



Improving the Reading Proficiency of Grade 2 Struggling Learners Through the Pa-Cher Collab (Parent-Teacher Collaboration) Approach

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ABSTRACT:

This action research focused on enhancing the reading skills of Grade 2 students facing challenges at Liong Elementary School, Cataingan West District, Masbate Province, by utilizing the Pa-Cher Collab (Parent-Teacher Collaboration) method. The research addressed the ongoing challenge of inadequate reading comprehension and fluency in young students, as indicated by national evaluations and the findings of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment. The main issue examined was whether a cooperative approach involving both parents and teachers could meaningfully improve students' reading abilities, particularly in Filipino and Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) subjects. A one-group pretest-posttest design of a pre-experimental nature was employed, consisting of 16 second-grade students (7 boys and 9 girls). Standardized reading assessment tools were utilized to conduct pretests and posttests. The program lasted one month, featuring in-class phonics lessons, spontaneous storybook readings, reading assignments at home, and consistent communication between parents and teachers. Data were also gathered using teacher observation logs, weekly reports, and informal interviews. The findings revealed a statistically significant enhancement in MTB-MLE reading skills ($p < .001$), confirming the efficacy of mother tongue education when combined with family engagement. However, no statistically significant improvement was observed in Filipino scores ($p = .077$), suggesting that a longer or more varied intervention might be necessary. The results highlighted the importance of contextual and inclusive approaches like the Pa-Cher Collab in promoting early literacy, particularly when home and school initiatives are coordinated. In summary, the Pa-Cher Collab method was successful in improving MTB-MLE reading abilities but had minimal effect on Filipino. This indicates the need for prolonged and varied teaching strategies in acquiring a second language. The research offers valuable insights for teachers and policymakers aiming to implement community-driven literacy programs.

Keywords: reading proficiency, parent-teacher collaboration, MTB-MLE, Filipino literacy, early grade intervention.

1. Introduction

A proficient reading ability is a fundamental skill that supports academic success and lifelong learning. Many studies have highlighted the difficulties students face in developing adequate reading skills. Idulog et al. (2023) noted that Filipino students face challenges in reading comprehension and vocabulary development, citing resource limitations and socioeconomic challenges as contributing factors. Additionally, Cabural and Infatado (2023) reported that students at Aloran Trade High School were not proficient in reading comprehension, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions.

Learning to read is the key to success for younger learners, particularly those in Grade 2. Guilaran (2019) pointed out that Grade II pupils in the Claveria I District had poor reading comprehension skills, often recognizing words without understanding their meanings. In light of these discrepancies, early interventions must not only teach word recognition but also foster comprehension skills. Additionally, the Department of Education's Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assessments consistently indicate that many students in Grade 2 fall below the expected reading proficiency levels, indicating the urgent need for effective strategies to support these learners. Based on the results of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), Liong Elementary School in the Cataingan West District of Masbate Province also observed this issue among Grade 2 learners.

To address these challenges, the study titled “*Improving the Reading Proficiency of Grade 2 Struggling Learners Through the Pa-Cher Collab (Parent-Teacher Collaboration) Approach*” was conceptualized. This research aimed to explore the effectiveness of a collaborative approach between parents and teachers in enhancing the reading skills of struggling Grade 2 learners. The Pa-Cher Collab approach involved parents in reading activities and provides structured support from teachers to create a supportive learning environment that reinforces reading practices at home and at school. Using evidence-based literacy strategies, such as phonics instruction and engaging reading materials, the study strives to transform learners from frustration to proficiency. Ultimately, this research aspires to offer practical insights for educators, parents, and policymakers in developing effective literacy programs that ensure no child is left behind.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This action research aimed to improve the reading abilities of Grade 2 learners at Liong Elementary School, Cataingan West District of Masbate Province helping them progress from a low level of reading proficiency to advanced proficiency through Pa-Cher Collaboration approach. This study fosters collaboration between parents and teachers and utilizes personalized instruction tailored to the specific needs of the children. The study investigated the following questions: How did the Pa-Cher Collaboration approach reading intervention enhance the reading levels of Grade 2 struggling learners at Liong Elementary School? And how effective was the PA-CHER Collaboration in improving reading skills?

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

A pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was applied to examine the effects of an intervention on the reading proficiency of Grade 2 learners from Section Gold which were composed of seven (7) males and nine (9) females at Liong Elementary School. The design involved measuring participants' reading performance before and after the implementation of the Pa-Cher (Parent-Child-Teacher) Collaboration approach. This method enabled the observation of changes in word recognition, fluency, and comprehension over the course of the intervention. While practical and efficient, this design had limitations such as the absence of a comparison group, which may affect internal validity. Nonetheless, it allowed for initial insights into the potential benefits of the intervention, especially in educational settings where randomized designs are not feasible.

