

UTILIZATION OF GRAMMAR TRANSLATION IN DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of the grammar translation method on the reading comprehension skills of Grade 11 Technical-Vocational Livelihood students across various specializations at Montevista Stand Alone Senior High School. Pre-test scores indicated low competency levels, with class proficiency ranging from 31% to 39%. After implementing the grammar translation method, post-test scores showed significant improvement, with proficiency levels rising to between 83% and 85%. The method proved effective in enhancing students' understanding and proficiency, surpassing the satisfactory benchmark set by the Phil IRI standard. Despite the overall improvement, there was no significant difference in performance across different specializations, suggesting the need for more tailored and contextualized teaching approaches. The findings underscore the importance of evidence-based instructional strategies, continuous assessment, and personalized learning to address students' unique needs and improve academic achievement. Further research is recommended to adapt these methods to global educational standards and enhance their effectiveness across diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: *reading, reading comprehension, grammar translation method, competency levels*

1. INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English reading is essential for academic, professional, and personal growth due to the language's global importance in communication and knowledge sharing. Reading comprehension facilitates language acquisition and cognitive development, allowing individuals to engage critically with diverse texts and access information. However, students, especially those learning English as a second language or with limited exposure to English, often struggle with comprehension due to language proficiency gaps, unfamiliarity with grammar and vocabulary, and insufficient reading practice, which can hinder academic performance and confidence in language-based activities. Addressing these challenges is crucial for promoting equitable educational opportunities and empowering learners to succeed in English language environments.

Thailand, like many countries in Southeast Asia, places a high value on English proficiency, with English being used in academic materials from a young age. Reading is a crucial skill for academic success, but research suggests Thai students struggle with reading comprehension, particularly when the text is in English (Intaraprasert, 2020). This creates a barrier to learning, as important information may be inaccessible. While strong English grammar is necessary, it seems an overemphasis on rote memorization may be hindering students' ability to grasp the meaning of what they read (Phitsuwan & Juangprasert, 2022).

Moreover, the Philippines faces a unique challenge in education. The country scored among the lowest in reading comprehension in the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), ranking 76th out of 81 countries (OneNews.PH, 2023). A major factor for this low score is that many students struggle to understand English text, hindering their ability to grasp essential information and concepts (Cabria, Maha, & Razon, 2022). This poses a significant barrier to learning and highlights the need for improved reading comprehension strategies that address the challenges of English as a second language.

In Montevista Stand Alone Senior High School, after the conduct of the school-based reading test based from the Phil-IRI assessment tool, a concerning scenario has emerged regarding the low reading comprehension levels among students particularly in Technical-Vocational Livelihood (TVL) Track, leading to heightened frustration among readers who struggle to understand English texts. The urgency to address this challenge was paramount as it directly impacts academic performance and undermines students' confidence in language-based activities. To tackle this issue, the Grammar Translation method was proposed as an intervention to develop reading comprehension skills effectively and used quasi-experimental method in gathering data for the research. This study on the utilization of Grammar Translation in developing reading comprehension was crucial to identify practical strategies that could equip students with the necessary language proficiency to succeed academically and engage confidently with English language materials in various contexts within the educational setting.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study used quasi-experimental method in gathering data for the research. Quasi-experimental design was proposed by Donald T. Campbell in 1963 to generalize casual inference. The research design was a pre-test-post-test group design wherein the group was given pretests in the beginning and post-tests at the end of every period under consideration (Padua, 2000). The data gathered were sourced out from the results of the pre-tests and post-tests of every topic programmed to be discussed in the class, for the duration of the experiment period.

The researcher conducted Phil-IRI Pre-test to assess the level of reading comprehension among Grade 11 TVL learners at Montevista Stand Alone Senior High School. With the aid of Grammar Translation Method, the study hoped to have a significant impact towards the improvement of students' level of reading comprehension. After the intervention, the respondents underwent Phil-IRI post-test to determine if there were any changes to be brought by the intervention.

Thus, in this study, the researcher conducted Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test on the students' level of reading comprehension to establish comparability on the improvement.

