



CONTEXTUALIZED LANGUAGE MODULE AND STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

BY

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Abstract

Reading comprehension appears to be a serious problem not only in schools but generally in the country. Thus, teachers were urged to apply various teaching methods, strategies, and approaches to enhance reading competence. In response, this study on the development of Contextualized Language Module (CLM) was conducted aimed to improve the reading comprehension of struggling readers in Maligaya National High School. It underwent validation and conveyed an excellent rate on its content, relevance, acceptability, and mechanics. Its effectiveness was tested through an experimental design involving 15 samples for the control group and another 15 for the treatment group who utilized the CLM. Using the mean, standard deviation, and paired t-test, it was found that there was no significant difference in the level of comprehension of both groups during the pretest, but a significant difference was noted in the post-test as the experimental group exhibited a higher mean and a very satisfactory performance predominantly on their literal and inferential levels. This significant difference manifested an improvement in comprehension of explicitly and implicitly stated ideas. Therefore, it can be concluded that the CLM is effective and its development is an excellent point for innovating localized materials that address the narrowing of the comprehension gap. It is recommended for use with other struggling readers in MNHS while teachers are suggested to explore and apply contextualization in their subjects to engage students in authentic, relevant, and meaningful learning. Furthermore, conducting a similar study in other areas is also recommended to validate the external findings.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, contextualization, mother tongue, module*

INTRODUCTION

Educational researches strongly correlate reading with academic success. Proficient reading skills are essential and crucial for creativity, critical thinking, writing, researching, and problem-solving. Hence, proficient readers have a higher chance of succeeding in school and passing exams than weak readers (Calderon, 2014).

The ability to understand a text is reading comprehension. The capacity to analyze material and ascertain its meaning is one of the reading competencies that every student has to develop. However, some students still need to improve their proficiency level in reading comprehension despite the level of reading instructions and strategies provided by the teachers (Bilbao et al., 2017).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has been stepping up efforts to close literacy gaps among students and intensify advocacy for reading proficiency by supporting the "Bawat Bata Bumabasa" (3Bs) Initiative among the schools in the country as stipulated in DepEd Memorandum No. 173, s. 2019. Sadly, statistics revealed the refutable truth about the country's current literacy landscape. According to data, one-third of students are identified as frustrated readers when they graduate from elementary school and move on to high school. At the same time, the remaining third is instructional readers (Luz, 2007), as cited by (Tomas et al., 2021). These reading levels fall below the expected and desired reading level for the student's grade and age.

This inference is in connection with the poor result demonstrated in the 2018 global survey called Program for International Assessment (PISA). Among 600,000 students

worldwide, Filipino students around 15 got a rating of 340 points in reading comprehension, lower than the average of 487 points. Consequently, the Philippines ranked last among the 79 countries, and the increasing number of struggling readers was attributed to the student's social media, technology, teacher-student interaction, materials, and reading habits. Alarmingly, the country retained this below-average reading score in the 2019 PISA (Ciriaco, 2019).

Similarly, in the local setting, at Maligaya National High School (MNHS), teachers observed that students' reading performance always prevails as the top problem, evidenced in the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). The researcher's survey on the reading performance of Grade 7 students in MNHS in 2020 revealed that out of 91 students, 43 fell under the frustration level, 29 as instructional readers, and 19 as independent readers.

With this alarming large fraction of struggling readers in Grade 7, the urge for remedial or intervention is imperative. It calls the researcher's attention to make instructional material for reading as an intervention tool that may improve the reading comprehension of struggling readers. Based on readings and literature, contextualization of material is extensively considered, given the country's linguistic diversity, as suggested by Dr. Perez, President of the Reading Association of the Philippines (RAP). This idea has been supported by DepEd Order No.35, s. 2016 which described the concept of contextualization as the process of matching the curriculum content and instructional strategies to a particular setting, situation, or area of application to make the competencies relevant, meaningful, and valuable to all learners. In addition, from a constructivist view, contextual teaching helps to promote authentic learning and increases learners' success by allowing them to make connections. In contextualized learning, learners use the new information they have learned and organized and combine it with the information they already have so that it makes sense to them. However, no literature yet has been published locally that revolves around contextualization of language in the teaching of comprehension, nor experimental undertakings which account for its effectiveness among struggling readers.

