

Reading Comprehension Results as Basis for a Proposed Targeted Reading Intervention Program

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Abstract

Reading comprehension remains a fundamental component of literacy. However, recent large-scale assessments, such as the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), continue to reveal persistent difficulties among Filipino learners, with many failing to reach minimum proficiency levels required for functional reading. In response, the Department of Education utilizes the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) to support targeted instruction, yet there remains a need to examine learners' performance at the local level to inform effective interventions. Thus, this study examined the reading comprehension levels of Key Stage 2 learners in a public elementary school using their Phil-IRI results, with the aim of informing the development of a targeted reading intervention program. A descriptive research design was employed, drawing on existing Phil-IRI data. Learners were grouped according to grade level and sex to identify patterns across frustration, instructional, and independent reading levels. Findings revealed that while some learners achieved independent reading levels, a considerable number remained at instructional and frustration levels, indicating ongoing comprehension difficulties. These patterns were observed across grade levels and among both male and female learners. The study concludes that many learners require targeted support and recommends the implementation of a sustained, data-driven reading intervention program with continuous monitoring of progress.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Intervention Program, Key Stage 2 Learners, Philippine Informal Reading Inventory

I. Introduction

Learning to read is widely recognized as a foundational outcome of primary education, as it underpins learning across all subject areas. Global education frameworks emphasize that developing foundational literacy in the early years is essential for enabling learners to access knowledge and sustain lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2020). In line with this, empirical evidence shows that learners

who fail to acquire basic reading skills in the early grades are more likely to experience persistent academic difficulties in later schooling (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). Reading literacy, as defined in large-scale assessments, involves the ability to understand, use, and reflect on written texts to achieve one's goals and participate in society (OECD, 2018). Beyond the classroom, strong literacy skills are associated with higher educational attainment and improved employment opportunities, reinforcing early reading development as a key priority in both global and national education agendas (World Bank, 2020).

Given the importance of reading proficiency, it is essential to understand the processes that underlie reading development. Reading is widely described as a complex cognitive process involving both decoding written symbols and constructing meaning from text (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). The Simple View of Reading explains that reading comprehension results from the interaction between word recognition and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). In the Philippine context, the Department of Education, through DepEd Memorandum No. 173, s. 2019 (Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa), emphasizes that reading proficiency depends on the integration of key subskills, including phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. At the elementary level, particularly in Key Stage 2, learners are expected to reach the independent reading level, where they can read accurately, fluently, and with sufficient understanding without instructional support.

To monitor learners' reading progress, the Department of Education implements the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) as a classroom-based diagnostic assessment tool designed to determine reading levels and guide instruction and intervention (Department of Education, 2018). As a formative assessment mechanism, Phil-IRI results are intended to support data-informed instructional decisions that address learners' specific reading needs. Ideally, assessment outcomes should indicate that most learners have attained the independent reading level, reflecting readiness for more complex academic tasks and higher-order thinking across learning areas (Department of Education, 2018; Department of Education, 2019).

However, national and international evidence suggests continuing challenges in reading proficiency. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 reported that Filipino learners performed significantly below the minimum proficiency level in reading, indicating difficulties in understanding and interpreting written texts (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). At the national level, Department of Education reports also indicate that many elementary learners remain at the instructional and frustration levels based on Phil-IRI results, suggesting limited reading independence.

Studies further reveal that although Phil-IRI assessments are regularly conducted, intervention programs are often generalized and not sufficiently aligned with learners' specific comprehension needs (Rodriguez, 2025). Moreover, despite literacy initiatives such as Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP), gaps in reading comprehension persist, particularly among Key Stage 2 learners. These conditions highlight a clear gap between expected and actual reading performance. While learners are expected to read fluently and independently, many continue to require instructional support or experience significant difficulty in comprehension. This gap underscores the need for targeted, data-driven, and context-specific interventions to improve reading outcomes and address identified learning needs.

In this context, the present study examines the reading comprehension performance of Key Stage 2 learners in a public school in Iloilo Province based on their Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) results. Specifically, it analyzes learners' reading comprehension levels when grouped according to grade level, sex, and grade level by sex. The findings of this study will serve as a basis for the development

of a targeted reading intervention program designed to address the identified needs of the learners and improve their reading comprehension skills.

II. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive research design, appropriate for describing and interpreting existing conditions through numerical data without manipulating variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It analyzed Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) reading comprehension results of Key Stage 2 learners as a basis for developing a targeted reading intervention program. This design facilitated the systematic identification of learners' reading levels and the determination of areas needing instructional support.

The respondents were Key Stage 2 learners in a public school in Iloilo Province, specifically Grades 4, 5, and 6 for the Academic Year 2025–2026, with complete Phil-IRI reading comprehension records. Total enumeration sampling was employed, wherein all eligible learners were included in the analysis, ensuring complete population coverage and minimizing sampling bias. Learners were categorized according to Phil-IRI reading levels such as independent, instructional, and frustration for a systematic analysis of reading performance.

