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Abstract

This action research employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods strategy to explore the influence of pop art and live spelling drill as learning interventions in the spelling ability of Grade 2 pupils in a single class of a public elementary school. This spelling ability is considered one of the least learned competencies of the pupils based on the diagnostic test and the teacher's classroom-level English assessment. The respondents were grade 2 pupils who agreed to attend the face-to-face classes during the third and fourth quarters of the school year 2021-2022 wherein the parents, through the mandate of the Department of Education had the option to send their children to school and attend onsite classes. A validated, researcher-made pop-up book was utilized as a learning material partnered with a live spelling drill was concurrently used to enhance the spelling ability of the participants. The pop-up books were distributed to the participants' parents and taught to them by the parents themselves as supplementary materials. It was revealed in the pre and post-tests that the average scores of the participants exhibited a significant difference. The mean score in the written spelling activity in the post-test is higher ($M=6.00$, $SD=1.10$) than in the pre-test ($M=2.05$, $SD=1.29$) $t(19) = -14.83$ ($p=0.001$). This finding was further strengthened by the feedback obtained from the parents of the pupils who were interviewed after the intervention implementation. Among the themes of the intervention include the increased interest of the pupils in the spelling practice at home, increased vocabulary, and enjoyment of using the pop art materials.

Keywords: *Action Research, Competency, Pop art book, Spelling Drill, Vocabulary*

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Introduction

The Philippines is a language-diverse country with more than 100 languages (Galang, 2000) spoken in the entire archipelago. Through the course of history, particularly the colonization of the different nations in the country, the selection of a national language that will be the medium of instruction in all sectors and across industries had been challenging (Barrot, 2018). It was then that the government chose English as the language of government, media, and trade. This also prompted the government to guarantee that the English language proficiency of Filipinos is sustained through education. One of these measures was the 1974 Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) which aims to use the English language as the medium of instruction in science and mathematics and the teaching of English as a subject in schools.

Presently, the K-12 basic education curriculum still upholds the English language proficiency of Filipinos for a better grasp of English and linguistic competence in general. The English subject is taught in kindergarten and has been a constant subject until twelfth grade. The English curriculum of the K-12 program applies the most essential learning competencies (MELCs) which refers to the knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes that students need to demonstrate in each learning activity. These competencies are necessary to develop a learner's practical and lifelong skills for learning amidst a crisis which will eventually lead the learner to have a successful life.

Spelling is part of the MELCs and a part of the integrated language arts domains of the K-12 curriculum. Spelling is a complex skill that is important to both writing and reading. It has been demonstrated in many studies that spelling has a high correlation to reading comprehension in which both competencies largely depend on language proficiency. Parallel to reading, spelling involves knowledge of the alphabetic system in terms of letter names, functional units of letters or letter clusters, amalgamation of phonemes, dividing of words into phonemes, and synthesizing phonemes into graphemes (written symbols) (Leong et al., 2005). One's spelling ability does not develop naturally. Like reading and writing, it needs to be taught overtly and explicitly. Moreover, as Ehri (2000) reported, poor spellers are also poor readers in most cases since spelling and reading develop synergistically and reciprocally. Because spelling is highly imperative to children's literacy development, it is essential that they master this skill. This mastery should help abate spelling constraints on students' writing, as well as ease their acquisition of foundational reading skills (Graham & Santangelo, 2014) thus, must be developed early on in the child's schooling years.

Learning to spell is a developmental process. According to the stage theory of spelling development, students improve from being preliterate to alphabetic spellers as they master letter-sound correspondence. Subsequently, they learn about within-word orthographic patterns (e.g., CVC spellings) and, afterward, about complex syllable patterns and derivational patterns (Moats, 2000; Joshi & Aaron, 2005; Otaiba et al., 2010). More recently, there have been researches that have emerged and purported the idea that spelling does not develop in such distinct stages, instead, students learn to spell by connecting their knowledge about the alphabet, phonology, orthography, and morphology across time with increasing efficiency (Treiman & Bourassa, 2000).

A pop-up book is generally described as a type of mechanical or movable book with pages that rise or stand when opened to simulate a three-dimensional form and is constructed with heavy cardstock or board paper instead of thinner paper. Pop-up books are popular among children and can

offer great interest and engagement to young learners especially those at primary levels (Mahadzir, 2013). Similarly, Van Dyk et al. (2010) defined pop-ups as various folding devices that cause figures to lift, pop up, rise and unfold, or unfold and extend when a page is opened or turned. They further explained pop-ups as a device that can be folded and manipulated to give a sense of 3D reality in the viewers' eyes, creating an effect that is attractive and manipulative for young and old people, hence, a book that can create an interactive experience for reading.

