Reading Skills Enhancement of Secondary Learners Amid Pandemic: Narrative Exposition of English Teachers in Focus

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Abstract:- This study explored the expositions of English teachers in enhancing the reading skills of secondary learners amid the pandemic, particularly in Davao del Sur division, there were ten (10) English teachers who participated in the study. This study made use of a phenomenological approach to extract the ideas of the participants. The virtual in-depth interview was employed to gather some information as regards to their respective experiences as they implement school-based programs on the reading skills enhancement of secondary learners amid the pandemic. Using the thematic analysis, the following themes emerged: interrupted face-to-face reading program implementation, deteriorating reading abilities during the pandemic, and stalled parents' involvement in the reading development of children. The coping mechanisms of the English teachers in enhancing the reading skills of secondary learners were establishing a reading environment, strengthening parents' involvement in the reading program, and the use of technology-related reading lessons. The insights drawn from the findings of the study were: Upskilling and reskilling of teachers in enhancing the reading skills of learners, and Plan reading programs appropriate for remote learners. They may continuously be innovative in designing reading programs appropriate for every modality preferred by the learners. The teachers may continue upskilling themselves to address the gaps of every learner in the school that needed attention in terms of reading literacy. Attending webinars is an avenue to enhance their competency in being an effective reading teacher.

Keywords:- Thenarrative Exposition of English Teachers, Reading Skills Enhancement.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem and Its Setting

Reading is likely the most important ability gained in K-12 schooling, laying the groundwork for lifetime learning and personal development. Oral reading fluency, defined as the capacity to read aloud quickly and accurately, is critical in the learning process. This skill can be tested quickly and accurately, making it a good predictor of reading comprehension and other essential literacy outcomes. Additionally, the development of early literacy abilities is critical since it lays the framework for future academic performance and general life achievements. As educational systems work to provide students with the tools they need, reading remains a focal point in developing both academic and life skills.

Reading is a key life skill that is required for navigating numerous facets of daily life and professional development. Reading, according to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson (2015), is essential for a child's academic and life success. Individuals who lack excellent reading ability may experience considerable problems in reaching personal fulfillment and career goals. The complexity of providing literacy for all is exacerbated by the growing demand for higher reading levels in a technologically savvy society. The ability to read critically entails not only decoding words but also comprehending underlying meanings, which is essential for analyzing complicated texts and engaging with varied viewpoints (Teele, 2004).

According to research, proficient readers actively engage with the material, using a variety of tactics to improve comprehension. Reading comprehension can be improved by techniques such as predicting material, establishing connections, envisioning scenarios, inferring meanings, questioning concepts, and summarizing information (Block & Israel, 2005). Effective education of these strategies requires a structured approach that begins with naming and explaining the method, followed by teacher modeling through a think-aloud process, and progresses to group practice, partner activities, and autonomous application (Duke and Pearson, 2005). By incorporating these approaches into reading instruction, educators can help kids build strong comprehension abilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in school closures in March 2020, highlighted the impact of educational disruptions on oral reading fluency. The extended absence from typical classroom settings has prompted worries about the expanding reading achievement gaps, particularly among kids who rely heavily on structured learning environments or are learning English as an extra language. Emerging research suggests that the epidemic has exacerbated existing literacy discrepancies, emphasizing the necessity for tailored measures to address these setbacks. Understanding the exact level of learning loss requires additional research, especially for students who have not engaged in examinations owing to a lack of educational options.

Addressing these gaps is an urgent concern, as kids who have undergone large disruptions may find it more difficult to restore lost learning progress. Current estimates of learning loss are likely to underestimate the experiences of the most vulnerable learners, who may have the most difficult time catching up. Educators and researchers must work together to better understand these students' unique situations, reengage them in the educational process, and apply compensatory instructional techniques to help them recover. This work is crucial not only for correcting present achievement gaps, but also for averting future academic declines.