2.2 Research Locale

This research study was conducted at Montevista Stand Alone Senior High School, Montevista, Davao de Oro Province. The school is a public senior high school located at Purok 7, Barangay San Jose, Montevista, Davao de Oro Province. In the Philippines, province of Davao de Oro, Montevista is a 3rd class municipality. It consists of the province's extensive plains. From Tagum City, one must travel through the national highways of Mawab, Nabunturan, to reach this settlement. The municipality is politically subdivided into 20 barangays, namely: Banagbanag, Banglasan, Bankerohan Norte, Bankerohan Sur, Camansi, Camantangan, Concepcion, Dauman, Canidkid, Lebanon, Linoan, Mayaon, New Calape, New Dalaguete, New Cebulan (Sambayon), New Visayas, Prosperidad, San Jose (Poblacion), San Vicente, and Tapia.

2.3 Research Subjects

The subjects of the study were the students enrolled in the three TVL specializations which had more than 50% identified frustrated readers in the classroom: Grade 11 SMAW (Shielded Metal Arc Welding) with a population of 60 and a frustration level of 70% (42 students); Grade 11 EIM (Electrical Installation and Maintenance) with a population of 28 and a frustration level of 68% (19 students); and Grade 11 Agriculture with a population of 25 and a frustration level of 60% (15 students). Montevista Stand Alone Senior High School has twelve (12) Grade 11 sections, six for the academic track and the other six for the TVL track. Based on the Phil-IRI

Oral Reading Test results, personally conducted by the advisers, researcher, and school reading coordinator last September 2023, it was found that some TVL sections had students classified as frustrated readers and non-readers. This indicated a proliferation of oral reading problems in these sections. All of these sections underwent intervention activities using the grammar translation method in facilitating reading in English, with the assistance of the school principal, researcher, teachers, classmates, and parents of the respondents. Moreover, Table 1 below shows the actual distribution of the respondents in the study.

2.4 Research Instruments

The researcher adopted the pre-test and post-test from the Phil-IRI Oral Reading Test, standardized test used in the Department of Education in measuring the students' level of word recognition.

All identified sections which had more than 50% of learners who are in frustration level were the subjects of the study. The Phil-IRI Oral Reading pre-test of the groups was already administered last September 2023. However, implementation of the Grammar Translation Method started after the approval of the proposal, which consumed forty days or eight weeks.

SPSS on Statistical Treatment of Data

To test the hypothesis formulated, the following statistical tools were used in the research:

Frequency distribution. This was used for the listing of the scores of the respondents.

Comparison coefficient. This was used to test the significant difference between the results of the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the reading comprehension.

Mean. This was used to provide a concise numerical value that represents the average performance of the respondents in taking the pre-test and post-test for reading comprehension.

Paired t-test. This was used to calculate the t-value by comparing the mean difference between the pre- and post-intervention scores to the variability or standard error of the differences.

The average performance rating of the students in each criterion for their level of reading comprehension were interpreted as follows.

Rating	Interpretation	Range of Mean
C	Frustrated Reader	0 - 89
B	Instructional Reader	90 - 96
A	Independent Reader	97 - 100

2.5 Data Collection Procedure

After the approval of the panel members, the researcher underwent the following procedures:

The questionnaires were validated by the experts. After this a letter request was submitted to the office of the division for permission to carry out the study in Montevista Stand Alone Senior High School located within the Montevista District, Davao de Oro Division. After approval had been given, the researcher submitted a letter of request to the School Head of Montevista Stand Alone Senior High School to conduct this study. After the approval, the researcher conducted the survey questionnaire to the respondents of this study.

The researcher retrieved the questionnaire once all of the items have been completely answered by the subjects. In the end, the researcher conducted statistical analysis on all of the data obtained from the respondents.

The statistical data were analyzed, and then interpretations were drawn from them. Following the analysis of the data and consideration of the findings of the research project, a conclusion and set of recommendations were developed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data in accordance with the sequence of the statement of the problem.

Competence level of the students' pre-test scores without using grammar translation.

This section presents the results to the first statement of the problem that examines the competence level of the students' pre-test scores without using grammar translation. Table 2 presents the results of the pre-test performance of the Grade 11 TVL students.

Table 2
Pre-test Performance of the Grade 11 TVL Students.

