

*Reading Aloud and Repeated Reading Strategy Based on the 'Callan Method'
on the Development of the Students' Reading Skills*

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of utilizing the reading aloud and repeated reading strategies of the Callan Method in improving the reading skills of the Grade 8 students from the selected high school in Surigao del Norte. The 29 students participating in this study have shown poor reading performance based on the results of the reading inventory of the Phil-IRI in 2020. The quantitative data of the study were the results of the pre-test and post-test of the Cambridge A2 Key for Schools test. Results revealed that there was a significant difference in the reading skills of the Grade 8 students upon the completion of the 120 required hour of Callan- mediated classes with the mean and standard deviation of (M=15.83, SD=4.60) as compared to the pre-test results (M=10.62, SD=3.51), $t(29)=-8.39$, $p < 0.05$. Likewise, the teaching interventions have improved the reading proficiency of the students with an effect size of (Cohen's $d = 1.55$). Furthermore, the qualitative data of the study looked into the affordances and challenges of using the Callan Method in reading. Students identified the affordances of the method to be as follows: guided reading for better understanding of context, repetition practices for mastery, collaborative learning, language translation for unfamiliar vocabulary and familiarity with the new method. The challenges identified during the utilization of the method are the following: the fast-paced instruction, unfamiliar vocabulary in the text and unfamiliarity with the method in the teaching of reading.

Keywords: Callan Method, Reading Aloud, Repeated Reading Strategy, Reading Performance

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Introduction

Reading is a lifelong skill to be used both for academic purposes and everyday life. According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, (1985) reading is a basic life skill. This includes reading academic or non-academic books, scanning menus, signage, advertisements, checking doses of medicines, learning how to cook by following a recipe and others. Moreover, reading is considered a key element for a child to succeed both in academics and life. Indeed, without the ability to read well, opportunities for professional and personal fulfillment will inevitably be lost. The continuous demand for proficient literacy in the high-technological society makes this issue even more pressing (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Despite its importance in students' academic endeavors, reading is one of the most challenging and unattainable successes in the education system.

While reading is considered an important factor in academic success and day to day learning, the Department of Education in the Philippines reported that based on the 2007 data, an alarming 70% of the students are incapable of reading and do not meet their expected level, among the challenges met were poor reading comprehension, word recognition and pronunciation, Estremera & Estremera, (2018). This report was also evaluated by Scholastic Inc., which is known to be the leading publisher and distributor of children's books in the world. Moreover, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a study under the Economic Co-operation and Development organization that measures student's competence in reading, science and math of its member and non-member countries by conducting assessments among 15years old students' scholastic performances (San Juan, 2019). In the 2018 PISA result, the Philippines reportedly scored lowest out of 79 countries in reading comprehension which was participated by 600,000 students under the age of fifteen. According to the data, over 80% of high school students in the Philippines around the age of fifteen did not reach the average level of proficiency in reading. The ramification of the outcome drew criticisms toward the Department of Education and the implementation of the Republic Act No. 10533 "Enhanced Basic Education of 2012" or much widely known as K to 12 Program.

In order to address the challenges in poor reading, the Department of Education has issued guidelines on the utilization of the 2017 Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) Funds for the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program: Professional Development Component which aims to develop every Filipino learner's literacy and numeracy skills which will fundamentally help in the lifelong learning endeavors of learners from Kindergarten to Grade 3 following the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum by providing a sustainable and cost-effective development system for teachers in their professional teaching endeavors. Among the goals and objectives of ECARP is that 'every child should be a reader' by implementing the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program in the Philippines.

To shed light into the actual issues in reading, the researcher started to inquire among local schools in the locale of General Luna Surigao del Norte, Siargao Islands. Based on the Phil-IRI in 2020, the Grade 7 students of the participating school exhibited poor reading performance. In the findings, 67% or 6 out of the 11 female population of the Grade 7 students belong to the frustration level in word recognition and reading comprehension.

Meanwhile, 70% or 10 out of the 18 males obtained 60% in word recognition and reading comprehension. Furthermore, 3 out of the 29 Grade 7 students were identified as non-readers.

The Phil-IRI reading inventory tests consist of word recognition and reading comprehension, which assesses the literal, inferential and critical skills of students in reading.

