

A Decodable Reader in Southern Sorsoganon for Grade One Pupils

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Abstract:- This study developed and validated decodable reader in Southern Sorsoganon as a supplementary reading material for Grade One pupils at Bulusan Central School, Bulusan District, Division of Sorsogon Province for the school year 2023-2024. The respondents of the study were twenty (20) Grade One pupils. Seventeen (17) pupils were from the last section who took the Modified Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (mCRLA) for the Beginning of School Year to determine their reading profile, while three (3) Grade One pupils were from the first section who took the field testing since they were identified as At Grade Level/fluent readers. Additionally, five (5) evaluators validated the said supplementary reading material. The study employed ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) model instructional design in the development and validation of the material. The decodable reader covered Mother Tongue 1; Quarter 1 under the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs). The validity of the decodable reader was evaluated by evaluators using Evaluation Sheet for Print Resources adopted from DepEd Learning Resource Development and Management (LRMDS) along with the following factors: Content, Format, Presentation and Organization, and Accuracy and Up-to-datedness. The decodable reader in Southern Sorsoganon for Grade One pupils passed DepEd Learning Resource Management and System (LRMDS) standards. Moreover, all evaluators agreed that the material should be approved for use in public schools if the necessary changes and revisions were made. The decodable reader, according to evaluators, would effectively supplement the teaching-learning process for the target pupils. In addition, based on the result of the field testing, the pupils regarded the decodable reader as relatable and interactive reading material.

Keywords:- Decodable Reader, Development, Validation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Literacy is the ability to communicate using written, printed, or electronic signs or symbols to represent language. This concept is commonly contrasted with orality (oral tradition), which encompasses a wide range of strategies for communicating through oral and acoustic media. However, in real-world situations, written and oral communication forms

coexist and interact within the same culture and the same groups of people (Foley, 2023).

Essential components of literacy, reading and writing provide people with access to the world. These activities have a vital influence on children's academic, social, and even future professions. They provide people with confidence and freedom. As such, children who are confident in their ability to read are also confident in their ability to learn within and outside the classroom. At the same time, reading may also lead to better job opportunities for them in the future. As a result, it may contribute to poverty alleviation, eliminate daily struggles, hunger, and crime.

Literacy has the power to transform both a person's life and the lives of others. On the other hand, readers who struggle are more likely to encounter difficulties in oral expression. This can lead to anxiety, depression, or other conditions that may negatively impact one's overall quality of life. The higher a person's ability to express himself, the greater will be his confidence, self-esteem, and chances of living a happy and healthy life.

In terms of literacy, schools are crucial institutions for helping students achieve their educational goals. Starting to read at a young age is essential for success in all academic subjects. Teachers play a critical role in developing children's foundational skills to set them up for future success. Even though reading is not a standalone subject in grades one through three, as it is integrated into other subjects, teachers still dedicate additional time to providing reading programs, enrichment, and remedial instruction without expecting financial compensation for their efforts.

Serao (2022) emphasized the importance of a child's native language in shaping their academic performance. Learning their mother tongue from an early age helps strengthen their social, personal, and cultural identities. It also aids in better understanding the educational process and developing a positive attitude towards social interaction. This strong foundation also facilitates the learning of additional languages.

Azardon (2020) highlighted the Philippines' initiative in 2013 to incorporate various native languages into the basic education system. This move was praised by international

organizations such as UNESCO, academic conferences, and advocates of fair, culturally appropriate, and accessible education. The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program provided hope for minority children to better comprehend instruction in their home languages and actively engage in the learning process. The Philippines set a strong example for other countries in promoting inclusive education and committing to cultural and linguistic diversity.

Dyvik (2024) pointed out a gender gap in the global literacy rate. While literacy rates have generally increased worldwide for both men and women, men are, on average, more literate than women. As of 2022, approximately 90 percent of men and just under 84 percent of women worldwide were literate. The adult literacy rate is defined as the percentage of people aged 15 years and older who can read and write with understanding a short, simple statement about their everyday lives.