The pandemic's influence on reading ability in the early grades highlights the critical need for evidence-based literacy development interventions. With minimal testing data available for younger students, initiatives to shed light on how oral reading fluency and early literacy have been impacted can help guide national resource allocation to address these difficulties. Early assistance is critical since reading issues can impede success in other areas, potentially leading to larger academic obstacles over time. As education systems adjust to post-pandemic circumstances, regular monitoring and targeted measures to sustain learning growth will be critical to reducing the long-term consequences of this extraordinary upheaval.

B. Research Questions

This study assessed the experiences of English teachers on reading skills enhancement amid the pandemic. Specifically, it sought to answer the following inquiries:

- What are the lived experiences of English teachers on reading skills enhancement of learners amid the pandemic?
- How do English teachers cope with the challenges in the reading skills enhancement of learners amid the pandemic?
- Based on the findings of the study, what insights can be drawn from the experiences of English teachers on reading skills enhancement of learners amid the pandemic?

C. Theoretical Lens

Psycholinguistic theory, which examines the relationship between mind and language, serves as the foundation for this investigation. According to Goodman (1967), reading is a process in which the reader's knowledge and predictions are guided by language signals that are chosen from perceptual data. As they read more, the reader forms hazy conclusions about meaning and then confirms, rejects, or refines them in light of new information. Top-down reading approaches rely on the reader's linguistic competency to accomplish understanding through the use of visual, syntactic, and semantic signals. These models—which were influenced by psycholinguists—suggest that proficient readers translate text straight from print to meaning, as opposed to bottom-up models, which hold that meaning develops through the decoding of discrete elements (Harris & Sipay, 1984).

According to Rumelhart's (1980) interactive paradigm, reading, particularly for proficient readers, requires simultaneous top-down and bottom-up processing. This point of view contends that understanding depends on the reader's ability to integrate prior knowledge with visual information from the text. Competent readers make up for missing knowledge or skills by interpreting words or inferring

meaning from context. Accordingly, reading is viewed as a dynamic process in which the reader's linguistic proficiency, their understanding of the outside world, and the visual symbols used to represent language interact to produce comprehension (Harris & Sipay, 1984). Reading takes on a different character as students' progress from less developed to more advanced stages. Reading involves a variety of interrelated skills that change over time.

By highlighting the significance of prior knowledge, McCormick and Pressley's (1997) schema theory broadens our understanding of reading comprehension. According to this idea, knowledge is arranged into units called schemata that contain both instructions on how to use the knowledge and the knowledge itself. When reading, activating pertinent schemata can greatly improve memory, inferencing, comprehension, and attention allocation. Rumelhart (1980) asserts that texts offer hints that assist readers in extracting or creating meaning from prior information. Because understanding a text entails more than just linguistic proficiency—it is an interactive process engaging the reader's prior knowledge and the information within the text—effective comprehension thus requires the ability to connect textual content with one's background knowledge (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988).
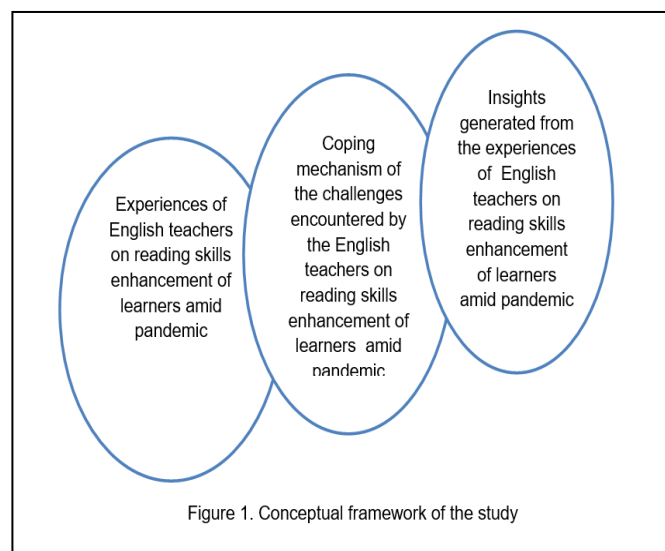

