

COMPARISON OF DRAMA AND JAZZ CHANT IN DEVELOPING PHONEMIC SKILLS OF GRADE I

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Abstract: The researcher compared the use of drama and jazz chant in developing the phonemic awareness of the grade 1 pupils of San Mariano Primary School.

Specifically, the profile of the respondent was described in terms of age, sex, ethnicity and parent's educational attainment.

The Grade I pupils' level of phonemic awareness when exposed to drama was compared to their phonemic awareness when they are exposed to jazz chant using the same tool/strategies. The relationship between the profile variables and level of phonemic awareness was also determined.

This research made use of descriptive correlational design to describe clearly the variables. A structured tool on phonemic segmentation, phonemic blending, and rhyme recognition and rhyme production was used to determine the pupils' level of phonemic awareness when it comes to drama and jazz chant. The data were analyzed with the use of frequency counts and percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson's' product moment correlation.

The study yielded to the following results: 1. most of the respondents were six-year old girls. 2. most of the respondents were Ilocanos. 3. most of their fathers were farmers and were high school level/graduates and most of their mothers were homemakers and were high school level/graduates. 4. the pupils' level of awareness was outstanding. 5. there was no significant difference in the level of phonemic awareness of Grade I exposed to drama and jazz chant; 6. there was no significant relationship between profile variables and level of phonemic awareness; 7. only rhyme production of the pupils had a significant difference on the level of phonemic awareness when exposed to drama and jazz chant; and 8. on the listed profile of the respondents', only ethnicity was significantly related to the pupils' level of phonemic awareness.

Keywords: jazz chant, phonetic skills, drama, phonemic awareness, Ilocano.

1. RATIONALE

One of the most difficult tasks that a grade one teacher faces is the recognition of the degree reading readiness of his or her young students. A great deal has been written on the subject of reading readiness since it is an important subject. There is essential agreement on what is meant by the words, "reading readiness." It might be translated as, "the time at which a child is capable of learning to read".

Reading readiness is defined as the time when a child transforms from being a non-reader to a reader. This can be a tough transition but is very rewarding. [1] Formal reading instruction is introduced in kindergarten or in the first grade, and since we have rules that govern when a child may start school, it customarily happens to six-year olds. Thus chronological age is made the official benchmark of reading readiness.

However, there are many people who have challenged this timetable. Thus was born the belief that children-even infants-are capable of grasping far more complexity than we generally give them credit for.[2] Educated parents and interested

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educators became excited with the possibilities of advanced education for very young children. Furthermore, a new philosophy was instituted: "Teach your child to read before his second birthday." They had well-known examples of the possibility of early education in Chopin, who began composing his own music and had his first piece of music published when he was just seven years old [3] and Michelangelo who was an accomplished artist before puberty. However, there are others who suggest that a child should not be introduced to reading until he is eight years old or older.

In order to decide when reading readiness occurs in a child, we must know what reading is. Reading is a process of perceiving symbols, of visual, oral and aural discrimination. It involves the ability to form concepts, and it certainly involves prior experience. If a child has never been introduced to the fact of wetness, or hardness, or even of a cow or a cat, the written or oral stimulation of the word will not evoke any mental image in the child.

Reading must be "a purposeful activity in which the individual seeks to identify, interpret, and evaluate the ideas and points of view expressed by the writer."

The time in a child's life when he becomes capable of reading involves a manifold readiness Gestalt. He must have reached readiness in four different aspects of growth; physiological, psychological (emotional and intellectual), educational and sociological (cultural and environmental).

One requirement in physical factors is general good health. If a person has habitual headache, or he is partially blind, or his feet hurt constantly, he will not be able to concentrate on the intricate process of reading. Children ordinarily start out far-sighted, and their eye muscles slowly tighten in their focusing ability. Very often we find that poor readers have "double vision" which usually means their focus field is too far out; that they are still farsighted. The grasping of discrimination between "b" and "p" requires fine distinctions, whether the stimulus is visual or oral. A child must be ready physically before he can learn to read.