Based on the available figures, students from the participating school do not display proficiency in reading. In context, the purpose of the inventory is to serve as one of the bases in planning, designing/redesigning the reading programs or activities in the school geared towards the development of the reading skills of the students and the improvement of overall school reading performance.

To address the alarming performance of students in reading, finding an aid to the issues and problems is necessary to come up with an alternative method and strategy to improve students' reading competence and provide students the opportunity to rise above the challenges on the students' frustrated reading performance (Lauritzen, 1982, as cited in Homan et al., 1993). In this regard, this present study was undertaken since the researcher believes that students' competence in reading must be developed despite the hindrances for a better education. Moreover, the researcher also believes that success and development is possible when opportunity arises through research and innovation.

In recent years, "commercially exceptionally successful in several countries of the world in the teaching of English as a second language is the Callan Method," (Hrehovcik, 2003). This is a method that eliminates the biggest enemy of boredom and bad memory through its high-speed repetitive oral exercises and revision method of teaching through reading aloud and error correction. The method practices repetitive questioning done by teachers while students learn to respond through reading grammatically structured responses for English language fluency. It has been successful in teaching language faster than any other method around the world. In 2016, The study of Shishido et al. (2016) entitled "Improving Oral Proficiency through the Callan Method" revealed a significant success rate in improving undergraduate Japanese students' English oral fluency and overall competence in English.

Currently, Callan Method is only used in English as Second Language (ESL) schools in the Philippines, hence unfamiliar to the educational institution. Despite the limited information about the method, the researcher's experience working in the ESL industry in Cebu City, Philippines for two years has given her the knowledge on the practices of how Callan Method works and what it does in the development of students in learning the English language. The unfamiliarity of the method in the education industry has posed a limitation on the effectiveness of Callan Method in a different educational setting in the Philippines, thus this limitation drives this study to further investigate the effectiveness of the Callan Method in the aspect of the reading skill as it could also lead to a larger aspect of English language competence among students in the Philippine setting. It is in this context that this research was undertaken since the researcher believes that opportunity arises when they adapt to changes- through research and innovation.

The pursuit of this study was useful in determining whether a new methodology which was found effective for ESL learners as well as helping the Filipino students in a regular school system in honing their reading skills and competency. In determining whether the Callan Method is effective, the researcher facilitated a mixed-method study in finding out whether the Callan Method was a suitable approach in improving students' development. The study sought to determine affordances and challenges encountered in implementing the reading aloud and repeated reading strategy in developing grade 8 students' reading skills. The main objective of this study is to provide data to be used as a basis in planning and designing the

reading activities geared towards the development of the reading skills of the students, particularly among schools located in remote areas where access to educational materials is limited.

Results and Discussion of the Study

This part of the study presents analysis and interpretation of the data of the study from the consolidated results of the pre-test and post-test results of the Grade 8 respondents/participants.

Interpretation and Analysis

This part of the study discusses the results on the use of reading aloud and repetitive reading strategies of the Callan Method in improving the reading skills of the Grade 8 respondents/participants from the participating school.

Table 1 presents a summary of the consolidated results from the pre-test and post-test in determining students' reading levels before and after the Callan-mediated lessons conducted among the Grade 8 students of the participating school. Found in the table from left to right are as follows: the reading level category, raw scores range, CEFR levels, pre-test and post-test respectively along with its data: N= which refers to the number of participants and its equivalent percentage.

Table 1: Results on the conducted pre-test and post-test with corresponding reading levels

Reading Levels	Scores	CEFR Level	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
			N	%	N	%
-	0-8	-	9	31.03	1	3.45
Elementary	9-17	A1	19	65.52	18	62.07
Pre-Intermediate	18-26	A2	1	3.45	10	34.28
Intermediate	27-35	B1	0	0.00	0	0.00
Upper Intermediate	36-44	B2	0	0.00	0	0.00
Lower Advanced	45-53	C1	0	0.00	0	0.00
Advanced	54-62	C2	0	0.00	0	0.00

As shown in Table 1, in terms of reading levels for pre-test, nine or (31.03%) of the participants among the group were underperforming in reading. This means that students did not showcase efficient reading abilities prior to participating in the Callan mediated classes; hence, the acquired scores did not meet the standard for elementary level or A1 readers. In the implementation of the Callan Method, the teacher-researcher focused on developing students' competence in vocabulary building, reading comprehension, improving pronunciation and reading accuracy. The teacher-researcher strictly followed and applied the reading aloud and repetitive reading strategies of the Callan method in every reading class to ensure that students have fully engaged in using the Callan Method during the implementation period. After the completion of the 120 required hours of Callan Method, the teacher-researcher determined its effects among the Grade 8 students upon the completion of the required 120 hours.

