



Improving Reading Comprehension of Students through Reciprocal Reading: The Case of Canitoan National High School

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of reciprocal reading strategy on reading comprehension among the grade 10 students of Canitoan National High School using quasi-experimental method. Twenty grade 10 junior high school students of Canitoan National High School were randomly selected and then divided into control and experimental groups during the fourth grading period of school year 2018-2019. The data gathering instrument used in this study was taken from the Testing Reading Power book authored by Concordia C. Logue, Saturnina R. Ferrer, and Regina R. Condez. The author was granted permission to use five selections of story in the book for academic purposes. A pretest and posttest was given before and after the conduct of treatment to the two groups of respondents. The One-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used in the study to determine the significant difference between the pretest and posttest score of the two experimental and control groups. The analysis yielded an F-ratio of 0.23 and probability value of 0.638 which indicates that there was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest score of experimental group and control group at 0 .05 level of significance which led to the non-rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that reciprocal reading strategy applied to the experimental group was not effective in improving the reading comprehension skills of students.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension; Reciprocal Reading; High School Students.

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1. Introduction

Reading is an essential skill of a person for survival. People mostly get information through reading which enables them to be functional in everyday living. It is the fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends on it [23]. Hence, it is a way to understanding and building knowledge across all levels of education. However, without comprehension, reading is a frustrating, pointless, and useless human activity. It is also the process of making meaning from text and gaining understanding of what is described in the text rather than obtaining meaning from isolated words or sentences [18]. It is beneficial to students because it helps them to analyze, summarize, criticize, and utilize the information from the reading text such reading stories, novels, instructional guide, and activity procedures when there is comprehension. For high school students, reading comprehension is an important academic skill. It underpins school learning and becomes increasingly important in all subject areas as students progress through the grades. Nowadays, knowledge and information are available anywhere and most of the time, many students get information from the internet because it fast and easy to access. In fact, the availability of reading materials online such as e-book and e-journal has increased the exposure of students in reading [18]. Student may have ability to read the words but failed to utilize the information because of poor reading of comprehension. It frustrates students when understanding of the text is difficult to achieve. It lowers their self-confidence when expressing their thoughts on a topic during discussion because of poor reading comprehension. Poor reading comprehension leads to poor grades and low scores in examinations and in standardized test such as the National Achievement Test (NAT). The problem in poor reading comprehension that beset educational institutions in various countries is also evident to many students in the Philippines in general, and in Canitoan National High School (CNHS) in particular. CNHS is a public secondary institution owned by the government of the Philippines and supervised by the Department of Education, Division of Cagayan de Oro City. The school is considered as a medium type of school due to its large number of enrollees reaching to 1,219 students and 53 teaching and non-teaching personnel. The school performance in the NAT fluctuated in the past three consecutive years. Based on school data, 45.3 percent in the MPS for school year 2012-2013; 52.05 percent in the MPS for school year 2013-2014; 38.05 percent in the MPS for school year 2014-2015. Based on the ratings, the school performed poor in the NAT for three years. This implies that the school failed to attain the 75 percent standard passing rate set by the Department of Education. The low academic performance of students in CNHS continued in school year 2016-2017 when the school got the average proficiency level of 63.07 percent in the periodical test in the eight academic subjects. In school year 2017-2018, the proficiency level nailed poorer with the rating of 54.84 percent. In school year 2018-2019, the average proficiency level of first grading and second grading test achieved a very low 49.13 and 49.98 percent respectively. In a Department of Education (DepEd) and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) joint study, the result singled out the problem on poor reading and reading comprehension as a principal factor in the miserable performance of students in the National Achievement Test [34]. It was also reported that DepEd regarded reading comprehension as the single factor which caused frustrations of students to perform better in the achievement test [16]. Hence, the problem on the low performance ratings in NAT and the poor comprehension level of Canitoan National High School has encouraged the researcher to look for a possible solution to solve the problem. Since the researcher is a classroom teacher, he chose to employ the reciprocal reading as reading strategy to improve the reading comprehension of students. This study was limited on the

