

# Story Retelling (SR) Technique in Improving Reading Comprehension of Sixth-Graders

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## ABSTRACT

The PHIL-IRI results of the sixth graders during their fifth grade were seriously alarming. All learners were identified as frustration readers. Thus, this study aimed to improve sixth graders' reading comprehension through Story Retelling (SR) technique. The study used a pretest-post-test quasi-experimental design consisting of two intact classes with 43 grade 6 learners. One class was exposed to SR Technique, while the other was exposed to the traditional method. The comparison of posttest results revealed no significant difference in the comprehension level of the respondents with ( $p > .01$ ) between groups. The data proved that SR did not significantly enhance the reading comprehension of the learners. There was a slight increase in the posttest mean scores of the experimental group. However, the increase was not significant. It showed that the learners lacked solid general knowledge and vast vocabulary, which are essential in reading. The interviews discovered that the learners were not exposed to the English language and were not adequately monitored about their academic progress. These pre-existing background conditions significantly affected the intervention, preventing a significant difference in the learners' reading comprehension. Based on the results, it is recommended that the Story Retelling (SR) technique is only introduced to the learners after they learn the basic reading skills, including vocabulary, and establish solid general knowledge. Moreover, the amount of time spent on the intervention added to the undesirable results. Thus, the intervention should be conducted in more than six weeks to achieve better results.

**Keywords** — Education, PHIL-IRI, reading comprehension, Story Retelling (SR) technique, vocabulary

## INTRODUCTION

In the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) cited by Thomson (2018), 80 percent of school students around fifteen years of age in the Philippines received lower scores in areas like reading, mathematics, and science compared to those who took the same assessment in other countries (Trinidad, 2020). A similar study by Tomas et al. (2021) revealed that in the 4056 Filipino reading profiles and 4216 English reading profiles of children in grades 1 through 7, the majority of them were frustrated readers. This is consistent with the report

that twenty million Filipinos could read but not understand (Nolasco, 2010). The report showed they were not able to meet the minimum level of proficiency in reading. According to the results, the students were not exposed to expository texts and improper instruction in processing information. Establishing a solid foundation for the students in their critical literacy is a challenge facing today. Some things need to be improved in the country's educational system to make up for this negative feedback which primarily includes curriculum development and implementation. For instance, many teachers are trained to emphasize gathering details instead of analyzing the materials being used. This focus should shift towards providing chances for students to make visualization, synthesis, and connection building with the materials they are reading. Moreover, establishing good foundations for the literacy and comprehension programs in the current educational platform, the K-12 curriculum, could be salient keys to this enormous endeavor.

In the Division of Gingoog City, sixth-graders had performed very poorly in the previous year's Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). All of them were identified as frustrated readers, implying that reading comprehension was a severe academic problem among these learners. According to Honig et al. (2013), various strategies were identified to be helpful towards establishing reading comprehension. These include using prior knowledge, predicting events, determining and synthesizing main ideas, inferential questioning, visualizing, story mapping, and story events retelling. Most of these strategies were already used by teachers in the classroom. Still, a potential attribute was seen in story retelling because while this may not be the most engaging student task, it is one of the most straightforward ways to assess reading comprehension (Kolk, 2013).

Thus, this study aimed to improve the reading comprehension of sixth graders through Story Retelling (SR) technique. Story retelling is an effective approach for increasing reading comprehension, which leads to increased enthusiasm and passion for reading (Warth, 2021). Jennings et al. (2014) asserted that retelling is a strategy used to determine how well a reader understands a particular story's content and context. Story retelling is a higher thinking activity that allows learners to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and interpret the text they are reading at complex levels (Tankersley, 2005). It will enable them to explore the story beyond the literal level, allowing them to understand the story in their level of perception and understanding. They build connections between what the story means and what meaning they acquire from it. This understanding of the story is beyond ordinary reading experience. Hence, retelling could effectively enhance

reading comprehension to help learners understand the meaning behind and beyond the material they are reading.

