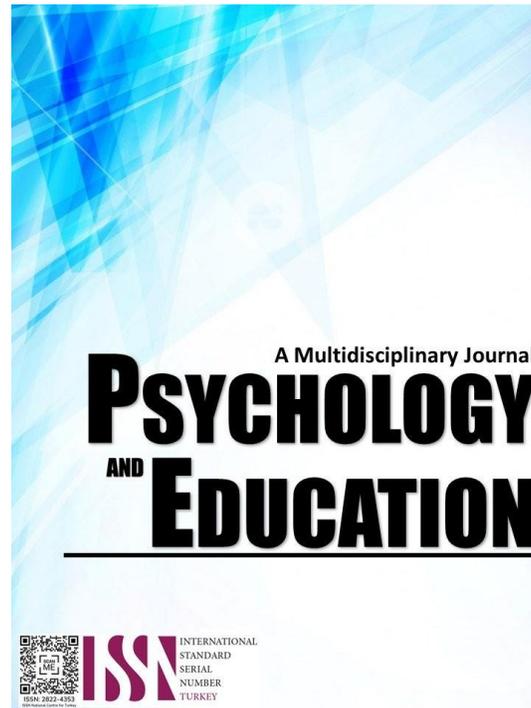


**SYLLABICATING, COUNTING, ORAL READING AND
EXPOUNDING (SCORE): A TECHNIQUE THAT
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Syllabifying, Counting, Oral reading and Expounding (SCOrE): A Technique that Enhances learners' Reading Comprehension in English

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Abstract

Mabuhay Elementary School strived its best to improve learners' reading and comprehension skills specifically in English. Thus, innovative technique was comprehensively crafted and implemented to the learners who had difficulties in reading and understanding contexts. Syllabifying, Counting, Oral reading and Expounding (SCOrE) technique was administered to the identified learners under frustration level and instructional level of grade four Fatajung. This study utilized triangulation technique which used a variety of data sources and information in order to ensure the validity of results and give more detailed picture of the experiences through pretest and posttest results, learner's observations and learner's interview. As the results revealed that SCOrE technique increases the reading level of the learners. In fact, (9) nine learners were in Independent Level in posttest from (0) zero in the pretest, and (13) thirteen learners were in Instructional Level from (2) two during pretest. This means that the intervention was effective, because most of the learners had improved in their reading proficiency level. However, there were (3) three frustration learners remained at their level due to frequent absenteeism. With this, as teacher with full commitment of change who believed that no learners should be left behind, additional reading passages were given to the learners who need more attention to ensure quality and accessible education for all.

Keywords: *syllabifying, counting, reading, expounding, comprehension*

Introduction

It was Tuesday morning, first day of classes for school year 2023- 2024, when I conducted reading session to my grade four learners. I called one of my pupils to read aloud the first line of the story. But he refused to read and said "Lagare goreg sir." This statement is a Blaan dialect which means "I do not know how to read sir". He also added this statement "Ya sir, Mya ago na liku" which also mean "I feel shy and scared to read sir". However, upon seeing his Phil-IRI reading profile, he was under frustration level. I was expecting that he could even read a little word from the given story.

During my break time, I cannot get over thinking why does this learner always refuse to read? Later on, I found out that this learner was scared to read aloud, because he was not sure if he can read the words correctly and with understanding. And, what surprised me the most was, it was not just only him, but most of my grade four learners were in the same feeling. With this, I gave more reading materials and other reading intervention like peer tutoring. However, these interventions did not make any change with the situation at all.

In this alarming situation, I came up with an intervention which believed was effective in dealing this problem. Through Syllabifying, Counting, Oral reading and Expounding (SCOrE) technique, learners easily decoded different words and had a comprehension on the words. In the process of reading, readers first decode the words in the written texts by using appropriate orthographic, phonetic and morphological knowledge and skills. Later, they associate the words that they decoded with both their existing phonological lexicon and their previous knowledge and experiences, and so they comprehend the meanings of the words. Finally, by analyzing the sentences that are composed of the words that they comprehended within the context of syntactic characteristics, readers arrive at the intended message (Güldenöglü et. al, 2014).

As class adviser and reading advocate, my heart was filled with so much fear for my learners if they stick at this level of reading and understanding contexts. Hence, students with poor reading skills cannot be expected to demonstrate successful performance in academic fields, and in fact their entire academic lives can be adversely affected by delays in acquiring reading skills (Güzel, 1998). Consequently, it minified their self-esteem and confidence to read and surely decreases participation in classes due to their poor comprehension skill. All I want for them was to embrace reading with joy and excitement. I want them to amplify their confidence in reading words without uncertainties and fear of words. I want them to gain all the necessary skills in reading, to have active participation not only in one subject but, in all subject areas or disciplines. Thus, immediate action for this problem must be implemented which was why, I was highly committed to conduct this research.