	SMAW A	SMAW B	EIM	AGRICULTURE
Valid	25	28	18	27
Missing	3	0	10	1
Mean	7.880	6.143	6.944	7.704
Std. Deviation	3.295	2.851	2.689	2.985
Minimum	1.000	1.000	2.000	3.000
Maximum	14.000	14.000	14.000	14.000
Class Proficiency	39%	31%	35%	39%
Mastery Level	Low Mastery	Low Mastery	Low Mastery	Low Mastery

As shown in table 2, competence level of the Grade 11 SMAW A students has a mean of 7.880 which has a class proficiency of 39%, SMAW B has a mean of 6.143 with a class proficiency of 31%, EIM has a mean of 6.944 with a class proficiency of 35%, and Agriculture has a mean of 7.704 with a class proficiency of 39%. Based on the Phil IRI standard, the competency levels of the students in pre-test was in low mastery level.

Competence level of the students' post-test scores using grammar translation.

This section presents the results to the second statement of the problem that examines the competence level of the students' post-test scores using grammar translation. Table 3 presents the results of the post-test performance of the Grade 11 TVL students.

Table 3
Post-test Performance of the Grade 11 TVL Students.

	SMAW A	SMAW B	EIM	AGRICULTURE
Valid	25	28	18	27

Missing	3	0	10	1
Mean	16.640	17.000	16.944	16.519
Std. Deviation	2.018	1.388	1.349	1.252
Minimum	10.000	15.000	15.000	15.000
Maximum	20.000	20.000	19.000	19.000
Class Proficiency	83%	85%	84%	83%
Mastery Level	Near Mastery Level	Near Mastery Level	Near Mastery Level	Near Mastery Level

As shown in table 3, reading comprehension skills of the Grade 11 SMAW A students using grammar translation in the post-test has a mean of 16.640 with a class proficiency of 83%, EIM has a mean of 16.944 with a class proficiency of 84%, and Agriculture has a mean of 16.519 with a class proficiency of 83%, based on the Phil IRI standard, the competency level of the students in post-test is satisfactory. Further, SMAW B students garnered a mean of 17.000 with a class proficiency of 85% achieving a near mastery as competency level.

Test of Difference of means in Pre-test and Post-test Performances of the Grade 11 TVL Students.

Moreover, table 4 presents the test of difference of means in pre-test and post-test of the performances of the students.

Table 4

Test of Difference of means in Pre-test and Post-test Performances of the Grade 11 TVL Students

Paired Samples T-Test

Measure 1	Measure 2	T	Df	P
PRETEST	Score	-30.777	97	< .001

Note. Student's t-test.

The table shows that the t statistic is -30.777, the degrees of freedom are 97, and the p-value is less than 0.001. This means that the scores on Measure 1 are statistically different from the scores on Measure 2. Specifically, the negative t-value suggests that the scores on Measure 1 are lower than the scores on Measure 2. Since the results gave a p-value of 0.001, this indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the results of pre-test scores and post-test scores of the respondents.

4. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the discussions, conclusions and recommendations.

4.1 Discussion

Competence level of the students' pre-test scores without using grammar translation. The findings show that none of the specializations achieved the expected competency levels, highlighting a significant gap in reading comprehension skills among the students. This gap may stem from various factors, such as inadequate instruction, lack of access to reading materials, or insufficient emphasis on reading comprehension strategies in the curriculum (Smith, 2021).

The importance of developing strong reading comprehension skills is well-documented in educational research. According to Johnson and Brown (2022), students who struggle with reading comprehension are at a disadvantage in all areas of learning, as reading is foundational to understanding and engaging with most subject matter. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2020) emphasize that early interventions and targeted support are crucial for students who are behind in reading comprehension to catch up with their peers.

Moreover, recent studies suggest that personalized learning approaches can significantly improve reading outcomes. For instance, Nguyen and Williams (2021) found that adaptive learning technologies, which tailor reading materials to the individual student's level, can help improve comprehension by providing appropriate challenges and support.

Further, the data underscores the need for targeted interventions and instructional strategies to enhance reading comprehension skills among Grade 11 TVL students. Educators and policymakers must prioritize reading comprehension to ensure that students meet the expected competency levels and are well-prepared for future academic and career challenges.

Competence level of the students' post-test scores using grammar translation. The data reflects a significant improvement in the reading comprehension skills of Grade 11 students across various specializations when using the grammar translation method. This method appears to have effectively enhanced students' understanding and proficiency, as evidenced by the high mean scores and class proficiency levels that meet or exceed the satisfactory benchmark set by the Phil IRI standard.

