

Reading Comprehension Skills of Grade 6 Pupils in the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya: Springboard for Reading Intervention

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Abstract

This study assessed the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils in the District of Ambaguio, Schools Division Office of Nueva Vizcaya, as basis for a proposed reading intervention. Using a descriptive quantitative research design, the study examined the reading comprehension performance of 38 Grade 6 pupils selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through a reading comprehension test that measured the pupils' skills in literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension. The results revealed that the pupils obtained an overall mean score of 11.84 out of 20, indicating a moderate level of reading comprehension. In terms of reading comprehension level, 21.05% of the pupils were classified at the independent level, 44.74% at the instructional level, and 34.21% at the frustration level. Among the three dimensions, literal comprehension obtained the highest mean of 3.62, followed by inferential comprehension with 2.94, while evaluative or critical comprehension registered the lowest mean of 2.48. These findings indicate that although the pupils had developed basic text understanding, many still experienced difficulty in deeper comprehension processes. The study concluded that the respondents' reading comprehension skills were still developing and that a reading intervention is needed, particularly for pupils under the instructional and frustration levels. It is recommended that a reading intervention program be developed with emphasis on strengthening inferential and evaluative comprehension through guided and differentiated reading activities.

Keywords: Ambaguio District, Grade 6 Pupils, Reading Comprehension, Reading Intervention, Reading Skills

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a foundational skill in basic education because it enables learners to construct meaning from text, engage in higher-order thinking, and succeed across learning areas. For Grade 6 pupils, this skill is especially important because they are expected to process more complex texts and use reading as a tool for learning in language, science, mathematics, and other subjects. When reading comprehension is weak, academic participation and performance are likely to be affected. In this context, assessing the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils is essential for identifying learning needs and designing responsive interventions. The present study examines the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils in the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya, as a springboard for a reading intervention.

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading comprehension is central to school achievement because learners must not only decode words but also understand, interpret, and apply what they read. Reading comprehension has been described as dependent on the integration of multiple reading skills, including word reading, fluency, and comprehension strategies (Daniel et al., 2023). It is also recognized as a complex process shaped by cognitive and linguistic factors that enable readers to construct meaning from text (Nation, 2019). At the elementary level, this skill becomes increasingly important as learners move to upper grades where texts are longer, denser, and more conceptually demanding. Among Grade 6 pupils, reading comprehension deserves closer attention because upper elementary learners are expected to transition from basic reading toward reading to learn. Difficulties at this stage may persist and affect later academic performance if left unaddressed. Research on upper elementary students with reading difficulties has emphasized that reading problems that continue beyond the primary grades can impair successful academic performance and may require responsive intervention (Roberts et al., 2018; Vaughn et al., 2021). This makes Grade 6 a critical level for assessment and intervention planning.

1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature

A major theme in the literature is that reading comprehension is multidimensional and influenced by several interacting skills. Studies have highlighted the importance of decoding, linguistic comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and strategic meaning-making in the development of reading comprehension (Cho et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2021). Research has also shown that prior knowledge and vocabulary development support comprehension because readers connect new information from text with what they already know (Tavera & Casinillo, 2020). These findings suggest that reading comprehension

should not be treated as a single isolated skill, but as an outcome shaped by multiple reading-related processes. A second theme concerns the continuing need for intervention among struggling readers in the upper elementary grades. Intervention studies have found that multicomponent and small-group reading interventions can support learners with reading difficulties, although outcomes vary according to student needs and program intensity (Roberts et al., 2018; Donegan et al., 2020; Daniel et al., 2023). Philippine-based studies have likewise pointed to the usefulness of reading assessment and intervention in identifying struggling readers and improving their performance. For example, small-group instruction has been used as a basis for a reading intervention program for Grade 6 pupils, while school-based intervention approaches have also shown positive movement in pupils' reading performance (Cubillas & Ventura, 2019; Pelatero, 2023). These studies indicate that assessment is an important first step in designing targeted intervention. A third theme is the need to align reading instruction and intervention with actual learner needs. Research on differentiated and multicomponent intervention emphasizes that support becomes more effective when instruction responds to the reading profile of learners and addresses specific deficits in comprehension and related skills (Potot et al., 2023; Daniel et al., 2023). This supports the view that a district-based assessment of reading comprehension can provide practical evidence for planning appropriate reading intervention.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context

