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| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Identifying Reading Miscues and Reading Performance in the Oral Reading Verification Test in English: Basis for an Intensive Reading Program

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| **ABSTRACT**

Reading serves a vital role in achieving quality education. However, it is alarming to note the learners' poor reading performance in national and international assessments, which schools must address. In this study, the pupils' reading performance is looked into through the Oral Reading Verification Test (ORVT). It is a tool that assists in determining the reading strengths and weaknesses. It also helps to identify the pupils struggling with decoding and comprehension fluency. This study aims to determine the pupils' reading performance profile and the common reading miscues in the pupils' ORV pretest and posttest results. The study employed the descriptive method and was conducted at San Isidro Elementary School, Pilar, Bohol, with 200 pupils as participants from Grades IV, V, and VI. The One-Way-ANOVA F-test was used in identifying the significant mean difference in the pupils' ORV pretest and posttest scores of the control group. The pretest results showed that most of the pupils were at the frustration level, meaning they were slow readers and had poor comprehension. The posttest shows an evident improvement in the pupils' reading performance from frustration to instructional levels. This result was verified when it found a significant difference between pupils' Oral Reading Verification pretest and posttest. The pretest also showed several reading miscues, significantly improving during the posttest. Findings also reveal a significant difference in the pupils' performance when grouped according to grade levels. This study recommends that teachers conduct remedial classes in reading for pupils at the frustration level category and encourage them to read more English reading materials. Likewise, peer tutoring initiated by learners at the independent level is encouraged to help those who are slow readers. Teachers should apply different teaching methods and strategies in reading to catch the pupils' attention, boost their confidence, and read fluently with good comprehension.

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1. Introduction

Reading serves as the foundation of learning. People are now expected to understand the text on a basic level. The ability to understand spoken and written language and convey thoughts and concepts is critical to a person's development and progress. Students' ability to recognize words and their level of comprehension is critical in achieving high-quality education. It helps students develop the knowledge and skills needed to become effective, independent readers who understand what they read.

In the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment, the Philippines ranked last in reading comprehension for boys and girls among the 79 participating nations and economies. The country has the highest proportion of underachievers in reading. Reading was the prime focus assessed, and the Philippines' average reading score was 340, more than 200 points lower than China's. The country has the highest rate of reading underachievers, and its participation in PISA helps define the foundation for international standards and measure the efficacy of future improvements. (2018 PISA- Philippine National Report)

The Philippine Department of Education understands how critical it is to address issues and gaps in order to ensure that our country's basic education is of high quality. Steps must be taken, and reforms must be implemented in order to achieve a high-quality basic education. The ORV is one of our schools' reading programs, which provides a variety of reading initiatives.

The Oral Reading Verification (ORV) Program's Operating Principles serve as its foundation (ORV-Division of Bohol). The oral reading comprehension test seeks to determine the learner's reading level, including independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels, in order for teachers to know what level of reading materials their students can read and understand well and what level of reading materials they are not yet ready for.

Students must be able to read the words on the page to comprehend the text while reading. Teachers who understand the significance of the essential, fundamental elements that lead to successful word recognition—phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition of irregular words—are more likely to ensure that these are taught to their students so that their word reading becomes automatic, accurate, and effortless (Murray, 2016). Students must use various techniques to succeed because word recognition is a difficult task. A lack of solid reading comprehension skills and fluency affects a child's success at school, as academic progress depends on understanding, analyzing, and applying information gathered through reading.

The researcher has been an Oral Reading Verification Coordinator for quite some time, and based on observations, the students hardly ever read English, let alone understand it. They have difficulty expressing themselves. With this current observation, the researcher is prompted to conduct this study in the hope that measures to address this situation can be devised.

The Oral Reading Verification Test (ORVT) is one of the research bases in this study. It is a tool that aids in determining a learner's reading strengths and weaknesses. It also aids in identifying students who are having difficulty with fluency in decoding and comprehension. Every teacher should be aware of whether or not their students can read and comprehend the texts used in class and how they use the ORV.

This study aims to determine the student's reading performance profile and the difference between the students' ORV pre-test and post-test results. The reading performance profile will provide teachers with information on specific interventions to improve word recognition and comprehension.

