

Effectiveness of Localized English Reading Materials in Enhancing the Reading Skills of the Grade two Pupils

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Abstract

Students today are 21st-century learners who prefer digitization, and reading is not their top priority; teachers, at the same time, should meet the needs of these students. English teachers, specifically in reading skills, should have the capability and knowledge to craft methods to use in dealing with students who have difficulty with reading. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of localized English reading materials in enhancing the reading skills of grade two pupils. The reading skills of the pupils in this research were determined through match pairing. The participants came from the total population of 32 pupils from section orange in grade two, who were grouped into two through match pairing based on their pretest results. There was 16 match paired pupil-participants included in this study. These pupil participants were the advisees of the researcher for the school year 2021-2022 in modular distance learning. Another group of respondents was the 20 teacher-validators who assessed the crafted localized reading materials using the survey questionnaire. The pretest showed that both groups are at the beginning level in terms of their reading skills. The findings of this study indicated that the experimental group got much higher mean scores than the comparison group on their formative and post-test. The computed t-values for lesson 1 gained a t-value of 2.368, lesson 2 with a t-value of 2.885; lesson 3 with a t-value of 5.085; and lesson 4 having a t-value of 8.259 showed extremely significant differences between the formative means scores of the participants. A similar result found a highly significant difference between the post-test mean scores performance of the experimental group and the comparison group with a t-value of 3.966 and a p-value less than 0.01 level of significance. All results indicated the rejection of null hypotheses and acceptance of alternative ones. These findings implied that teachers must use tactics and practices such as learning by doing, manipulative, and practical learning to integrate localization and contextualization into the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: *Localized English Reading Materials; Reading Skills; Teaching-learning Process*



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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a gateway to learning all disciplines. It is an essential skill that significantly affects how well students achieve in school. Students who are deemed to be proficient readers also tend to have a greater understanding of various reading abilities, such as vocabulary growth, word choice, style, and knowledge of varied ethical diversity throughout cultures. According to Collier (2019), reading is significant for children since it can benefit their education, social and cognitive development, and mental health. With these advantages, reading might be seen as a necessary life skill. It serves as a basis for the student's success, not just in school but in all facets of their lives.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31098/jefltr.v2i2.1126>

Research Synergy Foundation

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Without the capacity to read, the learner lacks opportunities for personal fulfillment and will unavoidably lose out on career achievement. Reading has been the mother skill of all disciplines; thus, it should be encouraged in children to help them embrace it more as they become older. The learners' reading capacity is still a problem even though each school is implementing several reading intervention programs, particularly those that fall under the purview of the Department of Education. English has been the medium of instruction in most of the subjects that were taught in school. Nevertheless, there was a slight change in the educational system when Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) was institutionalized by DepEd, especially for students beginning in the formative years of Grades 1 to 3 who need to communicate the foundation of the language competencies in terms of reading, writing, and speaking using their native (L1) language have a better comprehension skill compared with those who were taught in the formative years us (Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MLE), 2009).

With the development of technology and the proliferation of online games that divert students' attention from reading books, magazines, and other relevant literature, more students are losing interest in reading and becoming complacent about it (Philippine Star, 2010). Hence, teachers and school personnel find it more challenging to introduce reading as a fun and enjoyable activity promoting metacognitive and logical thinking skills. Thus, the essence and significance of crafting and developing reading materials necessitate the learners' attitude toward reading. Considering that the present generations are prone to numerous distractions such as online games, the more they are uninterested in reading. In view, having these kinds of localized reading materials primarily boosts the interest of the learners to read since the level, choice of words, and content of the texts are according to their learning styles and conditions in which they can interact with the message. Localized materials also have the advantage of strengthening reader understanding and appreciation because the text is presented in the reader's own language, and the context is relatable and familiar. Likewise, it evokes a learner's cognitive curiosity about the subject matter by relating to the actual pressing concern of society where their contribution and awareness are appreciated and valued. Finally, by utilizing localized materials, the bearing and significance of the curriculum are highly recognized and developed, making it more meaningful and relevant based on the learner's holistic needs.