As a result, post-test scores showed that there was a significant development among the students after participating in the Callan-mediated classes. The number of underperforming participants from the pre-test have relevantly decreased from nine students to one or (3.45%) over the past few months of undergoing the Callan mediated classes. These data can be associated as a success with the promised results of the Callan Organization (1998) as cited by Hrehovcik (2003) on improving students' language skills which requires as little as 80 hours to 120 hours to achieve improvement. For reference, it can be observed that over eight students or (27.58%) of the participants are no longer unclassified or non-readers as post-test results show that participants now belong to elementary for A1 level readers.

Among the twenty-nine participants, nineteen or (65.52%) of the participants scored between 9-17 during the pre-test which indicates that prior to the study the participants exhibited capabilities to identify basic text and recognize familiar words from the phrases as described in the literature. Upon the completion of the 120 Callan-mediated classes, students showed improvement in identifying words in the text. Students are more confident in reading as they have now mastered how to answer comprehension questions based on the context clues from the comprehension questions. Lastly, they are more proactive in reading using the practices and strategies of the Callan Method that provided them a better approach and experiences in learning how to read. In line with these improvements in the reading competency of the students, there were eighteen students or (62.07%) who belonged in the elementary level as shown in the post-test results. Prior to the implementation of the Callan Method, there were nineteen students who were categorized as A1 readers. Posttest data results showed eighteen; hence, it can be inferred that there was only one student or (3.45%) out of the twenty-nine participants who was left as non-reader or uncategorized. For reference, A1 level readers are described by the Callan Organization (1998) as an individual who has basic understanding of everyday expressions and vocabulary for everyday use while A2 learners are capable of comprehending sentences and are able to express frequently used expressions for communicative purposes. Based on these definitions we can fairly make an assumption that students have developed from non-readers to elementary or A1 level readers to pre-intermediate or A2 levels, a clear manifestation of the effectiveness of the Callan method on its objective to improve students' reading abilities.

Pre-test data also recorded one or (3.45%) participants of the study were able to showcase abilities and skill in reading which met the intermediate or A2 level. After the implementation of the Callan method there were huge improvements in the reading performance of the students thus results showed an increased number of students (34.48%) who advanced to A2 level readers or the intermediate readers are characterized by using a higher level of vocabulary and are capable of associating it in their daily language. This significant development among students supports the claims that Callan can be effective in improving student's language skills as discussed and interpreted in Table 2 which presents the results on the significant difference in the reading performance of the Grade 8 students/participants with reference to the pre-test and post-test data. This outcome of the post-test results reflects the study of (Cunningham & Arlington, 2007) who acknowledges reading aloud strategies as an effective practice to developing students' cognitive abilities to grasp the newly introduced vocabulary from the text into meaningful units. Moreover, the guided-reading strategies of the Callan method further reinforces effective teaching in reading, thus increasing the chance of developing students' reading skills.

Table 2: Paired samples statistics of the Grade 8 students pre- and post-tests

		Mean	N	SD	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-Test	10.62	29	3.51	0.65
	Post-Test	15.83	29	4.60	0.85

Based on data shown in Table 2, there was a significant increase in the Grade 8 students post-test results. This means that after the implementation of the Callan method, students were able to show developments and improvements in their reading. This claim is supported with the mean and standard deviation of (M=15.83, SD=4.60) compared to the pre-test results with the mean and standard deviation (M=10.62, SD=3.51), ($t(29)=-8.39, p < 0.05$). In order to measure the magnitude of the mean of the pre-test and the post-test, Cohen's d was used with the formula $d = \text{Mean}/\text{SD}$ and $d = t/\sqrt{N}$. Results obtained an effect size of 1.55 which means that there was a significant difference between the two means of the pre-test and post-test of the Grade 8 students.