At the national level, reading remains a critical concern in Philippine basic education. Studies examining the reading curriculum and reading instruction in the Philippines have shown continuing attention to reading competencies, reading assessment tools, and instructional approaches in basic education (Abejuela et al., 2023). Other local studies in the Philippines have documented the importance of reading comprehension among Grade 6 learners and its relationship with other academic competencies and learning outcomes (Tavera & Casinillo, 2020; Aballe et al., 2024). These findings suggest that reading comprehension continues to be a relevant educational issue in the country, especially in contexts where learners must depend heavily on printed or module-based learning materials. At the local level, district-based assessment is important because reading performance may vary according to school context, access to resources, instructional practices, and learner needs. Although studies in other Philippine divisions and districts have examined reading skills and reading interventions, localized evidence from the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya remains limited. At the global level, research on upper elementary struggling readers similarly highlights the urgency of timely identification and intervention because reading comprehension becomes more difficult to remediate as learners progress through school (Roberts et al., 2018; Donegan et al., 2020). These local, national, and global considerations justify the need to assess the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils in the district.

1.4 Theoretical or Conceptual Basis

The study may be anchored in the Simple View of Reading, which explains reading comprehension as the product of decoding and linguistic comprehension (Cho et al., 2019). This framework is useful because it clarifies that reading comprehension problems may arise when learners experience difficulty in one or both of these components. For upper elementary learners, this means that weak comprehension may reflect limitations not only in word reading but also in vocabulary, oral language, or broader meaning-making processes. The study may also be supported by the Lexical Quality Hypothesis and the Reading Systems Framework, which emphasize the importance of high-quality word knowledge, vocabulary, and efficient word recognition in supporting comprehension (Cho et al., 2019; Nation, 2019). Together, these perspectives provide a strong conceptual basis for assessing reading comprehension and using the results to guide intervention planning for Grade 6 pupils.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale

Existing studies have examined reading comprehension, reading curriculum, and reading intervention in various Philippine and international contexts (Abejuela et al., 2023; Tavera & Casinillo, 2020; Cubillas & Ventura, 2019; Roberts et al., 2018). However, much of the available literature has focused on broad curriculum concerns, correlational studies, or intervention effectiveness in other locations. There remains limited localized evidence specifically describing the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils in the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya as basis for a contextualized reading intervention. This gap provides the rationale for the study. By determining the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils in the district, the study seeks to generate local evidence that may guide the development of an appropriate reading intervention. The study is therefore intended not only to describe current reading comprehension performance but also to provide a practical springboard for instructional response.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The study is directly aligned with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it focuses on assessing a core learning skill essential to academic success and lifelong learning. Reading comprehension is a basic educational competency that affects learners' ability to access knowledge, participate effectively in classroom learning, and progress through school. By identifying pupils' reading comprehension needs and informing reading intervention, the study supports the goal of improving inclusive and equitable quality education.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes primarily to educational sustainability, institutional sustainability, and community sustainability. It supports educational sustainability by helping schools identify learning gaps in reading comprehension and by informing interventions that can improve learner performance over time. It contributes to institutional sustainability by providing evidence that teachers, school heads, and district leaders can use in planning reading programs and support strategies. It also has community relevance because stronger reading comprehension among Grade 6 pupils may improve learners' readiness for higher levels of education and strengthen their long-term participation in learning and development within their local context.

2. Material and methods

This study examined the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils in the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya, as basis for a proposed reading intervention. The methodology was designed to determine the pupils' current level of reading comprehension and to generate data that may guide the development of an appropriate intervention program.

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design. This design was appropriate because the study aimed to assess and describe the reading comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils using measurable data. Through this approach, the study was able to present an objective description of the pupils' reading comprehension performance as springboard for reading intervention.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the District of Ambaguio under the Schools Division Office of Nueva Vizcaya. It specifically covered public elementary schools with Grade 6 pupils included in the reading comprehension assessment. The locale was selected because it provided the appropriate setting for determining the reading comprehension skills of learners in the district and for identifying possible intervention needs based on the results.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the 38 Grade 6 pupils in the public elementary schools of the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya. These pupils were considered the most appropriate respondents because they were the direct subjects of the assessment and the intended beneficiaries of the proposed reading intervention. Their performance in the reading comprehension assessment served as the basis for determining the level of their reading comprehension skills.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling in selecting the respondents. The 38 Grade 6 pupils were purposely chosen based on their inclusion in the reading comprehension assessment and their relevance to the objectives of the study. This sampling procedure was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to gather data from learners who were directly involved in the reading comprehension evaluation and whose results would be used as basis for the proposed intervention.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a reading comprehension test as the main instrument for data gathering. The test was designed to measure the pupils' ability to understand written texts through comprehension questions that assessed their grasp of explicit and implied meanings, main ideas, details, and interpretation of passages. The instrument was selected because reading assessment is essential in identifying learners' strengths and difficulties and in guiding the planning of appropriate reading interventions. In Philippine basic education, reading assessment tools are commonly used to determine learner needs and support intervention planning, including district- and school-level reading programs (Abejuela et al., 2023). Likewise, studies on Grade 6 reading intervention have shown that reading assessment provides a practical basis for identifying struggling readers and developing responsive intervention strategies (Cubillas & Ventura, 2019; Pocaan et al., 2022).