Thus, this study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of contextualization in narrowing the comprehension gap. The researcher proposed the development of Contextualized Language Module (CLM) aimed to capture students' interest in reading and eventually aid them in comprehending the text meaningfully.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the effectiveness of the Contextualized Language Module (CLM) as a tool for improving students' reading comprehension. Specifically, it answered the following questions: 1) What is the extent of the quality of the CLM in terms of content; relevance; acceptability; and, mechanics? 2) What is the reading comprehension level of the control and experimental groups during pretest and posttest as to: a. literal level; inferential level; evaluative level; and, applied level? 3) Is there a significant difference in

the pretest and posttest scores between the control group and the experimental group? 4) Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the control and experimental groups? And 5) Is there a significant difference in the mean gain scores of the control and experimental groups?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used descriptive–evaluative and experimental research designs to answer the problems statistically.

In validating the CLM, the researcher utilized the descriptive–evaluative design to determine the CLM's worth and quality in terms of its content, relevance, acceptability, and mechanics.

On the other hand, the experimental research design was used to give a clear comparison and differences between the students' performances in each level of reading comprehension as well as on their pretest and posttest scores before and after employment of the intervention.

Respondents of the Study

In this study, two groups of respondents were involved in the validation and experimentation processes, and their mother tongue language was considered as an essential characteristic in the selection.

The first group of respondents was the content validators who made an evaluation of the content, relevance, acceptability, and mechanics of the CLM. As to qualifications, the respondents were multilingual teachers who could speak Iloko and other languages and taught in the areas where “Iloko” was known as the dominant language of the students. Likewise, the respondents were language experts who have equal interest, background, and experience in the field of reading and language and, relatively, have already conducted similar and relevant researches.

Meanwhile, the second group of respondents was the Grade 7 students in MNHS who fall under the frustration level based on the Phil-IRI results. Students under frustration levels were described in Phil-IRI as struggling readers manifested by their reading problems and difficulties, more specifically in word recognition, comprehension, and fluency.

In this study, 30 struggling readers from Grade 7 were involved in the experiment; 15 belonged to the control group, which received either no treatment, while the other 15 were to the experimental group, which used the CLM as the variable tested for its effectiveness in improving reading comprehension.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Maligaya National High School located at Brgy. Maligaya, Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat where the identified students who performed poorly in their reading assessment were located. Likewise, the researcher considered the accessibility of the location which was an advantage on the process of selection of samples and collection of data from the respondents.

Sampling Technique

This study used inclusion criteria to determine the sample size and respondents. A purposive sampling technique was applied to determine the respondents who are qualified for the following set criteria: must be a Grade 7 student, a struggling reader, and the mother-tongue was Iloko.

As to the sample size, 30 out of 43 struggling readers were selected using the Simple Random Sampling Technique through the lottery method. The same technique was used to determine the 15 respondents for the control group and another 15 for the experimental group. Based on the Central Limit Theorem, a sample size of 30 is relatively standard across statistics as it often increases the confidence interval of the population enough to warrant assertions against the findings (Ganti, 2023).

Research Instruments

To find out the answers to the problems in this study, the researcher utilized three sets of research instruments: Contextualized Language Module (CLM), a Pretest and Posttest, and an Evaluation- Validation Instrument.

The CLM as the primary tool of the study was crafted by adapting literary texts from the Grade 7 book. The CLM was divided into four lessons and each lesson used a literary text as a springboard; Lesson 1 introduced a poem, lesson 2 told a short story, Lesson 3 presented a parable, and Lesson 4 was an essay. There were series of tasks and comprehension exercises in every lesson designed to assess and evaluate the students' literal, inferential, evaluative, and applied comprehension levels. The literary texts were translated by a professional and native linguist who can speak and write in Iloko and other languages fluently and whose cultural background, communication, and comprehension skills were considered to make sure that the message is conveyed in the most accurate and context-appropriate manner. The Iloko version of the selected literary texts was the distinctive feature of the CLM.