Reading is a cognitive process, complex enough for young learners to find it less convenient to derive a good understanding unless their reading skills have been honed very well. On a higher level, it is not enough that learners just read the words or simply get the meaning out of these words. They must learn how to associate these words in their places within a text. Nejad and Keshavarzi (2015) stated that reading comprehension is necessary for the learners to comprehend the context of reading material. Waugh (2018) similarly stated that when students cannot decipher the meaning of words, they will be unable to comprehend what they are reading.

There are at least six essential reading comprehension skills, according to Lee (2014). Decoding, fluency, vocabulary, reasoning, and background knowledge, as well as working memory and attention, are among them. Reading comprehension, forming connections between textual pieces, and comprehending important ideas require background knowledge (Smith et al., 2021). It is critical to provide learners with opportunities and challenges to apply their collective experiences or background knowledge (Christen & Murphy, 2005). Also, reading comprehension is best developed and improved when readers have a larger vocabulary, so they should be exposed to activities that encourage marginal vocabulary growth (Mokhtari & Velten, 2015). Vocabulary knowledge assists in activating and building background information in order to establish connections to text, and it can improve reading comprehension and fluency (Weiser, 2015). However, it takes time and considerable learning experiences to build a vocabulary (Smith, 2008).

Many factors affect reading comprehension. One is cognition, a person's total knowledge and learning orientation based on previous experiences (Walsh, 2017). Cognition is necessary for learners to comprehend new learning inputs by connecting previous and new knowledge (Anderson, 2013). The environment is also one factor. For instance, the social and educational backgrounds of the parents have a major impact on the academic achievement of their children, particularly in mathematics and language (Farooq et al., 2011). The teacher's influence, ideas, and expectations of the students' skills also affect their academic performance and accomplishments (Richland, 2020). Guided reading is also a factor. According to Vinciguerra (2002), guided reading has a positive impact on pupils' reading achievement. Passion, according to Serin (2017), is a driving component in learning.

Reading comprehension should be honed in the early years of children, insofar children start to acquire language inputs from their environment before they learn the language itself and use it to express themselves and communicate with other people. In a study, Kidwai (2013) cited Chomsky's Innateness theory that children are born with an innate capacity to develop a language. In the proper language development, children must establish basic reading skills to comprehend language inputs found in texts that they may find themselves reading in a formal and informal learning exposure. Waugh (2018) stipulated that reading comprehension is essential because it helps the learners acquire different language structures and rules and helps them in other learning areas like mathematics and sciences. In developing reading comprehension, children must engage in various learning activities, including story retelling. Story retelling is an excellent strategy for developing reading comprehension because through this, and the children can use their critical thinking in reconstructing the text they are reading (Mäkinen et al., 2018). To achieve good results with story retelling, there are things to consider. Farmer (2019) outlined the importance of voice, facial expression, and bodily gesture in storyretelling, mime, pace, repetition, rhythm, elaboration, exaggeration, and audience engagement.

Today, the Department of Education gears towards transforming Filipino learners into critical thinkers through reading. According to Tankersley (2005), the task is more than simply picking of words from a text read; it is a process that requires critical thinking and involves the evaluation of ideas and their application to daily situations. If the learners cannot develop the skills needed for reading comprehension, they cannot become critical thinkers. Critical thinking is significant in the learners' engagement in academic activities, which will dictate how well their future careers will go. The need for reading comprehension development in primary education is a salient key towards learners' academic progress. When there is no reading comprehension that learners manifest in the process, teachers must employ the necessary strategy to address the reading problem. Reading comprehension is so important because it affects the overall performance of the learners in all other learning areas. According to Spencer and Wagner (2018), learners with poor reading comprehension are unable to answer questions related to a passage being read; they are unable to retell the story from beginning to end; they are unable to make connections between sentences or paragraphs to create meaning from the passage; they are unfamiliar with the meaning of the words found in the course; and they lose interest in reading, forcing them to stop reading. Enhancing reading comprehension takes

time and effort, but reading comprehension practices might help (McNamara, 2007). Teachers and other stakeholders must use good strategies. When standard methods are not fit for the pain, teachers must think outside the box. According to Aguirre and de Cadiz (2015), instructional materials are critical in determining a program's efficacy. Exposure to books, newspapers and other reading materials would aid in developing the wide expertise required for reading intervention (Crandall et al., 2016).