Chi (2024) cited that at least 90% of Filipino children aged 10 struggle to read or understand simple text. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the pre-pandemic figure indicated learning poverty in the Philippines at 70%.

According to Calipay (2023), the Department of Education Bicol (DepEd V) has devised a "learning recovery plan" (LRP) to remedy the learning loss resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on formal education in the past two years (School Year 2020-2021 and School Year 2021-2022). The RAISE LRP (Recovering for Academic Achievement by Improving Instruction through Sustainable Evidence-Based Learning Programs) aims to address knowledge disruptions among transitioning students from Grades 1 to 3 caused by the pandemic in key learning areas such as literacy and numeracy. At present, DepEd, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Research Triangle Institute (RTI International), through its Advancing Basic Education in the Philippines project (ABC+), is continuing to implement a learning recovery program (LRP) that addresses the early-grade learning gaps in Bicol Region students. This 8-week program requires the refinement of learning resources as well as the production of available learning resources.

In many regions, particularly in the Bicol region, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provides reading materials contextualized in their native language to K-3 students. This enables young learners to receive better support as they transition from their native language to Filipino and English. The researcher was inspired to contribute to this initiative, notably in the development of supplementary reading materials for pupils in her school.

In recent years, teachers have faced various problems in implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), including children's ability to read and

comprehend due to a lack of learning resources written in their mother tongue. The results of the Beginning of School Year Modified Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (BoSY MCRLA), particularly in Bulusan Central School, reflect this. This is a problem that teachers are dealing with, especially in the lower section. Developing a decodable reader in the mother tongue for the pupils of Bulusan Central School will be needed.

❖ *Statement of the Problem*

This study aimed to develop and validate a decodable reader in the Southern Sorsoganon linguistic variety for Grade One pupils at Bulusan Central School, Bulusan District for the School Year 2023-2024.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

- What is the reading profile of Grade One pupils along:
 - Letter sounds, rhymes, sentence reading; and
 - Reading fluency and comprehension?
- What are the features of the developed decodable reader?
- What is the validity of the developed decodable reader based on DepEd Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) along:
 - Content;
 - Format, (prints, illustrations, design and layout, paper and binding and size and weight of resource)
 - Presentation and Organization; and
 - Accuracy and Up-to-datedness of information?

II. RELATED LITERATURE

The researcher has undergone intensive research on the existing literature to find links with the present study. The information gathered focused on the importance of learning to read and write in one's mother tongue, the legal basis for developing supplementary reading material, and the DepEd Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) standards.

DepEd (2016) stated that learners who are starting their education should begin with their mother tongue, which is the language they understand the best. This is because learners need to build a strong foundation in their mother language before they can effectively learn additional languages. Strydom (2024) further emphasized that reading with meaning is the gateway to all learning. Therefore, to give a child the best start to their education, they must learn how to read and write with meaning in their mother tongue. Similarly, Sinnott (2022) stated that it is extremely important for people to learn to read and write in their own language because it gives everyone a sense of themselves and a sense of their place in the world.

The cited literatures have significant bearing on the present study since they addressed the importance of learning to read and write in one's mother tongue, and the necessity of mastering one's mother tongue before learning another language. In response to this, the present study focused on developing a decodable reader written in Southern Sorsoganon, which is the mother tongue of Grade One pupils. This approach may improve the pupils' reading abilities and provide a strong foundation for their future learning.

The K to 12 Curriculum is a crucial component of the Philippine education system, and one of its essential features is the localization of curriculum, as stated in DepEd Order No. 35, s.2016. This means that the curriculum should be flexible enough to allow schools to adapt it based on their respective educational and social contexts, making it more relevant and meaningful to the students. To achieve this, the production and development of locally produced teaching materials are encouraged, as emphasized in RA10533, 2013.

In addition, DepEd Order No. 173, s. 2019, encourages all DepEd personnel to develop supplementary reading materials that align with the existing development guidelines, procedures, and quality assurance of the Bureau of Learning Resources. This is to support the implementation of reading literacy initiatives in public schools. With this, teachers are also encouraged to continue innovating, inventing, and relearning to deliver a quality and productive output. They should possess a deep understanding of the subject matter, be equipped with various teaching-learning approaches and activities, and use appropriate instructional materials and learning resources to make learning more effective (DepEd Memorandum No. 173, s. 2019).