Meanwhile, the researcher-made pretest and posttest were composed of passages and comprehension questions that aimed to gather data to assess reading comprehension and to determine the significant difference.

Evaluation and validation instruments were also used to gather assessments, comments, and suggestions on the CLM before employing it on the target respondents. The said instrument was adapted from the study of Rivera (2016).

Data Gathering Procedures

Before the actual conduct of the study, a letter of communication duly signed by the adviser and the dean of the graduate school was secured and sent with proper coordination to the persons/authorities involved in the study. The letters were sent to the Graduate School of SKSU, Sultan Kudarat Division Research Coordinator, Local Government Unit of Lambayong, Barangay Council of Maligaya, and School Principal of Maligaya National High School.

After the confirmation and approval, the researcher then sent a letter of request to the three teachers who acted as content validators of the CLM. Afterwards, all the applicable comments and suggestions from the content validators were incorporated into the CLM before employing it to the respondents.

Meanwhile, a Weekly Home Learning Plan (WHLP) for the subject was then prepared and signed by the academic coordinator and school principal. The WHLP served as the guide of the researcher since the date, time, competencies, learning tasks, and the mode of delivery was indicated therein. The WHLP was used as required since the study was conducted during pandemic.

After the refinement of the instrument, the experimentation was conducted. In the first week of the 4th quarter, the pretest was administered to both control and experimental groups. It was unannounced to avoid bias and thoroughly get accurate data. After it was answered, it was gathered, checked, and analyzed. The researcher then distributed modules to both groups, a module with no language translation was given to the respondents under the control group, whereas the CLM was handed to the students in the experimental group. The students in both groups were given 6 weeks to answer the modules while the researcher allotted at least 3 hours every week to visit and supervise the students' progress. Lastly, the posttest was conducted on the 8th week, the researcher distributed the posttest to both groups after which was also retrieved, consolidated, analyzed, and interpreted using tables and statistical tools.

Statistical Treatment

In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the gathered data using specific tools: mean, standard deviation, and t-test.

The gathered data from the validation of the CLM as to its content, relevance, acceptability, and mechanics was treated using the mean and standard deviation. The 5-Point Likert-Five Scale for Quality from the study of Rivera (2016) was used to interpret responses.

The mean and standard deviation tools were also utilized to analyze the pretest and posttest results of the respondents before and after employing the CLM. The pretest and posttest results served as the basis of the reading comprehension levels of the students. The 5-Point Likert-Five Scale from the study of Caseres (2018) was used to interpret the reading comprehension level.

On the other hand, to test the hypotheses, the t-test for dependent means (paired-sample t-test) was used to compare the pretest and posttest scores from the same group, while t-test for independent means compared the difference of the mean gain scores between the control and experimental groups. For the research to come up with reliable results, the formula below was used:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Mean Distribution of the Level of Quality of the Contextualized Language Module.

Indicators	Mean		Verbal Interpretation
	Mean	SD	
Content	4.47	0.51	Excellent
Relevance	4.60	0.50	Excellent
Acceptability	4.53	0.51	Excellent
Mechanics	4.63	0.49	Excellent
Overall Mean	4.56	1.64	Excellent

Based on Table 1, it reveals that the group of content validators assessed the overall quality of the CLM as excellent for obtaining ($M = 4.56, SD = 1.64$). This means that it has met the 81% or above quality standards on its content, relevance, acceptability, and mechanics.

In detail, its content is excellent in its alignment with the DepEd curriculum, clearly defined and stated objectives, specific and understandable directions, sufficient exercises, the proper assessment tool, logical order, experiential learning, and further enhancement. In terms of relevance, the

material is appropriate and relevant to students' needs and experiences, provides an impetus for research, provides evidence of effectiveness, meets the minimum requirement set for the grade level, and is appropriate for teaching Philippine Literature in Grade 7. Likewise, the acceptability of the module is also excellent for achieving its purpose, motivation factor, application to real-life situations, ease of use, strategies and materials, ethnicity and diversity, and learning needs, values, and promotion to others. Further, the mechanics are excellent relative to understandable directions, format, punctuation, grammar, spelling, organization, and structure.