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

II. METHOD

A. Design and Procedure

This study used a qualitative research approach and a phenomenological design to investigate English instructors' lived experiences in improving reading skills throughout the epidemic. Drawing on psycholinguistic theory and phenomenology, the study intended to explore teachers' perspectives and personal stories through in-depth data collection via interviews. Participants were chosen from the Davao del Sur Division, where ten teachers discussed their experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during participants' free time, and data analysis included horizontalization, which involved identifying, grouping, and transforming significant statements into meaning clusters to form a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The study used insights from phenomenological theorists like Moustakas (1994) and scholars like Creswell (2013) to aid the

interpretation of lived experiences. Furthermore, qualitative research enabled the investigation of subjective experiences and knowledge construction in real settings, emphasizing a flexible methodology that could respond to developing findings (Merriam, 2009; Hatch, 2002). Member-checking techniques were used to assure the findings' credibility, and Gray's (2014) suggestions for preserving validity were followed to prevent drawing hasty conclusions. This technique provides a deep knowledge of the instructors' concerns and novel strategies for teaching reading skills in the face of pandemic limits.

B. Research Participants

The study included ten English teachers from Davao del Sur Division with at least three years of teaching experience, including positions as reading coordinators. Data was gathered using one-on-one interviews and survey questionnaires designed for qualitative research. Purposive sampling, guided by the key informant technique, was utilized to select participants, allowing them to act as cultural guides throughout the research process (Tongco, 2007). Furthermore, snowball sampling—a non-probability strategy in which existing participants help recruit future participants—was used to efficiently reach the desired demographic. This sampling approach was effective in collecting the exact data needed to achieve the research objectives. The study scrupulously followed ethical guidelines, ensuring that participants' identities were protected, and interactions remained collegial and morally sound.

C. Data Analysis

Careful data collection and analysis were done in this investigation. To eliminate prejudice and focus on participants, the researcher described personal encounters with the phenomena. Major assertions concerning participants' experiences were listed and classified into "meaning units." Textural and structural descriptions of "what" and "how" the participants experienced were written, including context. The final textural-structural description captured the "essence" of the experience, the important element of phenomenological study.

Thematic content analysis identified interview data themes. This flexible approach works for exploratory investigations without themes or deductive studies with particular patterns. Honesty about participants' viewpoints-maintained data integrity across studies (Montensen, 2020). In addition, document analysis was used to methodically assess documentary material, either alone or in a mixed techniques study. Document analysis supported, refuted, or expanded other data sources, boosting the study's trustworthiness (Frey, 2018).

Data triangulation, including environmental triangulation, was employed to strengthen the findings by collecting data from numerous sources and situations. This method revealed several aspects of the phenomenon. Setting, time, and season were examined in environmental triangulation to determine their impact on data. Research was more valid if findings were consistent across situations (Naeem, 2019; Kulkarni, 2013).

D. Analytical Framework

Braun and Clarke (2006) divide qualitative data analysis methods into theory-driven methods like conversation analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis and more flexible methods like thematic analysis, which can be used across theoretical perspectives. Researchers can examine data in depth using thematic analysis, which gives them theoretical freedom.