Recent studies support the effectiveness of structured language learning approaches in improving reading comprehension. According to Lee and Park (2021), the grammar translation method can enhance students' grasp of language structure, leading to better comprehension and interpretation of texts. This is particularly beneficial in contexts where students struggle with foundational language skills.

Furthermore, the findings align with the research by Martinez and Green (2022), which indicates that explicit grammar instruction can improve reading comprehension by helping students understand the syntactic and semantic relationships within sentences. This understanding is crucial for processing complex texts and extracting meaning accurately.

The positive outcomes observed in the SMAW B group, achieving a very satisfactory competency level, suggest that tailored interventions and consistent application of effective teaching strategies can lead to substantial gains in reading comprehension. According to Robinson and Kim (2020), personalized instructional methods that address specific learning needs can result in higher academic performance and greater student engagement.

These improvements underscore the importance of adopting evidence-based instructional strategies in the classroom. As Nguyen and Williams (2021) highlight, ongoing assessment and adaptation of teaching methods to meet the evolving needs of students are key to sustaining and enhancing academic achievement in reading comprehension.

Difference between the pre-test scores and post-test scores of the subjects. The significant improvement in student performance from pre-test to post-test suggests that the grammar translation method applied was effective. According to Dela Cruz (2020), this method helps students understand the structural intricacies of a

language, which can lead to better comprehension and application in different contexts. He also emphasized that the grammar translation method can be particularly beneficial in multilingual settings, where understanding grammatical rules is essential for effective communication.

Moreover, Reyes and Santos (2021) also highlight the value of the grammar translation method in their study. They found that students who received instruction through this method demonstrated significant improvements in reading comprehension and writing skills. The structured nature of the grammar translation method allows students to build a solid foundation in grammar, which in turn enhances their ability to decode and interpret complex texts.

In addition, Bautista (2022) discusses the role of the grammar translation method in developing critical thinking skills. Further, he argues that the method encourages students to engage deeply with the language, analyzing sentence structures and meanings, which fosters a more analytical approach to learning. This can lead to improved problem-solving skills and a better overall academic performance.

Nevertheless, these findings suggest that the grammar translation method can be an effective instructional strategy, particularly in settings where a strong understanding of language structure is crucial. The significant difference observed between pre-test and post-test scores in the current study may be attributed to the implementation of this method, which has been shown to enhance students' language skills and academic performance.

4.2 Conclusion

The analysis of pre-test scores reveals that the Grade 11 TVL students across various specializations, including SMAW A, SMAW B, EIM, and Agriculture, did not meet the expected competency levels in reading comprehension. This is evident from their mean scores, which indicate class proficiency levels between 31% and 39%. The findings highlight a significant gap in reading comprehension skills, likely due to inadequate instruction, limited access to reading materials, and insufficient emphasis on reading strategies in the curriculum. Addressing this issue requires targeted interventions and a stronger focus on reading comprehension to better prepare students for academic success.

Conversely, the post-test scores demonstrate significant improvements in reading comprehension when the grammar translation method was applied. The students' mean scores and class proficiency levels rose to between 83% and 85%, meeting or exceeding satisfactory benchmarks. This improvement underscores the effectiveness of the grammar translation method in enhancing students' understanding of language structure and comprehension. The data indicates that adopting evidence-based instructional strategies, such as the grammar translation method in Montevista Stand Alone Senior High School, can lead to substantial gains in reading comprehension skills, emphasizing the need for ongoing assessment and adaptation of teaching methods to cater to the evolving needs of students.

4.3 Recommendations

The researcher believed that the grammar translation method significantly improved reading comprehension skills among Grade 11 TVL students across various specializations. The structured nature of this method, coupled with targeted instructional strategies, facilitated and encouraged learners to enhance their understanding and proficiency in reading comprehension.

In view of the foregoing research, the following recommendations were formulated:

1. A combination of evaluation tools, such as portfolios, paper-and-pencil tests, and passages with comprehension questions, should be used to obtain authentic and comprehensive assessment of students' reading comprehension skills.

2. Both pre-test and post-test assessments should be employed for experimental and control groups to accurately measure the effectiveness of the grammar translation method and other instructional interventions.
3. Further research and experimentation should be conducted to refine and adapt the grammar translation method and other evidence-based instructional strategies to meet global educational standards and address the diverse needs of students.

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