The result of the findings reflects similarity to the findings of the study of Eng et al. (2014), which points out that the deployment of suitable reading comprehension modules has the potential in improving students' reading and comprehension abilities. Moreover, Geturbos (2001), as cited by Gurra (2008), states that the development of any instructional materials for students must be anchored on how the course must be taught. Any teacher's decision in preparing, selecting, and utilizing instructional materials must be aligned with what the students need to develop in terms of knowledge. Further, this also gives significance to the findings of the study of Ambayon (2020) on the modular-based approach and students' achievement in literature, that the modular approach had improved the students' performance from poor to excellent.

Table 2.a. Level of Reading Comprehension of the Control Group in their Pretest and Posttest ($n_1=15$).

Reading Level	Pretest			Posttest		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Literal	25.00	8.9	Fairly Satisfactory	33.67	8.1	Fairly Satisfactory
Inferential	22.11	9.2	Fairly Satisfactory	31.58	9.3	Fairly Satisfactory
Evaluative	27.88	10.0	Fairly Satisfactory	32.73	6.7	Fairly Satisfactory
Applied	24.67	13.6	Fairly Satisfactory	34.67	8.3	Fairly Satisfactory
Overall Mean	24.91	3.9	Fairly Satisfactory	33.16	3.9	Fairly Satisfactory

The data above indicates that during the pretest, all four (4) levels were described as fairly satisfactory ($M = 24.91, SD = 3.9$). In-depth, the inferential level got the lowest mean ($M = 22.11, SD = 9.2$) among the four groups. The data suggests that most students are not yet competent in reading between the lines and at the surface level. According to Hermosa (2012), to attain proficiency at the inferential level, learners should be able to respond to questions that are hinted at or suggested but not explicitly expressed in the text. This is followed by the applied level ($M = 24.67, SD = 13.6$), which indicates that pupils still need to attain the desired reading proficiency in applying the text to real-life situations. Hermosa (2012) adds that students needed help to achieve the reading goals that were stressed at this level, which included reading for use, values, and explanation. The literal level on the third test ($M = 25.00, SD = 8.9$) entails that students have not yet mastered the literal or first reading comprehension level. More exposure to reading activities may be a factor for

this low level of reading competency. Moreover, lastly, the evaluative level got the highest mark ($M = 27.88, SD = 10.0$) among the four groups, which implies that when compared to other levels, students at this level can make personal judgments in text in terms of accuracy, value, truthfulness, and relevance of the content.

Similarly, the posttest result indicates an accurate verbal description of fairly satisfactory ($M = 33.16, SD = 3.9$). This means the students' performances were almost identical during the pretest and posttest. The results for the following reading levels have shown that the literal level got ($M = 33.67, SD = 8.1$), the inferential level ($M = 31.58, SD = 9.3$) the lowest mean, the evaluative story ($M = 32.73, SD = 6.7$) next to the lowest (inferential) and the applied level ($M = 34.67, SD = 8.3$) which marked as the highest among the four levels of reading comprehension.

The results imply that during the pretest, students' low scores conveyed difficulty in comprehending in the given literary texts, considering that no discussion yet happened, and

certainly needs intervention. However, during the posttest, the control group manifested a slight increase in all levels of reading comprehension.

Table 2.b. Level of Reading Comprehension of the Experimental Group in their Pretest and Posttest ($n_2=15$).

