ORTON-GILLINGHAM APPROACH AND GRADE I PUPILS’ READING ABILITY

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Abstract. The main thrust of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the Orton-Gillingham approach in the reading ability of Grade I pupils. Moreover, it proposed an action plan to integrate the use of the Orton-Gillingham approach in teaching reading. The study utilized the pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. The pretest scores pairing with 24 respondents in each group determined the grouping of the respondents. Orton-Gillingham approach was used in the experimentation. Data were collected using the early grade reading assessment toolkit. These were administered in the two groups of respondents those were exposed to Orton-Gillingham approach from those exposed to Conventional approach (Marungko), respectively. Based on the findings, there is no significant difference in the performance between the pupils exposed to the Orton-Gillingham approach with those exposed to Conventional approach (Marungko). However, the research showed that those exposed to Orton-Gillingham Approach, twelve (50%) pupils performed as outstanding while eight (33.33%) pupils were outstanding using Marungko Approach. Thus, the Orton-Gillingham approach enhanced the pupils’ reading skills in terms of phonological awareness, appropriate spelling, retention, and better understanding. The proposed training and seminar program should be implemented to teachers for them to be able to utilize the Orton-Gillingham approach in teaching reading.

1. Introduction

Reading promotes confidence of an individual in a modern society. It enables people to act creatively and critically in an ever-changing and highly competitive world. It provides rapid, ready access to new information and knowledge that will help achieve life-long learning.

Having poor reading performance could greatly affect all other aspects in learning other subject areas. Because of this, the teacher necessarily needs to give more emphasis and attention on finding effective ways of teaching reading, especially in the first grade.

In teaching reading, it is important to use a teaching-reading approach which is designed to teach the most basic components in reading and progressing towards the more complex components.

One of the approaches in reading is the Orton-Gillingham Approach, an intensive, sequential phonics-based system while teaches the basics of word formation before the whole meaning. The method accommodates and utilizes the three learning modalities, or pathways, through which people learn—visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Since each learner has a different learning style, each also needs certain ways of learning reading. Unlike some scripted and rigid reading programs, the Orton-Gillingham Approach is a system that allows for flexibility.

Beginning reading is the most crucial part. Many children at risk for reading difficulties enter school with little or no phonological awareness, poor retention in learning reading and limited letter-level knowledge or an understanding of the alphabetic principle. Thus, a teacher needs to find effective teaching-reading strategies or approaches in which difficulties in teaching and learning reading can be attended to or can be lessened.

Based from the results of the Early Grade Reading Assessment in San Vicente Elementary School during the school year 2015-2016 it was found out that of the Grade I pupils have a poor reading ability which resulted to low academic performance. It is in this view that the researcher was motivated to venture on the study of the Effectiveness of the Orton-Gillingham Approach in teaching reading for grade one. Through the results of this study, the grade one teachers would be able to know the effective ways of teaching reading for struggling and diverse learners.
2. Literature Background

Reading is a skill that is useful throughout life. It is one of the most important skills that an individual needs to learn in order to progress academically. Thus, the teachers must take promoting ways to develop student’s learning into account.

Recognized that a student’s perception of written language plays a significant role in a student’s ability to master reading, spelling, and handwriting. Orton suggested that the answer to remediation lay in developing different, individualized instructional methods for teaching reading, spelling, and handwriting skills [1].

Samuel Orton, considered a pioneer in the developing principles of reading remediation beginning in the 1920s, posited that an instructional approach for reading should attempt to capitalize on their students’ auditory competence by teaching them the phonetic equivalence of the printed letters and the process of blending sequences of such equivalents so that they might be able to produce for themselves the spoken form of the word from its graphic counterparts [2].

Based on Dr. Samuel Orton and educator Anne Gillingham’s basic philosophy [3], it is believed that students with severe dyslexia need a multisensory approach, particularly the use of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic channels, in their literacy instruction. They intended the Orton-Gillingham approach to be the sole reading instruction for struggling students.

On the other hand, her study entitled “Teaching Reading in an Inner-City School through a Multisensory Teaching Approach” provides persuasive evidence that the Orton-Gillingham approach is beneficial in teaching reading to average grade one pupil [4].

Orton-Gillingham is a powerful approach to teaching reading and spelling that uses instruction that is multisensory, sequential, incremental, cumulative, individualized, phonics-based, and explicit. It is an approach in teaching reading that starts with the simplest unit of written language (the sound/symbol association) and progresses incrementally to full texts. Using the Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic modalities, students begin with learning individual sounds and then blend sounds to read words, phrases, sentences, and stories.