effect of reciprocal reading to the reading comprehension of the experimental group of respondents. Also, it was limited to twenty grade 10 junior high school students of Canitoan National High School officially enrolled in school year 2018-2019. They were randomly selected by the researcher as respondents of the study. The study focused to English subject where reading comprehension of respondents was assessed using pretest and posttest taken from the Testing Reading Power Booklet. For the reading level, the researcher will use the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Manual 2018 as reference [33]. This study only covered one grading period which is the fourth grading also called as the last quarter of school year 2018-2019.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study was a quasi-experimental research. It was designed with experimental and control groups of respondents, randomly selected by the researcher. The pretest and posttest scores were considered students' achievement in reading comprehension of the experimental and control groups. The pretest was given to the experimental group and control group before the Kaizen Reading Session begins and the posttest was given after the experiment. Qualitatively, a group work interaction was intensively observed by the researcher during the conduct of experiment. The researcher wrote every noticeable detail or situation that would reflect how the relationships and interactions evolved in the duration of the experiment.

2.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted at Canitoan National High School in the fourth grading period of school year 2018-2019. The school is located at Zone 1, Barangay Canitoan, Cagayan de Oro City It is a public secondary institution owned by the national government of the Philippines through the Department of Education. The school is considered as medium school due to its large number of population. In school year 2018-2019, the school has 1,219 enrolled junior high school and senior high school students in the Learner's Information System (LIS). It is managed by 1 school head, along with 46 teachers, 3 non-teaching personnel, and 3 security guards. The average of students per classroom is 47. The school offers grade 7 to grade 10 junior high school level and grade 11 to 12 senior high school level.

2.3 Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were the twenty grade 10 junior high school students currently enrolled in Canitoan National High School for school year 2018-2019. They were randomly selected by the researcher and then divided into two groups – the experimental group and the control group.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researcher employed 50-item multiple choice pre-test and posttest reading comprehension test. This 50-item test questionnaire was taken from the Testing Reading Power Booklet authored by Concordia C. Logue, Saturnina R. Ferrer, and Regina R. Condez. It has been used by the school in assessing student's reading

comprehension level. This booklet consists of 47 selections of short story. Each selection has 10 check-up comprehension questions. The researcher used five selections of short story to come-up with 50 items of pretest and posttest research instrument. For reading comprehension scoring guide, the researcher used the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Manual of 2018. This reading inventory manual has been used by the DepEd in assessing the reading comprehension level of elementary students. Canitoan National High School adopted the comprehension scoring guide of Phil-IRI in assessing the reading comprehension level of students in the secondary level [32].

Table 4

Reading Level	Comprehension Score (in %)
Independent	80 – 100%
Instructional	59 – 79%
Frustration	58% and below

To determine the proficiency level of respondents in English, the standard criterion set by the Department of Education was used [9]:

Table 5

Proficiency Level	Percentage
Advance Proficient	90% and above
Proficient	85% - 89%
Approaching Proficient	80% - 84%
Developing	75% - 79%
Beginning	74% and below

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher secured a permit from the office of the DepEd-Cagayan de Oro City Schools Division Superintendent Jonathan S. Dela Peña, CESO V and from the school head of Canitoan National High School Mrs. Lerio A. Del Puerto, SHT-V. Students below 18 years old were asked for their parent’s or guardian’s consent prior to the conduct of the research study. The researcher collected the data on the respondents’ proficiency level in English from the office of the school testing coordinator. The respondent’s proficiency levels in English were based on their test scores in English in four periodical examinations; first grading, second grading, third grading, and fourth grading. Their scores were added to get the total score and divided by four to get the average score. The student’s average score will determine the proficiency level of students. A pretest was conducted to both experimental group and control group before the Kaizen Reading Session begins. The experimental group used reciprocal reading and the control group did the tradition reading [18]. Afterwards, the researcher scheduled the conduct of posttest to the respondents of both experimental group and control group. Both the pretest and posttest scores were used in assessing the respondents’ levels of reading