This study will look into the effectiveness of utilizing the localized English reading materials in enhancing the reading skills of the Grade two pupils in San Cristobal Elementary School, Division of Calamba, Calamba City. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: 1). What are the mean scores of the two groups of Grade two pupils in the English formative test and post-test? 2). Is there a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups from the given formative test? 3). Is there a significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the two groups? 4). Is there a significant difference between the pretest and post-test mean scores?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The essential objective that every language teacher should consider is the appropriateness of the learning materials according to the needs and levels of the learners. Hence, language teachers should consider these factors in crafting such communicative instructional materials (Laylo, 2018). In this most challenging time when education was pursued despite the global pandemic, thinking

about intervention and crafting one may be a massive challenge among the teachers, the curriculum designers, and implementers. However, knowing the needs of the learners and what functional approach to use will help these educators to craft a practical innovation that can be used in continuing education. Localization and contextualization are the latest approaches to the teaching-learning process highlighted in the Philippines' K to 12 Curriculum. Teachers in any subject area should try to incorporate localization and contextualization in teaching because it shows a confident effect as regards the performance and motivation of students towards the lessons (Dioneda, 2019).

Given that every school's history is different, it is essential that the institution itself create reading materials that are tailored to the needs, interests, and reading abilities of the students with the aid of curriculum planners and developers. These considerations should be tackled at least by the learner's historical, cultural, linguistic, and contextual conditions, which are familiar to learners and can relate to immediately. Thus, for the reading materials for the classroom to be useful, cultural and linguistic values should be prioritized. Local authors might choose to create any original or made-up folk town stories that will best appeal to the students in their area (Lear, 2020). Localizing the curriculum can make learning more profound and significant. This also promotes local, cultural, and socio-economic contexts where learners can see the relevance of studying in their locality. Further, it is a vital element of the decentralization of education, governance, and management. The localization also corresponds with the integration of any rules that support the curriculum standard for its successful implementation and the impact on the knowledge and abilities of educators. The integration of local culture in the curriculum is localization (UNESCO, 2009).

Visconde and Lasaten (2018) revealed in their study that when learners are exposed to contextualized and localized learning materials, they approach the English lesson with more confidence to communicate actively in the class, complete the assigned task, and connect with the social issues by relating the lesson into a real-life application at home and in the community as well. Further results also revealed that these localized and contextualized learning materials improved students' summative score performance and drastically enhanced their soft skills, which proved that the essence of these materials served its ultimate purpose.

Presented related readings show that having an effective intervention program can make a difference for the pupils who are struggling, and this innovation will help them get back on track. Despite the difficulties of determining the best intervention and effective program to be used in scaffolding the teaching and learning processes, teachers should keep on studying and involving themselves in research for them to be more aware and capable of providing an intervention material or program.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed the quasi-experimental research design that allows the use of intervention to predict future outcomes of the study. A quasi-experimental attempt to establish the cause-and-effect relationship between variables involved a quantitative approach. Its methods emphasized objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through questionnaires using computational techniques (Chiang, 2015).

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The researcher employed a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. It is the preferred method to compare two groups and measure the degree of change that occurs because of the interventions used (Shuttleworth, 2008). This type of research manipulates independent and measures the dependent variable where it establishes connections of cause-and-effect patterns. It is a described phenomenon where conditions of a set of variables affect the desired treatment based on the context of the variables. Furthermore, the researcher applied the descriptive survey research since the validation of the localized reading materials was also part of the study.

There was 16 match paired pupil-participants included in the study. These participants came from the total population of 32 pupils from section orange who were grouped into two through match pairing based on their pretest results. The number of participants was determined by pairing the obtained score of each participant in the experimental group with the equal obtained score of each participant in the comparison group. These pupil participants were those under the class of the researcher for the school year 2021-2022 in modular distance learning. Another group of respondents for the study were the 20 teacher-validators who assessed the crafted localized reading materials using the survey questionnaire.

The participants were selected using the match pairing sampling technique. A matched pairs design is a statistical method for examining and evaluating the influence of the two groups, one of which is receiving a specific treatment in contrast to the other receiving no treatment at all. A definitive goal and ramifications of the match matching are to decide the gathering/unit which went through a mediation with the accompanying discernible qualities and attributes being scrutinized with next to no intensifying individual bias, particularly with respect to the scientist, which can be best estimated by the pretest scores of the members (Aragón-Mendizábal et al., 2017).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the provided pretest, which served as the foundation for matching up the two participant groups, are shown in the table. As a result, the pairs of Grade 2 pupils were included in comparison and experimental groups. With a descriptive interpretation of B as a beginner level (see *Table 1*), both participant groups achieved a mean score of 10.56 and a standard deviation of 3.42, respectively. The participants' average scores on the pretest, which were 74 percent and below, indicate that both groups have a poor level of familiarity with the competencies tested, as clearly manifested from the result. This simply showed that the individual score obtained by learners included in the experimental and control groups were at the beginning level before the experimental study.

