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Exonerating Children's Pitfalls in Learning Language: Parents-Teachers Partnership During the Covid-19 Pandemic Restrictions

Rosenda T. Hordista^{1*}, Jerson S. Catoto²

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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement in children's learning is crucial in enhancing their performance in school. With the restrictions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, their roles at home made a difference. This action research aimed to find out the importance of parents in helping children who have the difficulties in grasping their lesson in English. Moreover, this provided enough information which presented the panoramic perspectives and strategies employed by parents to exonerate these children from the shackle of ignorance. The participants of this study were parents who were considered as partners in teaching their children at home. Results showed that the challenges they experienced were children who were unresponsive and lacked focus. The strategies they employed in teaching struggling learners were the utilization of online resources, allotted reading time, they barred their children from using gadgets. Also, it was revealed that the strategy was effective in helping the children to read. Parents gave words of encouragement to their children that they needed to focus on their studies amidst the pandemic. Thus, it was looked forward that teachers in all level should also have to utilize the same strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Partnership between teachers and parents has been crucial in helping children who have been facing problems in answering their Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since face-to-face instructions were prohibited by the government, the Department of Education has employed different teaching modalities. In cases where learners do not have an internet connection and gadgets (Baticulon et al., 2020), teachers developed the SLMs to aid them to continue their studies amid the global health crisis.

The study of Epstein (1986, 2005) reiterated the importance of parental involvement and teacher attributes as determinants of children's educational experience. In addition, there is an overlapping spheres of influence in a child's education; the family and the school. Within the family, the parents and the whole family interact with the child. Meanwhile, in the school, the teachers and whole school influence the child. Child's academic and social development is enhanced when these two spheres overlap.

Consequently, the impact of the pandemic has shuttered schools and stopped children from attending and having interactions with their teachers and classmates. This created a gargantuan problem in the sense that some of them refused to respond to the modules given to them. There were even reports of psychological impact among the children where they do not show interest anymore with their studies. The study of Fore (2020) found out that it even affected their health and wellbeing (Khan et al., 2020; Yasmin et al., 2020).

Furthermore, teachers alone cannot fulfill their duties and responsibilities without the help of the parents. They too are bombarded with different tasks-from the reproduction to the delivery, and retrieval of the Self-Learning Modules

from the respective learners. In the same manner, they faced stress and anxiety (Oducado et al., 2020; Talidong & Toquero, 2020). Behind, this predicaments, they need to continue their profession by dealing with the needs of the children (Reimers et al., 2020).

Hence, this action research focuses on the effectiveness of parents and teachers' partnerships in teaching children to learn the English language in the midst of the pandemic. Also, this will provide other researchers with sufficient information as this study will be conducted in the local parlance.

Objectives of the Study

This action research aimed to find out the usability of parents in helping children who have the difficulties in grasping their lesson in English. Moreover, this provided enough information which presented the panoramic perspectives and strategies employed by parents to exonerate these children from the shackle of ignorance.

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges experienced by parents in teaching non-reader students in English in the midst of the pandemic restrictions?
2. What are the strategies employed by parents and teachers in teaching non-reader students in English in the midst of the pandemic restrictions?
3. How did these strategies help students to develop their reading and comprehension skills in English?
4. What are the suggestions of parents and teachers to improve the reading and comprehension skills of the students during the pandemic restrictions?

Limitation and Delimitation

This action research was limited on identifying the

¹ Lanao Central Elementary School Lanao, Kidapawan City, Philippines.

² College of Education, Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology, Doroluman, Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines.

* Corresponding author's e-mail: rosenda.hordista001@deped.gov.ph

challenges experienced by teachers and parents in teaching non-reader students during the pandemic restrictions. Also, it will identify their strategies, and the effectiveness, and their suggestions to improve the reading and comprehension skills of the students.

METHODS

This is an action research, specifically a participatory approach. It is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. As Thomas (2017) put it, the central aim is change and the emphasis is on problem-solving in whatever way is appropriate. It can be as a conversation rather than a technique. It is about people thinking for themselves and making their own choices, asking themselves what they should do and accepting the consequences of their own actions (Thomas, 2017).