comprehension. The experimental group followed the steps of reciprocal reading recommended by Palinscar and Brown [29]. **Step1.** Scaffolding: The teacher introduced the four reading strategies through demonstration and modeling. In this way, the students observed how the strategies are executed correctly so they could apply it on their own. In this way, the teacher gradually passed the responsibility of the implementation of the strategies to the students. **Step 2.** In groups of four, a role was allocated to each student. Each of them performed the role as predictor, questioner, clarifier, and summarizer. **Step 3.** Students were instructed to read a text selection. Suggestions were made for students to use note taking strategies during the reading session. **Step 4.** The predictor helped the group connect sections of the text by reviewing predictions from the previous section and helped the group predict what they read about next by using clues and inferences in the text. The questioner helped the group to ask and answer questions about the text and reminded the group to use all types of questions (higher and lower order thinking). The summarizer restated the main ideas in the text and helped the group state the main idea or ideas in their own words. The clarifier helped the group find parts of the reading that were not clear and found ways to unblock these difficulties. **Step 5** Roles in the group switched and the next selection of text was read. Students repeated the process with their new role. They repeated this process until text/topic selection is finished. A posttest consists of 50 multiple choice questions were given to the two groups after completing the entire set of reading sessions. Qualitatively, group work interactions were closely observed by the researcher during the conduct of experiment. The researcher wrote every noticeable detail or situation which helped in interpreting the relationships and interactions evolved along the period of experiment. The tabulation and analysis of data were done right after the administration of the research instruments. The researcher then asked the assistance of a statistician for the statistical treatment of the the gathered data.

3. Results

3.1 What is the proficiency level of respondents in English?

Table 1: Proficiency level of respondents in English

Group	Advance Proficient (90-above)	Proficient (85-89)	Approaching Proficient (80-84)	Developing (75-79)	Beginning (74-below)
Control Group A	0	2	2	1	0
Control Group B	0	1	2	2	0
Experimental Group A	1	1	2	1	0
Experimental Group B	0	1	3	1	0

Table 1 shows the proficiency level of the respondents in English subject. Among the 20 respondents, there was 1 respondent with advance proficient level, 5 respondents with proficient level, 9 respondents with approaching proficient level, and 5 respondents with developing level. It was noted that respondents with proficient, approaching proficient, and developing levels were present in the four groups. Only experimental group has 1 respondent with advance proficient level. It indicates that the respondents of the study have varied proficiency

level in English. They were group heterogeneously according to reading ability level and proficiency level [29]. It allows the lower-performing students to benefit by learning from the more effective peer models.

3.2 What are the reading levels of respondents in terms of pretest and posttest scores?

Table 2: Reading level of respondents in their pretest and posttest score

Groups	Scores	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
		Number of Respondents	of Reading Level	Number of Respondents	of Reading Level
Control Group A	40-50	0	-	0	-
	30-39	2	Instructional	4	Instructional
	0-29	3	Frustration	1	Frustration
Control Group B	40-50	0	-	0	-
	30-39	4	Instructional	4	Instructional
	0-29	1	Frustration	1	Frustration
Experimental Group A	40-50	0	-	1	Independent
	30-39	3	Instructional	2	Instructional
	0-29	2	Frustration	2	Frustration
Experimental Group B	40-50	0	-	0	-
	30-39	3	Instructional	4	Instructional
	0-29	2	Frustration	1	Frustration