Psychological factors are every bit as important as the physical, in determining reading readiness. Educators differ in their evaluation of a person's "intelligence quotient," but everyone will undoubtedly agree that there are degrees of mental maturity, and that a child must have attained a certain degree of intellectual functioning before he can assimilate what he reads.

One of the most important factors of all is emotional stability and maturity. A child who is at odds with himself and the world will not be able to concentrate on those black-on-white squiggles on a page. A child who has been taught to be super organized and structured will be unable to venture into the excitement of reading and, conversely, the disorganized, wholly impulsive child will be incapacitated. The paranoid child will not be able to accept the authority of the printed word and the autistic child will refuse to respond in anyway. The degree of instability or immaturity of a child has a direct relationship to his reading readiness.

As far as young children are concerned, education, must be considered in conjunction with the child's sociological background.

The educational-environmental factor is influenced by the kind of family the child belongs to. Educational factors are a product of his family's culture and environment. The type of society the child comes from will have an important bearing on the direction his development takes. Other important aspects are: the language patterns within the home; the concern and interest of the parents in stimulating the child to explore new ideas and new places; the attitudes parents have toward learning, toward school, and toward books; the model they present to the child; and, the care with which they provide mental content, or experiential background. Cultural differences have been widely discussed in the past few years and need not be reiterated here.

Some of the specific things the teacher hopes a child has learned before he enters first grade, which parents might teach their children, are how to hold crayons or pencils, to become familiar with writing implements, the ability to detect likenesses and differences, the ability to rhyme, being able to interpret pictures, also the conventional left to right progression, and hopefully the attention span of the child will be sufficiently lengthened so he can sit still long enough to learn new things.

The teacher who is faced with anywhere from ten to twenty first-graders cannot expect that they will all beat the same stage in the developmental process. There are many reading readiness tests on the market; however, none of them is

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comprehensive enough to take into account all of the factors necessary. By means of an appropriate selectivity of standardized tests, informal inventories and observation the teacher can become proficient in recognizing the physiological, psychological, educational, and sociological factors which combine to produce the "complete" child who is ready to read. [4]

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Our society has been studying childhood play for centuries. Plato and Aristotle mention play in their teachings and writings although they mainly viewed children as miniature adults and that games for children had to be carefully selected. [5]

Play of the 16th century is depicted in the famous Flemish painter's, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, "Children's Games" in 1560. This summer townscape, void of adults, shows medieval children at play. Many of the amusements and recreations in the detailed illustration of over 200 children, engaged in nearly 80 different games and play activities, are still played today. [6]

Friedrich Froebel in his most important work, *The Education of Man* stated that play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul.[7] He was convinced that the primary focus for teaching young children should be through play. Pretend or make-belief play is a universal aspect of childhood, one which most parents would also agree is beneficial for children. Four-year-olds enjoy cooking in the kitchen. They carefully dress the baby dolls, get their pocketbook, put the baby in the stroller, push the stroller to the "store," purchase a chicken for dinner, and then stroll home and begin cooking. This lasts for five to ten minutes with much interaction between each of the players—even the dog who can only say "woof-woof" joins in the pretend play. Our society has been studying childhood play for centuries. Plato and Aristotle mention play in their teachings and writings although they mainly viewed children as miniature adults and that games for children had to be carefully selected. However, it was contrasted with the prevalent view at the time that play was a form of idleness and disorder.[8]

While some of the theories for play date back a few centuries, these are most the commonly proposed reasons and ways of children's play:

- *Excess Energy*—play rids extra energy from the body
- *Relaxation or Replenish Energy*—play recharges energy and allows the escape of mental stress¹⁵
- *Evolutionary Recapitulation*—since all species of animals play—kittens, puppies, lambs, dolphins—humans tend to repeat the play of ancestry and biological inheritance; the higher of both the order of animal and the level of civilization or refinement, the longer and more complex the play period
- *Instinct-Practice*—play to learn future adult roles; e.g., mommy, daddy, or teacher

