Word Wall Approach: Promoting Vocabulary Learning and Comprehension Skills of Pupils

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the implication of using the World Wall approach in promoting and enhancing the word power and reading comprehension skills of the pupil-participants. To this end, true experimental research design was utilized in order to test the efficacy of the approach.

A total of 32 Grade-III pupils were randomly distributed into experimental and control groups, with 16 pupils in each group. The experiment covered two trial runs. Pretest and posttest were administered every trial to determine the pupils' performance. Data were statistically treated using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

The results of the study revealed that the use of word wall approach as an integration in teaching reading effectively enhances pupils' reading achievement in both vocabulary and comprehension skills. Likewise, it was also noted that using the conventional way of teaching reading can also gradually improve performance, hence may still be used in instruction.

Thus, this study recommends that DepEd allowance funds to support and encourage word wall resources in teaching through provision of word wall instructions in schools and conduct of workshops and seminar for teachers on using word wall approach. School administrators are also encouraged to require their English teachers to integrate word wall approach in teaching literature lessons. Moreover, they should also conduct monitoring of classes whenever necessary, to check if teachers really do the integration. Furthermore, English teachers are challenge to utilize word wall approach in teaching to better facilitate pupils' learning of the subject. In addition, they should also endeavor to attend seminars and workshops on word wall approach to improve their knowledge and skills in word wall approach. Finally, other researchers are urged to explore and share other scientific research studies about the relationship of using word wall approach and pupils' academic performance.

KEYWORDS: Word Wall, Word wall approach, Teaching Reading, PhiLIRI, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

A word wall is a collection of high-frequency sight words that are age appropriate, classified into groups or categories, and is located on the wall of a classroom for children to easily see and learn (Brabham & Green) [1] argues that word wall helps to create a print rich environment for students, and can be a wonderful tool that is designed to promote group learning.

It is not enough to simply have a word wall in the classroom. you have 'do' the word wall (Cunningham) [2]. Teachers cannot simply put up words somewhere in the classroom and tell students to use them. Doing a word wall means being selective and limiting the words that are essential to the unit of study. Doing a word wall means making the words accessible by putting them where students can see them. Doing a word wall means adding words gradually. Cunningham [2] suggests adding five words week. Doing a word wall means students have time to practice and to write with the words. Doing a word wall means using a variety of review activities to provide enough practice so that the words become automatic for the students. Teachers who 'do' word walls report that all students can learn critical words. word walls strategy also serves to teach word analysis and to build vocabulary from units of study.

Word walls serve multiple purposes such as: support the teaching of key words and subject-specific terminology; promote independence in reading and writing by building vocabulary; provide visual clues and reference for language learning; and help students remember connections between words concepts.

In retrospect, the child as the center of educative process must be well – nurtured, and must be fostered with educational abilities to free himself for herself from the limited world of mysteries. Thus, education serves as an agent to transport the child's mind into a new world of understanding. Children who are poor readers usually lack a wide vocabulary (Dubliner and Smetana) [3].

Vocabulary is fundamental to reading comprehension. One can't understand a text without a text without knowing what most of the words mean. A wealth of research has documented the strengthen of the relationship between vocabulary and comprehension. The proportion of difficult words in a text is the single most powerful predictor of text difficulty, and a reader's general vocabulary knowledge is the single best predictor of how well that reader can understand a text. This fact is supported in a comprehensive research finding of Bromly [4] that vocabulary promotes reading fluency, boost reading comprehension, improves academic achievement, and enhances thinking and communication.

Richek [5] further emphasize that vocabulary is one of the best predictors of reading achievement since the fundamental aspect of comprehension is the ability to deal with unfamiliar words encountered in a text. Clearly, vocabulary and comprehension are closely connected skills. Each skill is imperative to reading achievement, yet one relies heavily on the other. To illustrate, recognizing and understanding more words will increase the likelihood that pupils will comprehend what they are reading and therefore perform better in school (Hansen) [6].

However, Harmon [7] notes that many pupils continue to struggle with comprehension because of limited vocabulary has become an obvious and serious problem for many pupils and even educators since it hampers comprehension. Therefore, increasing vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental part of the educative process, both as a means and as an end (Nagy) [8].