Table 2 shows the reading level of respondents based on their scores in pretest and posttest. In the pretest and posttest, respondents in the control groups have gained scores 39 and below which indicates that their reading level fall under instructional reading and frustration reading level. In the pretest, control group A has more respondents with frustration reading level while control group B has more respondents with instructional reading level. Both control groups have no respondent with independent reading level based on pretest and posttest scores. There was an evident increased in the posttest scores of the two respondents in control group A from frustration reading level to instructional reading level after the traditional reading method was applied, However, majority of the respondents posttest scores in the two control groups have shown no significant effect. Two experimental groups have gained scores 39 and below based on their pretest scores which indicates that the respondents reading level fall under instructional and frustration reading level. Both experimental groups have more number of respondents with instructional reading level than frustration reading level and no respondent with independent reading level. These two groups were given reading intervention called Reciprocal Reading for two weeks which aimed to increase their scores in the posttest as well as their reading level. A posttest was given to the respondents of the experimental groups after the reading intervention. There was an increased in the posttest scores of the respondents of both experimental groups. One respondent in experimental group A has an increased in posttest score and was moved into independent reading level from instructional reading level. Also, one respondent in experimental group B has an increased in posttest score and was moved into instructional

reading level from frustration reading level. However, majority of the respondents' posttest scores have shown no evident improvement from the pretest scores. The scores gained in the posttest by majority of the respondents of the experimental groups indicate that reciprocal reading improved the reading comprehension of the respondents, but not enough to suggest a significant level of improvement. In addition, the posttest scores revealed that majority of the respondents of the experimental groups have almost similar responses with the respondents of the control groups.

3.3 Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest score of experimental group and control group?

Table 3: Comparison of Students' Reading Comprehension Skills using One-Way Analysis of Covariance

Sources of Variation	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Adjusted Squares (SS)	Adjusted Squares (MS)	Mean F-value	Probability value
Treatments					
(Control vs Experimental)	1	4.05	4.05	0.23	0.638
Error	17	302.76	17.81		
Total	18	306.81			

(ANCOVA)

Table 3 shows the comparison of the reading comprehension skills of students for the experimental and control groups. The analysis yielded an F-ratio of 0.23 and probability value of 0.638 which indicates that there were no significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores of students in the experimental and control groups which led to the non-rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that the intervention applied to the experimental group was not really instrumental in improving the reading comprehension skills of students. There might be a little increase in their posttest scores for the experimental groups but failed to reach the significant level to conclude that reciprocal reading caused such increased.

3.4 What are the student's perceptions about their experiences using reciprocal reading?

The researcher conducted a focus group discussion to the respondents of experimental group A and group B. In a recorded interview, the respondents answered the questions asked by the researcher. Below were the answers of students transcribed verbatimly from the audio recording device.

Researcher: What were your experiences from your reciprocal reading group? How did you do the reciprocal reading?

Respondent: We followed that instruction, *kato bitaw imong gihatag* [the one you gave] first is to predict the title itself second is clarifying which is *magkuha mi sa among mga* [to get some] words *nga dili kabalo* [we do

not know] unsay definition ana [its definition]. Questioning which is really important. Once you read story *dapat naa man jud kay mga* [you should have] questions *kay para makasabot ka* [so that you understand it]. Summarizing, to summarize *kung unsay gyuy imong nasabtan ana nga* story [what you understand from the story].

Researcher: What was your impression about reciprocal reading?

Respondent: My impression sir is the tradition and the reciprocal style of reading is very different *lahi ra jud kayo sila sir kay* [they are different from each other] *mas tsada ang* reciprocal *kaysa katong* traditional style of reading [reciprocal is better than the traditional style of reading].

Researcher: Talking about traditional reading method how do you usually do it?

