



The effectiveness of using bisaya alphabet workbook in teaching letter names and sounds to grade 1 academically challenged learners

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Abstract

The main goal of this study was to see how effective the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook compared to any available alphabet materials in teaching letter names and sounds to Grade 1 academically challenged learners of Sto. Tomas Elementary School. Two groups, control and experimental were subjected to be tested on the effectiveness. The experimental group, the recipient of the intervention was taught the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook while the control group was taught with any available alphabet materials inside the classroom. Pretest and Posttest were administered using the Task 2 and Task 3 of the EGRA Toolkit. Pre-Test was administered for both group and was done through one-on-one testing. After the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook was taught, Post-Test was administered for both groups. Thus, the results were compared through the learners' scores. The study concluded that there was a significant difference between the scores of the learners' pre-test and posttest in the experimental group. And, there was a significant difference in the scores of the learners' posttest in the experimental and control group. As a result, using the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook, learners can easily learn the letter names and sounds in a convenient way. Because of the favorable outcomes of the trial, the researcher advised teachers to use the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook as their tool for alphabet teaching.

Keywords: Alphabet knowledge, bisaya local language, self-made alphabet material

Introduction

Learners need to be taught with the necessary knowledge. Understanding letter names and sounds is essential for the initial steps in the reading process. Teachers, as highlighted by Ehri (2020) [2], must establish a strong alphabetic foundation during the first year of instruction to promote reading skills. However, despite the swift progress children make when learning their language, many learners today are often taught using non-local language resources, even when being taught in their local tongue. This lack of teacher preparation and mother tongue resources in curricula results in reading proficiency being developed in both local and international languages (Sardana et al., 2022) [7].

Reading literacy is considered fundamental for all subject learning, not only in the Philippines but also in countries like Australia, where the teaching of reading literacy in primary schools is a top priority. Numerous educational regulations and initiatives have been implemented to enhance reading literacy instruction for both teachers and students (Ritmaningrum, 2015).

The Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Bangkok has been supporting eleven countries in implementing mother tongue/bilingual literacy programs in the Asia-Pacific region. These countries include Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Afghanistan (UNESCO, 2007).

In the Philippines, the challenge of reading difficulties among students is longstanding, with Filipino students consistently facing reading struggles (Tomas et al., 2021) [1]. Consequently, teaching reading and literacy has always been a primary focus in the Philippine curriculum (Gatcho & Bautista, 2019) [3].

For over 40 years, Tboli speakers in South Cotabato, Philippines, have been engaged in reading, writing, and teaching the language. Save the Children and the Department of Education have collaborated with Tboli teachers since 2010 to develop mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) resources for use in first- and second-grade classes in pilot schools across six Tboli villages. Save the Children received feedback from some parents and educators during training sessions on the need for a second set of Tboli materials due to variations in word choice and pronunciation (Hasselbring, 2015) [4].

In Agusan del Sur, teachers are currently facing challenges in instructing students with different learning levels. Consequently, they are constantly exploring new teaching methods to deliver effective instruction, ensuring all students, especially those at lower levels, have equal opportunities to comprehend reading materials (Villapane, 2019) [9].

To engage learners effectively, teachers should implement interactive instructional strategies where learners actively participate in the learning process. It is crucial that learners understand the language of instruction to engage interactively. Teaching letter names and sounds requires thoughtful consideration of ways and strategies to facilitate learning, emphasizing the importance of adequate teaching-learning tools. Using localized tools in the common community language can greatly assist learners in developing literacy skills.

In her current teaching experience at Sto. Tomas Elementary School, the researcher has observed some learners struggling to grasp letter names and sounds, hindering their progress in reading activities. Teachers are grappling with how to ensure no child is left behind in learning. Therefore, the researcher created a teaching-learning tool, the "Bisaya Alphabet Workbook," designed to help academically

challenged learners in Sto. Tomas, Loreto, Agusan del Sur, learn letter names and sounds effortlessly. This tool, based on the Bisaya Mother Tongue of the community, aims to enhance learners' engagement and participation in the learning process. It is envisioned to benefit not only the researcher as an elementary teacher but also other educators handling academically challenged learners with literacy gaps, ultimately benefiting the learners themselves.

Material and Methods

This research is based on the Perceptual Learning Theory of the Psychologist, Eleanor Gibson. Perceptual Learning Theory has three basic parts. First, perceptual learning is long-lasting. Second, it is perceptual. Third, it is the result of practice or experience. Based on the Perceptual Learning Theory, learners can learn the alphabet knowledge using the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook.

The concept that alphabet books are beneficial for enhancing knowledge of letter names and sounds comes as no surprise. By incorporating visual cues such as images of objects, alphabet books allow children in the prealphabetic reading phase (Ehri, 2020) [2] to take on the role of the "reader" (e.g., identifying "hat" from a picture of a hat). Moreover, these books, along with developing letter knowledge, can assist children transitioning into the partial alphabetic phase (Ehri, 2020) [2] in deciphering words using less direct clues associated with the initial letter (e.g., recognizing "hat" from a picture of a dog wearing one).

Educating children in different languages is possible, but the most effective approach is through their native language. Alphabet book reading plays a significant role in the learning process, particularly in teaching reading skills. This method is most effective when the content is presented in "Bisaya," the Mother-Tongue language in the community.

The research framework illustrated in Figure 1 outlines the relationship among the variables in the study. It indicates that a pretest will precede the intervention, which involves the Bisaya Alphabet Book, followed by a posttest to evaluate any improvements in the learners' reading abilities.