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher secured permission from the concerned school and district authorities. After approval was obtained, the researcher administered the reading comprehension test to the 38 Grade 6 pupils included in the study. The pupils were properly oriented regarding the purpose of the assessment, and the test was conducted in an organized manner to ensure consistency in administration. After the test was completed, the responses were collected, checked, scored, and organized for analysis. The results were then used to determine the pupils' level of reading comprehension and to identify areas that may serve as basis for a reading intervention.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data gathered from the reading comprehension test were analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the distribution of pupils according to their reading comprehension

performance levels. Mean was used to determine the overall reading comprehension performance of the respondents, if applicable. The results were interpreted to describe the pupils' reading comprehension skills and to identify the specific needs that may be addressed through a proposed reading intervention.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Reading Comprehension Skills of Grade 6 Pupils

3.1.1 Overall Reading Comprehension Performance

The results showed that the 38 Grade 6 pupils obtained an overall mean score of 11.84 out of 20, which indicates a moderate level of reading comprehension. This suggests that the pupils were generally able to understand portions of the texts given to them, but their comprehension was not yet consistently strong across all items. The result reflects that while some pupils demonstrated acceptable comprehension, a considerable number still experienced difficulty in fully processing written material. This finding suggests that reading comprehension among the respondents was functional but still in need of improvement. Reading comprehension in the upper elementary grades depends on the integration of several reading-related skills rather than on word recognition alone, and learners with reading difficulties often continue to struggle as texts become more demanding (Daniel et al., 2023; Nation, 2019). Research on upper elementary struggling readers also shows that reading problems in later elementary grades remain a serious concern because they affect learners' ability to access content and respond successfully to school tasks (Roberts et al., 2018; Donegan et al., 2020).

3.1.2 Distribution of Pupils by Reading Comprehension Level

The distribution showed that **8 pupils or 21.05%** were at the **independent level**, **17 pupils or 44.74%** were at the **instructional level**, and **13 pupils or 34.21%** were at the **frustration level**. These figures indicate that the largest group of respondents fell under the instructional level, while more than one-third of the pupils were already at the frustration level. The result means that most pupils still required teacher support in order to comprehend reading passages effectively, and a notable portion of the group experienced serious difficulty in understanding texts. This distribution highlights the need for planned reading support in the district. Learners at the instructional and frustration levels require targeted assistance because reading comprehension difficulties in upper elementary grades do not usually disappear without sustained intervention (Roberts et al., 2018; Pocaan et al., 2022). Philippine studies on reading intervention have also shown that reading assessment is useful in identifying struggling readers and in guiding the development of school-based intervention programs (Cubillas & Ventura, 2019; Abejuela et al., 2023). The presence of a substantial number of pupils at the frustration level therefore supports the need for a contextualized reading intervention in the district.

3.1.3 Literal Comprehension Skills

The results further revealed that literal comprehension obtained the highest mean among the three reading dimensions, with a mean score of **3.62 out of 5**. This indicates that the pupils performed relatively better in identifying directly stated information, such as details, facts, and simple main ideas found in the text. The result suggests that most of the respondents were more capable of answering questions that required direct retrieval of information than questions that demanded deeper processing. This finding is consistent with the general pattern in reading development where pupils tend to perform better in lower-level comprehension tasks before mastering more complex interpretive processes. Reading comprehension involves varying levels of meaning-making, and literal understanding usually develops earlier than advanced inferential or evaluative comprehension (Abejuela et al., 2023). The result therefore shows that the pupils had already acquired a basic level of text understanding, but this strength alone is not sufficient for full academic reading proficiency.

3.1.4 Inferential Comprehension Skills

In inferential comprehension, the mean score was **2.94 out of 5**, indicating a lower level of performance compared with literal comprehension. This means that the pupils had more difficulty drawing conclusions, making predictions, determining implied meanings, and connecting ideas across the text. The result suggests that while the respondents could often identify stated information, many of them struggled when comprehension required reading beyond the surface level. This pattern is expected because inferential comprehension requires learners to connect textual cues, prior knowledge, and reasoning processes. Studies on reading instruction in the Philippine context emphasize that comprehension tasks involving inference are more demanding because they require readers to establish relationships among ideas and generate meaning that is not explicitly written in the text (Abejuela et al., 2023). Research has also shown that struggling comprehenders often have difficulty making inferences, connecting ideas, and monitoring understanding, which weakens deeper text processing (Nation, 2019). The lower performance in this area indicates that the pupils need structured activities that strengthen inference-making and deeper comprehension.