Twentieth Century Theories of Play

- *Cognitive Development*—play to learn cognitive concepts through the manipulation of blocks, puzzles, paints, clay, props
- *Functional Play*—play for the sheer joy of repetition; e.g., swinging, hopping, skipping
- *Construction Play*—play for a purpose; e.g., building a castle
- *Symbolic Play*— plays involving a representation of an absent object; e.g., pretending your hand is the phone^{13, 19}
- *Socio-dramatic Play*— pretend play that involves interactions with others and the use of props and symbols, most highly developed form of play; it is often imitative of real life situations¹⁹

Twenty-first Century Theory

- *Neural Evolution*— play connects/wires the brain cells and makes sense of the world

The neural evolution theory pulls the other theories together into one while all theories of play have current merit. The brain needs play, and especially pretend play, to form neurological connections which in turn make meaning of the world.

We need to engage children in a variety of sensory stimulation and offer them opportunities to explore, imagine, and create.[9]

Research Paradigm

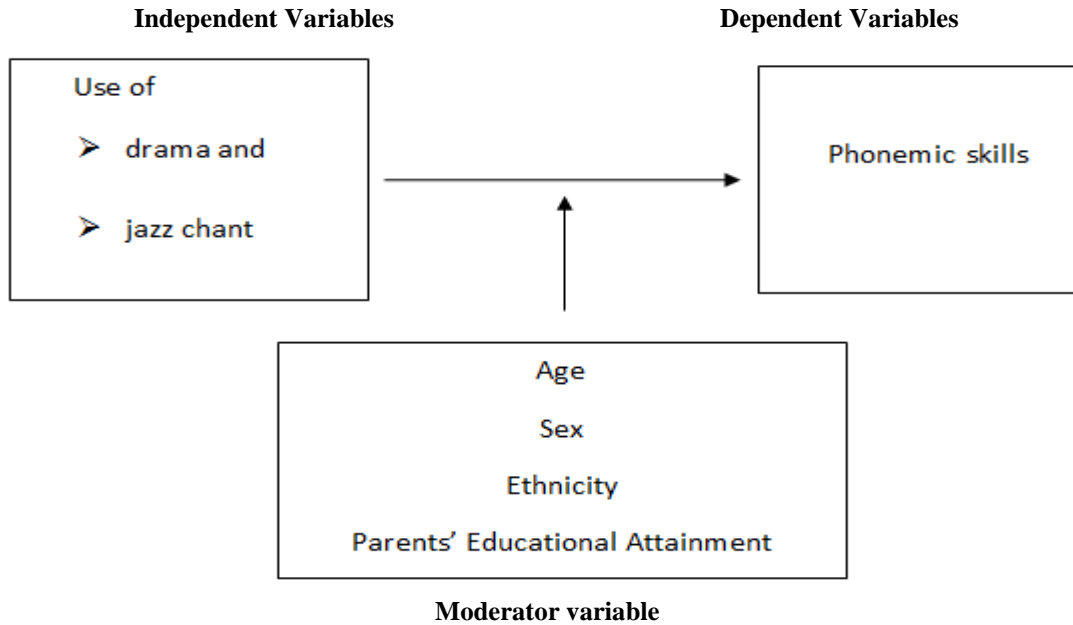


Figure1. A paradigm showing the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable.

Statement Of The Problem

This study compared the use of drama and jazz chant in developing the phonemic skills of Grade I.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

- 1.) What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. age,
 - b. sex,
 - c. ethnicity, and
 - d. parents' educational attainment?
- 2.) What is the level of phonemic awareness of Grade I when exposed to drama? to jazz chant ?
- 3.) Is there a significant difference in the level of phonemic awareness of Grade I when exposed to drama and when exposed to jazz chant?
- 4.) Is there a significant relationship between profile variables and level of phonemic awareness?