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to improve the reading comprehension of learners through Story Retelling (SR) technique.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The design used in this study was quasi-experimental. A quasi-experimental plan aims to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between an independent and dependent variable. The researcher used a quasi-experiment to test the effectiveness of the intervention strategy to the reading comprehension enhancement among the respondents. Two intact classes were used for the study as control and experimental groups. The Story Retelling (ST) technique was used as an intervention strategy in the experimental group. In contrast, the control group was exposed to the traditional technique, which involved the typical reading and answering follow-up questions without story retelling.

### **Research Site**

This study was conducted in one of the schools of Gingoog for the school year 2020-2021. This school was one of the largest schools in the East 2 District of Gingoog City Division. It was situated 5 kilometers away from the National Highway to Butuan. There were four buildings. One building was used as the principal's office. The others were for school classrooms, a mini-library, and a canteen. This school was staffed by nine elementary teachers and one principal. For the school year 2020-2021, the school had 307 enrolled learners. The school did not perform well in PHIL-IRI the other year. The fifth graders currently enrolled in the sixth grade performed less satisfactorily than the other grade levels. All of them were classified as frustrated readers who could read but could not understand what they read.

## Participants

The study respondents were the Grade 6 pupils in one of the schools in Gingoog for the school year 2020-2021.

Group	Sample
Experimental	21
Control	22
<i>Total</i>	<i>43</i>

The experimental group was the section Narra pupils. They were taught using the Story Retelling (SR) Technique. On the other hand, the control group was the section Talisay pupils. They were conducted using the traditional method of reading without a story retelling activity.

## Instrumentation

Two research instruments were used in the study. The first instrument was the 40-item Reading Comprehension Test used for pretest and posttest. It determined if the student fell under the independent, instructional, or frustration category of reading comprehension. The passages utilized in both the tests were adapted from PHIL-IRI. The questions were varied based on literal, inferential, and evaluative reading comprehension skills. The second instrument was an interview where select respondents answered a few questions about the drivers and barriers that affected the intervention program. It was focused on the positive and negative experiences of the learners in using the Story Retelling (SR) Technique.

## Reliability and Validity of Instrument

The instrument's validity was submitted for validation to the three experts in reading: a master teacher in English from Gingoog City Comprehensive National High School, a master teacher from Mimbunga National School, and a Senior Education Program Specialist from the DepEd-Gingoog Division. It was to ensure that the passages and questions were fitted to the Grade-6 pupils. For reliability, pilot testing was conducted on another group of Grade-6 pupils with the same characteristics as the respondents. Then, The reliability evaluation using Kuder-Richardson 20 was used, which revealed a result of 0.70 described as reliable.

## **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Gingoog City Division and the school principal of the research site to conduct the study. Then, Consent Forms were secured. Upon approval of the request, the researcher started validating the reading comprehension test in a Grade 6 class of the same school. After the research instrument validation, the researcher started conducting the study.

After the 40-item pretest, the researcher utilized the Story Retelling (SR) Technique in the experimental group. The researcher engaged the respondents in Story Retelling (SR) activities. The engagement happened every weekday for at least one to two hours for each respondent. This ended six weeks. This reading approach aimed to help learners improve reading comprehension through story retelling activities. Before the small group activity, the researcher involved the respondents in a guided practice wherein they modeled pre-reading strategies. In the preview, the students were given a passage to read. The respondents were asked to read the story independently. During reading, they were monitored by the teacher. The teacher reread the story while the learners listened without unnecessary movement. After reading the passage, the respondents were asked to answer a worksheet that required the respondents to answer related questions about the story. Then the respondents individually retold the story in their terms in an oral presentation. During the oral presentation, the teacher helped the respondents recall the events in the story to correct their mistakes.