2. Literature Review

Reading, according to Goodman's Psycholinguistic Theory, is a receptive psycholinguistic process in which the actor employs strategies to create meaning from text. Reading research focuses on translating a linguistic surface representation (text) into thought. Much of Goodman's theory was based on analyzing miscues (mistakes) in read-aloud texts. He, too, believed that efficient readers reduced their reliance on visual detail, but he focused his theories on the interactions between reader and text. The physiological process cycles basic physical and sensory information into deeper levels of cognitive processes (Peglar, 2003).

The primary source of data for the view of the reading presented here is the observation of oral reading. Understanding reading requires in-depth analysis and a constant search for insights that will let us infer the workings of the mind as print is processed and meaning is created. Oral miscue analysis is the tool most useful in the in-depth analysis of reading behavior to understand the reading process. He also stressed that literate speakers of any language have two alternative surface language forms, which are realizations of the same deep structure and which represent alternate encodings of the same meaning.

According to Goodman and Goodman (1977), reading is an active language process in which readers demonstrate their sophistication as functional psycholinguists. However, gaining access to these activities and underlying processes is difficult. The authors propose using oral reading as a database to make such processes more accessible. They argue that when oral readers deviate from the written text—when miscues occur—the underlying processes of reading are revealed. Using examples from children and adults, the authors present a typology of miscues and show how miscues provide a window into reading and other language processes. Reading is a psycholinguistic process in which the reader (a language user) reconstructs a message encoded by a writer as best he can.

The Automaticity Theory is a well-known theory in the field of reading fluency that focuses on word recognition (Samuels, 2007, as cited in Feruzi, 2021). The automaticity theory defines reading fluency as the ability to decode and comprehend a text at the same time (Samuels, 2007). Reading text, according to Tracey and Morrow (2012), includes many sub-skills (or processes), such as letter recognition, associating sounds with letters, blending, segmenting, chunking, skimming, and scanning. However, when reading a text, all readers go through three fundamental processes: decoding, comprehension, and attention (Samuels, 2007; Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Surprisingly, the last one, attention, refers to the amount of focus and energy readers devote to a text when processing the information for comprehension. The greater the emphasis on decoding, the less emphasis on comprehension.

As a result, Samuels (1974) developed a repeated reading strategy based on the automaticity theory. Students can use the repeated reading strategy to reduce the amount of attention and cognition required to decode a text. As a result, the attention and cognition capacity allocated to higher level processes, such as reading comprehension, will be increased.

Reading is a combination of decoding and comprehension. Although this appears to be a simple task, learning to read is much more difficult than most people believe. Children must understand that spoken words are made up of individual sound parts in order to learn to decode and read printed English (Gough et al., 1993).

Traditional definitions of reading comprehension frequently emphasize decoding success and the ability to answer questions after reading. However, research has shown that, while successful decoding is necessary for a good reader, reading comprehension is much more than just decoding over time. The reader's thought processes, the learning that occurs, the mastery of new information, the expansion of knowledge, and the subtle connection with the thoughts of the unknown are all as important as decoding. After all, the goal of reading is to read and understand, not just to successfully decode (Zimmermann and Hutchins, 2003).

It is difficult to teach beginning readers to read. It is believed that instruction is required in several areas, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. One of the primary goals of phonics instruction is to teach students how to read words in and out of context. Readers can read words in a variety of ways (Ehri, 2003). All of these methods necessitate knowledge of the alphabetic system. Unfamiliar words can be read by decoding, which is the process of converting letters into sounds and combining and blending them to form recognizable words.

Phonological awareness is the awareness of the sound units that make up a spoken word, and it refers to both the ability to break a word down into phonological units and the ability to synthesize these units into a spoken word. The ability to use phonological codes to retain information for short-term storage is referred to as phonological memory (Blachman, 2000).