These literatures serve as the legal basis and blueprint for the development of the decodable reader as a supplementary reading material for Grade One in this study. The need to develop innovative materials that pupils can relate to their own experiences is highlighted, and this is in line with the goal of making learning more contextualized and meaningful for the students.

The Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) is a comprehensive system consisting of four integrated sub-systems aimed at providing increased distribution and access to learning, teaching, and professional-development resources at the regional, division, and school levels. These sub-systems include assessment and evaluation, development, acquisition, and production, storage and maintenance, and publication and delivery. The LRMDS system provides information on the quantity, and location of textbooks and supplementary materials, access to learning, teaching, and professional development resources in digital format, and standards, specifications, and guidelines for the four subsystems (DepEd Order No. 76, s. 2011).

This cited literature holds significance in the present study as the developed decodable reader was designed using DepEd Learning Resources Management and Development System LRMDS standards. If the material fails to meet the DepEd LRMDS criteria, it may not be permitted to be used in public schools. Therefore, the decodable reader was carefully designed to meet every criterion.

Decodable books are a type of reading material that enables young or struggling readers to improve their phonics skills by introducing them to a selection of letter-sound correspondences that they have already learned through explicit teaching (Warner, 2022). This is why early readers are often highly motivated to read independently when using decodable texts, as they experience success applying their new alphabetic knowledge as soon as it is learned, as stated by Bruneel (2023). Decodable books serve as a vehicle for students to see the real-life application of what they are learning while preventing the development of poor reading strategies.

However, Schwartz (2023) stated in her article that teachers are divided when it comes to decodable books. One of the teachers mentioned that decodable books just don't have a storyline.

Moreover, Pennell, Jordan, Nash, Elson Trathen (2024) emphasized that not all decodable texts are created equally, nor are they all equally appropriate for all readers. In this regard, Dufresne (2023) suggested some criteria for selecting a decodable book to use for students. These criteria include having a meaningful story, language structure that sounds natural, illustrations with vibrant colors and diverse characters, pictures that are appealing to the age group, and providing opportunities to practice new skills.

Similarly, Pierce (2024) asserted that a good set of decodable books will introduce new phonics concepts in a systematic and deliberate way, with a carefully constructed scope and sequence in which the skills that students learn build cumulatively. Decodable books are sequential in nature and build phonic knowledge gradually, developing the foundational skills that children need for independent reading.

The cited literatures bear significance to the present study since they are about decodable readers. It suggests that decodable reader can be effective in teaching reading, but it requires careful planning and implementation to be successful. In addition, using decodable reader should be balanced with other reading materials to ensure students are exposed to various reading materials.

All of the mentioned literatures were closely related to the present study, which focused on the development and validation of a decodable reader as supplementary reading materials to improve the reading abilities of pupils. Therefore,

the developed decodable reader has not only benefited pupils but also teachers in the process of teaching to read. It is essential to use decodable readers along with other reading materials to ensure that pupils are exposed to various reading materials.

III. RELATED STUDIES

Numerous studies have been reviewed to form a profound understanding of the use of developed reading material in enhancing pupils' reading ability. They are considered related in various ways to the present study.

To develop reading materials for indigenous learners, Abad (2020) utilized the Instructional Materials Design and Development (IMDD) model. The study found that the developed reading material not only supplements the textbooks used in the classroom but also enhances the reading proficiency of the learners. The reading material contains lessons that directly address their identified needs and learning styles, based on their own context and stories.

Similarly, Fatimah and Komalasari (2021) developed a mother tongue big book media to improve children's literacy movements. They used a development method with research steps to detect potential problems, collect data, design and validate the product, revise the design, test the product, and revise it again before mass production. The study's results passed the product evaluation stage, including limited feasibility tests of content experts, language and graphic experts, as well as product trials, including initial field tests, main field tests, and expanded field tests. The study revealed that the literacy learning process using the mother tongue big book media greatly facilitates students in understanding literacy materials. It makes learning fun, interesting, motivating, and activating to students.