Six steps of thematic analysis were used for this investigation. First, I transcribed and reviewed recordings to learn the data. Initial coding identified noteworthy data features, which were arranged into themes. We evaluated, modified, and plotted topics to highlight their relationships. Finally, themes were named, defined, and used to build a report with data extracts for examinations. Coding, sorting, and theme grids helped analyze data relationships and provide a complete analysis.
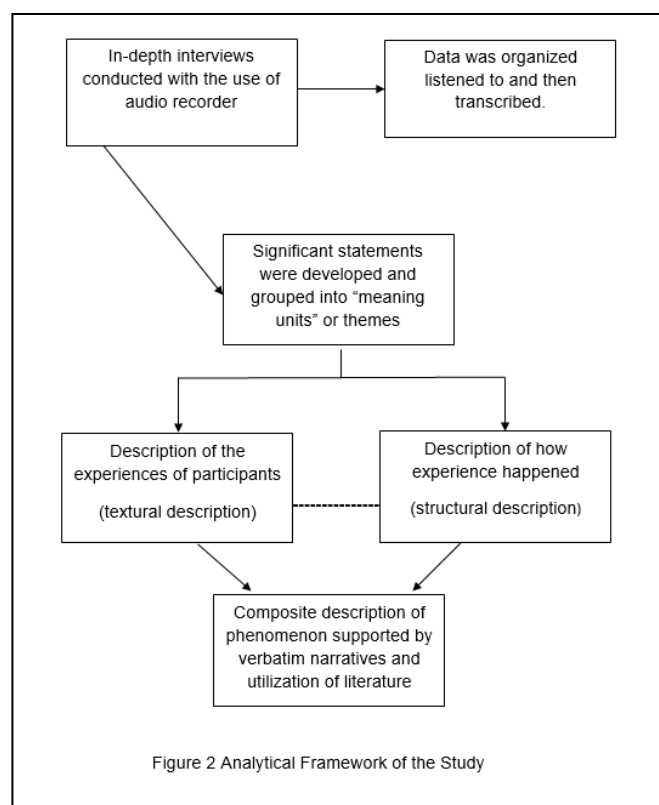

Fig 2 Analytical Framework of the Study

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Experiences of English Teachers in Enhancing the Reading Skills of Secondary Learners Amid the Pandemic

Reading is essential for academic and personal success. It is crucial to a child's academic success and future prospects. Reading remains difficult in the education system, with technological advances demanding higher literacy levels. Reading programs are not available to everyone, compounding this issue.

Interruptions in face-to-face reading sessions affected consistency, the study showed. Some students sent video clips of performance tasks to show devotion. According to study comments, sports coordinators supervising these tasks were satisfied.

"As an English teacher, I have As an English teacher, I had experienced a fair share of challenges in reading enhancement, especially during this time of the pandemic. One factor that I experienced that hindered the conduct of reading enhancement is the absence of face-to-face classes for it is really difficult to track and monitor the learner's reading level due to a world health crisis. Apart from it, is on how to continuously monitor them given that at present we are in distance learning. Everything is really beyond our control, truly it is inevitable personally, I cannot force every student to go to school to have their reading assessment because of some personal matters which involve their health security and most of them are working away from their hometown and because of that, they cannot participate on the said activity. Apart from it, I also reached out to them through any social platforms for them to participate virtually yet there were problems regarding internet connectivity which also hindered them to participate. Further, if I were to wrap up the most difficult one when it comes to reading involvement that would be on how to track the learners and monitor their reading progress continuously like visiting even in the remote the remotest area just to ensure their welfare and safety." (R4)

"Reading enhancement in this time of pandemic has greatly changed specifically the way it is being administered to the learners. First, the none face to face interaction is a great challenge considering the situation of each learner who needs thorough reading remediation. Second, the progress tracker should be tracked always to see the reading development of a learner. Lastly, the access to authentic reading materials that learners cannot grasp right away. I experience difficulties during this time of pandemic because of none face no face interaction of the learners in administering the reading enhancement." (R5)

"Reading is necessary for education as well as in our daily lives. Reading in this pandemic time indeed gives a great effect on the lives and education system. Students nowadays neglect our education, seems like they are not interested in it. Reading at this present moment is very inadequate. It is a big challenge for language teachers to teach reading in this pandemic time. But since there is no face-to-face intervention, we may find ways to communicate with our students." (R10)

Distance learners have a wealth of specialized online reading, according to Macintyre and Macdonald (2011). Remote students benefit from online educational materials and a wider selection of services. These materials enable distance learners to attain their goals. E-learning platforms allow students to study information that interest them, improving the learning experience, according to Farid et al. (2018).

During the 2019–2020 school year, the global COVID-19 epidemic disrupted face-to-face instruction (Kuhfeld et al., 2021). As educators and parents sought ways to continue formal education remotely, several schools adopt virtual learning, a trend that continued into 2021. However, Viner et al. (2020) observed that distant learning efficiency is questionable. The change to online education spurred researchers to study distance learners' reading interests and how different reading materials might engage them (Sun, 2003).