Phonics instruction is thought to help students understand the text as well as recognize words. To understand the meaning of a text, readers must be able to read the majority of its words. Although necessary, being able to read all of the words may not be enough because comprehending a text necessitates other abilities, such as knowing the meanings of the words, having relevant world knowledge, and being able to recall the text already read. Thus, one of several factors influencing comprehension is word reading ability. Students can write words after receiving phonics instruction. Unfamiliar words can be written using spellings that represent the words' sounds. Furthermore, phonics refers to the relationships between written language letters (graphemes) and individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. It helps children understand the systematic and predictable relationship that exists between written letters and spoken sounds. This symbol-sound relationship aids in the accurate and automatic recognition of familiar words as well as the decoding of new words. Thus, phonics instruction improves children's ability to read words both in isolation and in context (Chugh, 2011).

Word recognition is the most obvious skill involved in reading. It is the ability of a reader to correctly and effortlessly recognize written words. It is an essential component of fluent reading. Words that beginning readers first sound out using word analysis or phonics become known as whole units after they frequently appear in connected text. It means that beginning readers must read a large amount of related text at an appropriate level in order to solidify their word recognition abilities.

People must be literate or have a successful transaction with texts in order to read the text, connect to it, interpret it, apply it, and critically analyze it. Reading becomes difficult without the ability to accurately decode words because each word takes a long time to decode. Meaning is lost, and thus no meaning is derived from the text. (1990, Freebody and Luke).

Teachers help students develop skillful reading comprehension, which contributes to the goal of reading. According to Murray (2000), competent reading comprehension combines two distinct but equally important components: word recognition skills and language comprehension ability. To put it another way, there are two keys to unlocking text comprehension: being able to read the words on the page and understanding what the words and language mean within the texts that children are reading (Davis, 2018). Fluency and reading comprehension suffers when a student is unable to recognize words on the page accurately and automatically. If a student does not understand the meaning of the words, his or her reading comprehension will suffer. Students who are skilled in both word recognition and language comprehension outperform their peers in reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is a deliberate, active, and interactive process that takes place before, during, and after reading a piece of writing. It is one of the pillars of the reading act and is essential for students' academic success. A large adequate vocabulary or knowledge of the meanings of words, as well as access to good words, are essential for comprehension. Readers with powerful comprehension can draw conclusions from what they read. Reading, reasoning, and thinking are thus required for comprehension.

Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) is a DepEd Order no.50, s.2012 that supports the Department of Education's (DepEd) goal of making every child a reader and writer at his/her grade level. It is a national program that supports the achievement of Education for All (EFA), one of the goals of which is universal school participation. This program emphasizes early reading intervention implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It also emphasizes the creation, administration, and reporting of data from reading assessments.

Furthermore, Division Memorandum no. 246, s.2017 calls for a Division Workshop on the preparation, validation, and selection of the unified ORV passages and questionnaires in all grade levels. Division Memorandum No.362 s.2017 emphasizes the Division Unified ORVT guidelines.

`This study is being conducted in light of these theories, legal bases, and related literature.

3. Methodology
The study employed the descriptive correlational method. The descriptive aspect deals with the profile of the pupils' reading performance in the ORV pretest and posttest and the identification of the common miscues and the miscued words. The correlational aspect is on finding the significant relationship between ORV pretest and posttest results and looking into the significant difference in the ORV results among grade levels.

3.1 Research Participants
The participants of the study were the 200 pupils of San Isidro Elementary School, Pilar, Bohol, Philippines. These pupils include Grades IV, V, and VI levels.

3.2 Research Instruments
The validated test, which was the main tool in gathering the data, was the Oral Reading Verification (ORV) Test. This tool consists of a story with seven (7) comprehension questions, after which follows an activity to check the pupils' word recognition and a set of questions to check their level of comprehension.

In checking the pupils' word recognition, there is a word recognition error marking system for graded passages. It includes the seven (7) types of miscues, namely: mispronunciation, substitution, refusal to pronounce, insertion, omission, repetition, and reversal. The Oral Reading Verification (ORV) test has four categories in pupils' reading levels, namely: independent, instructional, frustrated, and non-reader. A pupil becomes an independent reader when he/she only commits one (1) error in a comprehension question. He/she can read independently without the guidance of a teacher. There are two types of instructional readers. First, a pupil commits only one (1) error in a comprehension question, and he/she commits three (3) or more miscues in word recognition. Second, when a pupil commits two (2) or more errors in comprehension questions, only one (1) or two (2) miscues are committed. A pupil becomes a frustrated reader when he/she commits two (2) or more errors in comprehension questions and commits three (3) or more miscues. A non-reader is a pupil who is incapable of answering comprehension questions and cannot sound out letter-sound connections for single consonants and consonant blends. The rating was also descriptive with letter representation in the Reading Quadrant. The Oral Reading Verification (ORV) test uses a set of criteria to determine the pupils' reading level.