Reading Level	Pretest			Posttest		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Literal	21.67	8.38	Fairly Satisfactory	76.67	8.80	Very Satisfactory
Inferential	24.56	10.84	Fairly Satisfactory	61.40	7.87	Very Satisfactory
Evaluative	27.27	13.31	Fairly Satisfactory	61.21	9.39	Very Satisfactory
Applied	24.67	13.02	Fairly Satisfactory	60.67	9.61	Very Satisfactory
Overall Mean	24.54	9.26	Fairly Satisfactory	64.99	4.89	Very Satisfactory

Table 2. b presents the reading comprehension levels of the experimental group in their pretest and posttest as to literal, inferential, evaluative, and applied levels. Generally, the experimental group's reading comprehension before exposure to the intervention is described as fairly satisfactory ($M = 24.54, SD = 9.26$). This is attributed to the following comprehension results at specific levels: literal level ($M = 21.67, SD = 8.38$) being the lowest, and the applied level ($M = 24.67, SD = 13.02$) being the highest. Meanwhile, the inferential and evaluative levels ($M = 24.56, SD = 10.84$) and ($M = 27.27, SD = 13.31$) are in between, respectively. This means that students in the experimental group are not yet competent in answering literal, inferential, evaluative, and applied comprehension questions.

According to Almutairi (2018), the reading problems that negatively impact students' comprehension could include one or more of the following: inappropriate use of prior knowledge; lack of vocabulary; difficulty with reading fluency; limited understanding of common text structures (Graham & Bellert, 2005); difficulty making inferences (Hall, & Barnes, 2017; and, unfamiliarity with the appropriate strategy needed to gain meaning from a text (Woolley, 2008). Having one or more of these problems may prevent students

with learning disabilities from comprehending what they are reading and being successful at school.

In addition, Hoeh (2015) stressed that not being able to comprehend successfully can prevent students from learning, retaining information that they read, and graduating from school, which will negatively impact different aspects of their lives later on. This is true as Almutairi's (2018) notions that those who do not possess the ability to understand what they are reading are put at a disadvantage in every academic and personal life situation. Ambayon (2020) supported this, who states that reading comprehension is amazingly complex and multifaced.

On the other hand, after giving the intervention, the literal level remarkably obtained the highest mean ($M = 76.67, SD = 8.80$), followed by the inferential level ($M = 61.40, SD = 7.87$), the evaluative level ($M = 61.21, SD = 9.39$) and the applied level ($M = 60.67, SD = 9.61$). These results indicate an increase in reading comprehension after employing the CLM. It was also noted that all levels were described as very satisfactory, emphasizing the literal level as one of the areas that had shown better improvement. This claims that after the employment of the contextualized language material, all levels of reading comprehension need less supervision from the teachers.

Table 3. The t-test analysis on the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Control Group and Experimental Group.

Scores	N	Mean scores	Df	SD	t-computed	t - tabular
Pretest						
Control	15	14.73	28	5.12	0.14	2.05
Experimental	15	14.47		5.55		
Posttest						
Control	15	19.80	28	4.11	15.34	2.05
Experimental	15	39.80		2.93		

Note: $\alpha = .05$ level of significance

Table 3 shows the analysis of the pretest and posttest scores of the control and experimental groups. As indicated, the control and experimental groups during the pretest got ($M = 14.73$, $SD = 5.12$) and ($M = 14.47$, $SD = 5.55$), respectively, from which it can be inferred that both groups have almost the same performance. However, during the posttest, it can be noticed that the control group ($M = 19.80$, $SD = 4.11$) got a lower mean than that of the experimental group ($M = 39.80$, $SD = 2.93$). This implies that the posttest scores of the experimental group are higher than those of the other group. The experimental group performed better than the other group considering the intervention employed.

Moreover, the t-test computation for independent samples during the pretest obtained a computed t of 0.14, less than the critical value of 2.05 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is accepted, for obviously, there is no significant difference between the pretest scores of both the control and experimental groups.

On the other hand, during the posttest, the computed t of 15.34 is higher than the critical value of 2.05 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected because there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the control and experimental groups.

Table 4. Differences between the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Control Group and Experimental Group.