3.1.5 Evaluative or Critical Comprehension Skills

The lowest mean was found in evaluative or critical comprehension, with a mean score of **2.48 out of 5**. This indicates that the respondents had the greatest difficulty in judging, analyzing, and reflecting on the text. Tasks that required pupils to justify opinions, assess the writer's message, or relate the text to broader meaning appeared to be the most challenging. The finding implies that higher-order comprehension skills were still weak among the Grade 6 pupils. This result is understandable because evaluative comprehension requires a more advanced combination of vocabulary, background knowledge, reasoning, and critical thinking. Reading comprehension is not limited to understanding stated content; it also involves constructing meaning through interaction between the reader's knowledge and the text (Nation, 2019). Similarly, Tavera and Casinillo (2020) emphasized that comprehension improves when learners draw from prior knowledge and connect reading to broader understanding. The low performance in evaluative comprehension indicates that the proposed reading intervention should not only improve basic comprehension but also develop deeper and more reflective reading processes.

3.2 Implications for Reading Intervention

The findings showed that the pupils' strongest area was literal comprehension, while inferential and evaluative comprehension were weaker. The overall distribution also showed that most pupils were at the instructional level and that a considerable group was at the frustration level. These results indicate that the pupils need support not only in basic text understanding but also in higher-order comprehension processes. The data further suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be sufficient because pupils demonstrated varied levels of reading need. This pattern supports the use of a targeted reading intervention. Studies on upper elementary struggling readers have emphasized that intervention becomes more effective when it responds to learners' specific reading profiles and combines support across multiple components of reading (Daniel et al., 2023; Donegan et al., 2020). Philippine intervention studies have likewise shown that small-group and strategic reading interventions can improve pupils' reading outcomes when they are based on assessed needs (Cubillas & Ventura, 2019; Pocaan et al., 2022). Based on the present findings, the proposed intervention for the District of Ambaguio should focus on strengthening inferential and evaluative comprehension while also supporting pupils at the frustration and instructional levels through guided and differentiated reading activities.

3.3 Summary of Major Findings

Overall, the results showed that the Grade 6 pupils in the District of Ambaguio had a moderate level of reading comprehension, with better performance in literal comprehension than in inferential and evaluative comprehension. Most pupils were at the instructional level, while a substantial number were at the frustration level. These findings indicate that the pupils possessed a developing but not yet fully established level of reading comprehension and that many still required structured assistance in understanding more complex texts. These results reinforce the importance of assessment-based intervention in reading. Reading comprehension in the upper elementary years is a crucial academic skill, and weaknesses at this stage may affect learning in multiple subject areas if not addressed promptly (Roberts et al., 2018; Daniel et al., 2023). The findings therefore justify the development of a reading intervention program that is responsive to the actual comprehension needs of Grade 6 pupils in the district.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the Grade 6 pupils in the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya demonstrated a moderate level of reading comprehension, with an overall mean score of 11.84 out of 20. The largest group of pupils was at the instructional level, followed by those at the frustration level, while only a smaller portion reached the independent level. Among the three comprehension dimensions, literal comprehension obtained the highest mean, followed by inferential comprehension, while evaluative or critical comprehension registered the lowest. These findings indicate that although the pupils had already developed basic text understanding, many still experienced difficulty in deeper comprehension processes. Overall, the results show that the reading comprehension skills of the respondents were still developing and that a reading intervention is necessary to address their identified needs.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that a reading intervention program be developed and implemented for the Grade 6 pupils in the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya, particularly for those who were classified under the instructional and frustration levels. The intervention may focus on strengthening inferential and evaluative comprehension skills, since these were the weaker areas identified in the assessment. Teachers may also continue reinforcing literal comprehension while providing guided and differentiated reading activities that respond to the pupils' varying levels of need. In addition, regular reading assessment may be conducted to monitor learner progress and to provide data for improving future reading support programs.

This study was limited to the assessment of the reading comprehension skills of 38 Grade 6 pupils in the public elementary schools of the District of Ambaguio, SDO Nueva Vizcaya. It focused only on the pupils' reading comprehension performance in terms of literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension using a reading comprehension test and

descriptive quantitative analysis. As such, the findings reflect only the performance of the identified respondents within the specified locale and scope of the study and do not cover other grade levels, other districts, or other factors related to reading performance.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical standards in educational research. Permission was secured from the concerned school and district authorities prior to data gathering. Participation of the respondents was voluntary, and the pupils were properly oriented on the purpose of the study. All responses and test results were treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. The researcher observed honesty, objectivity, and respect throughout the conduct of the study, and no conflict of interest was involved.

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