3.3 Data Gathering Procedures
After getting permission from the school authorities, the researcher gave informed consent to the participants' parents, explaining to them the purpose of the research and the nature of their children's participation. Parents were made to understand that their children's participation is voluntary, that their identity will be kept private, and data gathered confidential.

The class adviser gave each pupil a short passage to read. This passage was used to assess the pupils' word recognition. The adviser counted and recorded the number of words read and their miscues. To check the pupil's comprehension, the adviser recorded the response of the pupils to the given questions about the passage. After a week, the researcher retrieved the data from the school principal for data processing since the eight (8) class advisers submitted the ORV test results to the Principal's Office. The names nor pseudonyms of their pupils were not indicated in the ORV test results to uphold the anonymity of the participants. This research is being monitored by the Holy Name University Ethics Review Board, and the data gathering was done only after getting clearance from the board.

4. Results and Discussion
This section deals with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data. The first portion presents the oral reading verification test results of Grades IV, V, and VI pupils, the reading miscues of the pupils both in pre-test and post-test, and the top 5 commonly miscued words. The second portion deals with the difference in pupils' verification tests both in pre-test and post-test.

4.1 Pupils' Oral Reading Verification Test Results (Pre-test)

Figure 1 shows the pupils' oral reading verification pre-test results.

*Figure 1. Pupils' Oral Reading Verification Test Results in the Prestest*
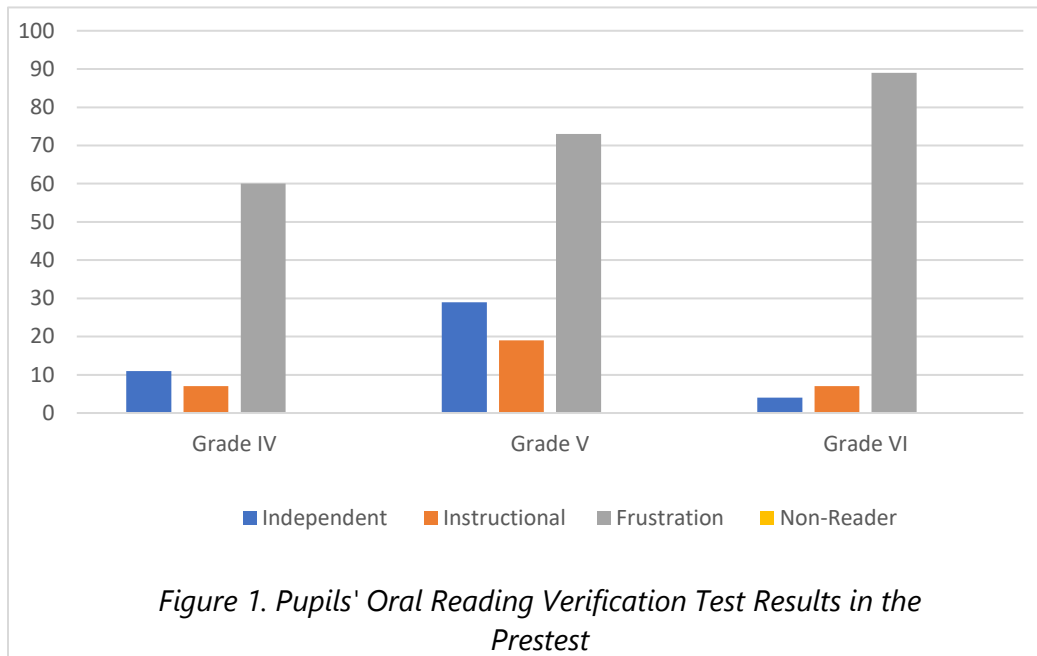
The Grades IV, V, and VI classes have no non-readers. However, a plurality of pupils in all grade levels are frustration readers, which comprise more than 60% of the pupils in each of the classes. This means that most of the children in the three grade levels read haltingly with little or no comprehension; they read slowly with poor understanding. The Grade VI class had the highest percentage of frustrated readers, comprising almost 90% of the class, and worsening the case, it has the lowest percentage of independent readers, which is only 4 percent. The Grade IV class, on the other hand, has the lowest percentage of frustrated readers, comprising 60 percent, and has the highest percentage of independent readers, comprising 11 percent of the class, though it has 21 percent of instructional readers that can read fluently with little or no comprehension. Evidently, the results show a decreasing reading performance as the pupils progress in grade levels. The majority of the Grade VI pupils could hardly comprehend the materials read.