Group	n	Mean scores	Df	SD	t-computed	t - tabular
Control						
Pretest	15	14.73	14	5.12	6.10	2.14
Posttest	15	19.80		4.11		
Experimental						
Pretest	15	14.47	14	5.55	16.56	2.14
Posttest	15	39.80		2.93		

Note: $\alpha = .05$ level of significance

It can be seen in Table 4 the computation of the pretest and posttest scores of the control and experimental groups. Results reveal that the control group on the pretest got $M = 14.73$, $SD = 5.12$, while the experimental group got $M = 19.80$, $SD = 5.56$. This suggests that both groups obtained almost the same rating regarding reading comprehension and need improvement.

However, during the posttest, the control group attained ($M = 19.80$, $SD = 4.11$) while ($M = 39.80$, $SD = 2.93$) was underscored by the experimental group. This signifies that both groups performed well during the posttest, but the experimental group performed better than the control group because it gained a higher mean. The significant increase was attained with the help of the CLM employed by the researcher. It further explains that the module fits the student's needs and reading comprehension level.

Therefore, in analyzing the significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the control and experimental groups, the null hypothesis is rejected since the computed values of 6.10 and 16.56 for the control and experimental groups, respectively, are higher than the t-critical value of 2.14. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the control and experimental groups.

Table 5. The t-test analysis of the Mean Gain Scores of Control and Experimental Groups.

Group	N	Mean Gain	Df	SD	t-computed	t - tabular
Control	15	5.07	28	3.2	11.64	2.05
Experimental	15	25.33		5.9		2

Control	15	5.07	28	3.2	11.64	2.05
Experimental	15	25.33		5.9		2

Note: $\alpha = .05$ level of significance

Table 5 indicates the t-test analysis of the mean gain results of both groups regarding their reading comprehension level. As shown, the computed t of 11.64 is higher than the critical value of 2.05 at a .05 level of significance. This goes to show that the difference is statistically significant. It merely suggests that the mean gain of the experimental group ($M = 25.33$, $SD = 5.92$) is relatively higher than that of the control group ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 3.22$). It is, therefore, evident that the group who used the module achieved better than those who did not. Hence, using the module contributes to the students' significant learning. This result is consistent with earlier findings that the developed module is excellent in content, relevance, acceptability, and mechanics.

This shows a similar result to Bonganciso (2016) which show that contextualized teaching and learning improve students' reading comprehension abilities. Furthermore, it emphasizes that when reading instructions fit within the students' framework, students are motivated to learn, can use their schema to understand the information, can make connections between the text and context, and can develop their confidence.

In summary, educational resources in all forms are essential tools for the learning process. In addition to enhancing the learner's knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, it enables them to accomplish the learning objectives more efficiently and enjoyably.

CONCLUSION

Based on the statistical analysis and findings of the study, it can be concluded that the development of the CLM is a good point for innovating localized resource materials useful in narrowing the reading comprehension gap. The significant difference in the mean gain is strong evidence that the CLM is effective as it helped struggling readers to understand the text meaningfully. Further, the theory of contextual teaching is found to be substantial as it made the students' learning meaningful by enabling them to connect the text and context, use their schema in understanding the text, and, boost students' confidence because what they are reading is within their framework. Furthermore, this study is seen to have contributed great impact to the DepEd's contextualization of learning materials, in the institutionalization of mother-tongue as an auxiliary language at the secondary level, and support to the department's advocacy of 3Bs Initiative: Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa Program (Challenge: Every Learner a Proficient Reader Program), which aimed to make every learner a proficient reader at his/her grade level. And lastly, it can be concluded that the Contextualized Language Module is an authentic, relevant, and effective material for scaffolding reading comprehension.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and drawn conclusion, the following are highly recommended: 1) The CLM may also be used as supplementary material to other struggling readers in MNHS; 2) The CLM used in struggling readers in MNHS may not be as effective if used with other Iloko students of other geographical locations due to environmental factors, socio-cultural background, and socio-linguistic diversity; 3) It is also suggested that when translating language from one to another, accuracy must be observed; 4) Teachers of other subjects may consider Contextualized Teaching and Learning Approach to showcase relevant, useful, and meaningful learning among students; 5) Use of the mother-tongue in English class is case to case basis as this may affect the use of the target language; and 6) The conduct of similar studies in other areas is recommended to validate the external validity of the findings.

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