The effectiveness of supplementary reading materials for elementary learners in Southville 8 Elementary School was evaluated by Naval (2023) using a mixed-method research. The research instrument used in this study was an electronic survey questionnaire. The criteria for assessment were based on the Guidelines and Processes for Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) Assessment and Evaluation of DepEd (Evaluation Rating Sheet for Print Resources). The results of the study indicated that the evaluators perceived the supplementary materials as "outstanding," as evidenced by the grand weighted mean of 3.51.

Similarly, Nuñez, Samosa, Sinajonon and Yu (2021) developed and evaluated the effectiveness of the vocabulary story photo album as an innovative reading material for learner's development in reading skills. They evaluated the survey questionnaire based on content, format, presentation and organization, and accuracy and up-to-datedness, using the

DepEd Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) evaluation tool. This study provided various evidence on how innovation can play a significant role in enhancing students' reading skills..

All the studies described above share a common goal of developing reading materials that are contextualized and written in the mother tongue. The results of the data gathered are suitable and appropriate for the target learners. They also emphasize the need for a thorough preparation and evaluation process for reading materials before their use. The decodable reader in the present study was also carefully designed and evaluated by selected evaluators, using the DepEd Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) Assessment and Evaluation (Evaluation Rating Sheet for Print Resources) for the content, format, presentation and organization, and accuracy and up-to-datedness of the decodable reader. It is worth noting that reading materials play a crucial role in helping learners improve their reading abilities, and the present study aims to contribute to this goal.

However, the current study employed the ADDIE model, which involves Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, as the five-phase procedure for the development of the decodable reader. This approach is distinct from the other studies mentioned in the text.

The subject matter and type of material used in the previous studies were different from the ones used in this study. In this study, the developed decodable reader may be converted into a talking book using Bloom software and may be accessed online or offline.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study aimed to develop and validate a decodable reader in Southern Sorsoganon as supplementary reading material for Grade One pupils as at Bulusan Central School, Bulusan District, Division of Sorsogon Province for school year 2023-2024. The study employed a descriptive-developmental method to answer the specific problem in the study.

As a descriptive-developmental study, the decodable reader's validity was determined through evaluation by evaluators and fluent readers from the first section who took the field testing. In addition, as part of a developmental study, the development and validation of the decodable reader followed a comprehensive five-phase instructional design model known as ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate). This approach involved a thorough product development process, which included analyzing and describing the product to ensure its validation and quality for the final output.

V. THE SAMPLE

The study included a total of twenty-five (25) respondents, which consisted of twenty (20) Grade One pupils from Bulusan Central School, Bulusan District during the school year 2023-2024. Seventeen (17) pupils were from the last section while three (3) Grade One pupils were from the first section who took the field testing since they were determined as At Grade Ready readers and there were no identified At Grade Ready readers from the last section. Additionally, a group of 5 (five) evaluators with more than five years of experience in teaching Mother Tongue in Bulusan district, validated the developed decodable reader. The study employed a purposive sampling method, specifically selecting the last section in Grade One as the respondents. The same sampling method was used to determine the evaluators. The confidentiality of the respondents' names was maintained for privacy purposes.

The study utilized the Evaluation Rating Sheet for Print Resources as the primary instrument for evaluating the decodable reader. The evaluators employed this tool to validate the effectiveness of the reader. Following this validation, the decodable reader was tested by pupils in a field testing environment. The study employed a pre-experimental single-group design to validate the developed decodable reader. In order to analyze and interpret the data, statistical tools such as frequency count and weighted mean were used to derive meaningful results.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The reading profile of Grade One pupils includes sixteen (16) emergent readers and one (1) at the transitioning level.
- The features of the developed decodable reader possessed the desired qualities intended to enhance the reading profile of Grade One pupils.
- The decodable reader passed the criteria set by DepEd Learning Resource Management System (LRMDS) guidelines and may be use in public schools.

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