The aforementioned findings seem to link with the study of Barahim (2016) conducted in Zamboanga City, Philippines. In her findings, she revealed that the Grades IV, V, and VI pupils were at the frustration level of reading comprehension, and this has adversely affected their ability to solve word problems. She suggested that DepEd may conduct a seminar-workshop on improving pupils' reading comprehension and that the English teachers may explore intervention methods to improve the reading comprehension of the Grade IV-VI pupils. Likewise, in the study of Estremera et al. (2018) conducted in Sorsogon, Philippines, involving Grade VI pupils as respondents, findings reveal that 71% of the participants were at the frustrating level of 24% in the instructional level and only a very little percentage have reached the independent level. These research findings give us a view that poor reading performance is a problem confronting not only the participants of this study but also in some other parts of the country. Evidently, our students lack comprehension, which requires knowledge not only of words but their relationships in sentences, paragraphs, and longer passages. They have difficulty understanding the intent of the author and fail to go beyond literal and recorded facts to hidden meanings or implications.

4.2 Pupils' Oral Reading Verification Test Results (Posttest)

Figure 2 shows the pupils' oral reading verification posttest results.

Figure 2. Pupils' Oral Verification Test Results in the Posttest
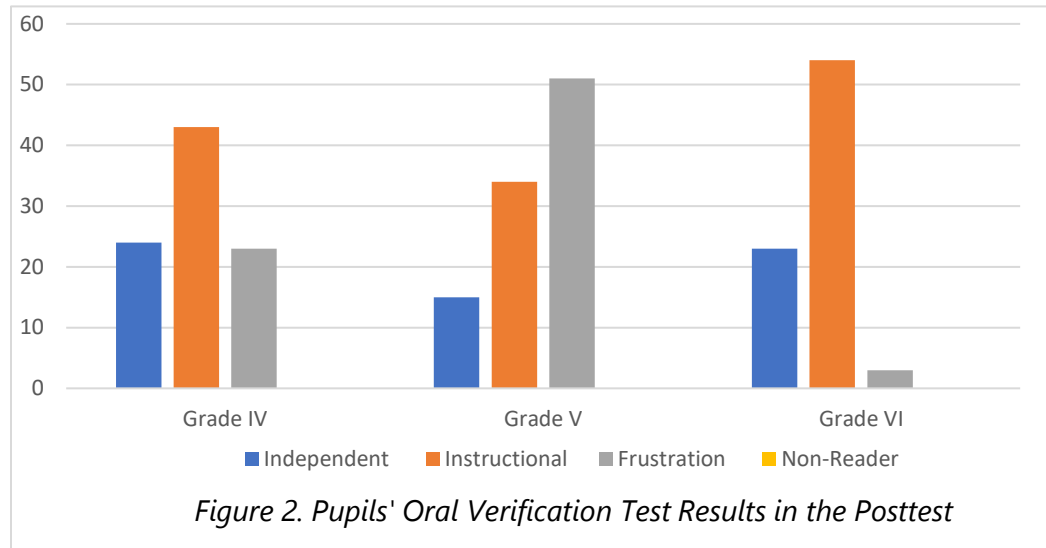
After reading intervention, fifty-one percent (51%) of the grade five pupils were still at the frustration level. This grade level also registered the lowest percentage of independent readers at 15%. The grade six class obtained the lowest number of frustrated readers but registered the highest percentage (33%) of instructional readers – those that can read fluently with little comprehension. The grade four pupils had the highest percentage of independent readers, and they had 22% of readers can read haltingly but had good comprehension.