Furthermore, the traditional bottom-up approach to reading, influenced by behaviorist psychology, claimed that learning was based upon "habit formation, brought about by the repeated association of a stimulus with a response" (Omaggio) [9]. This become the basis of the word wall approach, which sought to form "habits" through drilling and repetition. These are based on recognition and recall of lexical and grammatical forms with an emphasis on the perceptual and decoding dimension.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study was conducted to ascertain the effects of word wall approach in promoting the vocabulary and reading comprehension of the Grade III pupils in Dumingag I District, Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur, School Year 2018-2019.

Specifically, this study intended to answer the following questions:

1. What is the pretest and posttest performance of the pupil-participants in the experimental and control groups in teaching reading during the first trial run?
2. What is the pretest and posttest performance of the pupil-participants in the experimental and control groups in teaching reading during the second trial run?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest performance level of the pupil-participants in the experimental group during the first and second trial run?
4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest performance level of the pupil-participants in the control group during the first and second trial run?
5. Is there a significant difference on the posttest result of experimental and control groups in the first and second trial runs?
6. Is there a significant difference on the posttest performance level of the pupil-participants between the vocabulary and reading comprehension during the first trial run?
7. Is there a significant difference on the posttest performance level of the pupil-participants between their vocabulary level and reading comprehension in the second trial run?

This study determined the implication of using the Word Wall approach in promoting and enhancing the word power and reading comprehension skills of the pupil-participants. To this end, true experimental research design was utilized in order to test the efficacy of the approach.

It was conducted in the selected elementary school of Dumingag – I District, Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur, School, School Year 2018 – 2019. A total of 32 Grade-III pupils were randomly distributed and control groups, with 16 pupils in each group.

The experimental covered two trial runs. The selections taken from the Philippines Informal Reading Inventory Manual 2018 were limited to "Summer Fun", used in the first trial run and "The Caps and the Kittens", used in the second trial run. Both lessons were taught using Teaching Reading in lower Grades method with the integration of word wall approach in the experimental group. Pretest and posttest were administered in every trial to determine the pupils' performance.

The study only treated the following variables: profile of the pupil-respondents as to sex and age; their vocabulary words and reading comprehension levels; and the significance of the difference between the male and female pupil-participants' vocabulary words and comprehension levels. In the vocabulary skill, it was centered only on the use of configuration clues and context clues.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Performance of the Pupil-participants in Terms of the Pretest and Posttest Results of the First Trial Run

The data on the performance of the pupil-participants in both groups in terms of the pretest and posttest result in the first trial run are presented in Table 1.

As revealed, the pupil-participants in the experimental group show considerable increase in their comprehension level from only 9 or 56.25% in the pretest to 14 or 87.50% in the posttest descriptively interpreted as Independent. Likewise, posttest result display that most of the pupil-participants have achieved competence as only 2 or 12.50% belonged to instructional level and none in the frustration level. This henceforth proved that the use of word wall approach in teaching reading to pupils can augment pupils' reading comprehension skills.

On the other hand, the pretest results of the control group show that 14 or 87.50% of the pupil-participants belonged to instructional level with 2 or 12.50% in the frustration level and none falls under independent level. A slight increase can be noted in posttest results as 1 or 6.25% reach the independent while rets remain in the instructional level. These results imply that the use conventional way of teaching reading could help learners read but do not foster higher levels of learning particularly in reading comprehension.

Generally, it can be noted that pupil-participants engaged in a reading lesson with the integration of word wall approach comprehend better than those who didn't.

Jones [10] confirm these result he noted that interactive word walls showcase well-selected words; they help teachers build a foundation for student content vocabulary comprehension. They also support word-learning strategies by highlighting root words, suffixes, prefixes, and their meanings. This helps student decode meaning in text. Additionally, when students use the word walls they become more conscious of words and definitions. This support content comprehension. It also helps students become aware of vocabulary in the word around them.