Despite the breakthroughs in digital technologies and the advent of 21st-century learning, pop-up books are still popular among children. Regardless of the oldness of pop-ups, it is regarded as popular art or pop art in modern society and has been proven an effective visual material in the children's learning process including in reading and writing development (Ellis et al., 2005; Triana, 2017).

On the other hand, the drill technique in classrooms could promote knowledge acquisition and improve the memorization skills of students due to its repetitive nature. Drills are thought to be a crucial component of language learning. The drilling approach utilized exercises to present and practice grammatical structures while promoting the development of positive habits. The use of oral drills as a method for language practice remained ubiquitous in many ways that are considered to be communicative despite the technique's heavy reliance on the notion that language learning occurs through imitation. In many classroom settings, drills are done in a controlled phase to help students develop accuracy before moving on to a more communicative and complex language lesson.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a learning gap in basic education. Because of the unprepared shift to online, modular, and flexible learning modality, students experienced inconvenience in their education while knowledge and skills development was hampered. To contain the pandemic, schools transitioned to home-based and remote learning which led to several challenges in both developed and developing nations (Schleicher, 2020). Some of these problems include internet connection problems, parents who lack language proficiency in English-centered subjects, and practical exams that need special devices and equipment unavailable at home. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds have also been described to experience triple disadvantage, with a home environment less conducive to learning, diminished access to digital tools, and higher vulnerability to the health and financial impacts of the pandemic (Allam et al., 2020)

The unique case of one public elementary school in San Miguel, Bulacan was observed and became the focus of this study. Particularly, the grade two pupils, who, based on their spelling test scores and diagnostic exam, were empirically characterized by their classroom teacher as poor spellers. Similarly, the spelling ability of these pupils was also deemed as one of their least learned competencies.

Grade two teachers apparently saw this situation as the repercussions of the lack of focus of their pupils during online classes, high nonattendance or absence because of internet connectivity problems, lack of interest in completing the self-learning module activities, and fragmented support and guidance of the parents in the blended learning in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. Utilizing pop-up book and drill as a classroom intervention, the present study attempted to demonstrate the effectiveness of this synergized learning strategy in spelling improvement among selected pupils in a face-to-face setup.

Literature Review

Contrary to the continuously growing body of evidence on learning to read in alphabetic writing systems, the development of spelling has attracted less attention in terms of exploration. Yet learning to spell carries a more difficult concern to the child than learning to read, especially in an obscure orthography such as English where the link between the phonemes and graphemes is usually unpredictable.

Treiman and Bourassa (2000) claimed the idea that spelling does not develop in such distinct stages, instead, students learn to spell by connecting their knowledge about the alphabet, phonology, orthography, and morphology across time with increasing efficiency. The early study of Treiman (1993) positioned that children show sensitivity to the orthographic restrictions of the system they are absorbing from a relatively early stage and are more likely to produce grapheme sequences that occur in the orthography than those that violate positional constraints (ex. "kight" for kite). Despite these early influences of exposure to print, young children often rely on a "sounding out" and "sounding like" strategy in which spelling conventions are not utilized.

In one study (McBride-Chang et al., 2005), they found that morphological awareness predicted vocabulary size, monitoring and control for phonological awareness, timed or speed rate-based naming, and word reading measures, in a given population of students in kindergarten and second grade.

Many authors have hypothesized that students' spelling develops in stages that parallel reading development (Ehri, 2000; Moats, 2000). According to the stage theory of spelling development, learners progress from preliterate to alphabetic spellers as they master the letter-sound correspondence of their language. Then they learn about within-word orthographic patterns like CVC spellings, and subsequently, about complex syllable patterns and derivational patterns.

With respect to writing, Graham (1999) stated that poor spelling ability has been hypothesized to weaken the composition process via straining cognitive resources and interfering with higher order skills that are necessary to produce well-written academic writing materials like essays, position papers, and other prose outputs. Accordingly, if students have problems and complications with spelling, they may then be impaired in developing wider writing skills (Graham et al., 2002).

Insights on the value of practice and repetition as a means to improve one's skill could be used in language development. Jones et al. (2016) had first and second grade pupils first take a pretest and then learn spelling words using self-corrected tests known as rainbow writing. Often appearing on lists of fun and enjoyable spelling activities. This rainbow writing method requires copying words multiple times in different colors. In each experiment, practice testing yielded better ability to spell words on a posttest that occurred weeks later. Among 1st grade learners, the scale of pretest-to-posttest improvement from practice testing exceeded that from rainbow writing by over 300%. Additionally, the pupils consistently reported liking testing more than rainbow writing by an approximately three-to-one margin. These results counter the claim that testing only reflects "short-term memory" and disprove the suggestion that testing and repetition drills are boring and bland.