It can be observed that in the ORV posttest, pupils' reading performance dramatically improved, especially in grades IV and VI, where the number of independent and instructional readers raised to approximately 70%. Generally, the three grade levels increased their reading performance.

4.3 Reading Miscues of the Pupils as Revealed by ORVT Results (Pre-test and Posttest)

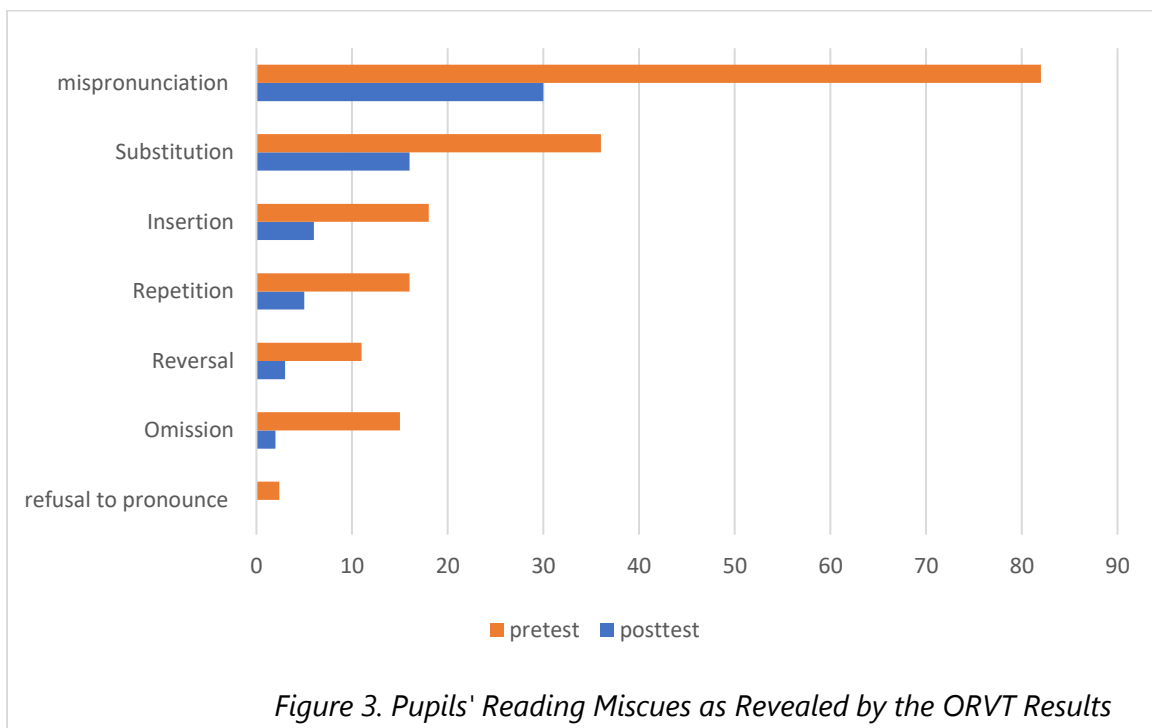*Figure 3. Pupils' Reading Miscues as Revealed by the ORVT Results*

Figure 3 shows the reading miscues of the pupils as revealed by the pre-test results. Results show that Grades IV, V, and VI pupils consistently have mispronunciation as the topmost miscue, where 82% of the total population committed it among the other miscues. This means that the pupils attempt to pronounce the word but produce an incorrect pronunciation. The pupils of the three grade levels also substitute a word that is incorrect, making substitution number 2 in the rank. Thirty-six (36) percent of the pupils in three grade levels incorrectly substitute a word from the passage. Insertion comes third among the miscues. This happens when pupils insert a word that does not appear in the texts. Sixteen (16) percent of the pupils tend to repeat one or more words that have been read already, and fifteen percent of them omit a word or sequence of words in the text, and still, they continue to read. They also reverse the order of words comprising 11% of the three grade levels. Only 7% of the pupils in the three grade levels refuse to read and pronounce the passage.