Action Research Questions

The purpose of conducting this action research study was to address the problem on reading comprehension in English of my Grade Four learners. Thus, this research sought to answer the question: What are the lived experiences of English language teachers who adapt modular distance teaching in terms of:

1. How does SCOrE technique enhance learners' reading comprehension in English?

Intervention

Syllabication, Counting, Oral reading and Expounding (SCoRE) technique was the best and appropriate way to assist the needs of my learners in reading and comprehension. This technique was absolutely timely and relevant because it offers easy steps and convenient to conduct. In doing the intervention, I made four simple steps incorporating explicit teaching to teach learners the process effectively and equipped them with necessary skills in reading and comprehension. These steps were:

Step 1. Syllabication – This was the first step in conducting the intervention. The process of this step was simply dividing the words into syllables from the story by marking hyphenation or slashing it. Teaching learners about different types of syllables helped them understand how to break words down into manageable parts and decode words faster since learners were chunking sounds rather than sounding out every single letter. Syllable awareness was one of the most important predictors of phonological decoding in Turkish (Durgunoğlu & Öney, 1999, 2002; Öney & Durgunoğlu, 1997; Öney & Goldman, 1984). In addition, if readers analyzed the syllabic structures of words in an appropriate way, then they can process the words correctly (Güldenöglü, 2016). In administering this step, I modeled the learners first on how to divide the words into syllable and how to put markings on it. I made sure that learners followed this step by checking learner's material one by one. After doing this phase, learners were able to proceed to the second step which was counting.

Step 2. Counting – Learners at this stage count the chunks or syllables in the word from the story. The main goal of counting syllables was to teach learners on how to decode words and read them correctly and fluently through the association of numbers and letters. Hence, there was a medium to large correlation between phonological skills and numeracy skills (Davidse, et. al, 2014). Therefore, they need to have numeracy skills to be able to count phonemes, syllables, letters and words in reading (Guhl, 2019). At this step, confirmation was needed if learners counted the number of chunks in a given word correctly to ensure proper syllabication and remembering it through counting numbers. Then, proceed to the third step which was Oral reading.

Step 3. Oral reading – This was the capacity of learners to read with speed, correctly and accurately. Students who had appropriate speed, accuracy, and expression when reading aloud (i.e., students who had oral reading fluency) were more likely to comprehend connected text (Sabatini, et. Al, 2018). I simply employed guided practice in this phase to process reading in which I was the one who read each word first following the Syllabication and Counting steps. The learners had to repeat after me by reading aloud altogether through focusing on the chunked syllable of the word. Hence, Oral reading has been found to be effective in helping students become better readers (Chard, Vaughn, and Tyler 2002, et al.). In doing this process, it helped the learners developed their ability in reading accurately at a natural pace. After performing this phase, learners had to proceed to the last step which was expounding.

Step 4. Expounding – This was the fourth and final step in the process in unlocking difficulty in comprehension. Expounding was simply explaining the meaning of the word or sentences through the contexts of the learners. In embracing and practicing this phase, it helped IP learners to easily connect and understand the content and meaning of the word that they were reading. Learners were able to increase their comprehension level when the texts presented to them had connections to their lives and to their own structure of orientation (Bonganciso, 2016). Along with this technique, Phil-IRI reading passages was used as reading materials. In doing so, I believed that it helps improved learners' reading skills and boost their confidence in reading. And I was confident that it definitely attained my goal in making my learners to step up the next level which was enhancing learners' comprehension. Moreover, Casingal (2022) found that the rise in independent-level students makes Phil-IRI and remedial classes useful.

Action Research Method

Participants

The grade 4 learners of class Fatajung of school year 2023-2024 in Mabuhay Elementary School were the participants of this study. The result of the Phil-IRI pre-test scores served as baseline data to determine the progress of each learner. Only, under Frustration and Instructional level learners were the participants. Thus, there were 25 pupils that falls under Frustration Level and Instructional Level and considered to be the subject for intervention.

Procedure

The necessary data was gathered in a systematic procedure. Firstly, I sent a letter of permission to conduct the research study to the School Principal to seek for an approval and support.