The researcher used traditional reading in the control group, requiring the respondents to retell the story orally. The respondents received the same mode instruction as the experimental group. After reading, the teacher discussed the passage, which included unlocking vocabulary and getting the main idea. Then, the respondents were asked to answer a worksheet that required them to answer questions related to the story. No retelling of the story events happened.

The researcher had to meet the respondents through home visitation because the respondents could not be gathered altogether in one classroom or learning environment. Because of the limited contact time with the respondents, the researcher contacted at least five respondents a day whose residences were physically close to one another, with one same story to read and retell every week.

The 40-item reading comprehension posttest was administered after one month and one week of intervention implementation. Checking, tallying, and consolidation of data followed. The raw data were given to a statistician, and the researcher interpreted the findings of the study.



## Scoring Procedure

Reading comprehension was measured through a 40-item Reading Comprehension Test composed of literal, inferential, and evaluative questions. The researcher used the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Scale 2018 to determine the reading comprehension level of the learners. Below is the scale to measure the reading comprehension level:

Range of Score	Reading Comprehension Level	
	Performance Criteria	Qualitative Description
33-40	At least 80-100% of the questions were correctly answered	Independent
24-32	Students answered 59-79% of the questions correctly	Instructional
0-23	At least 58% of the questions were correctly answered	Frustration

## Statistical Treatment

For the analysis and interpretation of data, the mean was used to determine the reading comprehension level of the learners, and a t-test was used to determine the significant difference between the reading comprehension levels of both groups.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Reading Comprehension Level in the Pretest and Post-test

Table 1 presents the reading comprehension level of the learners in the control and experimental groups in the pretest and posttest.

Table 1. Mean Level of Respondents' Reading Comprehension in Pretest and Post-test

Respondents	Pretest		Post-test	
	Mean	Proficiency Level	Mean	Proficiency Level
Control Group	13.18	Frustration	13.05	Frustration
Experimental Group	13	Frustration	13.57	Frustration

*Legend: Independent – 33-40 Instructional – 24-32 Frustration – 0-23*

The results revealed that in the pretest, the mean values of both groups were slightly closer. Specifically, the control group had a mean of 13.18, while the experimental group had a mean score of 13. The students could read the text, but they lacked good reading comprehension in understanding its meaning. It implies that their background knowledge of reading comprehension belongs to the same level, which is frustration. It implies that they found it challenging to understand the questions in the text.

The results affirmed the study of Nolasco (2016), whose findings revealed that about 20 million Filipinos can read but cannot understand the meaning of the reading content they are reading. It is an indication that the quality of education went low in past years. Meanwhile, PISA (2018) results showed that a majority of male students (84.82%) and female students (76.90%) did not obtain the minimum proficiency level (Level 2) in Overall Reading Literacy (Trinidad, 2020).

It means that the respondents belong to million Filipinos with low reading comprehension in English texts. Many factors have contributed to this problem, including the learners' background and teaching strategies used in the classroom. Based on the interviews, the learners do not have proper guidance from their parents because they are also busy making a living. Most of them come from prominent families who are under the poverty line. This trigger caused the learners' lack of educational background to establish good reading comprehension. It is consistent with the data from Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) cited by Thomson (2018), which revealed that learners' socioeconomic background immediately affects their academic performance. If learners do not receive enough learning exposure to language, their cognition is affected. Cognition is a person's total knowledge from previous experiences and learning orientation (Walsh, 2017). Cognition is vital for a learner to understand new learning inputs by connecting the past knowledge with new ones (Anderson, 2013). If the learner has poor cognition, it would be challenging to understand new knowledge because he cannot link it to other similar knowledge inputs. Meaning, there comes a missing link that sets a barrier between the old and new learning.

Meanwhile, the mean score of the experimental group in the posttest was 13.57, which was slightly higher than the mean score of the control group, which fell at 13.05. The difference at 0.52 is not significant. In the interviews, some of the learners in the experimental group found story retelling as a fun activity that piqued their passion in expressing their way of recalling events of

the story. Serin (2017) asserted that passion has a motivating factor in learning. However, in general, the respondents from the experimental group still did not improve significantly to advance to the instructional level or proficient level. The respondents in both groups remain at the frustration level, which means that all the respondents performed almost at the same rate and the same level despite the exposure of the experimental group to story retelling.