Participants in this survey indicated anxiety about reading decline due to the pandemic. They complained about modular learning, especially for poor readers who need phonetic training. Language teachers noted that many kids lack desire and reading skills, highlighting that the pandemic hindered reading programs. Student engagement and literacy growth have been challenging to maintain in the present school environment, which encourages comfortable reading.

Some of the participants' responses were noted as:

"As language teachers, integrating reading lessons is part of our profession. Not all learners are interested in reading, it is to the teacher how to convince or give strategies to the students." (R1)

"Reading enhancement in this time of pandemic is consistently deteriorating and the reading abilities of our learners are at risk of continuous decline. The modular way of learning does not suffice in augmenting the learning needs, especially in reading because modules do not teach sounds, mostly to frustration level students." (R7)

"Reading is a great challenge for us, language teachers since this pandemic occurs at this time. Learners are too relaxed in terms of their reading skills, they lack interest in reading. It seems like education is taken for granted in the present generation. Most learners that I encountered during the PHIL-IRI belong to the frustration level. Supposedly, in this pandemic time, parents/ guardian should assist their learners. They should give time and give effort to their learners." (R8)

"Pandemic gives a big effect on our daily lives as well as our education. Our education system is slowly taken for granted by our present generation. The DepEd is providing programs for learners so that there will be no left behind but, the problem is in our learners. Some of the students reached higher levels but their reading skills belong to the elementary level." (R9)

The theme analysis matches Goldstein's (2020) research, which found that American students' reading proficiency was stagnating or dropping and that top and low achievers were growing apart. Anderson et al. (2015) stress that reading is a life skill crucial for a child's success in school and beyond; without it, people risk missing out on personal and professional fulfillment. Reading is important, yet in a technology-driven society that requires excellent literacy, it is one of the hardest topics (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 2018). Teele (2020) also notes that the pandemic has hindered children's critical reading. He believes readers must understand both the visible content and the underlying meanings to understand the work.

Block and Israel (2020) claim that the epidemic has caused a deterioration in pupils' reading skills, which is exacerbated by modular learning's failure to teach struggling students phonics. The lack of parental involvement in their children's reading development has been a major concern for English teachers. Unfortunately, many parents lack smartphones or other devices needed to communicate with teachers, and those in remote locations often lack internet availability. This separation hinders educator-family

collaboration, making it harder to promote students' reading skills during this crucial time.

Here are some of the comments of the English teachers:

"Reading by this time of pandemic needs support from guardians and parents. If parents are busy as well as the guardians, it is impossible to have high expectations from the learners especially if he or she is not discipline-oriented. The only way for the teacher to prove the level of efficiency of the learner is through Phil-Iri; which gives poor results, which means individuals still need more effort for their development." (R2)
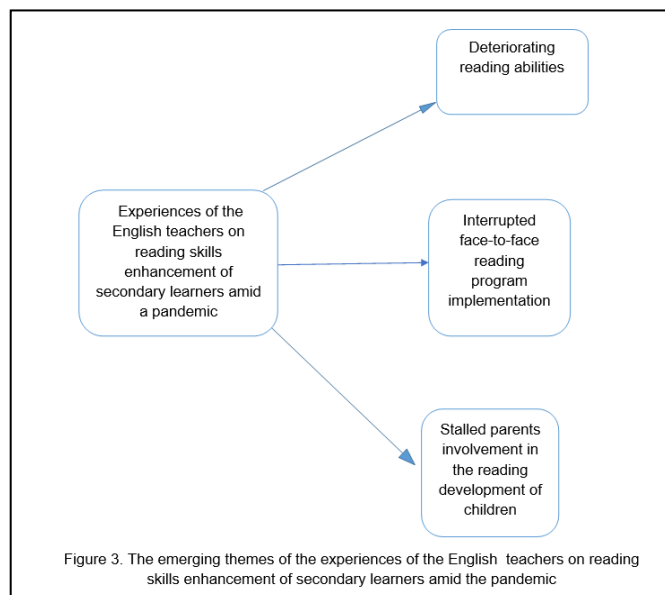
"Teachers are trying their very best in giving updates and encouraging their students. Teachers visited their learners but some students were lack of support from their parents/guardians. Provided that my students are in High School and I have witnessed their difficulties in reading and from it, I can say that the students have reached this level yet there were still difficulties maybe because of the lack of interest and the sustainability in practicing reading. I am quite unsure about the development of the reading skills of the students." (R4)