Table 3: Paired T-Test results of the Grade 8 students' pre-test and post-test

Scores	Paired Differences		Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	SD		Lower	Upper			
Pre-Test vs Post- Test	-5.21	3.34	0.62	-6.48	3.94	-8.39	28	0.0000

Table 3 presents the results on the significant difference in the reading performance of the Grade 8 students before and after implementing the reading aloud and repeated reading strategy in the Callan Method. The effectiveness of the Callan method was evident with a 5.21 mean difference between the pre- and post-test which determined a significant improvement comparing students' performance before and after the use of Callan method. This means that the students were able to adapt the use of the new teaching method in their reading classes and were able to develop the way they learn how to read and comprehend the lessons that they were taught to them. The success of the Callan method reflected in the students' performance during their post-test in which they successfully obtained higher scores compared to their pre-test scores. Prior to taking the pre-test, the students did not receive any interventions or any kind of classes. This means that whatever scores they obtained from their pre-test reflects their reading competence.

The outcome of the study supports language researchers Shishido & et al (2017) claims on the effectiveness of Callan method in improving students' language skills. Researchers like Arayat & et al. (2019) also support the Callan Method has been helpful in improving students' communicative skills through its various practices and its repetitive and guided approach towards the students who are using the method. With the positive results from the data as presented in Table 1, it can be observed that the reading aloud and repetitive reading have been relevant in improving students' reading skills.

Summary on the Interpretation on the Affordances and Challenges of the Grade 8 Students

The qualitative data of the study looked into the affordances and challenges of using the Callan Method in reading. Students identified the affordances of the method to be as follows; guided reading for better understanding of context, repetition practices for mastery, collaborative learning, language translation for unfamiliar vocabulary and familiarity with the new method. The challenges identified during the utilization of the method are the following; the fast-paced instruction, unfamiliar vocabulary in the text and unfamiliarity with the method in the teaching of reading.

Conclusions

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Callan method in the development of the reading abilities of students in a Philippine classroom setting. Particularly, the study focuses on the effects of the reading aloud and repeated reading strategies of the Callan method in improving the poor reading abilities of the Grade 8 students in a selected high school in Surigao del Norte.

Findings of the study concluded that the use of reading and repetitive reading strategies of the Callan Method were effective. Specifically, use of the new method has contributed a relevant role in improving the reading abilities and skills of the Grade 8 students/participants by advancing from elementary level to pre-intermediate. Upon the completion of the required 120 hours of using the Callan method, students have improved from elementary readers to pre-intermediate. Considering the limited hours of interventions and the effects it has had on the reading skills of students, the Callan method can potentially be a great teaching alternative in the teaching of reading.

This study has proven that students may have different teaching preferences that suit their needs and are more effective than the conventional practices and ways of teaching. As an alternative, the introduction of the Callan Method of teaching was pursued because of its success in improving students' language skills among non-English speakers. Likewise, the teacher/researcher envisions to impart the same success in improving students' reading skills by adapting the same method of teaching. It is in this context that the study was conducted.

The improvements that the students have shown in the study have proven to the teacher/researcher that innovation through research in addressing issues and challenges in education is necessary. The success of determining the effectiveness of the Callan method in teaching reading is equally relevant in successfully providing an aid to the alarming poor reading performances of the students in the participating school. Providing an alternative teaching method in the teaching of reading has provided students an opportunity to have a better education especially those who belong in the displaced schools. The lack of teaching resources must be addressed or given practical solutions so students can compete in the demands of the highly civilized society. It is with this principle that the researcher has introduced the Callan Method.

Additionally, the pursuit of this study has proven that the Callan Method is not just effective in improving oral proficiency among its users but is also effective in developing reading proficiency of students in a Philippine classroom setting. Therefore, the teacher-researcher

believes that change and development can be attainable through educational research and continuous efforts among teachers and school administrators to provide alternative and innovative teaching as a solution to the pressing issues and challenges in the education sector. With the continuous efforts of the stakeholders and innovations in education, one day every student will be given equal rights to quality education that every Filipino student deserves.

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