The intervention results yielded that almost all respondents could not retell the story being read unless guided by the teacher. They could not even express their thoughts in English, so they had to use the vernacular to do the retelling activity. Spencer and Wagner (2018) said that learners with poor reading comprehension could not answer the questions related to a passage being read; cannot retell the story from the beginning to the end; cannot make connections among the sentences or paragraphs to create meaning out the passage; are not familiar with the meaning of the words found in the course and lose interest in reading which forces them to quit reading. It confirmed the PHIL-IRI results of the learners that they were all frustrated readers. In the interviews, there were many contributing factors to the learners' poor reading comprehension. Some of them were already mentioned, including poor learning background associated with low-income family socioeconomic status and low cognition due to lack of exposure to the language associated with poor learning environments.

Other factors may include limited vocabulary, general knowledge, and limited time of intervention implementation. Limited vocabulary caused the learners' inability to express themselves in English. They had to use their mother tongue in the retelling activity. A little language problem in reading comprehension is seen because it obstructs learners from connecting among ideas (Mokhtari & Velten, 2015). A limited vocabulary could have been less troublesome if learners had good general knowledge because they could understand the whole thought of the story by creating a complete picture. But that was the problem; they lacked solid general understanding, which could have helped them read. General knowledge is vital in reading comprehension, according to Christen and Murphy (2005).

With general knowledge, the learners could connect one idea to another and create a whole thought. Meanwhile, a six-week intervention implementation was also one reason the learners could not improve reading comprehension. It was too short for the intervention to positively impact the learners' reading comprehension, considering that learning to understand the meaning of a text takes more time than learning how to read it. It was affirmed by McNamara (2007), who stated that enhancing reading comprehension takes time and effort.

Similar results were revealed in Frischmann’s (2016) study, who stated that learning new skills takes extended until complete development.

**Significant Difference in the Experimental Group’s Pretest and Post-test**

Table 2 shows the distribution of statistics of the respondents’ reading comprehension levels. It indicates their pretest and posttest scores.

Table 2. Significant Difference in the Experimental Group’s Pretest and Post-test

Group	Pretest		Post-test		T	p	Decision	Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Experimental	13	4.44	13.57	5.16	-.623	.540	Accept	Not Significant

The data reveal that the mean level of the experimental group in pretest and posttest is almost the same. The improvement is only 0.57 in favor of the posttest. It also shows that the p-value is 0.542, which is higher than the 0.05 level of significance. In this case, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the experimental group. The control group remained to be in the frustration level of reading comprehension. It is observed that the standard deviation in the pretest is slightly lower than the standard deviation in the posttest. It indicates that their scores are closer to the mean.

However, the scores in the pretest have slightly wider dispersion. But the distribution is insignificant. It implies that there were only very few learners who improved their posttest scores. The minimal increase in the posttest mean scores of the experimental group shows that few learners enhanced in the process. Still, it does not necessarily mean that the effectiveness of the intervention caused it. Various factors affect the academic performance of the learners, especially in reading comprehension development. These factors encompass the external influences of the learners; and innate cognitive abilities (Chomsky, 1979). According to McWhorter (2020), children have natural abilities for oral language acquisition, which determine how slow or how fast they are in acquiring language inputs from the environment and learning new language forms. That is why the cognitive ability of the readers is vital in the process of reading comprehension. In this research’s case of the learners of the experimental group, some learners

performed better than others. They could grasp ideas from the activities of the intervention better than the other respondents.

Similarly, Borah (2013) stated that learners with below-average cognitive abilities that cannot be considered disabled are called slow learners, while those who can move faster than moderate learners academically are called fast learners. Cognitive skills can be honed through engaging activities, which will help learners to exercise them properly. Reading practices enhanced through reading comprehension strategies help develop cognitive skills. Although there are several strategies to developing reading comprehension, and even how effective these strategies are, there is still a variation in how the readers respond to the activity considering that they have different backgrounds and previous learning experiences. However, there are various categories through which we can assess the learners' response to reading comprehension strategies.