Table 1. Pretest Mean Scores of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Group	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
Experimental	10.56	3.42	B
Comparison	10.56	3.42	B

Legend: 17.90- 20.00 or 90-100% Advanced (A); 16.90-17.89 or 85-89% Proficient (P); 15.90 -16.89 or 80-84% Approaching Proficiency (AP); 14.90-15.89 or 75-79% Developing (D); and 14.89 or 74% & below Beginning (B).

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The formative test means a score of the two groups is presented in Table 2. It is perceived then that the experimental group has the higher composite mean score of 8.86 (SD=0.96). In contrast, the comparison group has a 6.36 mean score (SD=1.77). The descriptive interpretation of the experimental is P which means Proficient, while the comparison is B which means beginning. This finding strongly supports the assertion of Mahabadi (2013) that utilizing localized reading texts and passages reinforced learners' social and cultural identities. This can be attributed to their enthusiasm and appreciation, which suggests that they are aware that the reading materials were produced from the perspective of their culture. In this way, it will create enthusiasm and eagerness among the learners considering they understand the context much better and can connect with the story, thus enhancing their academic performance in the target language.

Table 2. Formative Test Mean Scores Performance of the Experimental and Comparison Groups

Lesson		Mean	SD	DI
Lesson 1: Classifying Sounds	Experimental	8.75	1.12	P
	Comparison	7.31	2.15	B
Lesson 2: Reading the alphabet	Experimental	8.81	1.04	P
	Comparison	6.94	2.38	B
Lesson 3: Recognizing common and Proper nouns in sentences	Experimental	9.06	0.929	A
	Comparison	6.50	1.78	B
Lesson 4: Recognizing common action words	Experimental	8.81	1.05	P
	Comparison	4.69	1.70	B
Composite Mean	Experimental	8.86	0.96	P
	Comparison	6.36	1.77	B

Legend: 8.95- 10.00 or 90-100% Advanced (A); 8.45-8.94 or 85-89% Proficient (P); 7.95 -8.44or 80-84% Approaching Proficiency (AP) 7.45-7.94 or 75-79% Developing (D); and 7.44 or 74% & below Beginning (B)

According to the Phil-IRI table of reading skills, the experimental group's result shows that their reading abilities fall into an independent level with ease in word/alphabet recognition and passage comprehension. This indicates that the localized reading materials did help improve pupils' eagerness to love and grasp the beauty of reading.

Table 3 shows the post-test mean scores of experimental and comparison groups. The results implied that the experimental group has a mean score of 17.63 (SD=2.33), which is described as P and means proficient. In contrast, the comparison group has a mean score of 12.63 (SD=4.47), which has B interpretation which means beginning. This result affirms the claim of Sharma (2014) that students' knowledge should be associated with the phenomena of where and how they live. That learning becomes meaningful when it transfers from one context to another. It further supports the claim of Chew (2008) that there is a significant development in using authentic and localized instructional materials for language teaching.

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Converted to the PHIL-IRI reading level, the experimental group achieved the independent level wherein participants were able to interact with the text since the content, choice of words, and context of the conversation was based on their cultural and historical background. Hence, the pupils have mental participation in the narrative story of the text. This simply connotes that the localized reading materials could connect the mental, social, and cultural domains of the pupils inviting them to be more acquainted with the essence of reading.

Table 3. Post-test Mean Scores of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Group	Mean	SD	DI
Experimental	17.63	2.33	P
Comparison	12.63	4.47	B

Legend: 17.90- 20.00 or 90-100% Advanced (A); 16.90-17.89 or 85-89% Proficient (P); 15.90 -16.89 or 80-84% Approaching Proficiency (AP) 14.90-15.89 or 75-79% Developing (D); and 14.89 or 74% & below Beginning (B)

Table 4 shows the significant difference between the formative scores of the two groups. The comparative analysis in lesson 1 generated a t-value of 2.368, which is more than the .01 difference.