Upon approval, pretest set A reading passage of grade 4 from Phil IRI Toolkit served as an instrument to measure the differences of scores between pre-test and posttest using the same set. The reading passage from pretest set A was composed of 70 words, while posttest set A reading passage was composed of 80 words with 6-item comprehension questions. Each question must be answered comprehensively by the participants.

Once the respondents were identified and activity plan was also set, an assent letter was sent to all parents for a formal permission and proper coordination regarding the program. After soliciting permission from learners' parents, I had conducted an orientation together with my school principal to the identified participants for them to fully aware the situation and completely understand the significance of the intervention.



The implementation of SCOrE Technique Intervention only covered ten weeks during first quarter of the School Year 2023-2024. First week of the implementation was the conduct of Phil-IRI pretest. Then, the remaining days and weeks of the implementation were the conduct of Level one, Grade 2 reading passages, Level two, Grade 3 reading passages and Level three, Grade 4 reading passages. The intervention continued up until the tenth week or last week of implementation.

Every reading level was consisting of 4 sets in pretest from Set A, B, C and D and posttest set A, B, C and D reading passages of grades 2 and 3, while set B, C and D for grade 4 with a total of twenty-two reading passages. Hence, only twenty-two reading passages were utilized in ten weeks. After the conduct of my intervention, I had collected all the data from the results of the posttest scores of my participants. Results of the intervention was analyzed thoroughly using Phil-IRI tool.

Data Analysis

In analyzing and interpreting the scores of the learners, Phil-IRI tool was used and the results were illustrated through column graph to visualize the learners’ progress. For oral reading score, the number of words in the passage was subtracted to the number of total miscues and divided by the number of words then, multiplied by 100. For comprehension score, I read the questions and recorded the pupils’ responses.

Table 1. *Table of percentage for Comprehension Scores*

No. of Items	Score in Comprehension	%
6	6	100
	5	83
	4	67
	3	50
	2	33
	1	17

In identifying the reading level of each student for each passage, the criteria include the percentage of word recognition accuracy and the percentage of correct answers to comprehension questions was shown below.

Table 2. *Phil-IRI Oral Reading Profile*

Oral Reading Level	Word Reading Score (in %)	Comprehension Score (in %)
Independent	97-100%	80-100%
Instructional	90-96%	59-79%
Frustration	89% and below	58% and below

Further, to determine a comprehensive reading profile for that passage, descriptions of the learner’s reading profile in word reading and comprehension per passage were presented in Table 3 as shown below.

Table 3. *Learner’s Reading Profile Per Passage*

Word reading	Reading Comprehension	Reading Profile per Passage	Interpretation
Independent	Independent	Independent	The level at which readers function on their own with almost perfect oral reading and excellent comprehension.
Independent	Instructional	Instructional	The level at which readers profit the most from teacher directed instruction in reading.
Instructional	Independent	Instructional	
Instructional	Frustration	Frustration	The level at which readers find reading materials so difficult that they cannot successfully respond to them.
Frustration	Instructional	Frustration	
Frustration	Frustration	Frustration	

In addition, Triangulation technique was also used to ensure the validity of the results of the study. Triangulation technique is the combination of two or more data sources, investigators, methodological approaches, theoretical perspectives within the same study. Its goal in research was to use two or more methods of research to strengthen the design and to increase the ability to interpret the findings (Denzin, 1970). Furthermore, interview to the learners who were recipient of the intervention was done, as strong support to convey the validity of the effectiveness of my intervention. A good avenue to be acquainted about their personal experiences in dealing with the intervention given. Each pupil’s comment and thoughts in the said intervention whether positive or negative was written on my journal as basis for reflection.

Ethical Consideration

The personal data of the respondents were kept private and confidential all throughout the conduct and completion of the research study as adherence to protecting their right to anonymity. All data gathered were reflected as the result of the study with no appearance of any name of the respondents. The researcher will follow the Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, (National Privacy Commission, n.d.) to safeguard the security and privacy of study data, that includes gaining informed consent from participants, using appropriate data collection methods, securely storing data, using data ethically, and safely disposing of data. Participants’ personal data will only be kept as long as it’s required to meet the purposes for which it was collected, that is when the objectives of the study are

already met, and this study is finally published.

Results and Discussion

Upon the conduct of the intervention, most of the learners successfully read the different reading passages accurately and responded the corresponding comprehension questions correctly. They followed the four steps from the given intervention exquisitely with excitement. They easily adapted the nature of the intervention on how it was being demonstrated and used to it as days passed by during the implementation.