Caravolas et al. (2001) investigated the first 3 years of schooling of British children to uncover the developmental relationship between spelling and reading ability and to identify the component skills

of their spelling. Large battery of tests, including reading, phoneme awareness, letter-sound and letter-name knowledge, memory, and verbal and nonverbal IQ assessments were used. Spelling productions were assessed both for phonological believability and for conformist accuracy. A path analysis revealed that phoneme segmentation and letter-sound knowledge were the precursor skills of early phonological spelling ability. Correspondingly, although initial phonological spelling ability predicted later reading, early reading ability did not impact later phonological spelling ability. These indicated that skilled spelling requires a foundation in phonological transcoding ability which in turn enables the formation of orthographic illustrations.

Locally, Barrot (2018) mentioned the importance of spelling as a precursor to reading as well as writing and should be integrated in the 21st century curriculum of English learning in the Philippines. Parallel to this, Sicam and Lucas (2016), found that Filipino students have very high positive attitude towards English and Filipino where females have significantly higher positive attitudes towards English than males. Meanwhile, it was also revealed that socio-economic status is significantly related to positive attitudes towards English language. Gender is significantly related with instrumental language orientation in Filipino; age is significantly related to instrumental language orientation in Filipino and integrative language orientation in English.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The current study utilized the sequential explanatory mixed method approach. In this approach, the quantitative data was initially collected followed by the qualitative data. The quantitative data in this study was acquired through the administration of an oral and written spelling drill and the use of the pop-up book, "Let's Enhance Your English Spelling Ability" given to participants. To collect the data, a pre-experimental research design, specifically, the one-group pretest-posttest design was used.

Qualitative data gathering ensued wherein the researchers carried out semi-structured interviews among the randomly selected parents of the participants and obtained feedback on the proposed interventions after the conduct of the study. The feedback were consolidated through a narrative presentation and thematic analysis.

Sampling Method

Due to school restrictions brought about by the pandemic in terms of participation in face-to-face classes, the research adopted convenience sampling in the selection of respondents. This type of non-probability sampling relies on data from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were the selected grade 2 pupils who agreed and consented to participate by their parents in face-to-face classes at Tartaro Elementary School, San Miguel, Bulacan. The respondents consisted of 8 males and 12 females a total of 20 pupils aged between 7-8 years old

during the time of the study. They were also pre-selected by the Grade 2 chairperson of Tartaro Elementary School since they were already evaluated as below-average performers in the English subject and had poor to below-average spelling ability. All of the participants had not yet experienced the spelling book pop art prior to the execution of the intervention.

Instruments

A total of four instruments were used and developed in the study. The first instrument was the researcher-made and validated pop-up book, *Let's Enhance Your English Spelling Ability*. The book had two parts. Part 1 comprised of letters A to L and is 28 pages. Part 2 had 32 pages and was composed of Letters M to Z. Each letter had three pictures of different objects and each picture has a word below it that identifies and refers to the object in the picture. All the objects in the pictures were used in a sentence. The words included in the pop art were taken from the grade 2 English textbook, *Developing Reading Power* and *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)*.

Furthermore, the books were validated by the validation team from the Tartaro Elementary School comprising of the school principal, learning resources management and development system (LRMDS) coordinator, English coordinator, and a teacher III in the participant school. The two-part pop-up books, *Let's Enhance Your English Spelling Ability* was recommended for reproduction for school use only on April 25, 2022, after passing the validation. For clarity of understanding, the words pop-up and pop art will be used interchangeably in this paper.

The contents of the pop art reading material were divided into three sections. The first section displayed the alphabet and three examples of pop-up picture words that corresponded to the letter of the alphabet being learned on that page. The second section of the pop-up book was the activity sets where the pupils wrote the missing letter to correctly spell the word asked. The images used in the activity were the same in the first section of the book. The last section of the book presented an image only with no clue letters to complete the name of the image. This exercise directed the pupils to name the image on the page referring only to the image as hints.

The second instrument was the sets of questionnaires for the Live Spelling Drill consisting of 10 items for written spelling and another 10 items for oral spelling. The words that were asked to be spelled during the Live Spelling Drill were taken from the Grade 2 English books entitled, *Developing Reading Power*, *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)*, and the pop-up book, *Let's Enhance Your English Spelling Ability*.

The third instrument was the questionnaire for the pretest-posttest of the pop art *Let's Enhance Your English Spelling Ability*, which also had 20 items. The words included in the written spelling activity (considered a pretest-posttest questionnaire) were also taken from Grade 2 English books entitled, *Developing Reading Power* and *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)* and the pop-up book, *Let's Enhance Your English Spelling Ability*.