"I cannot assure when it comes to the reading development of the student in remote areas because some of our students need to earn a living rather than reading/ education. There are many factors on why students have no interest in reading. These include the lack or absence of devices that a student can utilize and the lack of parents' guidance and support in the reading enhancement of their children, and time spent during the reading/studying time of the students." (R5)

"Discouraged and unsatisfied, there should be factors why a student is a non-reader. One factor that affects the learner's development of his reading skills is the lack of knowledge of parents and guardians in dealing with their student's problems with reading. We all know that there are different ways of attending to their different needs." (R7)

As learning often happens at home rather than in the classroom, Coveart and Eagan (2020) say the best present parents and teachers can give children is learning direction. Bus (2003) argues that reading is better than singing or playing and that good book reading habits are necessary to life. Parents and instructors must choose age-appropriate, entertaining, and culturally relevant books for this exercise. He stresses that societal and cultural factors affect literacy practices, emphasizing that if parents view reading as worthless, their children may too, leading to a lack of enthusiasm in literacy and academic challenges.

Smith (2020) claims that all readers make decisions based on their knowledge and experiences, improving academic success. Stand and Booth (2008) also support peace and children's books. Parental involvement in reading activities may make them exciting and nurture a love of reading and literacy development.

Figure 3. The emerging themes of the experiences of the English teachers on reading skills enhancement of secondary learners amid the pandemic

B. The coping Mechanisms of the English Teachers in the Reading Skills Enhancement of Secondary Learners Amid the Pandemic

Remote learners have little opportunity to hold books and practice reading, whereas in-person learners have empty or restricted classroom bookshelves due to safety concerns. Despite these obstacles, educators are more intentional and resourceful about literacy promotion. Barriers to teaching and learning have made it difficult for teachers to improve secondary students' reading skills. These challenges did not dissuade research participants, who showed perseverance and commitment to helping all pupils read and comprehend.

The participants' tales stressed the value of a conducive reading environment. As traditional classrooms closed, children' homes became the learning environment, causing concern about reaching school standards. Most respondents maintained consistent communication with students and parents to build confidence, encourage, and assist students morally and financially. This loving home environment, with participation from teachers, coworkers, and school heads, helped pupils improve their reading skills even in difficult times.

The responses of the participants were noted:

"The constant communication with the students and parents, encouragement for those low self-esteemed students, and moral and even financial support to students made these difficult situations inspiring as far as the reading opportunities for learners are concerned. This environment is what our learners need at home. With the help of colleagues and school heads, teachers can deliver reading enhancement to our students." (R6)

"I request the parents/ guardians to bring their students along with them to school for face-to-face remediation. The school with the support of my parents and me would be a very encouraging environment for slow readers to achieve the reading level expected of them. The limited face-to-face contact with students is difficult, however, we can create a reading culture at home. The frustration level students need

someone who can facilitate and encourage them to read at home, someone who will carefully plan and prepare reading activities for them. Physical assistance is needed." (R7)

Baker and Scher (2002) argued that positive parental views toward reading and literacy motivate children to read. Diverse learning methodologies and environments customized to students' interests and skills were stressed by Goodman (2020). Reading abilities, comprehension, and expressiveness can improve in gifted and learning-disabled children through enrichment reading programs.

Parental reading values affect literacy engagement, especially with distant learning, according to Coley (2020). Reading with parental assistance helps kids become independent readers and prepares them for school. A strong parent-teacher partnership improves children's reading skills, and participants believed that it helps instructors analyze kids' progress. Many parents don't actively support their kids' education.