Table 1. Performance of the Pupil-participants in Terms of the Pretest and Posttest Results of the First Trial Run

Level of Performance	Experimental Group				Control Group			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	F	P(%)	F	P(%)	F	P(%)	F	P(%)
Independent (80-100%)	9	56.25	14	87.50	0	0.00	1	6.25
Instructional (59-79%)	6	37.50	2	12.50	14	87.50	15	93.75
Frustration (58 and below	1	6.25	0	0.00	2	12.50	0	0.00

Performance of the Pupil-participants in Terms of the Pretest and Posttest Result of the Second Trial Run

Table 2 shows the data on the performance of the pupil-participants in terms of the pretest and posttest result of the second trial run.

As presented, the pupil-participants in the experimental group have maintained high level of performance along independent level as evidently supported by their pretest and posttest results.

On the other hand, the control group showed fair result in their pretest with almost all or 15, 93.75% belong to instructional level and only one or 6.25% in the frustration level. However, a considerable improvement was noted during the posttest as 3 or 18.75% of the pupil-participants fall in the independent level; 13 or 81.25%, instructional level; while, no one belongs to frustration level.

The results indicate that the experimental group's performance is superior than the of the control group. Hence, it is empirical to say than the use of word wall approach as a strategy in teaching reading to lower grades strengthens pupils' reading skills.

The action research conducted by Aritonang [12] validate the aforementioned findings that word walls are effective, enjoyable, and interesting way to teach vocabulary because it can help the students to recognize, promote independence, develop a growing core of words, and provide reference support for students during their reading and writing. Thus, the use of word walls fosters better learning and comprehension.

Table 2. Performance of the Pupil-participants in Terms of the Pretest and Posttest Results of the Second Trial Run

Level of Performance	Experimental Group				Control Group			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	F	P(%)	F	P(%)	F	P(%)	F	P(%)
Independent (80-100%)	16	100.00	16	100.00	0	0.00	3	18.75
Instructional (59-79%)	0	0.00	0	0.00	15	93.75	13	81.25
Frustration (58 and below	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	6.25	0	0.00

Table 3. Significance of the Difference Between the Pretest and Posttest Results of the Experimental Group

Variable	Mean of the Difference	SD	t-value computed	tabular
First Trial Run Pretest Posttest	1.94	1.0627	7.302	1.753
Second Trial Run Pretest Posttest	0.75	0.683	4.392	1.753

The findings indicate that there is a difference in the level of reading achievement of the experimental group in terms of the pretest and posttest results in the first trial run. This implies that use od word wall approach in teaching reading increased the level of pupils' learning as evidenced by the mean difference of 1.94 between the posttest and pretest. This result agrees to the findings of Hansen [6] that recognizing and understanding more words will increase the likelihood that pupils will comprehend what they are reading and therefore perform better in school.

The results indicate that there is also a difference in the experimental group's level of reading performance with respect to the pretest and posttest results in the second trial run. This entails that teaching reading using word wall approach improved pupils' reading success as attested by the mean difference of 0.75 between the posttest and pretest. This proves that pupils can comprehend a text better when they have readily access to a vocabulary. This fact is supported in a comprehensive research finding of Bromly [4] that vocabulary promotes reading fluency, boosts reading comprehension, improves academic achievement, and enhances thinking and communication.

Table 4. Significance of the Difference Between the Pretest and Posttest Results of the control Group

Variables	Mean of the Difference	SD	t-value computed	tabular
First Trial Run Pretest Posttest	1.25	0.4472	11.181	1.753
Second Trial Run Pretest Posttest	0.75	0.6831	4.392	1.753

The findings indicate that there is a difference in the level of reading achievement of the control group in terms of the pretest and posttest result in the first trial run. Traditionally-based literature teaching can provide higher achievement scores to pupils as they are used to this method of instruction.

The computed t-value of 4.392 is greater than the tabular value of 1.753 which rejected the hypothesis and established a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results of the control group in the second trial run. The findings entail that teaching reading using the familiar method also promoted pupils' learning as proven by the mean of the difference of 0.75. This confirms that teaching following lecture method is effective in learning as teacher's explanations are very helpful in making students understanding the lesson. Moreover, lectures were superior to discussion to promote factual information; and that learning preferences of learners effect their performance, that is pupils may have believed in knowledge and power of memorizing (Tang and Williams) [12].