The fourth and last instrument was the questions for the semi-structured interview with the randomly selected parents who taught the content of pop art to their children at home. The questions were: (1) *Paano nagustuhan ng inyong anak ang disenyo at nilalaman ng pop art book?* (How did your child find the design and content of the pop art book?); (2) *Nakitaan ba ninyo ng interes sa spelling ang inyong anak habang tinuturuan ninyo siya gamit ang pop art book?* (Did you notice any spelling interest

in your child while you are teaching him/her the contents of the pop art book?); (3) *Kumusta ang spelling ability ng inyong anak pagkatapos gamitin ang pop art book?* (How was your child's spelling ability after using the pop art book?); and (4) *Mairerekomenda ba ninyo ang pop art book na ito sa ibang mga magulang ng elementarya?* (Will you recommend this pop art book to other parents of elementary pupils?).

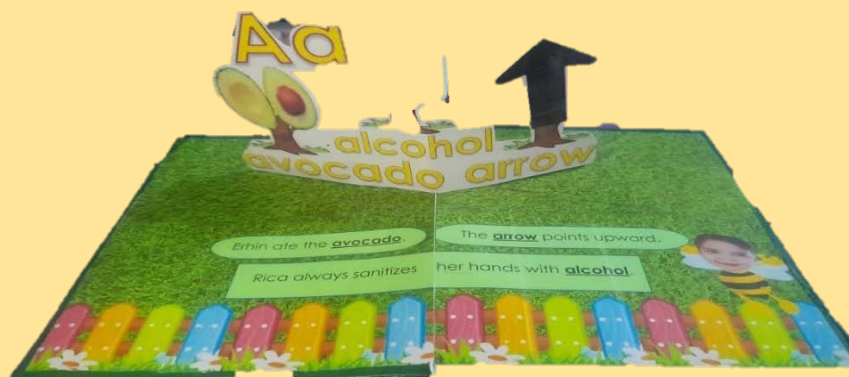
Classroom Intervention Implementation

The classroom intervention was implemented in the third and fourth quarters of the school year 2021-2022. Prior to the execution of the intervention, the school administrators of Tartaro elementary school including the school principal and grade two chairperson informed the parents of those that agreed to attend the face-to-face classes and the identified respondents about the conduct of the research and the role of their children as participants. Permission and all the necessary documents were secured by the researchers before the actual application of the intervention.

The intervention began with the conduct of a 20-item spelling pre-test (written) in which the teacher pronounced the words to be spelled in the class using the Filipino accent. Afterward, a briefing among the grade 2 participants was held to inform them about the pop art, *Let's Enhance your English Spelling Ability* books which they were provided for each as a learning material to improve their spelling skills. The pupils were also instructed that the pop art books were to be read by them under the guidance of their parent or designated guardian at home. Moreover, the pupils were also informed about the live spelling drill consisting of oral and written spelling activities integrated into their daily classes for the two remaining quarters as part of their English subject exercises. Oral and written spelling drills were alternately conducted every week.

During the intervention, all the participants were asked to join the oral and written spelling drill before the class discussion. At the end of the intervention period, a 20-item post-test written spelling activity was conducted. Subsequently, a semi-structured interview with randomly selected parents was also carried out to obtain their perceptions and feedback on pop art books as supplementary reading material at home.

Figure 1
The First Page of the Pop-up Book Showing Words that Start with the Letter A



Research Ethics Consideration

To conduct the study, the researchers sought approval from the school principal of the elementary school. A meeting between the parents, the school administrators, and the researchers also ensued to ask for consent and brief the parties on the classroom intervention and data collection that would happen. Confidentiality of the identities of the participants was maintained throughout the conduct and reporting of the outputs of the study. The researchers ensured that the stipulations in the Research Management Guidelines of DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017, were followed throughout the conduct of the study.

Data Collection

Scores from the pre-and post-assessments were recorded while the responses from the interviews were consolidated. A rubric with a four-point verbal description and three criteria was used to determine the spelling ability of the grade two pupils before and after the intervention's application. The verbal descriptions were: Always Observed (3.40-4.00), Sometimes Observed (2.60-3.39), Rarely Observed (1.80-2.59), and Not Observed (1.00-1.79). The criteria cited were: (1) Number of English words spelled correctly; (2) Time consumed in the spelling activity/test and (3) Attention given towards live spelling activity. To acquire data in the third criterion, the class was video captured and photographed during the intervention implementation with permission from the parents and the school administrators.