Here are some of the identified themes that emerged from the narratives of the participants:

"I contact the student through her/his guardian. Reading needs face-to-face contact with one another, so the parent and I agreed to bring the child to school every Monday and Wednesday, to teach the learner how to read." (R8)

"I have a supportive parent, she is religious in monitoring the reading progress of her son. Her son Is identified as a frustrated reader. I am happy because her son is improving. My partnership with her mother improved his reading status." (R3)

"Children whose parents are more involved in their education have higher levels of academic performance than children whose parents are involved to a lesser degree. Parents have a great influence on the reading ability of children. I observed that when the parents have a low level of reading ability, they do not have the patience to teach their children to read. They do not show a good example to their children." (R6)

While schools have historically been in charge of a child's learning development, Lim et al. (2021) pointed out that the pandemic has brought attention to the vital role that parental engagement plays. Even a small number of parents can make a big difference in the quality of education that occurs at home, which can then affect many children's academic development. Parental involvement in remote learning has been reported by Durisic and Bunijevac (2020) to be positively correlated with improved academic performance, with more compliant students being led by supportive parents. According to Williams and Sanchez (2021), in order to improve academic achievement, parents' involvement in their children's education is included into educational policies by policymakers and scholars alike.

Technology-based reading materials are becoming a useful resource for distance learning. Teachers who are proficient in technology can create engaging reading sessions that students can do on their own time. Numerous educators have observed that sharing reading passages on social media sites like Facebook has aided in the development of students' reading comprehension and grammar.

Here are some of the identified themes that emerged from the narratives of the participants:

"Since most of my students are engaged in technology, students must use this technology to enhance their reading ability. What I did is I used this by asking learners to search for reading passages." (R3)

"Every twice a month, I will be having my virtual class in all of my English subjects. In that way, I can ask for updates from my learners about their reading skills. However, if they cannot attend my virtual class by the time that they were scheduled in retrieving/receive modules, I can personally ask them for updates." (P5)
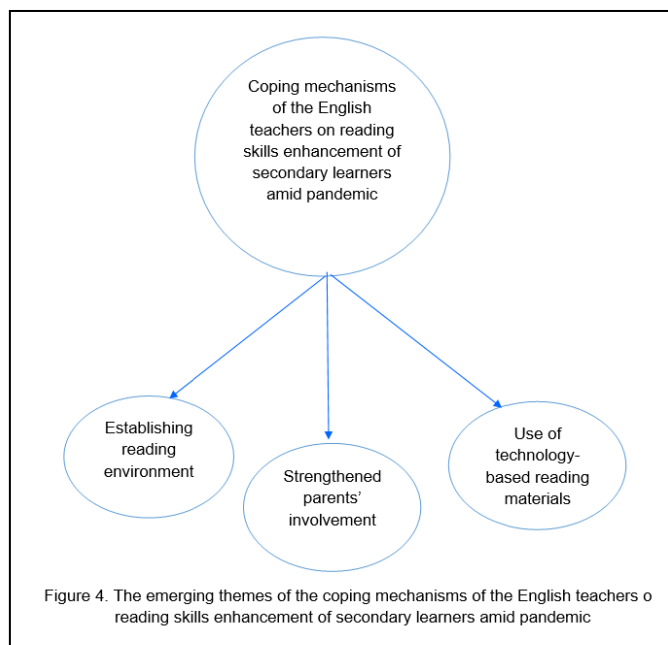
"Learners enhanced their reading skills during this pandemic time through the use of technologies and reading materials. Because of the pandemic, students have a lot of time in involving themselves in reading." (R7)

"My learners enhanced their reading abilities through technological competence. Through the use of the technologies, our learners enhanced their skills in reading. For instance, on Facebook, our learners may read passages that will develop their reading and posting, it will help them when it comes to grammar. But sad to say that most of the students use technologies differently." (R8)

According to Clark et al. (2016), there are novel learning contexts that have arisen for reading instruction, particularly when technology is involved. It is essential to comprehend the cognitive aspects of reading as well as the function of the human-machine interface in contemporary digital devices. This study focuses on teaching English reading to struggling and multilingual learners through technology-mediated applications.