Research Hypothesis

This study was guided by the following research hypotheses:

1. there is no significant difference between Grade I's level of phonemic awareness when they are exposed to drama and their level of phonemic awareness when they exposed jazz chant with the same tools/strategies.
2. there is no significant relationship between profile variables and level of phonemic awareness.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research used descriptive-comparative design with the use of standardized Phonemic Awareness tool developed by Barbara Clark and with the use of questionnaire as the main instrument in gathering data. It is descriptive – comparative

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type because the study dealt with comparing the phonemic awareness skills of two groups of respondents exposed in two different but related teaching strategies on beginning reading.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at San Mariano Primary School in Pudtol District San Mariano Primary School is situated at the eastern part of the town proper. It is 2 kilometers away from the district office. The school has 2 teachers and 1 teacher for afternoon session headed by a cluster principal. It is the school where the researcher is presently assigned.

Respondent of the study

The respondents of this study were the grade I pupils of San Mariano Primary School. They were grouped into 2 through draw lots. Each group consisted of six members. One group performed drama while the other group presented the jazz chant.

Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire was used to gather the needed data. It consisted of the information related to the profile of the respondents.

To determine the pupils' phonemic level of awareness the tool on phonemic segmentation and blending and rhyme recognition and production patterned after Dr. Barbara Clark was administered.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study in the respondent school.

After an approval was made, a similar letter of request was forwarded to the District Supervisor then to the School Head.

The data gathering procedure started with the grouping the respondents into 2 through draw lots. Each group assigned a leader. After which, the teacher gave the script to the group who picked drama and gave them time for rehearsal before performing the drama. While the execution was going on, the researcher administered phonemic awareness instrument. On the other hand, the jazz chant was read by the teacher which was followed by the students who belong to the jazz group. The same instrument was administered by the researcher while the jazz chant was being performed.

Statistical Treatment

The data gathered were recorded, tabulated, analysed and interpreted using various statistical tools.

Frequency counts, percentages, and mean standard were used to treat the profile variables and the level of phonemic awareness of the pupils.

The t-test for independent sample was used to compare level of phonemic awareness of pupils exposed to drama and jazz chant.

The 5 – point scale presented below was used to describe level of phonemic awareness of respondents.

Level of Phonemic Awareness

Score	Range (limit)	Verbal Interpretation
5	4:20 – 5:00	Outstanding
4	3.40 – 4.19	Very satisfactory
3	2.60 – 3.39	Satisfactory
2	1:80 – 2.59	Fair
1	1:00 – 1.79	Poor

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	5	42
Female	7	58
Age		
5	1	8
6	8	67
7	3	25
Ethnicity		
Agta	1	8
Isnag	3	25
Ilokano	8	67
Fathers Educational Attainment		
Elementary Level/ Graduate	4	33
High School Level/ Graduate	5	42
College Level/Graduate	3	25
Mothers Educational Attainment		
Elementary Level/ Graduate	3	25
High School Level/Graduate	5	42
College Level/Graduate	4	33

Table I presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to sex. Out 12 respondents, 7 (58%) are females and 5 (42%) are males. The girls' advantage on verbal abilities varied according to age and the type of ability [10]. The learning process for reading extends beyond the classroom. Differences among students are due, in part, to varying socio-economic environments. Another possible explanation for differences in reading achievement is that females and males have different reading behaviors and interests, and that they interpret reading materials according to their reading identity and the socio-cultural support for that identity.

It also presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to age. It can be gleaned from the data that 1(8% of the respondents) is 5 years old, 8 (67%) 6 years old and 3(25%) are 7 years old. This shows that majority of the respondents are of age 6. In reading comprehension, girls below age 6 performed better than boys, but among older children, the sex difference was negligible. In vocabulary, girls aged 6 to10 performed better than boys. Sex differences by type of ability showed that women have higher average abilities in speech production (word fluency) and anagrams, men have higher average abilities than women in analogies, and there were negligible differences in reading comprehension, essay writing, and vocabulary support for that identity.

The data reveal that there are 8 (67% of the total number of respondents) Ilocanos; 3(25%) Isnags and 1(8%) Agta. Most of the respondents are speaking Ilokano at home. The 3 Isnags and lone Agta respondent speak Ilokano since they live in an Ilokano community. Ilokano is their first language at home so if a teacher uses Ilokano in teaching, they can easily communicate and understand more.