Data Analysis

Paired t-test was used to analyze the quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test. All quantitative data were processed using SPSS V26 at 0.05 alpha level. On the other hand, the consolidated perceptions from the parents were subject to thematic analysis. The method of Braun and Clarke (2006) involving six phases of thematic analysis was used to generate findings. These phases are: 1. Familiarizing oneself with the data; 2. Generating initial codes; 3. Searching for themes; 4. Reviewing themes; 5. Defining and naming themes, and 6. Producing the report.

Results and Discussion

Improved Oral Spelling Ability of the Grade 2 Pupils

Before the intervention was employed among the grade 2 participants, a 20-item spelling activity was conducted. There was also an oral spelling activity before the distribution of the pop art books to the pupils. The scores were recorded and ranked based on the rubric used in the study. It was a distinguished poor performance among the pupils. In scaling the number of English words spelled correctly, majority of the pupils did not show any spelling proficiency ($M=1.65$, $f=11$) and was described as *not observed (NO)* as shown in Table 1.

This finding was also observed in the time consumed in spelling activity and the attention given to the live oral spelling activity which was also regarded as not observed ($M=1.60$, $f=11$). More than half of the pupils could not spell 10 words within 15 minutes. Meanwhile, only 9 students showed attention in continuing the spelling activity from 5-8 words then they informed the teacher that they could not

finish the activity. On the contrary. There were 11 pupils who showed attention in spelling the given 3-4 words.

During the intervention pursuit for two months, the live oral and written spelling drill was conducted alternatingly every week before the actual topic discussion inside the classroom. The participants were filmed during the spelling drills and were observed for their attention towards the activity. A mean of 2.35 was obtained in the criterion number of English words spelled correctly, described as *Rarely Observed (RO)*. As for the attention given towards live spelling activity, a mean of 3.00 was calculated and was categorically translated into *Sometimes Observed (SO)* (Table 2).

Table 1

Oral Spelling Ability of Grade 2 Pupils before the Drill and Pop Art Intervention

Criteria	N	Frequency (f)				Mean	Verbal Description
		AO (4)	SO (3)	RO (2)	NO (1)		
1. Number of English words spelled correctly	20	1	2	6	11	1.65	Not Observed
2. Time consumed in spelling activity	20	1	1	7	11	1.60	Not Observed
3. Attention given towards live spelling activity	20	1	3	5	11	1.70	Not Observed
Grand Mean	20	3	6	18	33	1.65	Not Observed

Always Observed (AO) (3.40-4.00); Sometimes Observed (SO) (2.60-3.39); Rarely Observed (RO) (1.80-2.59), and Not Observed (NO) (1.00-1.79).

Then at the end of the study, after the post-test, the last oral spelling activity took place in which 14 pupils had been rated *Always Observed (AO)* in the number of English terms they can spell out (M=3.60). This observation mirrored that of the consumed time in spelling (M=3.55) and attention in the spelling drill (M=3.75) as presented in Table 3 and was also viewed as *Always Observed (AO)*.

Table 2

Oral Spelling Ability of Grade 2 Pupils during the Drill and Pop Art Intervention

Criteria	N	Frequency (f)				Mean	Verbal Description
		AO (4)	SO (3)	RO (2)	NO (1)		
1. Number of English words spelled correctly	20	4	4	7	5	2.35	Rarely Observed
2. Time consumed in spelling activity	20	2	7	6	5	2.30	Rarely Observed
3. Attention given towards live spelling activity	20	9	4	5	2	3.00	Sometimes Observed
Grand Mean	20	15	15	18	12	2.55	Rarely Observed

Always Observed (AO) (3.40-4.00); Sometimes Observed (SO) (2.60-3.39); Rarely Observed (RO) (1.80-2.59), and Not Observed (NO) (1.00-1.79).

The grand means before, during, and after verbally described as *Not Observed*, *Rarely Observed*, and *Always Observed*, respectively depicted an observed improvement in the spelling skills of the pupils in an oral spelling setting. Several researches have demonstrated the link of spelling to reading and writing and its importance has been highlighted across industries, from education to business and marketing even in advertising and website development (Pan *et al.*, 2021; Graham & Santangelo, 2014; Oelke *et al.*, 2012). Explicit spelling instruction such as the assimilation of spelling in the curriculum and becoming part of instruction and lessons have been avowed to be effective in improving the spelling ability of pupils and students which then positively correlates to increased reading proficiency and eventually reading comprehension (Treiman, 2018, Schalagal, 2002). In this finding, it was established that spelling activities like drill technique and supplementary learning materials like pop art books, when acclimatized in the classroom and outside class hours and become a routine can enhance the spelling abilities of learners.