According to De Souza et al. (2018), there are benefits to technology-based learning environments over traditional approaches, including more engaging content, less social pressure, and flexibility with tools like scaffolding and feedback. Nevertheless, compared to computer-based methods, teacher-led interventions demonstrate more development, according to meta-analytic studies. Furthermore, Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2015) suggested that technology-based training follow accepted learning theories and combine sounds and images in accordance with successful teaching strategies.

Figure 4. The emerging themes of the coping mechanisms of the English teachers o reading skills enhancement of secondary learners amid pandemic

C. Insights Drawn from the Experiences of English Teachers on Reading Skills Enhancement of Secondary Learners Amid the Pandemic

The public health emergency has had a major impact on students' literacy and reading abilities. There are few opportunities for distance learners to interact with real books, and classroom bookshelves are either barren or restricted for safety reasons for students who attend in person. But the pandemic has also pushed educators to embrace more intentional and creative literacy strategies, such exposing kids to rich texts and employing scaffolding strategies for struggling readers in a variety of instructional forms. In order to ensure that students receive the support they require, teachers have worked hard to modify their teaching strategies to meet the new learning environment.

Retraining and upskilling educators is now essential. The current problem facing the educational system is preparing teachers for the changing demands of the classroom. In response to students' declining reading skills, the Department has organized webinars to give instructors up-to-date training. The World Economic Forum foresaw those technological improvements will increase the need for staff upskilling even before the pandemic. With distant learning necessitating new methods for producing and facilitating reading materials, these needs have only grown more pressing.

Participants in the study indicated that designing reading programs specifically for distant learners was critical. To address the needs of the learners, specific exercises and contextualized reading materials were created. Because of the remote learning mode, it was difficult to monitor and evaluate students' reading skills, necessitating meticulous preparation and cooperation between teachers. The reading programs' success was largely due to careful observation, relevant resources, and exhaustive evaluation procedures, which enabled teachers to successfully meet the developmental requirements of their children.

IV. IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A. Implications

The investigation produced important results about how secondary students' reading abilities were improved throughout the epidemic, which presented a big problem for English teachers. They suffered from having to work under more pressure and with less resources, particularly when it came to facilitating contact between students who did not have access to technology. Despite these obstacles, teachers were gratified to see pupils' reading skills advance from irritation to independence, carefully completing reading assignments even when they had to share printed materials because there were no gadgets. Nevertheless, connectivity problems added to the frustration teachers had while trying to reach out to parents and supervise the usage of tech-based resources. PHIL-IRI data, which shows a reduction over the last two years, supported the loss in reading skills. Some parents did not actively monitor their children's progress.

One of the teachers' coping strategies was to help parents create a reading environment at home by teaching them how to set up reading items and encouraging parental involvement. The collaboration between educators and parents made learning accessible, even though some parents thought the process was laborious. Even with limited internet connection, the utilization of technology-based resources encouraged students to read, and some found creative ways to print the materials. The experiences of the participants yielded two important insights: first, the instructors' extensive use of webinars for upskilling and reskilling was helpful in helping them adjust to the new methods of delivering education. Second, in order to guarantee that every student has a positive learning experience, reading programs that are specifically designed for distant learners must include contextualized and differentiated resources.

B. Future Directions

The study's findings highlight the need for specific actions by key stakeholders to address the issues in reading programs effectively. School principals or heads should promote a collective approach, encouraging all teachers to consider themselves as reading educators. Training sessions, such as LAC meetings, can help equip teachers with the skills to design reading materials for various subjects, ensuring the responsibility for enhancing reading skills is shared beyond English teachers. Teachers should remain innovative in developing reading materials and create strategies for involving parents in reading remediation at home to support struggling students. Parents can enhance program effectiveness by actively engaging with teachers and guiding their children through reading activities at home.

Learners should adopt a proactive approach, managing their time and resources effectively, especially during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic. They are encouraged to complete reading tasks diligently and find creative ways to meet academic requirements. For future researchers, conducting similar studies in different settings and exploring other factors influencing learners' academic, emotional, and social development may provide new insights. Further research could also investigate additional aspects of reading programs not covered in this study.

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