The next variable presents the educational attainment of the respondents' parents. The data reveal that 4(33%) are elementary graduates, while 5 (42%) are high school level/graduates.

As to the mother's educational attainment, 3(25%) are elementary graduates, 5(42%) are high school level/graduates and 4(33%) are college graduates. This shows that the educational attainment of the respondents' mothers is slightly higher than that of their fathers'.

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Parents strongly affect social learning process because they are the biggest influence in the early stage of their children’s lives [11]. One of the reasons why it strongly affects their children’s education is because “parents who have gone beyond high school education are found to be more involved with their infants and children than those who did not finish high school. Many less educated parents simply have more unmanaged stress in their lives, and this stress interferes with ability and opportunity to interact with their child” [12]. Typically, parents who have finished high school and gone on to receive additional schooling understand the pressures and stresses of school and are more equipped to handle them with their children when they go through school. Parents who have obtained further educational opportunities also have less stress in their lives because they most likely making more money while spending less time making that money than those who, unfortunately, have not been able to finish high school for one reason or another.

Level of Phonemic Awareness when exposed to Jazz Chant

Table 2. Level of Phonemic Awareness when exposed to Jazz Chant

Phonemic skills	Mean	Interpretation
Phonemic Segmentation	3.83	Very Good
Phonemic Blending	3.83	Very Good
Rhyme Recognition	5	Outstanding
Rhyme Production	5	Outstanding
Overall Mean	4.42	Outstanding

Table 2 reveals that the respondents are outstanding in rhyme recognition and production with the same mean of 5 and very good in phonemic segmentation and blending with the same mean of 3.38. The respondents’ level of phonemic awareness when exposed to jazz chant is outstanding with an overall mean of 4.42

This implies that exposing the pupils to jazz chants can increase their level of phonemic awareness. The language often stretches, shortens, blends, and often drops sound [13]. These subtle features of the language are extremely difficult for a student to comprehend unless his ear has been properly trained to understand the language of an educated native speaker in natural conversation. So, jazz chant’s first purpose is the improvement of speaking and listening comprehension skills.

Jazz chants can be used to teach multiple aspects of language: sound and intonation, rhythm and rhyming, structure, vocabulary, idiomatic usage, language function.

Table 3. Level of Phonemic Awareness when exposed to Drama

Phonemic skills	Mean	Interpretation
Phonemic Segmentation	3.83	Very Good
Phonemic Blending	3.17	Good
Rhyme Recognition	4.83	Outstanding
Rhyme Production	3.17	Good
Overall Mean	3.75	Very Good

Table 3 reveals that the respondents are outstanding in rhyme recognition with a mean of 4.83, very good in phonemic segmentation with a mean of 3.38 and good in both phonemic blending and production with the same mean of 3.17. The respondents’ level of phonemic awareness when exposed to drama is very good with an overall mean of 3.75.

The dramatic play enhances children’s societal language because it requires them to use different conversation precedents, accommodating and communicative tones, and language conventions. [14]

While children play and communicate, they are learning intuitively how language works, practicing its many nuances, and gaining insights into the meaning of written language. [15]

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Table 4. Differences in Phonemic Awareness in the Different Areas of Phonemic Awareness of the Two Groups

Area of Phonemic Awareness	t computed	t tabular@5%	Decision
Phonemic Segmentation	0	2.23	not significant
Phonemic Blending	1.32	2.23	not significant
Rhyme Recognition	1	2.23	not significant
Rhyme Production	5.96	2.23	Significant

Table 4 shows that of the different areas of phonemic awareness only rhyme production was proven to have a significant difference in phonemic awareness with t computed of 5.96 and t tabular at 5 percent of 2.23.

This means that jazz chant and drama are both essential tools/strategies in developing the phonemic awareness of first graders.