Table 5. Significance of the Difference Between the Posttest Result of the Experimental and Control Groups

Variable	Mean of the Difference	SD	t-value computed	Tabular
First Trial Run Posttest Experimental Posttest Control	3.5	1.5916	8.796	1.753
Second Trial Run Posttest Experimental Posttest Control	4.25	1.1255	15.104	1.753

The computed t-value of 8.796 is greater than the tabular value of 1.753 which rejected the hypothesis and established a significant difference between the posttest results of the experimental and control groups in the first trial run.

Therefore, there is a significant difference between the posttest results of the experimental and control groups in the first trial run. Based on the results, the experimental group performed better than the control group as evidenced by the mean of the difference of 3.5. this implies that teaching reading using word wall approach is more effective than the traditional way of reading instruction. The results support Trisnawati, et al. [13] findings that the English vocabulary abilities of the student who followed the model of visual word wall was higher than the students who follow conventional models.

The computed t-value of 15.104 is greater than the tabular value of 1.753 which rejected the hypothesis and established a significant difference between the posttest results of the experimental and control groups in the second trial run. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the posttest results of the experimental and control groups in the second trial run.

As the results indicate, the experimental group performed better than the control group as evidenced by the mean of the difference of 4.25. this justifies that teaching reading using word wall approach is more effective than the direct method of reading instruction.

The finding corroborates Anggriani [14] result in his study that use word walls strategy significantly improved students' vocabulary. Further, students showed higher interest in the learning activities using word wall.

Table 6. Significance of the Difference Between the Posttest Results of the Vocabulary and Reading Test in the Experimental Group

Variable	Mean of the Difference	SD	t-value computed	t-value Tabular
First Trial Run				
Vocabulary	3.81	0.91		
Reading Comprehension	4.31	0.79	2.405	1.753
Second Trial Run				
Vocabulary	4.69	0.704		
Reading Comprehension	4.56	0.629	0.5332	1.753

The computed t-value of 2.405 is greater than the tabular value of 1.753 which rejected the hypothesis and established a significant difference between the posttest results of the vocabulary and reading test in the experimental group in the first trial run. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the posttest results of the vocabulary and reading test in the experimental group in the first trial run.

As revealed, the pupil-participants in the experimental group have better performance in their reading comprehension test as supported by the mean of the difference of 4.31 over the 3.81 of the vocabulary test. Thus, it can be noted that use of word approach could help pupils comprehend the literature lesson easily.

The computed t-value of 0.5332 is lesser than the tabular value of 1.753 which unhesitatingly accepted the hypothesis. Therefore, there is no vocabulary and reading test in the experimental group in the trial run. Word wall activities have been one of the factors that strengthened high-frequency word recognition resulting in an increase fluency and better retention of knowledge.

Conclusions

1. The experimental group exhibits superior performance than the control group during the pretest and posttest result of the first trial run.

2. The experimental group performance notably high in the pretest and posttest of the second trial run than of the control group.

3. The use of word wall approach in teaching reading has significantly increased the reading performance of the pupil-participants in the experimental groups in the two trial runs.

4. Although the pupil-participants in control group show good reading ability, result still indicates that conventional teaching of reading also improves pupils' performance at a moderate pace.

5. teaching reading using word wall approach s more effective than the conventional method.

6. A significant difference exist on the posttest performance level of the pupil-participants between the vocabulary and reading comprehension during the first trial run.

7. An insignificant difference exist on the posttest performance level of the pupil-participants between the pupil-respondents' vocabulary level and their reading comprehension in the second trail run.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the DepEd allocate fund to support and encourage the use of word wall as a resource in teaching and to conduct workshop and seminars for teachers on how to use word wall approach effectively.

2. That English teachers utilize word wall approach in teaching to better facilitate pupils' learning of the subject, attend seminars and workshops on word wall approach to improve their knowledge and skills in using the strategy.

3. That other researchers explore and share other scientific research studies about the relationship of using word wall approach and pupils' academic performance.

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