While the oral spelling ability of the participating pupils has improved based on the findings, on the sidenote, this result has other implications. Because the participants in the study were from a public school, their English spelling performance was considerably lower than those from the private school. As discussed by Kahn-Horwitz *et al.* (2006) and Sicam and Lucas (2016), preference and positive attitude towards English are higher in learners from middle and high socio-economic backgrounds which included those enrolled in private schools than in students from lower-socio-economic families and are studying in government-owned academic institutions. This has been a challenge long confronted by the basic education in the country that needs to be addressed as English along with its main components is significant as a language for communication in the context of globalization (Madrunio *et al.*, 2016).

Table 3

Oral Spelling Ability of Grade 2 Pupils after the Drill and Pop Art Intervention

Criteria	N	Frequency (f)				Mean	Verbal Description
		AO (4)	SO (3)	RO (2)	NO (1)		
1. Number of English words spelled correctly	20	14	4	2	0	3.60	Always Observed
2. Time consumed in spelling activity	20	14	3	3	0	3.55	Always Observed
3. Attention given towards live spelling activity	20	16	3	1	0	3.75	Always Observed
Grand Mean	20	44	10	6	0	3.63	Always Observed

Always Observed (AO) (3.40-4.00); Sometimes Observed (SO) (2.60-3.39); Rarely Observed (RO) (1.80-2.59), and Not Observed (NO) (1.00-1.79).

Spelling Ability Improvement in Written Form

From the results presented in Table 4, it was observed that at some point during the operation of the teaching intervention, there was a marked change in the level of development of the spelling skills through writing drills of the participants. From the verbal description of *Rarely Observed (RO)* (M=2.05) (f=17 as rarely observed) before applying the intervention in the class to *Sometimes Observed (SO)* (M=3.30) (f=14 as sometimes observed) after the last written spelling drill was conducted.

It should be noted here that the words asked by the teachers during the written spelling drill were mostly taken from the words found in the pop art book developed by the researchers. Parents before the beginning of the action research were instructed to read the *Let's Enhance Your English Spelling Ability* to their children at nighttime and/or on weekends, and whenever they have free time at home. Another point to note here was that some participants of the study brought their pop art books to school and read them during lunchtime.

Table 4
Comparison of the Written Spelling Ability of the Grade 2 Pupils as Intervened by the Drill and Pop Art Book

Written Spelling Drill	Mean Score (Total Item=10)	Frequency (f)				Mean Rating	Verbal Description
		Always Observed (4)	Sometimes Observed (3)	Rarely Observed (2)	Not Observed (1)		
Before	2.05	0	2	17	1	2.05	Rarely Observed
During	3.60	0	12	8	0	2.60	Sometimes Observed
After	6.00	6	14	0	0	3.30	Sometimes Observed

Always Observed (AO) (3.40-4.00); Sometimes Observed (SO) (2.60-3.39); Rarely Observed (RO) (1.80-2.59), and Not Observed (NO) (1.00-1.79).

The researchers proposed two potential major reasons for this improved written spelling skill of the participants. First, the knowledge growth that budded from their exposure to the pop art book. As instituted in early studies (Sulzby, 1985; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; West et al., 1993), children's books particularly picture and illustration-filled could offer an incentive for the development of knowledge about print, letters, and sounds in pre-conventional readers (children under the age of nine years old), because storybook illustrations are mostly accompanied by the written text that parents can read aloud to their children. In addition, children may learn more new words during reading than during other exchanges with language, such as during meals and playtime, because children's books contain three times as many low-frequency and basic words as television shows or adults' conversations with children (Hayes & Ahrens, 1988).

The second potential reason is the repetition and practice of phonological awareness. The repeated reading approach utilized in the pop art book given to the participants provided scaffolding for

the students to understand the sound structure of the language and subdivide and segment words into phonemes. This was pointed out by Jongejan et al. (2007) as they described phonological awareness to strongly influencing reading and spelling development. This is because phonological awareness refers to the ability to understand the sound structure and includes the ability to segment speech into phonemes and the aptitude to detect and manipulate phonemes. Hence, repeated reading of the content of the pop art books aided the grade 2 pupils to enhance their phonological awareness to better understand letter sounds which in turn helped them connect sounds to read a word and spell them correctly.

Taguchi et al. (2016) noted that repeated reading could facilitate enhanced reading proficiency, comprehension, and spelling ability. They further claimed that while learners' comprehension increased through the repetitions, they could change their rate of reading as they wished or needed. Crucially, in terms of spelling, children become better spellers as they gain familiarity with the words in the content they read. They eventually spent less time gripping on words, made fewer fixations per word, and return to the previously fixated parts of the text increasingly fewer times. This notion was supported by the statements from the parents during the interviews stating that they observed their children recalled words if they see them once or twice and then they became quick in spelling the words they learn over time.