The primary data source was the Phil-IRI reading comprehension results, a standardized assessment tool developed by the Department of Education (DepEd) to measure learners' reading comprehension through oral and silent reading. Existing school records were used as secondary data and classified according to the established reading levels.

Permission to access the Phil-IRI records was secured from the school head of a public school in Iloilo Province. After approval, coordination was conducted with the designated reading personnel to obtain the required data. The records were collected, reviewed, and organized according to grade level and reading category. Only complete and valid entries were included. The data were encoded, tabulated, and treated with strict confidentiality, and were used solely for research purposes. Descriptive statistics, specifically frequency counts and percentages, were used to determine the distribution of learners across reading levels.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Frequency counts identified the number of learners under each reading level across grade levels, while percentages described their distribution. The data were systematically organized and presented in tabular form to facilitate comparison and interpretation of reading performance. The results served as empirical basis for developing a targeted reading intervention program addressing learners' specific reading needs.

III. Results

The results of the study indicate that learners' reading comprehension levels were distributed across frustration, instructional, and independent categories in both the pre-test and post-test phases. In the pre-test, most learners were classified under the frustration (44%) and instructional (43%) levels, while only 13% were at the independent level. When grouped according to grade level, Grade 4 recorded the highest proportion under the frustration level (53%), whereas Grade 5 showed a relatively balanced distribution between instructional (44%) and frustration (37%) levels. Grade 6 had the highest proportion under the instructional level (53%), with only 7% reaching the independent level. In the post-test, improvement was observed, with the independent level increasing to 48% and the frustration level decreasing to 23%. Across grade levels, increases in independent readers were noted, particularly in Grade 4 (44%), Grade 5 (46%),

and Grade 6 (57%).

Overall, the findings show an improvement in reading comprehension from pre-test to post-test, reflected in the shift from frustration and instructional levels toward the independent level. However, the presence of learners in the lower categories indicates the need for continued reading support. These results suggest that reading comprehension develops progressively and requires sustained intervention. Consistent with the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), comprehension depends on the interaction between decoding and language comprehension, which may still be developing among learners in the frustration and instructional levels.

The table below shows the data.

Table 1

Pre-Test and Post-Test Reading Comprehension Levels of Key Stage 2 Learners by Grade Level (Phil-IRI Results)

Category	N	Pre-Test						Post-Test					
		Frustration		Instructional		Independent		Frustration		Instructional		Independent	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Grade 4	47	25	53	16	34	6	13	13	28	13	28	21	44
Grade 5	43	16	37	19	44	8	19	11	26	12	28	20	46
Grade 6	30	12	40	16	53	2	7	3	10	10	33	17	57
Total	120	53	44	51	43	16	13	27	23	35	29	58	48

In terms of sex, the results of the study indicate that learners’ reading comprehension levels, when grouped according to sex, were distributed across frustration, instructional, and independent categories in both the pre-test and post-test phases. For male learners (N = 73), the pre-test results show that 49% were classified under the frustration level, 36% under the instructional level, and 15% under the independent level. In the post-test, a marked improvement was observed, with 49% reaching the independent level, while those under the frustration level decreased to 26% and instructional level to 25%. For female learners (N = 47), the pre-test results indicate that 36% were under the frustration level, 53% under the instructional level, and 11% under the independent level. In the post-test, improvements were likewise observed, with 47% reaching the independent level and a reduction in the frustration level to 17%.

Overall, both male and female learners demonstrated improvement in reading comprehension from pre-test to post-test, as reflected in the increased proportion of learners in the independent level and the corresponding decrease in frustration-level readers. Although variations in distribution are noted between groups, both sexes exhibited similar patterns of progression across proficiency levels. These findings suggest that reading comprehension development occurs across both male and female learners and is not strongly differentiated by sex. Rather, improvement appears to be associated with instructional support and intervention strategies provided during the learning process. This is supported by studies emphasizing that reading outcomes are more strongly influenced by targeted instructional interventions than by demographic factors such as sex (Rodriguez, 2025).

The table below shows the data.

Table 2
Pre-Test and Post-Test Reading Comprehension Levels of Key Stage 2 Learners by Sex
(Phil-IRI Results)

Category	N	Pre-Test						Post-Test					
		Frustration		Instructional		Independent		Frustration		Instructional		Independent	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Male	73	36	49	26	36	11	15	19	26	18	25	36	49
Female	47	17	36	25	53	5	11	8	17	17	36	22	47
Total	120	53	44	51	43	16	13	27	23	35	29	58	48

Furthermore, the results of the study indicate that learners’ reading comprehension levels, when grouped according to grade level and sex, were distributed across frustration, instructional, and independent categories in both the pre-test and post-test phases. For Grade 4, both male and female learners initially showed higher proportions under the frustration level (53% and 54%, respectively). In the post-test, notable improvements were observed, with increases in the independent level among male (44%) and female (46%) learners. For Grade 5, pre-test results showed that both male and female learners were concentrated in the frustration and instructional levels. In the post-test, both groups demonstrated improvement, with male learners reaching 50% in the independent level and female learners increasing to 41%. For Grade 6, pre-test results showed that male learners were mostly in the frustration level (62%), while female learners were predominantly in the instructional level (65%). In the post-test, both groups showed marked improvement, with male learners reaching 62% and female learners 53% in the independent level.