Respondent: *Among ang mga ideas bitaw sir kay kanang example nagbasa mi sa stories unya murag ang among ideas bitaw sir kay didto ra namo gikuha tanan; wala na mi lain mahatag nga idea; tungod kay didto na namo gikuha tanan. Dapat ang new man gyud karon sir, para sa akoo sa dili paka magbasa sir, title pa lang imong basahon naa na kay idea; naa na kay thinking pag-abot sa imong mind nga unsay buot pasabot ato murag nahatagan na nimo siya ug explanation bisag wala pa ka nagbasa.* [All of our ideas are based from the story and it limits our mind in creating ideas. In the new strategy of reading which is referring to reciprocal reading you read the title of the story first and make prediction based on the title. In this way, it gives you a hint on the story you are about to read].

Researcher: What were the reasons why your score in the posttest has no increase although some you have a little increase in posttest score?

Respondent: *Naglibog mi sir kay nagbalik-balik. Feel nimo nga kabalo na ka ani nga answer. Dili man diay, malimtan man diay. Nakabasa na ka sa isa masagol nimo sa imong huna-huna. Malimtan nimo unsa imong gibasa.* [Because the stories were the same in the pretest, we were confident with our answers in the posttest. We believed that our answers were correct but they were not, because we have actually forgotten].

Respondent: Ang area pud sir saba [The place was noisy].

Respondent: *Kailangan nimo dalion ba kay sa ngalan nga naa pa kay gaapason nga bulohaton. Ang oras sir gaapason. Ang deadline. Ga struggle imong mind. Gaapas ka sa oras, gaapas ka sa mga compilation, sa mga activities.* [We struggled in reaching deadlines of our academic requirements.

We were running out of time in our projects and other activities]

Respondent: *Atong nga time nga gapatong-patong ang mga projects. Wala pa nahuman among mini-theater, atong gowns nga gipang-assign, ug kato pong research paper, naa pud mga written output.* [We had bunches of things to do. I have to make mini-theater, finish the gowns, write a researcher paper, and submit all the written output].

Respondent: *nakahuna-huna ko nga dapat humanon ko ni ug dali kay naa pay uban buluhaton.* [My mind was set to finish all the academic requirements because there are more tasks waiting to be done.]

Respondent: *Gaapas mi sa oras kay nawala among compilation.* [I was running out time for my compilation was misplaced.]

Respondent: *Na busy pud ko ato sir kay akong uban nga compilation sa Math nangawagtang. Nibalik ko ug sulat sa 3.1*[I was busy working for my compilation in Math because I lost some of it. I have to rewrite 3.1]

Respondent: *Amo gidali-dali pag answer. Kani kay kabalo na ko ani kay nabasa na ni nako mao na ni ang answer.* [I answered it quickly because the stories were the same in the pretest, and I know that it is the answer.]

Researcher: You felt confident enough because you have already read this in the pretest.

Respondent: Yes.

Their answers to the questions during focused group discussion clearly tell that their mind set was not directed to the posttest activity. They have already conditioned their mind to work on their final academic requirements. In the case of this study, the experiment was conducted on March, the last month of school year 2018-2019. Respondents had hectic schedules on their classroom and school activities. They were busy working on their portfolios, projects, practical performances, and reports and submit these requirements before deadlines so that they could join the moving-up ceremony. Their statement clearly described that they reserved their time and effort in complying the academic requirements. They gave less concern and importance to others things such as the experiment which was not required by the school or by their subject teachers.

4. Discussion

Respondents in experimental and control group have varied proficiency levels in English. Majority of the respondents have approaching proficient level in English. Their proficiency percentage ranges from 80 % to 84%. These respondents have a better understanding and knowledge in English however, they needed improvement. There were also respondents with proficient level. These respondents have good command and knowledge in English. Their proficiency percentage ranges from 85% to 89%. Only one respondent has an advance proficiency level in English. This respondent attained the proficiency percentage ranges from 90% and above and considered as the best performer in English. There were also respondents with developing proficiency level. Their proficiency percentage ranges from 75% to 79% and were considered as the low performing respondents of the group. These respondents needed assistance from the respondents with advance approaching, proficient, and approaching proficient levels in English. It indicated that respondents were grouped heterogeneously according to their proficiency level in English. In order to deepen the interpretation of the result, the researcher conducted a focus group discussion to the two experimental groups. A recorded interview was done to get the answers of the respondents to the questions of the researcher. In the discussion, the researcher found out that the respondents have less interest and focused on the experiment because their attention and priority was on the final academic requirements of English, Mathematics, Music Arts Physical