On the other hand, Participatory Action Research (PAR) addresses issues with disadvantaged members of the society (Calhoun & Karaganis, 2001). As stipulated by Brydon-Miller and Maguire (2009) that schools are the ideal site for social change efforts. A school culture affects the behavior and achievements of its members. Its tenets such as participation, collaboration, and non-hierarchical relationships, fosters increased growth and discovery. This study is a Participatory Action Research since it delt into the problems and the corresponding solutions to be shared by the parents and teachers as partners and agents of change in this time of the pandemic.

Data Gathering Instrument

An interview guide was utilized in this study. This contained questions to be asked to the informants relative to the problems and solutions.

Informants and Participants

The informants of this study were parents who have strong coordination with regards to the performance of the students to learn and improve their reading and comprehension skills in English language.

Procedure of the Study

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher wrote the schools division superintendent to conduct this Participatory Action Research among teachers and parents. Upon approval, the informants were identified. A consent-to-participate form was given to them. The contents will be explained to them that their participation is for research purposes only and that the results will not be used against them.

During the conduct of the study, each of the informants was interviewed. A span of time was given to them to determine the efficacy of the strategies that they are currently employing in helping non-reader students to have the skills in reading and comprehension. After the

interview, a token of gratitude was given to them as a sign of gratitude of the time and efforts that they have extended.

The results of the interview were transcribed and translated into English to have the sense of universality. Meanwhile, the data analysts did the thematic analysis by identifying the emergent themes coming from the responses of the informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Themes and Core Ideas on the Challenges experienced by Parents in Teaching Students in English in the Midst of Pandemic Restrictions

The first research question focuses on the challenges experienced by parents in teaching students in English in the midst of pandemic restrictions.

Lack of Focus and unresponsive learners. Students during the pandemic were losing their focus towards their studies. Hence, it was difficult for the parents to help them to improve their skills in the English language. It can be attributed by the mere fact, that some of them felt the effect of the pandemic towards their interests to do their tasks even in the comfort of their homes.

During the interview, it was shared by the parents that:

"Maglisod kog pabasa ug paanswer sa ila kay busy pud ko sa akong trabaho. Unya naay mga pangutana nga dili pud ko kahibalo. Labi mn gud tung maestro jud ang magpabasa ky expert n man na sila." (I am challenged in terms of reading and asking him to answer his modules because I was busy with my work. Also, there are questions which I do not know. I should say, that teachers gave the best ways in teaching our children, Participant 3).

"Maglisod jud ko ug pabasa sa iya lalo na sa English kay naanad na siya sa binisaya so gina bisaya niya ug basa ang ubang words. Unya nabag uban ko kay karon lang jud nahitabo nga ang mama na ang maging teacher , sa una support lang mn gud to." (I face the difficulties in asking him to read especially in English because he is used with the Cenebuhano. I was even shocked that mothers are becoming teachers unlike before that I only gave support, Participant 4).

"Maglisod kog pabasa kay dili man siya maminaw , dili mabadlok sa akoa. Bentaha kung naa siya sa school ky mabadlok siya sa iyang teacher ug maminaw siya." (It was in reading that challenged me the most. He did not listen to me. Unlike in school he used to follow his teacher and he really listens, Participant 5).

On the contrary, it was suggested that to make reading more exciting and practical, the first thing a reader must do is to read what they love. Literature works such as a novel, or short story will be exciting texts to read. They will give the best experience with enjoyment to gain a general understanding of what the readers read and offer authentic text that enables them to master the target language (Rahayu & Suryanto, 2021).

Themes and Core Ideas on the Strategies Employed by Parents in Teaching Non-Reader Students in the Midst of the Pandemic Restrictions

Table 1: Themes and Core Ideas on the Challenges experienced by Parents in Teaching Students in English in the Midst of the Pandemic Restrictions

Themes	Frequency of Response	Core Ideas
Lack of Focus and unresponsive learners	General	The students do not concentrate on what they are doing.