2.2 Data Sources

This action research collected information from sixteen Grade 2 Gold learners at Liong Elementary School who were identified as challenged readers or not skilled in reading. The main data sources consisted of pretests and post-tests that utilized standardized reading evaluation instruments. These assessments were conducted prior to and following the one-month rollout of Project PaCHER, a reading intervention program in the classroom. The pretests identified the students' initial reading abilities, whereas the post-tests assessed any advancements achieved following the intervention. The identical tools were utilized during both testing phases to maintain consistency in measurement. Castillo and Gallardo (2021) state that these organized evaluations have proven successful in pinpointing reading deficiencies and monitoring advancement in early grade students within the Philippine setting. Alongside test outcomes, the research employed teacher-maintained implementation records such as daily observation sheets and activity logs.

These records documented students' attendance, participation in reading tasks, and completion of activities during the intervention phase. These teaching records supported the test-based findings and offered insights into the regularity of student engagement. Dizon and Umayam (2020) highlighted that documentation produced in the classroom serves as a reliable data source in action research, particularly when assessing the effectiveness of reading interventions carried out over a short timeframe. The choice of data sources was consistent with the Department of Education (2022) recommendations regarding reading evaluation and tracking in early grades. These sources were also aligned with best practices in global classroom research, as detailed by McKenney and Reeves (2019), who suggested employing authentic, curriculum-integrated tools to collect significant data. Moreover, Pascual (2020) pointed out that studies in Philippine public schools must emphasize contextually relevant data to ensure that interventions address the needs of local learners. In summary, the data sources utilized in this research ensured reliability, practical use, and conformity with both national and international standards in early literacy studies.

2.3 Research Procedure

The study utilized a pre-experimental, one-group pretest-posttest framework to evaluate the impact of the Project PA-CHER program on enhancing the reading skills of underperforming Grade 2 students at Liong Elementary School. Initially, a standardized reading pre-assessment was conducted to determine the students' baseline reading abilities, particularly focusing on those at the frustration level. Subsequently, consent forms were distributed and collected from parents to officially involve them in the reading enhancement program. This phase ensured ethical research methodologies and fostered collaboration between parents and teachers, a strategy recognized as effective in promoting literacy growth (Epstein et al., 2019). The participants were then introduced to Project PA-CHER, an initiative designed to improve literacy by promoting collaboration between parents and teachers along with personalized support.

During the intervention phase, challenged readers engaged in reading activities both at school and at home. Educators conducted reading sessions using pop-up storybooks and phonics instruction in class, while parents were given instructions to assist with related activities at home. The researcher visited students' homes two times a week for a month to provide materials, demonstrate reading techniques, and discuss progress with parents. Weekly reports were recorded to monitor progress, challenges, and student participation. The cooperative aspect of the intervention encouraged a nurturing learning environment, consistent with DepEd (2022) recommendations for enhancing early grade literacy through contextual, inclusive, and community-focused methods. The significance of personalized learning was also emphasized, taking into account various learning styles, as noted by Alvarado et al. (2021), who indicated that differentiated instruction is essential for bridging early literacy gaps.

After a period of four weeks, the initial reading assessment from the pretest was administered again to evaluate any advancements in reading skills. Alongside test outcomes, the study included casual interviews, questionnaires, and observations from teachers and parents to corroborate findings and understand the broader effects of the intervention. Interaction between the school and families remained ongoing during this time, which was essential in strengthening reading habits and encouraging motivation in students. The documentation collected during the intervention provided valuable information to assess its success and highlight key strategies for maintaining reading enhancement. A study conducted by Dizon and Umayam (2020) endorsed the implementation of teacher-parent collaborations in action research, especially in addressing specific student needs in underperforming situations, such as early grade literacy.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Normality Test of Data in Filipino and MTB-MLE

Table 1 below presents the findings from the normality tests performed on the Filipino and MTB-MLE scores of Grade 2-Gold students during the pretest and posttest stages. The data were found to be non-normally distributed. Every Shapiro-Wilk test statistic yielded p-values that were below the .05 significance threshold. In particular, the pretest Filipino recorded a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.782 along with a p-value of 0.002. The posttest Filipino displayed a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.594 and a p-value of 0.001. The pretest MTB-MLE recorded a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.781 and a p-value of 0.002. The posttest MTB-MLE recorded a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.538 and a p-value of 0.001. These findings suggested that the normality assumption was not upheld (Razali & Wah, 2011). The non-normality was more evident in the posttest scores, which had smaller sample sizes ($N = 6$), likely leading to the observed deviations (Razali & Wah, 2011).