Significant Spelling Skill Progress

A written spelling pre and post-test was conducted before and after executing the drill and pop art intervention. On their pre-tests, the pupils acquired an average score of 4.55 from a 20-item assessment while on the post-test the score had a palpable increase of 15.70 on average. The increase was reported to be statistically significant (Table 5) with post-test scores (M=15.70, SD=0.48) significantly higher than the pre-test (M=4.55, SD=0.52); $t(-24.84)$, $p=0.001$.

Table 5

Mean Score Difference in the Pre-test and Post-test of the Grade 2 Pupils

Assessment	Mean Score (Mean±SD)	Standard Error	Significance (p<0.05)	T value	Paired Samples Correlation (R)
Pre-test	4.55±2.33	0.52	0.001	-24.84	0.60
Post-test	15.70±2.15	0.48	0.001		

The observed results in the present study showed that the synergistic influence of the drill and pop art book significantly improved the spelling ability of the pupils. From a developmental perspective, as the researchers proposed earlier that the pop art exposure and repetition reading leading to phonological awareness have potentially brought improvement of the spelling skills of the pupils, these processes thereby suggest that the phonological awareness and visual modeling (i.e. picture books, mechanical books) hold predictive powers in not just the spelling but reading ability of pre-conventional readers. A number of studies have also offered the same propositions in the early reading development of children (Ashmore et al., 2002; Mol & Bus, 2011; Taguchi et al., 2016). However, the central role of phonological awareness and visual modeling in the acquisition of reading and spelling ability can be argued linguistically as there are also other considerable factors at play including the pre-existing reading ability of the individual, literacy exposure, and the language itself.

Themes Generated from the Parents' Feedback

Using thematic analysis, the responses and feedback of the parents during the interviews were segregated into themes as displayed in Table 6. Four questions were asked to the randomly selected parents. The parents were allowed to respond freely. Their responses were analyzed thematically. Main themes and sub-themes were generated to organize clearly the parents' feedback. Seven main themes and thirteen sub-themes emerged from the parents' feedback and comments.

Table 6
Parents' Feedback on the Utilization of Pop Art Book as Supplementary Learning Material in Spelling Skill Improvement

Question	Main Theme	Sub-theme	Description
How did your child find the design and content of the pop art book?	Physical Appeal	Colorfulness, Simple Design, Illustrative/Visual,	The pop-art book catches the attention of the pupils because it is colorful, easy to use, and filled with pictures/images
	Type of Content	Engaging exercises, Entertaining illustrations, Common Examples	The pop-art book is entertaining as it contains familiar examples and exercises suitable for children
Did you notice any spelling interest in your child while you are teaching him/her the contents of the pop art book?	Enjoyment	Positive/Happy Mood in Using the Book	The pupils are happy every time they read the pop-art book
	Frequent Browsing of the Book	Repeated Use of the Book and its Exercises, Memorization of the Words in the Book	The pupils read the pop-art book repeatedly and answer the exercises to memorize the words
How was your child's spelling ability after using the pop art book?	Improved Spelling Ability	Better word recognition, Improved sound recognition and pattern	The pupils can correctly spell basic sight words and become familiar with them that they can use to properly construct a simple sentence.
	Increased Vocabulary	Simple sentence construction	
Will you recommend this pop art book to other parents of elementary pupils?	Ease of Use for Beginners/Early Graders	Sense of enjoyment while learning	The book is recommended since it is easy to use and the pupils enjoy using it, and also a good replacement for smart devices.
		Alternative to smart devices	

Main Theme 1: Physical Appeal and Type of Content

The physical appearance of the book was given emphasis and scrutinized based on its design, colorfulness, and illustrations. On the other hand, the content of the book was described to be entertaining due to its illustrations and common examples. Some comments were:

P#1

“Yes, my daughter liked it. She was really happy with the 3D pictures that stood up when the book was opened. She liked the book because the book is really well-made for children, and the design is suitable for their age. This is a type of book that is not scary or boring for children. Most children today when they see a book they suddenly cry or run away. This pop art book is enjoyable like story books or coloring books, this gets their attention.”

P#3

“I saw that he enjoys using it, especially on the part where there are pop art pictures. He can also relate to the objects in the pictures because he is familiar with them.”