Learning styles theorists have identified another form of learning styles to be reading styles. "Reading style is defined [5] as an individual's learning style when he or she reads and can include environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and psychological stimuli". The different reading styles are visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic. It is also important to consider the pupils’ learning styles in learning reading. Since each individual is different, each individual also learns differently. Multisensory approach to teaching accommodates many learning styles, which could increase the opportunity for success. Thus, if a child is not learning in the way you teach, change your teaching strategy and teach the child in the way he learns [6].

Learning styles indicate the student’s ways of learning reading. There are different models about learning style. One of these is Neil Fleming’s VARK Learning Style Model. Fleming’s model was categorized into four: visual, auditory, read/write, and Kinesthetic. Visual learners learn best by seeing information based on [7]. Auditory learners learn best through sensory experience as described [8]. Read/write learners learn through taking notes verbatim and reread it [9]. In line with the study of Fleming, kinesthetic learners learn through experiencing/doing things.

Moreover, Aural or auditory learning styles are most favored by the students specifically for Asian learners[10]. Thus, Orton-Gillingham approach using visual, auditory and kinaesthetic VAK modalities in teaching reading could greatly cater to the needs of the Fleming’s VARK learning style model.

The belief that teachers need to include in each teaching presentation at least three basic learning modalities (auditory, visual, and tactile), to meet the needs of most students, is a common thread among researchers [11].

Teachers need to give meaningful learning experiences that would make pupils’ senses become engaged enabling them to remember and retrieve information more effectively. Learning is good when it provides learning experiences or situations that will ensure understanding [12].

In addition, Frey, Lee, Massengill, Pass & Tollefson on their study entitled "Balanced Literacy in an Urban School District" noted that pupil’s developed reading and writing skills when they were allowed to be involved in kinesthetic-tactile and physical movement in the classroom and engaged in conversations(auditory) sharing and demonstrating(visual) ideas coupled with direct instruction in systematic and explicit ways. Orton Gillingham approach engaged pupils in multisensory and interactive reading instruction [13].
An example of examining the impact of a multi-sensory approach to teaching reading is exemplified in a study [14]. They used the Orton-Gillingham technique, which involves visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities, with first-grade children at the special education level. These children improved enough in their reading abilities to advance them out of the special education level. The maintenance of the gains that they achieved with the use of the multi-sensory approach was evaluated after a two year period. None of the children had returned to special education classes.

Teaching Reading in an Inner-City School through a Multisensory Teaching Approach” examines the efficacy of the multisensory teaching approach to improve reading skills in the first-grade level. It was found out that the Orton-Gillingham-based Alphabetic Phonics Method made statistically significant gains in phonological awareness, decoding, and reading comprehension while the Houghton-Mifflin Basal Reading Program made gains only on comprehension [4].

Studies have demonstrated that the Orton-Gillingham Method has been found to be effective in diverse settings, socioeconomic groups, and even different age groups. It has primarily been shown to be effective in beginning readers—kindergarten and first grade—but has also been used to help adolescents and even adults to learn to read with greater fluency [15].

The study is anchored on some legal bases such as the Article VIII Section 2 of the Code of Ethics for Teachers which states that the teacher should recognize the interest and welfare of the students as his greatest or highest concern. Students must receive a just and impartial treatment. This also emphasizes the school’s consideration on student’s differences, especially on intellectual ability. In this sense, a teacher has to employ different and effective reading approaches so that the learners could gain appropriate learning experiences.

Furthermore, the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 Section 5 states that:

Basic education is intended to meet basic learning need which provides the foundation on which subsequent learning can be based. It encompasses kindergarten, elementary, and secondary education as well as alternative learning systems for out of school learners and those with special needs.

In relation to teaching reading, the teacher must be resourceful enough to cater to the learning needs of his/her students.

Based from the results of the Early Grade Reading Assessment in San Vicente Elementary School during the school year 2015-2016 it was found out that most of the Grade I pupils have a poor reading ability which resulted to low academic performance.

Therefore, the researcher is motivated to study the Effectiveness of Orton-Gillingham Approach on Teaching Reading in grade one with the end view of being able to determine the effectiveness of Orton-Gillingham Approach to the grade one pupils’ reading ability. The researcher had come up with a reading development program based on the results of the study.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Design

The researcher used the pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. This design involved pretest, experimentation, and postest. Quasi-experimental design involves selecting groups, upon which a variable was tested, without any random pre-selection processes. After the selection, the experimentation proceeded in a very similar way to other experiments, with a variable being compared between different groups.