Table 4. Test of Significant Difference of Experimental and Comparison Groups' Between their Formative Test Mean Scores Performance

Lesson	Mean	Mean Difference	Computed t-value (df=30)	Cohen's D	Decision	Interpretation
Lesson 1	Experimental 8.75 Comparison 7.31	1.44	2.368*	0.84	Reject the Ho	There is a significant difference
Lesson 2	Experimental 8.81 Comparison 6.94	1.87	2.885**	1.02	Reject the Ho	There is a significant difference
Lesson 3	Experimental 9.06 Comparison 6.50	2.56	5.085**	1.79	Reject the Ho	There is a significant difference
Lesson 4	Experimental 8.81 Comparison 4.69	4.12	8.259**	2.92	Reject the Ho	There is a significant difference.

Cohen's d: 0.20 (Small); 0.50 (Medium); 0.80 (Large)

Legend: df = Degrees of Freedom

***Highly Significant at .01 level*

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It also showed an extensive interpretation of the standardized difference (Cohen's d). The comparative analysis in lesson 3 generated a t-value of 5.085, which is more than the .01 difference. It also shows an extensive interpretation of the standardized difference (Cohen's d). The comparative analysis in lesson 4 generated a t-value of 8.259, which is more than the .01 difference. It also showed an extensive interpretation of the standardized difference (Cohen's d). Considering the results, it is therefore concluded that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the formative tests' mean scores of the two groups is rejected. This supports the claim made by Bugtong (2017) that to incorporate localization and contextualization into the teaching-learning process, teachers must utilize strategies and techniques, including learning by doing, manipulative learning, and practical learning. Instructional or teaching-learning tools are localized and contextualized to make it easier to give instructions in the context of the local community's environment, culture, and resources. Because the teacher must be more inventive, flexible, resourceful, adaptive, and imaginative when giving instructions and introducing teaching-learning activities to increase localization and contextualization in the classroom, teaching and learning become more realistic, practical, tailored, accurate, and relevant.

As shown in Table 5, the comparative analysis of the post-test mean scores of the experimental and comparison groups yielded a t-value of 3.966, which is more than the .01 level of difference. Moreover, it showed a significant interpretation of the standardized difference (Cohen's d), which is 1.40. It can be shown that that the null hypothesis there is no significant difference between the post-test tests' mean scores of the two groups is rejected. It supports the study of Laylo (2018) that utilizing localized materials will improve the creativity of the curriculum designer and further lessen the cost of the instructional materials. On the other hand, using contextualized and indigenous resources will assist students in easily grasping the subject being taught, especially if they are unfamiliar with some of the terms used.

Table 5. Test of Significant Difference between the Post-test Mean Scores of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Group	Mean	Mean Difference	Df	t-value	Cohen's D
Experimental	17.63	5.01	30	3.966**	1.40
Comparison	12.62				

Legend: df = Degrees of Freedom

***Highly Significant at .01 level*

This implies that the pupils are at an independent level and can recognize words and letters based on their sounds and properties. They have also interpreted the passages correctly. This can be directly related to the localized materials, which make the lesson more manageable and pleasurable because they suit the pupils' academic needs and interests, making it more dynamic and engaging. In return, pupils were able to show eagerness towards the activity, eventually removing the scaffolding process as they approached as independent readers.

Table 6 showed the comparative analysis generated a t-value of 15.970** for the experimental group while 2.836** for the comparison group; both results are more significant than

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the .01 difference. This affirms a significant difference between the pretest and post-test mean scores obtained by the experimental group and the comparison group. This supports the findings of the study by Egcas et al., (2017), which showed that using a localized curriculum, especially in the reading proficiency of Grade 8 students, proved to be more effective and comprehensive in developing communicative skills in the target language because it involves the students' fundamental prior knowledge into the new learning principles.