Learners' progress was blatantly observable and highly evident. Before, without intervention I had seen so much fear on their faces when they were asked to read words or phrases and mostly heard this statement *Dili ko sir* (I cannot do it sir!). They had doubts for themselves in reading and so their confidence was truly affected. It was totally different from previous days and weeks; in fact, they had exceeded my expectation. They were able to easily decode words and its meaning from the passage I discussed. This was when *Dili ko sir* (I cannot do it sir!) has turned into *Ako sir* (I can do it sir!) when I asked them to read something in front of the class. Their responses had shown so much motivation. Morgan and Fuchs (2007) agreed that there was a strong relationship between motivation and reading comprehension proficiency. Similarly, researchers have been well aware on how motivation improves comprehension among language learners (Ahmadi & Hairul, 2012; Dornyei, 2006; Grabe, 2009). They already had the confidence and skills in reading. They also comprehend simple questions and even shared their own perceptions and thoughts based on their understanding in the passage read.

Results of Learner's Interview

After the conduct of my intervention, an interview was conducted to my learners. The discussions and interviews were intended to be informal in order to promote honest responses of my participants. The main thrust of the method was to provide validation and confirmation if the intervention conducted was effective on their end. My learners' responses were very overwhelming. I was so happy knowing that they have certainly felt good on the experiences they had and most of them unveiled their positive comments and feedbacks on the technique that has been implemented. The following were few of their significant comments and feedbacks:

(1) *Sir, ganahan kayo ko sir kay lingaw kayo mag bagis bagis (chunking syllables) ug ihap ihap matiman-an ra dayon nako.* (I had so much fun chunking and counting words sir, I can easily follow the steps and remember the words).

(2) *Abi gud nako lisud sir, sayon raman di ay, kabalo najud ko mag bahin-bahin ug syllable (Syllabicate) unya ma diretso na nako ug basa.* (I thought it was difficult, but then I realized it was very easy to do. I can now be able to syllabicate the words and read fluently).

(3) *Lisud jud ang English sir, pero ganahan kayo mi sa imuhang pagtudlo gamit ning SCOrE technique sir. Masabtan jud namo unsay pasabot sa mga lisud nga English (English words/terms) unya imuha pajud bisayaon ug i blaen usahay ug estorya sir.* (English words are difficult to understand sir, but you manage to make it easier for us. With this SCOrE technique, we can easily understand and learn, because you explicitly explained difficult terms in English words through our own dialect).

All my learners had fun in doing the activity. They had actually more words to say and share during my interview to them. It was really a heartwarming moment listening to their joyful experiences. We used to laugh sometimes remembering the time when they were very serious and silent inside the classroom and gave their full attention, so that they were able to get a perfect score during assessment.

With this, both learner's observation and "learner's interview results as enumerated above revealed that most of the participants gained positive learning experiences and feedbacks on the program implemented as the learners' posttest high results.

Reflections

This was one of the lines from my learners that flattered me the most and felt victorious with my intervention. *Pwede ta mag SCOrE technique taga adlaw sir? kay ganahan kayo ko kay kabalo ug makasabot nako sa pagbasa.* (Can we have SCOrE technique every day sir? Because, I like it so much. I can now understand the words I read). This statement might be very shallow to hear and a very usual statement at some point, yet it conveys deeper sense of meaning. Upon hearing this, I was certain that he loved what he experienced, very strong evidence that the intervention was truly helpful and effective to them.

With this, it gave me realization on my teaching-learning process using my innovative technique and came up to a conclusion that these learners had learned and felt excitement every session we had. It manifests on how fully motivated they were to accept the challenge and to do such activity again. When students understand the importance of an activity and experience or expect enjoyment, they were more likely to take part in it (Leaper, 2011). Furthermore, when students felt successful, their confidence increases along with their motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Teaching is such a challenging role, especially teachers in elementary graders. Thus, effective teachers have an engaging personality, knowledge, and pedagogical skills that were demonstrated with passion and enthusiasm (Benekos, 2016). I have been so obsessed thinking of an efficient and effective way on how I can teach them comprehend easily with simple words, until I found SCOrE technique. Through this, I could tell that my learners had already the necessary skills in reading and comprehending texts.

We cannot deny the fact that there were circumstances along the way. This intervention has set its scope and limitation. If there were learners who were non-readers, they were given other relevant activities that suits to their level. Learners who also engaged in frequent absenteeism were given reading passages to read at home so that no learners will be left behind despite the difficulties of the situation to ensure quality and accessible education for all.

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