3.2 Environment and Participants

The Cluster Seven in the island of Pres. Carlos P. Garcia, Bohol is the locale of the study composed of two Elementary schools namely: San Vicente Elementary School and Lapinig Elementary School, during the school year 2016-2017. These schools are located in the two neighboring Barangays of San Vicente and Lapinig Pres. Carlos P. Garcia, Bohol. The researcher chose these two schools as the research environment among the 21 Elementary Schools in the District in order to assess the reading performance among Grade I pupils on the two schools.

The participants of the study were the Grade I pupils because in this level that they already start to develop their reading ability. There were 48 pupils, 24 pupils in San Vicente Elementary School and 24 in
Laping Elementary School. One group was exposed to the Orton-Gillingham Approach and the other group was exposed to the Conventional Reading Approach (Marungko).

3.3 Instrument

In this study, the researcher used the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tool for the pretest and posttest. This reading tool was used by elementary schools in assessing the reading ability of the pupils in the primary grades. It was composed of eight reading components namely; orientation to print, letter name and letter sound knowledge, initial sound identification, familiar word reading, invented word decoding, oral passage reading, reading and listening comprehension, and dictation. The tool was administered by the researcher to the two groups of pupils individually to ensure its proper implementation.

3.4 Procedure

The researcher wrote a Letter of Request to the Bohol Schools Division Superintendent to conduct a study in Pres. Carlos P. Garcia District, after the approval of the Campus Director of BISU Main, Campus, the Dean of the College of Advanced Studies and the Researcher Adviser. The researcher asked permission from the Public Schools District Supervisor of Pres. Carlos P. Garcia District to conduct the study to the two Elementary Schools of the said District, after the approval from the School Principal.

In conducting the study, the researcher administered the pretest to the pupils. The scores were collected and tabulated. After recording the scores, the result was interpreted using the Arithmetic Mean. The result of the pretest was used to determine the grouping through score pairing. The researcher conducted 40 sessions during the study. The research procedures were followed for both groups.

| Experimental Group                                      | Control Group                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Call the pupils one by one and administer the pretest   | Call the pupils one by one and administer the pretest |
| Present the reading lessons through the Orton-Gillingham Approach | Present the reading lessons using the Conventional Reading Approach (Marungko) |
| -Visual, Auditory, Tactile/Kinesthetic                   | -Visual and Auditory Steps:                        |
| Steps:                                                  | 1. Letter and sounds                              |
| 1. Drill                                               | 2. Forming Syllables                              |
| 2. Introduction of New Concept/Phonogram                | 3. Introducing words                              |
| 3. Letter Formation Work                                | 4. Forming phrases                                |
| 4. Spelling Dictation                                   | 5. Read short stories                             |
| 5. Oral Reading                                        |                                                   |

Posttest will be administered by the researcher individually
The scores will be recorded.
Results will be interpreted using the preferred guide

4. Result

The following were the findings based on the results of the data gathered:

1. The performance of the pupils exposed to the Orton-Gillingham Approach was fairly satisfactory in the pretest while very satisfactory in the post-test. The average mean value was 25.08, described as satisfactory.

   The performance of the pupils exposed to the Conventional Reading Approach (Marungko) was fairly satisfactory in the pretest while very satisfactory in the posttest. The average mean value was 23.36, described as satisfactory.

   However, those exposed to the Conventional Reading Approach (Marungko), one (4.17%) of the pupils’ performance was fairly satisfactory; only five (20.83%) pupils performed satisfactory; ten (41.67%) performed very satisfactorily; eight (33.33%) pupils were Outstanding; and no one (0%) needed
improvement. While those exposed to Orton-Gillingham Approach, twelve (50%) pupils performed as outstanding; nine (37.5%) of the pupils’ performance were very satisfactory; three (12.5%) performed Satisfactory; nobody (0%) performed fairly satisfactory and no one (0%) needed improvement performance in Orton-Gillingham Approach.

2. There was no significant difference between the performances of the pupils exposed to the Orton-Gillingham approach and with those exposed to Conventional Reading Approach (Marungko), thus the null hypothesis was accepted. This was attested to the computed z ort of -1.7029 which was less than the critical value of 1.9599 at 5% level of significance.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion was made:

The Orton-Gillingham Approach shows twelve (50%) pupils performed as outstanding. While the Conventional Reading Approach (Marungko) shows eight (33.33%) pupils were outstanding. Orton-Gillingham Approach enhanced and improved more the Grade I pupils’ reading ability. Thus, as a reading approach, Orton-Gillingham Approach will help pupils to have retention and gain meaningful learning in beginning reading.

6. References

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