Due to the violation of the normality assumption, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was utilized for additional statistical evaluation. This choice was made following the recommendations of Field (2013), who emphasized the appropriateness of non-parametric tests for addressing small sample sizes and non-normal data distributions. The results highlighted the differences in learner abilities in language subjects such as Filipino and MTB-MLE, which influenced the scoring distribution. This type of variability was common in authentic classroom environments where learner differences affected academic outcomes (Field, 2013). Additionally, utilizing non-parametric testing methods ensured the accuracy of the statistical results, even with the non-normal distribution of the data. This method illustrated the practical challenges faced in assessing learners in early grades and emphasized the need for research techniques that were aligned with genuine educational contexts (Razali & Wah, 2011). Overall, the results of the normality assessments supported the use of non-parametric methods and underscored the challenges related to evaluating language skills in young learners.

Table 1
Normality Test of Data in Filipino and MTB-MLE During the Pretest and Posttest of Grade 2-Gold Learners

Variables	Languages	N	S-W	P-value	Interpretation
Pretest	Filipino	16	0.782	0.002	Not normally distributed
posttest	Filipino	16	0.594	0.001	Not normally distributed
Pretest	MTB-MLE	16	0.781	0.002	Not normally distributed
posttest	MTB-MLE	16	0.538	0.001	Not normally distributed

3.2 Statistical Interpretation of Pretest and Posttest in Filipino through Pa-Cher Collaboration Approach

Table 2 below presents the outcomes of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test performed to assess the impact of the intervention on the Filipino scores of Grade 2-Gold students during the pretest and posttest stages. The statistical outcome produced $W = 24.0$ and a p-value of .077, surpassing the .05 significance level. This suggested that there was no statistically meaningful difference between the pretest and posttest results. The null hypothesis was upheld, while the alternative hypothesis was dismissed. This statistical result indicated that the intervention failed to achieve a significant enhancement in the learners' performance in Filipino. This discovery coincided with other regional studies that noted minimal learning improvements when teaching interventions were inadequate in duration, intensity, or differentiation. For example, an action research study conducted in a classroom with Grade 7 students indicated minimal advancements in spelling due to the brief duration and a uniform teaching method (Scribd, 2023). In contrast, Abdon (2022) noted considerable advancement in early literacy abilities when phonological awareness instruction was provided for an extended duration and tailored to the requirements of the learners.

Additionally, the noted outcome underscored the persistent difficulty in instructing Filipino to young grade students, particularly regarding the K to 12 curriculum's application of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy. From Kindergarten through Grade 3, the curriculum requires that the student's first language be utilized as the instructional medium before moving on to Filipino and English (DepEd, 2016). Nonetheless, this change has been sudden and challenging for numerous students, especially when their native language isn't Filipino.

Studies have shown that students frequently face difficulties in learning Filipino due to limited exposure and irregular support beyond the classroom (Ball, 2011). This deficiency in support outside of school highlights the importance of the Pa-Cher collaboration model, which emphasizes the proactive

partnership between parents and educators. The method acknowledges that language acquisition should extend beyond the confines of the classroom. In homes where Filipino is not the primary language spoken, students miss opportunities to practice and strengthen what they learned in school. With the help of Pa-Cher collaboration, educators can encourage parents to incorporate Filipino into everyday activities, including storytelling, labeling items, and conversing in the language. This reinforcement has been shown to enhance comprehension and vocabulary growth (Malone & Paraan, 2018). The curriculum's spiral design, which gradually escalates the complexity of language lessons, also necessitated a foundational understanding that may not have been adequately cultivated during the intervention. In the absence of regular formative assessments and tailored instructional approaches, students may struggle to grasp essential Filipino concepts. Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasized that interventions must be thoughtfully crafted, maintained, and tailored to the readiness levels of learners. Likewise, Tomlinson (2017) advocated differentiated instruction that considers learners' profiles and interests.

Furthermore, the use of non-parametric tests such as the Wilcoxon signed-rank test ensured the validity of the findings, given the non-normal distribution of the data and small sample size. Field (2013) and Razali and Wah (2011) both supported the use of such tests in educational research, where real-world classroom variability often violates normality assumptions. In summary, the lack of significant improvement in Filipino scores revealed more than the ineffectiveness of a single intervention; it reflected broader systemic and contextual factors such as language transition challenges, insufficient home support, and non-differentiated instruction. These findings called for a more integrated approach to language education, one that combined structured in-class strategies with collaborative parental involvement, as promoted by the Pa-Cher model.

Table 2
Statistical Interpretation of Pretest and Posttest in Filipino Using Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

Variables	N	S-W	P-value	Interpretation
Pretest-posttest	16	24.0	0.077	Statistically not significant

3.3 Statistical Interpretation of Pretest and Posttest in MTB-MLE through Pa-Cher Collaboration Approach

The results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test performed to evaluate the impact of the MTB-MLE intervention on Grade 2 Gold learners are displayed in Table 4 below. The statistical evaluation yielded a Wilcoxon value of $W = 5.50$ and a p-value of less than .001, signifying a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest results. This outcome validated the success of the intervention. The null hypothesis was disproved, and the alternative hypothesis was confirmed.