By leveraging creativity and innovation to teach students using the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook, educators can make the learning process enjoyable and engaging for their students.

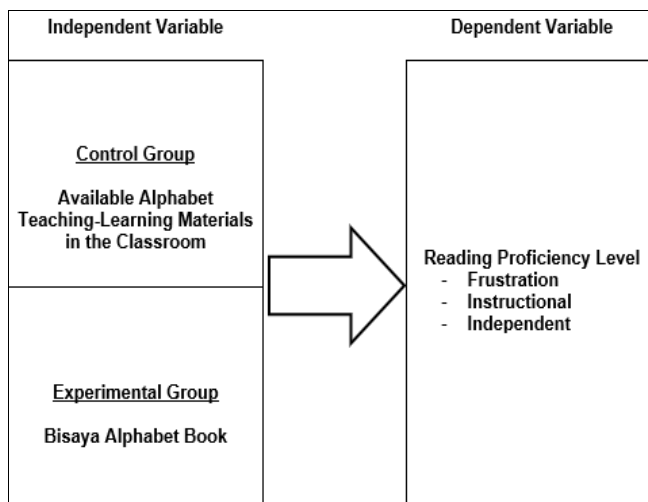


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

The study focused on examining the effectiveness of utilizing the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook to teach letter names and sounds to academically challenged Grade 1 learners at Sto. Tomas Elementary School. The researcher involved 52 Grade 1 academically challenged students during the 2022-2023 school year, with 26 students in Group A (control) and 26 in Group B (experimental). The study concentrated on comparing the pretest and posttest scores of the students before and after the assessments. A single Bisaya Alphabet Workbook was utilized throughout the one-month research period.

The study used the True experimental research method introduced by Ronald A. Fisher. Data for the study were collected using this approach. It is a statistical technique used to determine the causal relationship between variables. This method is known for providing strong evidence of relationships. To execute this, a control group along with one or more experimental groups is essential. The researcher must control a variable, and the groups should be assigned randomly. The research was based on a pretest-posttest group design, where both groups underwent pretests at the beginning and posttests at the end of each period (Moore & Tananis, 2009) [5].

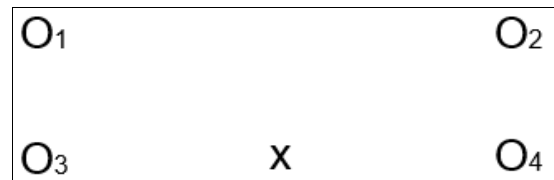


Fig 2: Research Design Diagram

The learners were randomly split into two groups, where group A was the control group and group B was the experimental group. Initially, both groups underwent the same pretest through individual assessments, similar to the reading assessment in the EGRA Toolkit. Following this, Group B (experimental) received an intervention using the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook. Subsequently, a posttest was conducted for both groups using identical tests.

In the study, the researcher utilized Task 2 - Letter Name Knowledge and Task 3 - Letter Sound Knowledge from the EGRA Toolkit. The standard EGRA Toolkit tasks 2 and 3, each consisting of 80 items, were employed in both the pretest and posttest, using the same tool.

Scores were tallied, and statistical methods were applied to determine the corresponding percentages. The research instruments, tasks 2 and 3 from the EGRA Toolkit, were presented to the researcher's validators and research adviser for feedback. Following validation, the pretest involving the two tasks was administered to the control group initially, then to the experimental group.

The pretest-posttest tool was deemed reliable, having been standardized by the Department of Education and utilized for several years to assess the learners' reading levels.

The learners were individually called upon by the researcher to undergo the test, with scores recorded post-assessment. A letter of authorization was provided by the researcher, signed for approval, first by the Division Office and then by the Loreto North District Office, to conduct the research at Sto. Tomas Elementary School. The letter was promptly delivered to the School Principal I of Sto. Tomas Elementary School, where the study took place.

Upon approval from the respective offices, the researcher commenced data collection to select 52 academically challenged learners. The researcher sought previous data on Reading Proficiency Levels from the two kindergarten advisers at Sto. Tomas Elementary School, based on the learners' academic performance throughout the school year. The kindergarten advisers identified the learners facing academic challenges. Subsequently, a simple random sampling method, the Fishbowl Draw Method, was employed to select 26 academically challenged learners. The researcher randomly drew 26 slips of paper, with the remaining 26 slips automatically assigned to the control group.

Two Grade 1 teachers in the control group used standard alphabet materials, while the researcher taught the experimental group using the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook. Both groups underwent one-on-one pretests and posttests.

Furthermore, the researcher prepared the needed instruments such as the EGRA Toolkit task 2 and 3 were prepared for the experiment. This instrument had already passed DepEd's quality assurance still they were carefully confirmed by the researcher adviser and validators.

Conclusion

The competency level of both the control and experimental groups at the beginning of the experiment were equivalent; All of them need help in terms of teaching them how to read because all of them are academically challenged.

The competency level of the learners that used the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook have greatly increased. Therefore, the interference of the use of the Bisaya Alphabet Workbook as a tool in teaching letter names and sounds was effective. The Bisaya Alphabet Workbook is a teaching material made especially to teach letter names and sounds. This Workbook was made by the Researcher with all the eagerness to help the children who have difficulty in reading. Reading level of the learners from the control and experimental group improved, respectively. The results showed that both approaches were effective in teaching children letter names and sounds.

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