Through jazz chant, the pupils practice stress, and rhythm. Chants are also simple which provide the language children really use and are repetitive, which mainly in case of very young learners is quite necessary. They help students to remember difficult words or phrases. And last but not the least; children are themselves while singing, clapping or shouting. [16]

Table 5. Relationship Between Profile Variables and Level of Phonemic Awareness

Profile Variables	Computed r	Tabular r	Decision
Sex	0.496	0.553	not significant
Age	-0.13	0.553	not significant
Ethnicity	-0.58	0.553	Significant
Father Educational Attainment	-0.09	0.553	not significant
Mother Educational Attainment	0.44	0.553	not significant

It is revealed in the table that only ethnicity has significant relationship on the level of phonemic awareness of the pupils. This means that their ethnicity has something to do with their spoken dialect at home which affects their ability to discriminate and manipulate individual speech sounds—phonemes”[17] and reading readiness as to phoneme segmentation, phoneme blending, rhyme recognition and rhyme production.

The jazz chant is a rhythmic expression of natural language which links the rhythm of spoken dialect at home. Since the rhythm stress and intonation pattern of the chant should be an exact replica of what the student would hear From educated native speaker in natural conversation which is now applied in the K-12 curriculum (Mother Tongue as medium of instruction).

4. SUMMARY

The study compared the use of drama and jazz chant in developing the phonemic awareness of the grade 1 pupils of San Mariano Primary School.

Specifically, it described the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, ethnicity and parent’s educational attainment.

It determined the level of phonemic awareness of Grade I pupils when exposed to drama and jazz chant and tested whether there is a significant difference in the level of phonemic awareness of Grade I exposed to the same tool/strategies. It also tested the relationship between the profile variables and level of phonemic awareness.

This study which is conducted at San Mariano Primary School on November 2015 to February 2016 is deemed vital to the teachers, students, and future researchers on reading readiness and the like.

This study made use of the descriptive correlational design to describe the variables clearly and of the structured practice oral test as the main instrument in gathering the data. A structured tool on phonemic segmentation, phonemic blending, and rhyme recognition and rhyme production was used to determine the level of phonemic awareness of the pupils

exposed to drama and jazz chant. The data were analyzed with the use of frequency counts and percentage, weighted mean, and Pearsons' product moment correlation.

The following are the findings of the study:

1. Most of the respondents are girls of age 6.
2. Most of the respondents are Ilocanos.
3. Most of their fathers are farmers and are high school level/graduates; their mothers are home makers and are high school level/graduates.
4. The pupils' level of awareness is outstanding.
5. This study proved the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the level of phonemic awareness of Grade I when they are exposed to drama and the level of phonemic awareness when they are exposed to jazz chant.
6. This study proved the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between profile variables and level of phonemic awareness.
7. Only rhyme production of the pupils has a significant difference on the level of phonemic awareness when exposed to drama and jazz chant.
8. On the listed profile of the respondents', only ethnicity is significantly related to the pupils' level of phonemic awareness.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most of the respondents are female od age 6.
2. Most of them are Ilocanos and their parents are farmers.
3. Most of the respondents are outstanding in rhyme recognition and production and very good in phonemic segmentation and blending which implies that exposing the pupils to jazz chants can increase their level of phonemic awareness.
4. Most of the respondents are outstanding in rhyme recognition, very good in phonemic segmentation, and good both in phonemic blending and production when exposed to drama.
5. Only rhyme production has a significant difference in the level of phonemic awareness of Grade I when exposed to drama and jazz chant.
6. Most of the listed variables on the profile of the respondents do not have a significant relationship on their level of phonemic awareness.
7. Only ethnicity has a significant difference in the profile variables and level of phonemic awareness of Grade I.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are presented:

1. Teachers should employ/ use drama and jazz chants in developing phonemic awareness of the pupils as early as kinder.
2. In-service trainings, workshops, and seminars for teachers should be conducted with the focus of developing phonemic awareness of pupils.
3. Parents should encourage the use of Mother Tongue (Ilocano) at home since it is very useful in phonemic awareness of the pupils.
4. A parallel study should be conducted using other tools/ strategy.

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