Figure 3 also shows the reading miscues of the pupils in the posttest results. Mispronunciation is still on the top among the other miscues. Thirty (30) percent of the pupils from the three grade levels incorrectly pronounce the text in the posttest. This result shows a significant improvement compared to their pretest results, where 82% of them mispronounced words. Second in rank is a substitution, where 16% of the participants substitute an incorrect word. Compared to the pretest results showing 36% committing substitution, the participants improved performance in the posttest, seeing that only a few inserted a series of words that did not belong to the passage. There is also a decrease in the repetition of words from 16% in the pretest to 5% in the posttest. There were only 3% who tended to reverse the order of words in the text. The omission of words also decreased to 2%. None of the pupils from Grades IV to VI refused to pronounce the words in the passage during the posttest.

It can be observed in the posttest results that the pupils improved reading performance in word recognition, seeing that they committed lesser miscues compared to the pretest results. It can be inferred from this data that the reading inventions used by the teachers have helped improve their ability to recognize words.

The benefits of the academic reading program lie in the fact that the reading program works. Results show that participants improved their reading performance both in word recognition and comprehension, thus improving their opportunities to learn. Teachers employed different reading interventions for their pupils. They conducted remedial teaching of those pupils that could not read well and comprehend English. They also had peer-tutoring in their class, and they had given many opportunities to read and practice reading during their vacant time. The advisers also distributed home reading materials to their pupils in order for them to practice reading even in their homes.

4.4 Difference between Pupils' Pretest and Posttest Results in Oral Reading Verification Test in English
Results show that the weighted mean performance of the post-test is slightly higher by 0.73 of the pre-test pupils' performance. The computed chi-value is 14.683, while the p-value is 0.0020, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of pupils in English oral reading.

This means that pupils' oral reading performance increased from being frustrated readers to instructional readers. It was at this level at which pupils could profit from instruction. They were able to comprehend what they read.

4.5 Difference in the Pupils' ORV Pretest and Posttest Results in the Three Grade Levels
The computed F-value is 4.71, while the p-value is 0.010. With a p-value less than the p-value of 0.05, this result implies a significant difference in pupils' pre-test and posttest performance when grouped according to grade level. The three grade levels differ in their reading performance because of many factors. Each grade level had different passages to read. It depends on their grade level; the higher the grade level, the longer the story in the passage was. Some factors also to be considered are their age and behavior.

While the posttest computed F-value is 4.09, the p-value is 0.018, less than the p-value of 0.05; this means there is a significant difference in the posttest performance of pupils when grouped according to grade level. Many students with reading difficulties or disabilities are also likely to continue to struggle with word recognition. Other students have difficulty with the increased vocabulary and comprehension of various complex texts in the content areas. As a result, a word recognition intervention may have a greater impact on students who continue to struggle with word recognition (Wanzek J., Wexler J., Vaugh S., and Ciullo S., 2010)

Students who struggle with reading can exhibit a variety of distinct patterns of performance that contribute to their poor reading comprehension and represent variation in performance on word identification, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, rate of reading, and expression (Buly & Valencia, 2002). Interventions that consider the reading comprehension problem and map interventions to specific comprehension problems may be implemented in future research.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the pupils' reading performance profile and the common reading miscues in the pupils' ORV pretest and posttest results. The findings show that at the pretest, more than half of the pupils in each grade level were at the frustration level. slightly improving during the posttest; results further show that mispronunciation and substitution are the top reading miscues affecting pupils' oral reading performance. Based on the foregoing findings, it can be concluded that The ORV Program has helped improve most of the pupils' reading performance from being frustrated readers to instructional readers. It shows that the program proves to be beneficial to children in improving their word recognition and comprehension. However, many pupils remained to be in frustration level even after the intervention was given. It shows that a group of pupils were not able to develop the skills needed to be at a level where reading can be used for learning. These pupils are expected to have difficulty dealing with the lesson in the different subject areas. These results would help provide essential data about how the Oral Reading Verification Program (ORVP) is working at the grassroots giving the reading teachers and curriculum planners baseline information on how to improve instruction in this area. It is, therefore, necessary to look into how to intensify the delivery of the program through contemporary curriculum discourses to help every child become a reader. Since this research covers only one public school, it is suggested that similar research with a more comprehensive coverage be conducted to verify these findings and conclusions.

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