One category that needs to be considered is vocabulary. To comprehend a text, one must have a vast vocabulary (Mokhtari & Velten, 2015). In the interviews conducted with the respondents, the researcher learned that the learners struggle a lot in understanding English texts because there were terms that they were not familiar. Two keys are required to unlock comprehension of printed text: the capacity to read correctly the words found in the text and the ability to make meaning of the words when put together in the sentence or paragraph (Davis, 2006).

Based on the interviews, the researcher learned that the learners' limited vocabulary was caused by their poor exposure to the English language. One's exposure to a particular language is critical for learners to understand a text. Exposing children to a language builds their general knowledge, which is essential in reading comprehension. General knowledge comes from years of exposure to books, newspapers, and other reading materials (Crandall et al., 2016).

Moreover, the respondents said that they were not expansively exposed to the English language at home in the interviews. Their parents do not help them out in their studies because they focus more on seeking money, and they do not have an excellent educational background to help their kids with their homework. In the study of Egalite (2016), family structure, parental education, and family income are indicators of the children's academic success. If the parents show poor conditions in all these aspects, the children will perform very poorly in school.

### Significant Difference in the Control and Experimental Group’s Posttest Results

Table 3 indicates the posttest scores of the Non-SR and SR groups. It shows the distribution of statistical mean and test statistics of the respondents’ reading comprehension levels.

Table 3. Significant Difference in the Control and Experimental Group’s Posttest Results

Score	Control		Experimental		T	p	Decision	Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Post-Test	13.05	3.43	13.57	5.16	-.395	0.695	Accept	Not Significant

The data show that the difference in control and experimental groups’ posttest mean scores provide sufficient evidence to accept the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between them. Specifically, it shows a mean of 13.05 in the posttest of the control group and 13.57 in the posttest of the experimental group, in favor of the latter. There is a mean difference of 0.57, which implies that the difference in the posttest between the two groups is not significant. There was no improvement in both groups’ level of comprehension, indicating that the intervention to which the experimental group was exposed did not make a significant difference in their comprehension level. The standard deviation also shows to be at 3.43 in the posttest of the control group and 5.16 in the experimental group’s posttest, which suggests that the respondents’ scores in the control group are closer to the mean score compared to the scores of the control to the scores in the experimental group. It implies that only very few learners in the experimental group performed better than the others, while the learners performed almost equally in the control group. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The data reveal that story retelling used in this study did not enhance the learners’ reading comprehension. In the interviews conducted with the respondents, it was disclosed that they found it challenging to comprehend the text because there were terms which they did not know. Consistent with the study of Davis (2006), the ability of the readers to correctly read the words in the text and their ability to comprehend the meaning of these words are essential keys in reading comprehension.

Developing and improving reading comprehension is best done when the readers have a wider vocabulary, so they should be exposed to activities that stimulate marginal vocabulary expansion (Mokhtari & Velten, 2015). According to Lee (2014), there are at least six essential reading comprehension skills. They include decoding, fluency, vocabulary, reasoning and background knowledge, and working memory and attention. If the learners fail to develop all these skills, it would be difficult to understand a reading passage. In the conduct of the intervention, the researcher observed that most of the learners manifested poor performances across these skills.

In the interviews conducted, the researchers learned that the learners were not widely exposed to different reading resources at home. That is why they could not build a general knowledge that could have helped them develop good reading skills. Exposure to books, newspapers and other reading materials would help develop the broad expertise needed in the reading intervention (Crandall et al., 2016). However, they lacked that general knowledge. Prior knowledge must be built in the learners if one does not exist. For instance, building their previous knowledge of English terms is vital if they are pushed to read with comprehension. It is essential to create an opportunity and challenge learners to use their collective experiences or prior knowledge (Christen & Murphy, 2005). Through this, teachers help the learners improve from memorizing information to meaningful learning. When that happens successfully, the learners could begin connecting learning events instead of just simply remembering pieces of the whole meaning. In the interviews, this was one of the missing factors of the learners that's why they could not read with comprehension. Their background was one reason why they performed poorly in reading. Most of these learners came from economically challenged homes whose parents had poor educational backgrounds. The parents' socioeconomic background and educational background significantly affect the learners' academic performance, especially in mathematics and language (Farooq et al., 2011). The parents' educational background appears to be more significant than their occupation about their children's performance in school.