Legend: General 50%
Typical 25-40%
Variant 20%

The second research question presents the strategies employed by parents in teaching non-reader students in the midst of pandemic restrictions.

Using of Online Resources

Parents are resourceful with the aid of the online sources. They used it by searching for answers and for the explanation of the bodies of knowledge and concepts which will demystify its complexities. Through this, parents could have the ability to help their children in searching for answers.

It was shared by one of the participants that:

“Mugamit jud ug google kung nay mga dili masabtan sa mga story ug mga pangutana. Usabay mag one-on-one pud mi pero kdali lang kay busy pud sa trabaho unya pag-abot sa balay, kapoy na.” (I used Google if there are questions in a story which I cannot understand...Participant 2).

The use of online resources will not only help the parents but also the child who has the willingness to widen his horizon especially in the parlance of reading. Also, they can find other activities which will add to the interest and motivates the learner in particular (Livingstone, 2012).

Reading Time Allotted

Parents gave time for reading of their children at home. It implies that they themselves are responsible enough in pushing their children to develop their skills. Likewise, giving their time means that the learning abilities of their children are important for them. Through their guidance, they could sustain the improvement in making their

children independent learners in the future.

The parent stated that:

“Naa mi reading time po, after ko sa work magbasa jud mi ana.” (We have time for reading after my work, Participant 4).

Likewise, early reading exposure is important in setting foundation for students to acquire the basic literacy skills that set them up for school and life success. More importantly, parent involvement at an early age is a critical component of reading skills development. In addition, parents understood and appreciated the value of early reading habits and would continue to nurture the reading relationship with their children (Sukhram & Hsu, 2012).

Barring Students from Using Gadgets

Using the gadgets is one of the culprits where students do not have the focus towards their studies. In this time of the pandemic, most of their time is consumed in watching videos, using of Social Networking Sites, as well as on playing online games. Hence, parents prohibited their children from using their gadgets especially during the time that they have to study and finish their school stuffs.

As mentioned during the interview:

“Para mubasa ug muanswer sa module, banian sa nko ug cellphone para walay disturbo. Dili ibalik ang cellphone kung dili mahuman ug answer o basa.” (I took his phone so that he has the focus in reading and answering his modules, Participant 1).

The use of gadget during the reading process disturbs the learner's focus. Hence, it is a must to remove it so that they could have internalized the proper way of reading and that they could comprehend the word that they are reading (Sararelli, 2010).

Table 2: Themes and Core Ideas on the Strategies Employed by Parents in Teaching Non-Reader Students in the Midst of Pandemic Restrictions

Themes	Frequency of Response	Core Ideas
Using of Online Resources	Variant	Parents utilize the online sources in searching the answers.
Reading Time Allotted	Variant	Parents gave time for the reading time of their children at home.
Barring students from using gadgets	Typical	Parents did not allow their children to use devices which hamper their focus on learning.

Legend: General 50%
Typical 25-40%
Variant 20%

ideas on the effect of strategies employed in developing the reading comprehension skills of students in English.

Efficiency of Strategies Employed

Generally, parents found it effective in employing the strategies in helping their children to read. Their styles provided positive results wherein they saw a significant change in their performance. In the same manner, as

Themes and Core Ideas on the Effect of Strategies Employed in Developing the Reading Comprehension Skills of Students in English

The third research question is on the themes and core

parents they can make a difference in the lives of their children especially in this global health crisis where the former are not allowed to go out and are confined in their homes.

Parents agreed that: “*Effective siya kay masabtan na mn niya ang story.*” (It is effective since he can understand the story, Participant 5).

“*Effective kay after namo magbasa , magmerienda man.*” (It was

effective as snacks are served after reading, Participant 6). It was posited by Ma et al. (2016) that learning outcomes are academic achievement and frameworks of parental involvement measures family involvement and partnership development. Parent involvement in education is associated with positive outcomes for students; however, little is known about how parents decide to be involved in children’s education (Anderson & Minke, 2007).