From the views of the parents which were based on their observations of their children, the exterior and overall design of the pop art book could be a factor to pick the interest of their children when it comes to selecting a reading material. Visual information is the most vital form of information for our brains. The human brain can process an image in mere 13 milliseconds (Potter et al., 2013) and thus, it is not surprising that more or less 90% of the information transmitted to the brain is visual. Colors, simple shapes, geometric patterns, cartoonized pictures, arrows, and positions translate unrelated text into a board, which the brain has a chance of examining in a non-linear way. Visual depictions give our brains more freedom in choosing what to focus on. Regardless of age and experiences, the mind is neurologically sensitive to colors and shapes more than to text (Clerkin et al., 2016).

Main Theme 2: Enjoyment and Frequent Browsing of the Book

Enjoyment and frequency of browsing the book were the indicatives of the interests of the children in the pop art book. Responses from the parents include:

P#6

“Every time I tutor my daughter using the pop-up, I feel that she could easily memorize the words because there is a picture that represents it. She liked that the images are things we use every day.”

P#4

“My child finds it easy to answer the exercises in the pop art book because he already memorized the words and pictures inside the book. He reads it even if I am not teaching him.”

The influence of emotions such as enjoyment and happiness have a positive effect on learning, memory, and social behavior (Hernik & Jaworska, 2018). As their study put it, enjoyment is regarded as a positive impression due to positive stimuli and is an essential element of a balanced life. This is

extremely important because a sense of harmony equates to feeling safe, feeling at ease, and feeling valued which in turn is an indispensable factor in both group and individual learning. Consequently, this sense of enjoyment prompted the young learners to use the book more and encounter the words more frequently eventually enriching their vocabulary and spelling ability.

Main Theme 3: Improved Spelling Ability Increased Vocabulary

All of the parents stated that the spelling ability of their children improved since they started using the pop art book as supplementary reading material at home. Meanwhile, the parents also rationalized that they will recommend the book because of the enjoyment, the ease of use, and the pop art being a good replacement for gadgets in terms of learning activity and pastime.

P#1

“The book helped my daughter a lot because after we started practicing spelling, she can now recognize the sound of each letter. As time goes by, she also becomes good at spelling. It was also a big help because now it’s easier for me to teach her how to read.”

P#5

“The book did a great improvement on my child's spelling ability because before he doesn't want to do spelling. He hates spelling. But he had a change of mind and now he wants to always spell with me like it is a game.”

P#7

“There's an improvement in his spelling ability. He can now spell words that he can't before. Before, he can't spell the words in his book even after we studied it several times. Now after studying the pop-up and we closed the book, when I ask him to spell some words, he spelled them correctly, easily.”

The use of pop art and drill had driven important behavior and cognitive mechanisms which ultimately led to improved spelling and increased vocabulary of the early-grade learners. As mentioned earlier, phonological awareness and visual modeling such as pop-ups and mechanical books hold predictive powers in the spelling and the reading ability of pre-conventional readers. Blunsdon et al. (2003) supported the present result when they investigated the use of frequent drills and linked it to sense of enjoyment and its potential learning outcomes. It was revealed that students “thought” they have learned more and can apply what they have learned if they “enjoyed” the experience and they are more likely to “continue doing” the activity due to the satisfaction and perceived knowledge gain the experience is providing.

Main Theme 4: Ease of Use for Beginners/Early Graders

The ease of use pertaining to the simplicity and practicality of the pop-up book is what primarily prompted the parents to recommend the book to early graders. As agreed in the early developmental process (Clerkin et al., 2016; Yu & Smith, 2012) children are most likely to learn the basic words in their early years which these words may have been the objects that are visually frequent in their households, though it is to be noted that it is not always the case. Nevertheless, the present study proved that pop-

up books containing simple and commonly encountered objects with their equivalent term and correct spelling helped the learners improve their spelling.

In summary, positive feedback from the parents were collated which affirmed the effectiveness of the pop art book in the enhancement of the pupils to spell basic English words. However, the present findings may still be pursued in other settings and should proceed with further validation using a large sample size.

Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrated the collaborative influence of drill and pop art in the significant spelling ability improvement of grade two pupils. The underlying perspective was that young learners may enhance their literacy skills and their subskills like spelling and reading through the repeated reading approach leading to phonological awareness and evoking visual stimuli. While these may be perceived as the predictors of spelling and reading proficiency, further studies particularly longitudinal studies have to be established for more concrete evidences. To the knowledge of the researchers, this is the first local study that combined drill and pop art in the enhancement of elementary English with a focus on spelling ability.

Likewise, this outcome strengthens the stage theory of spelling development in which learners evolve from preliterate to alphabetic spellers as they master the letter-sound correspondence and become able to spell complex syllable patterns and derivational patterns. On the other hand, as the learners become more phonologically aware through the use of various intervention materials inside the classroom, there are direct and indirect mechanisms of phonological and morphological awareness development that affect not only the vocabulary and reading ability of the learners but their language proficiency in general.

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