Table 6. Test of significant difference between the pretest and post-test mean scores of each group

Group	Test	Mean	Mean Difference	df	t-value	Cohen's d
Experimental	Pretest	10.56	7.07	15	15.970**	2.42
	Post-test	17.63				
Comparison	Pretest	10.56	2.06	15	2.836*	0.52
	Post-test	12.62				

Cohen's d: 0.20 (Small); 0.50 (Medium); 0.80 (Large)

***Significant at .01 level*

Based on the Phil-IRI reading level, the reflected result above, wherein the experimental group did perform better compared to its counterpart, can be interpreted as well that the pupils in those groups are now at an independent level. Having the above percentage of recognizing words and nouns only showed that the localized reading materials support the reading speed and comprehension of the pupils towards a given passage. Additionally, it demonstrated that the pupil participants could read aloud on their own without the teachers' direct supervision and support. As a result, the localized reading materials did emphasize the areas where teachers need to concentrate, especially on sounds, comprehension, or word recognition, as a result of surpassing the given difficulties in the reading component. Therefore, it is not surprising that a student's self-assurance and capacity to communicate not just with the text but also with their perceived understanding will aid in their development as competent readers and academically prepared for the years to come.

CONCLUSION

After an in-depth analysis of the data gathered from participants, the researcher was able to draw the following conclusions and recommendations that the localized English reading materials for grade 2 can enhance the reading skills of the pupils. 1) It was found out that there is a highly significant difference between the mean scores that were tested; therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the formative test mean scores and the performance of the learners was rejected. 2) The results showed a highly significant difference between the mean scores of the two participant groups; hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the learners' post-test mean scores performance was also rejected. 3) The results showed a very significant difference between the mean scores of each group before and after the test, rejecting the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in each

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group's performance between the pretest and post-test when this study was put into practice. 4) Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that using localized reading resources is an effective strategy for teaching reading and can help learners improve their performance. It can also boost teachers' ingenuity when intervening with their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

The participants of this study consisted of 32 Grade 2 pupils of San Cristobal Elementary School, which were match-paired using their pretest mean scores performance. The learners' performance for both groups was at the beginning level based on their pretest mean scores. Both groups yielded an equal distribution of respondents of 16 in each group.

Another finding of this study is that the experimental group received an impressive overall composite mean rating for the formative test of 8.86 (SD=0.96), which is interpreted as Proficient, while the comparison group received a beginning result of a mean rating of 6.36 (SD=1.77), indicating that the experimental group performed better than the comparison group.

The findings also showed that whereas the comparison group only showed a mean rating of 12.63 (SD=4.47), which is only categorized as a beginning, the experimental group that used the Localized Reading materials obtained a mean rating of 17.63 (SD=2.33), which is interpreted as Proficient.

It can be inferred that localized reading materials help pupils understand words and sounds while also allowing teachers to connect with pupils' cognitive and affective domains directly. This benefits pupils' academic achievement in terms of their English subject test results.

There are extremely significant differences between the formative mean scores of the participants in each of the four (4) lessons included in this study. The computed t-values for Lesson 1 gained a t value of 2.368, Lesson 2 with a t value of 2.885; Lesson 3 with a t value of 5.085; and Lesson 4 having a t value of 8.259. All results indicated the rejection of null hypotheses and acceptance of alternative ones. This implied that teachers must use tactics and practices such as learning by doing, manipulative, and practical learning to integrate localization and contextualization into the teaching-learning process.

A similar result found a highly significant difference between the post-test mean scores performance of the experimental group and the comparison group with a t-value of 3.966 and a p-value less than 0.01 level of significance. Thus, this result depicted that the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the two groups was rejected.

Finally, results revealed highly significant differences between the post-test and pretest mean scores of each group of participants. Both groups showed increased performance following the experimental process, as evidenced by the experimental group's computed t-value of 15.970 and Cohen's d of 2.42, and the comparison group's t-value of 2.836 and Cohen's d of 0.52. Both groups also had p-values of less than 0.01 level of significance. However, it can be noted that the experimental group has a higher mean difference of 7.01 compared to the group, with a mean difference of 2.06.

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were offered:

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1. Teachers as curriculum makers and implementers may craft and provide the supplemental materials applicable to the implementation of distance learning and, at the same time, address the needs of the learners.
2. The administration may provide an avenue for the teachers to develop skills in crafting supplemental materials. Additionally, they could provide a budget for the utilization of the materials' reproduction as a strategy for the learners.
3. Teachers can attend training sessions and seminars that emphasize teaching and learning methodologies.
4. The teachers may coordinate with the stakeholders in case there is a need for partnership since it involves the learners. Furthermore, the school partners may support the endeavors of the school.
5. Future researchers may conduct similar studies that will address the learners' needs.

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