The notable enhancement in MTB-MLE scores validated the efficacy of using the mother tongue as the language of instruction in the lower grades, consistent with the Department of Education's (DepEd, 2012) policy within the K to 12 curriculum. Many studies have confirmed the importance of mother tongue instruction in improving conceptual understanding, literacy growth, and learner engagement. Ball (2011) highlighted that students comprehend material more effectively when instructed in their native language, resulting in improved skills in both literacy and numeracy.

This discovery further confirmed the principles of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), which supports using students' native language during the early stages of their education. Research conducted by Malone and Paraan (2018) and Walter and Dekker (2011) indicated that children educated in their native language for essential subjects displayed enhanced academic abilities and a smoother transition to second and third languages. The current results reflected these findings and suggested that the MTB-MLE intervention implemented in this study effectively fostered cognitive growth and academic success among Grade 2 learners.

Moreover, the findings highlighted the significance of the Pa-Cher collaborative method in effectively implementing MTB-MLE. Since the mother tongue is typically the primary means of communication at home, parental engagement significantly contributed to enhancing the education received at school. By utilizing this cooperative method, educators and caregivers collaborated to improve literacy activities at home, including reading in their native language, sharing stories, and participating in verbal exercises. The synchronization between home and school settings fostered uniform linguistic exposure, aiding the students' educational advancement (Malone & Paraan, 2018; Cabanilla, 2021).

In contrast to Filipino language teaching—which might be more structured and less frequently utilized in daily dialogue—the MTB-MLE method enabled students to communicate freely and engage with academic material without language barriers. This organic involvement encouraged greater participation and enhanced comprehension. Additionally, the spiral progression aspect of the K to 12 curriculum became more accessible when rooted in a familiar language, facilitating learners' understanding of more intricate concepts (DepEd, 2016). The results also addressed criticisms regarding the uneven application of MTB-MLE in various regions, especially in areas lacking sufficient instructional resources or teacher preparation. In this research, the positive outcomes can be linked not only to the instructional design but also to family participation and the contextual significance of the language used. According to Tomlinson (2017), tailored instruction that considers students' backgrounds and languages results in more meaningful educational experiences.

In conclusion, the significant gains observed in MTB-MLE scores demonstrated the effectiveness of language instruction rooted in learners' cultural and linguistic context. The combination of a curriculum-aligned approach and strong home-school collaboration through the Pa-Cher model proved vital in fostering foundational literacy and learning success in early grades.

Table 4
Statistical Interpretation of Pretest and Posttest in MTB-MLE Using Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

Variables	N	S-W	P-value	Interpretation
Pretest-posttest	16	5.50	<0.001	Statistically significant

4. Conclusion

The findings of the action research titled “*Improving the Reading Proficiency of Grade 2 Struggling Learners Through the Pa-Cher Collab (Parent-Teacher Collaboration) Approach*” underscore the importance of collaborative, contextual, and language-sensitive interventions in addressing early-grade reading difficulties. The intervention, which emphasized active participation of both parents and teachers through home-based and school-based reading activities, demonstrated measurable success in enhancing learners’ literacy skills in their mother tongue (MTB-MLE). The statistically significant improvement in MTB-MLE posttest scores confirmed that children acquire literacy more effectively when instruction is delivered in their first language and reinforced in the home environment. These results support the current policy of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) and emphasize that parental involvement is a powerful tool for amplifying the effects of classroom instruction, especially when the medium of instruction aligns with the language spoken at home.

Conversely, the intervention’s lack of statistically significant impact on learners’ performance in Filipino highlights the systemic and contextual barriers that affect second language acquisition in the early grades. Despite the structured implementation of the Pa-Cher Collab approach, students struggled to demonstrate considerable improvement in Filipino reading skills, likely due to limited language exposure outside the classroom, insufficient time for language immersion, and the cognitive challenge of transitioning from mother tongue to Filipino. This result reveals the need for longer, differentiated, and more intensive interventions for Filipino, particularly for learners whose home environment does not support its daily use. It also indicates that the success of reading programs is highly contingent on both the language of instruction and the level of home-school alignment.

Overall, this study concludes that reading interventions in the early grades are most effective when they are language-appropriate, family-engaged, and sustained over time. The Pa-Cher Collaboration approach showed promise in promoting reading development, particularly in the context of mother tongue instruction. The research offers practical implications for educators, school leaders, and policymakers: to improve reading outcomes, strategies must consider the linguistic, cultural, and home contexts of learners. Moreover, any reading improvement initiative should provide differentiated support based on learners’ language background and readiness levels, with parents empowered as co-educators in their children’s literacy journey. The integration of these factors is vital to ensuring that foundational reading skills are solidified, enabling all children to thrive academically and beyond.

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