Table 3: Themes and Core Ideas on the Effect of Strategies Employed in Developing the Reading Comprehension Skills of Students in English

Themes	Frequency of Response	Core Ideas
Efficiency of Strategies Employed	General	Parents found it effective in employing the strategies in helping their children to read.

Legend: General 50%
Typical 25-40%
Variant 20%

Themes and Core Ideas on the Suggestions of Parents in Improving the Reading Comprehension Skills of the Students during the Pandemic Restrictions

The last research question tackles on the suggestions of parents in improving the reading comprehension skills of the students during the pandemic restrictions.

Giving of words of encouragement. For parents, it was necessary for them to motivate their children by giving them the pieces of advice where they need to focus on their studies amidst the pandemic. Also, this would allow the children to have the internalization of the lessons

and of course they could also appreciate the efforts being made by their parents to them. Parents are the best partners of teachers in honing the learners’ abilities.

They said during the interview that:

“*Encourage lang gyud sila pirmi nga magbasa kanunay. Ipasabot ug maayo ang kaayuhan sa pagbasa ug pagskwela.*” (We just need to encourage them to read. Let them understand the importance of reading and learning, Participant 1).

“*Ginapasabot lang nko sila nga importante nga makabasa ug makasabot jud sila.*” (I let them understand the importance of reading and comprehension, Participant 2).

Parents encouragements strengthen the will of the students to continue their quest for a higher learning. Correspondingly, this is essential in pushing the learners to their limits (Codjoe, 2007).

Table 4: Themes and Core Ideas on the Suggestions of Parents in Improving the Reading Comprehension Skills of the Students during the Pandemic Restrictions

Themes	Frequency of Response	Core Ideas
Giving of words of Encouragement	General	The parents motivated their children by giving them the pieces of advice that they need to focus on their studies amidst the pandemic.

Legend: General 50%
Typical 25-40%
Variant 20%

Implications for Practice

The partnership which was forged by parents and teachers in this time of the pandemic made a significant effect on the lives of the learners. In the same vein, parents who have the direct knowledge on the abilities of their children must learn how to accept the mere fact that they too have the important role to fulfill. Responsibilities are not only on the shoulders of the teachers. Learning first occurs at home with the aid of parents. Letting them read and comprehend would help them improve their skills not only in English but to other subjects where English is the main language used.

This action research is a manifestation that in the midst of quandary the participation of everyone is beneficial to the development of the learners in all facets of life. Furthermore, the discipline given by parents are efficient and effective that their children are forced to read. Aside from this, they are resourceful wherein they find ways to

improve their children’s skills in general.

As a teacher, it is my great pleasure that this action research made a gargantuan step to listen to the stories of parents who have faced the problems brought by the sudden shift in instruction. Indeed, they too can make a significant change in the quest of the children’s lives to see the brighter future. Lastly, it can be utilized by other researchers who wish to look the different perspectives of parental involvement.

Implications for Future Research

This action research has a significant impact to future researchers especially to those who wish to replicate this study in different setting and in different background. The collaborative efforts being made by parents and teachers in this time of the pandemic is crucial for strengthening the role of parents in handling their children to learn the English language. This study will fill the gap in the local parlance. Hence, future researches could look into the different approach. Like for example, they could conduct the mixed-method design by utilizing the themes as the dimensions of the study. These dimensions will serve as

the variables wherein the parents' perceptions using a larger population could be done. Hence, the quantitative data could be collected and thus, comparative analysis will be done. Furthermore, future researchers could also look into the role of teachers and their strategies in partnership with the parents of their learners.

CONCLUSION

Conducting an Action Research utilizing the qualitative approach is quite challenging on my part. Though, I am already a holder of a post graduate degree yet there are still a lot of things that I considered foreign. One of which is the Action Research since the approach is different from the researches that I already conducted.

As a teacher and as a mother, I saw myself on the shoes of the parents. They are really doing their best in order to serve the best for their children. Their partnership in this endeavor indeed made a milestone of achievement that the love of parents cannot be taken for granted. Nevertheless, learning is easy and that nurturing the children can be successfully done when there is cooperation.

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