Moreover, improving reading comprehension takes time and effort, but it can be done through reading comprehension strategies (McNamara, 2007). One of these strategies, one which was utilized in this study, is story retelling. Retelling a story helps learners build the connection between the events found in the text and all other elements that can be sought within it (Mäkinen et al., 2018). It provides them the opportunity to create meaning through their terms of expression. It will improve their creative and critical thinking, which is a good way of exercising comprehension skills. Story retelling provides an avenue for the

readers to orally retell a story in their own words, forcing them to analyze the content and determine which ones in the text to pick up and which ones to be eliminated. However, their performance in six essential reading comprehension skills, including decoding, fluency, vocabulary, reasoning, and background knowledge, working memory, and attention (Lee, 2014), led them to perform poorly in the story retelling activity conducted in this research.

**The Drivers in Implementing Story Retelling (SR) Technique in the Experimental Group**

The students were asked about the drivers and barriers in implementing the Story Retelling Technique to reading comprehension. The students were given prompts to answer in the interviews. These were collected, consolidated, and used as the basis for further analysis of the Story Retelling (SR) Technique data. The report prompts were summarized into two parts: positive experiences and negative experiences. The student’s responses varied, considering that they had different perspectives about their experience with the SR Technique.

The first prompt was on the students’ positive experiences with the use of SR. They were asked about their positive experiences with the SR Technique. Table 4 shows the drivers in implementing the intervention. It includes the number of learners in the experimental group who had positive experiences in the intervention. Identified drivers include guided instruction, excitement towards the intervention, and self-expression.

Table 4. The Drivers in Implementing Story Retelling (SR) Technique in the Experimental Group

Drivers	(N)	(F)	(P)
Respondents liked to be guided in the reading and retelling process.	21	20	95%
Respondents were excited to read and retell a story.	21	18	86%
Respondents liked to express their own ways to retell a story.	21	19	91%

Based on the data, about 95% of the respondents liked to be guided in the reading and retelling activities. About 86% of them were excited to read and retell a story, while 91% wanted to express their ways of retelling a story. Most learners agreed that they were happy about the SR Technique implemented by the researcher. They were pleased working together with the teacher, and they were motivated to read. Some learners stated that SR Technique enhanced their



self-confidence in reciting events of the story in front of the crowd. They also loved the guided reading because, through this process, they understood the reading passages easier. In addition, Vinciguerra (2002) pointed out that guided reading positively affects students' reading achievement. She listed some benefits of guided reading, including a) it allows for differentiated instruction; (b) it addresses individual weakness; (c) allows for targeted word work and sight word practice; (d) it can help build reading comprehension and fluency; and (e) can intentionally teach concepts about print. Since guided reading was one positive quality of the SR, their experiences in SR Technique were not bad at all.

Based on the interview conducted, the learners loved to read and retell a story, with a teacher guiding them along the way. They felt confident that they could quickly finish their task if properly guided in the reading and retelling process. Another driver in implementing Story Retelling (SR) Technique was the learners' enthusiasm to work with the teacher who guided them in the activities. They would feel bored when they were only reading on their own. They wanted to read with the teacher showing them. Story Retelling Technique was a perfect avenue for them to express their ways of retelling events of a story. Story retelling is a good strategy for building reading comprehension, which eventually yields excitement and love for reading (Warth, 2021).

### **The Barriers in Implementing Story Retelling (SR) Technique in the Experimental Group**

For the second prompt, the learners were asked about their negative experiences with Story Retelling Technique. Table 5 shows the barriers that faced the intervention. It includes the frequency and percentage of the respondents who agreed that they lacked vocabulary requirement, background knowledge, and proper exposure to language, which were important in the reading and retelling activities of the intervention.

