reading strategies are learnt and gradually mastered by the grade 4 pupils, students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. According to Chall (2006), reading is a process that changes as the reader becomes more able and proficient. Generally, grade 1-3 are characterized as a period when students are “learning to read,” and grade 4 and above are characterized as a period of “reading to learn.” In

the learning-to-read stage, students typically read simple texts containing familiar words within their oral vocabularies and knowledge base. In the reading-to-learn stage, students read increasingly more demanding academic texts containing challenging words and complex concepts beyond their oral vocabularies and knowledge base.

According to Tadros (2014) by means of using assessment data, teachers can plan appropriate program and instruction that support students' reading needs. Likewise, based on assessment data, teachers can target reading skill instruction and intervention to struggling readers.

The relationship between the reading levels and the reading strategies of the grade four pupils
Table 8 The relationship between the reading levels and the reading strategies

Shows that the reading strategy FINDING MAIN IDEA has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.4414 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.1948. This means that reading strategy FINDING MAIN IDEA has a little correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is not significant.

The reading strategy RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.2250 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0506. This means that reading strategy RECALLING FACTS & DETAILS has a little correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is not significant.

The reading strategy UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.2830 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0801. This means that reading strategy UNDERSTANDING SEQUENCE has a little correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is not significant.

The reading strategy RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.3773 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.1424. This means that reading strategy RECOGNIZING CAUSE & EFFECT has a slight correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is not significant.

The reading strategy COMPARING & CONTRASTING has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.2768 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0766. This means that reading strategy COMPARING & CONTRASTING has a little correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is not significant.

The reading strategy MAKING PREDICTIONS has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.0854 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0073. This means that reading strategy MAKING PREDICTIONS has a slight correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is significant.

The reading strategy FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.3579 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.1281. This means that reading strategy FINDING WORD IN CONTEXT has a little correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is not significant.

The reading strategy DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.0872 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0076. This means that reading strategy DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES has a slight correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is significant.

The reading strategy DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & Opinion has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.0815 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0066. This means that reading strategy DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPINION has a slight correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is significant.

The reading strategy IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.2856 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0816. This means that reading strategy IDENTIFYING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE has a little correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is not significant.

The reading strategy INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.1015 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0103. This means that reading strategy INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE has a slight correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is significant.

The reading strategy DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE has a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.0887 and a correlation determination (r^2) of 0.0079. This means that reading strategy DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE has a slight correlation to the reading level of the grade 4 pupils and it is significant.

The reading strategies with significant relationship to the reading level of proficiency of grade four pupils were MAKING PREDICTIONS, DRAWING CONCLUSION & MAKING INFERENCES, DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT & OPINION, INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN REAL & MAKE-BELIEVE.

Results of this study shows that instructional learners might be more autonomous in their use of reading strategies. They also may be using more strategies than they are consciously aware of or focused on while reading.

Several studies conducted in university settings (e.g. Sheorey & Baboczky, 2008; Sheorey, Kamimura, &Freiermuth, 2008; Sheorey&Mokhtari, 2001) revealed that higher proficiency readers used more strategies. In addition, higher proficiency readers used more global strategies than lower proficiency readers.

There are differences in strategy used in acquiring proficiency level that were not statistically significant. Respondents in this study showed a clear pattern of strategy used. Under frustration level, pupils used more strategies across all categories, while in instructional level, pupils used the least strategies.

Therefore, strategy training should focus on the different needs of learners and the characteristics of reading tasks at various proficiency levels. Students need to understand the characteristics of a given reading task and be able to identify and use appropriate strategies for task completion.

CONCLUSIONS

The following were the conclusions made on the reading proficiency level of grade four pupils, the strategies they learned and the relationship of reading proficiency level to reading strategy:

1. Majority of the grade four pupils who took the Phil-IRI reading proficiency test were categorized to be in the frustration level.
2. The study showed that it had been difficult on the part of most of the grade four pupils to comprehend what they are reading since they belong to the slow readers who read word-by-word.
3. Most of the pupils who belong to the frustration level of reading comprehension have trouble in sounding words and recognizing meaning of words through context.
4. Pupils who belong to the frustration level of proficiency have problem in connecting what was read to their prior knowledge and they found it difficult to apply content of a text to personal experiences.
5. Teachers face a great challenge in teaching reading comprehension since the pupils are hardly motivated to read.
6. Academic support from the parents is needed to develop pupils' skills and abilities in reading comprehension more specifically in the areas where the pupils are weak. Out of the twelve reading strategies six were not mastered by the pupils

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher formulated the following recommendations:

1. A reading remediation program in the schools is highly recommended.
2. Teachers in primary grades should focus on improving reading comprehension of pupils to increase their level of proficiency.

3. The school administrators should provide sufficient reading materials and support needed for improving pupils' level of reading proficiency.
4. Academic support from the parents is needed to develop pupils' skills and abilities in reading comprehension more specifically in the areas where the pupils are weak.
5. Teachers should exert effort in applying reading strategies in teaching reading and be knowledgeable to identify pupils' deficiencies, hence, improve their reading proficiency

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