Education and Health (MAPEH), and Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) subjects. Respondents gave less importance to the experiment in particular the posttest. Respondents have prioritized the final academic requirements such as school projects, report writing, portfolios, practical performance in Physical Education, and final exam despite the allotted scheduled for the conduct of the study. It was observed that the respondents answered the posttest hurriedly and went back to their respective classroom to work on their projects. There were evident increased in the posttest scores of the respondents of the two experimental group after the intervention was given by the researcher. Only one respondent from experimental group A has an increased in posttest score and moved into independent reading level from instructional reading level and one respondent from experimental group B has an increased in posttest score and moved into instructional reading level from frustration reading level. Their scores were not considered significant in improving reading comprehension. Furthermore, majority of the respondents' posttest scores have shown no evident improvement from the pretest scores. It simply implied that the intervention was not effective to improve the reading comprehension of the respondents.

5. Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study:

The study concludes that reciprocal reading is not effective reading intervention to improve the reading comprehension level of student. There are contributing factors that hinders the effectiveness of reciprocal reading as intervention. One factor believed that impeded the success of the research is the respondents' interest and priority. Respondents have put little attention to the experiment because their minds were set to work on the final academic requirement and deadlines.

Time is also a contributing factor to the result of the research. Students who failed or performed poor in the first grading have a chance to recover in the next grading period through taking intervention class or program. Fourth grading is not a best time to conduct intervention because it is the last period of school year and students are expected to have recovered already from their failing grades. It is also the time when students are busy working on their final academic requirements.

Academic burnout is also a big factor that contributed to the result of the research. During the conduct of the research, respondents were heavily loaded with their academic requirements such as projects, writing reports, compilations, portfolios and final performances in PE class. As a result, students were exhausted and had less interest to pay attention to the experiment.

6. Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned results, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. The Canitoan National High School should conduct regular monitoring and observation to their teachers in classroom teaching-learning activities. In the case of teaching English as second language, school may implement "Speak English Policy" in the classroom or in the offices in a particular time. For instance, during

Science, Math, MAPEH, and English classes, students are required to speak English because discussions and instructions are held in English. In this way, students are reinforced to use English in their conversations, discussions, and other classroom activities. It might be harsh to hear but it helps the students to practice speaking English and to become fluent speaker of the target language. It would be easier to the students to understand the reading text when they develop confidence on the target language and teacher may extend assistance such as intervention for the improvement of students.

2. English language teachers should develop variety of teaching strategies and instructional materials for language teaching. Teachers must also be guided on the curriculum and the target competencies being assessed and measured in the standardized test. In the process of teaching and learning of reading, teachers should motivate and challenge them to read more effectively. In this case, the language teachers should choose a certain teaching method that can build a good atmosphere of teaching-learning process – enjoyable and inviting classroom activities such as active and creative reading. Most importantly, language teacher must teach English language in a manner that it is a communication tool for global understanding. Hence, active communication relating to real and practical situations and issues must be held inside and outside the classroom. Activities like drama, debates, reporting, speeches, storytelling, and song presentations are good examples because it requires active communication. These strategies are encouraging students to use their different learning style and the five macro skills of learning.

3. Students should have great motivation and positive attitude to learn a second language particularly English. Motivations and positive attitude towards language learning are the leading predictors of their success in learning English language. Positive attitude is visible when student learn English at school and home. Learning a language is easier when doing it in group because it provides student the opportunities to share information and ideas with others. It helps them to understand more about the materials and learn more about others' perspectives and personal feedback so that they can actively participate in the discussion.

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