Table 5. The Barriers in Implementing Story Retelling (SR) Technique in the Experimental Group

Drivers	(N)	(F)	(P)
Respondents lacked the vocabulary requirement both in reading and retelling.	21	19	91%
Respondents lacked background knowledge which is significant in the reading and retelling process.	21	18	86%
Respondents lacked the proper exposure to the language, which is essential in communication.	21	18	86%

Building vocabulary takes time and significant learning experiences (Smith, 2008). Data reveal that 91% of the respondents lacked the vocabulary requirement in reading and retelling, and 86% lacked background knowledge and proper exposure to the language, which were significant in the reading and retelling process. Their responses revealed that there were terms in the stories they did not know about, and even if they were taught about their meanings, they would still forget them. It was hard for them to speak in English in retelling the stories. That is why they had to use the vernacular to express themselves. Moreover, based on the interviews, they did not have proper exposure to the language, so their vocabulary was narrow enough not wholly to understand the stories.

On the one hand, background knowledge is helpful to students so that they will enjoy reading and learning. They are essential to reading comprehension, making connections among textual elements, and understanding critical ideas (Smith et al., 2021). As equally important, the link between vocabulary and the goal of reading comprehension is profound. Once the learners fail to decode the meaning of words, they would fail to make sense of what they are reading (Waugh, 2018).

The teacher's guidance helped the learners of the study understand the stories, but they were wondering how they would appreciate them if the teacher was not there. The support of the teacher is significant in teaching reading comprehension among the learners. Not only does it help learners identify the right ways or correct manners in the process of reading, but it also helps them in some other vital ways. The teacher's influence, ideas, and expectations of the learners' capabilities impact their academic performance and achievements (Richland, 2020). It is also of equal importance to the way that the teacher tells the story. It should provoke the learners' imagination and pique their interest. It should involve the dramatic conveyance of the story because the ability of learners to see images in their minds enables them to enjoy reading. It is consistent with the techniques of Farmer (2019) in storytelling. He stipulated essential processes in storytelling, including voice, facial expression and bodily gesture, mime, pace, repetition, rhythm, elaboration, exaggeration, and engagement with the audience. All of these techniques can be summed up as a 'dramatic' factor in storytelling. The teacher's dramatic techniques in conveying the story's content will engage the learners in an exciting and compelling storytelling activity.

Aguirre and de Cadiz (2015) stated that instructional materials are significant in assuring the effectiveness of a particular program. The researcher developed and modified an instructional module using the Story Retelling Technique. This

module should be simple, straightforward, and easy to understand. The module should be added with activities that foster vocabulary enrichment, considering that the study's findings showed that poor vocabulary was one impediment to the intervention. A vast vocabulary is essential for learners to easily connect ideas in the text and organize these ideas in their context of expression. Vocabulary knowledge aids in activating and building background knowledge to make connections to text, and having vocabulary knowledge can increase reading comprehension and fluency while reading (Weiser, 2015).

### **LIMITATIONS**

The study was conducted in two heterogeneous classes. One section became the experimental group exposed to the Story Retelling (SR) Technique as a reading strategy of the study, and the other section was confined to a control group that received a traditional class strategy for reading that does not involve a story retelling. The two groups were given the same pretest and posttest. The researchers met the respondents through home visitation because the country was facing a threat from the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers gathered five (5) respondents each day with one same story read each week. There was limited time in implementing the intervention among the respondents, considering the untimely circumstances.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The Story Retelling (SR) Technique in this study does not enhance the learners' reading comprehension, although the researchers have noted several limitations on this conclusion for other researchers to explore. Learners' reading comprehension is affected by various factors, including learners' backgrounds. Poor exposure to the English language creates an undesirable impact on their reading comprehension. When learners are not well exposed to the language, it is difficult to understand these words' meaning. Story retelling meets a multifarious barrier in their implementation. One of these barriers may include the background knowledge and vocabulary of the learners. When these key factors are not well-developed in the learners in their early years at school, it is challenging to improve or enhance their reading comprehension through any strategies utilized.

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