Overall, the findings reveal a consistent improvement in reading comprehension across all grade levels and both sexes, as evidenced by the increase in independent readers and the decrease in frustration-level learners from pre-test to post-test. Although variations exist across subgroups, learners in all categories demonstrate progression in reading performance. These results suggest that reading comprehension is a developmental skill that improves with sustained instructional support. As emphasized by Pressley (2006), reading comprehension develops through explicit instruction and the use of cognitive strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. The observed improvements highlight the importance of structured and sustained reading interventions in supporting learners’ comprehension development.

The table below shows the data.

Table 3 Pre-Test and Post-Test Reading Comprehension Levels of Key Stage 2 Learners by Grade Level and Sex (Phil-IRI Results)

Category		N	Pre Test						Post Test					
			Frustration		Instructional		Independent		Frustration		Instructional		Independent	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Grade 4	Male	34	18	53	11	32	5	15	11	32	8	24	15	44

	Female	13	7	54	5	38	1	8	2	15	5	39	6	46
Grade 5	Male	26	10	38	10	38	6	24	7	27	6	23	13	50
	Female	17	6	35	9	53	2	12	4	24	6	35	7	41
Grade 6	Male	13	8	62	5	38	0	0	1	8	4	30	8	62
	Female	17	4	23	11	65	2	12	2	12	6	35	9	53
Total		120	53	44	51	43	16	13	27	23	35	29	58	48

IV. Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that Key Stage 2 learners initially demonstrated low reading comprehension performance, as evidenced by the high proportion of learners classified under the frustration and instructional levels in the pre-test. This suggests that many learners experienced difficulty in comprehending texts independently and required instructional support. Such results reflect broader concerns in the Philippine education context, where learners continue to face challenges in achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading comprehension, as reported in large-scale assessments (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019; Department of Education, 2019). These findings indicate that foundational reading skills among learners are still developing and require systematic support.

When analyzed according to grade level, learners across Grades 4, 5, and 6 demonstrated improvements in reading comprehension performance from pre-test to post-test, as reflected in the increased proportion of learners reaching the independent level. Grade 6 learners showed relatively higher gains compared with lower grade levels, suggesting that reading comprehension skills tend to improve as learners progress through the elementary grades. However, despite this improvement, the presence of learners in the frustration and instructional levels across all grade levels indicates that not all learners have achieved reading independence. This reinforces the view that reading comprehension is a developmental process that requires continuous practice and reinforcement. As explained by the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), comprehension develops through the interaction between decoding and language comprehension, both of which must be strengthened over time.

In terms of sex, both male and female learners exhibited similar patterns of improvement from pre-test to post-test. Although variations in the distribution of learners across proficiency levels were observed, both groups demonstrated increased proportions of independent readers and decreased proportions of frustration-level readers. This suggests that reading comprehension development is not strongly influenced by sex but is more closely associated with instructional exposure and learning opportunities. These findings align with studies which emphasize that reading outcomes are largely shaped by instructional practices and targeted interventions rather than demographic characteristics (Rodriguez, 2025). This implies that effective teaching strategies can support reading development across diverse groups of learners.

Further analysis based on grade level and sex revealed consistent improvement across all learner subgroups. While initial differences in reading performance were evident, all groups demonstrated progress in the post-test, indicating that learners benefit from structured reading support regardless of their classification. The observed improvements across groups highlight the role of guided instruction, practice, and exposure to reading activities in enhancing comprehension skills. These results suggest that learners' reading development is influenced by the quality and consistency of instructional support provided in the classroom.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of sustained, data-driven, and context-specific reading interventions among Key Stage 2 learners. Although improvements were observed, the continued presence of learners in the frustration and instructional levels indicates that additional support is still necessary to help all learners achieve independent reading proficiency. The use of Phil-IRI results as a basis for instructional planning is therefore critical in identifying learners' needs and monitoring their progress. In response to these findings, the study recommends the implementation of a targeted reading intervention program that focuses on differentiated instruction, guided reading strategies, and continuous assessment of learner performance. Such interventions should provide learners with opportunities to develop comprehension skills through structured activities that support understanding at various levels. By aligning instruction with learners identified needs, schools can better support the development of reading proficiency and promote improved academic outcomes.

V. References

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