

Development of Audiobook for Kindergarten Learners of Las Nieves Central Elementary School

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Abstract- This study aimed to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of an audiobook as an educational tool to improve language, literacy, and communication competencies in kindergarten learners. The researcher used the ASSURE Model to design and implement the audiobook, which was based on the kindergarten contextualized storybook "Sa Bukirin ni Bebot." The audiobook was narrated in three languages (Filipino, Binisaya, and English) and was validated by the Learning Resource Management Section Personnel of DepEd Agusan del Norte. The study found that the majority of kindergarten learners demonstrated a low level of proficiency in language, literacy, and communication competencies before the use of the audiobook. However, after exposure to the audiobook, the learners showed significant improvements in these competencies. The results of the paired t-test indicated that there was a highly significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the kindergarten learners. The study concluded that the audiobook was an effective intervention in improving the language, literacy, and communication competencies of kindergarten learners. The findings also suggested that incorporating audiobooks into kindergarten education can enhance learners' motivation, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and vocabulary learning. The study recommends that school administrators invest in high-quality audiobook resources and technical solutions, and that educators integrate audiobooks into their lessons to enhance student learning outcomes. Overall, this study highlights the potential of audiobooks as a valuable educational tool in kindergarten education, particularly in improving language, literacy, and communication competencies.

Keywords- Audiobook, Storybook, Language, Literacy and Communication

INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten students, these curious bundles of energy with minds like sponges, demand a dynamic learning environment. According to Ariyanti (2016), kindergarten students have a short attention span and cannot pay attention for long periods due to easily being distracted, necessitating a one-size-fits-all teaching method. To encourage even young pupils to grow to love reading, teachers must provide them with support and thoughtful instruction, as children as young as five and six must be motivated and driven to read. While young learners enjoy having books read aloud to them, teachers do not always have the luxury of reading aloud, making audiobooks a valuable tool to increase kindergarten students' desire and motivation to read during choice time (Boer, 2018).

Furthermore, audiobooks can benefit struggling readers by allowing them to access literature and develop comprehension skills (Wagar, 2016; Lynch, 2018; Moore & Cahill, 2016). Recognizing these needs, the Department of Education in the Philippines has implemented initiatives like the Gawad Teodora Alonso and the DepEd Memorandum no. 062 s.2020 to promote reading and listening to Filipino learners through various multimedia resources.

This research aims to provide essential insights into developing young children's reading comprehension and love of reading by analyzing the efficacy of audiobooks for kindergarten learners at Las Nieves Central Elementary School.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND STUDIES

The research literature demonstrates the significant benefits of using audiobooks to support young learners' reading development and engagement. Studies have found that audiobooks can enhance kindergarten students' motivation, desire, and enjoyment of reading during independent choice time (Boer, 2018). Audiobooks have also been shown to improve reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary acquisition, especially for struggling or reluctant readers (Wagar, 2016; Lynch, 2018; Moore & Cahill, 2016). Audiobooks can provide access to literature above students' independent reading level, fostering imagination and exposure to new subjects (Rues, 2023). Furthermore, research indicates audiobooks can support diverse learning modalities, including auditory, visual, and kinesthetic preferences (Karbalaei & Zare, 2019; Rogowsky et al., 2016). Studies also highlight the potential for interactive audiobooks to transform language learning and increase student-teacher satisfaction (Marchetti & Valente, 2016). Overall,

the literature suggests audiobooks are a versatile tool that can enhance a range of literacy skills and learning experiences for young students.

FRAMEWORK

The ASSURE Model was used as the framework of the study.

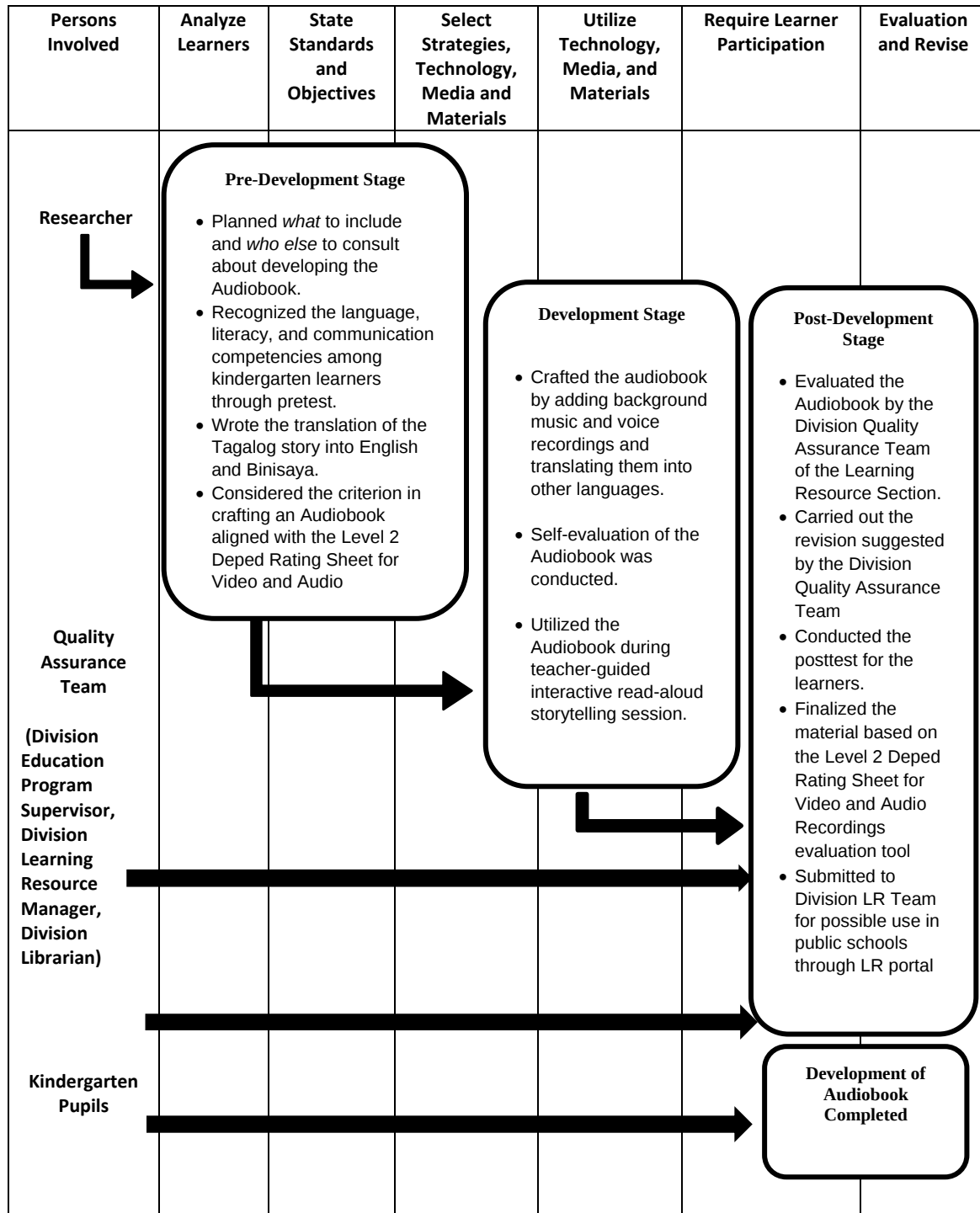


Figure 1: Research Flow

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of audiobooks in enhancing kindergarten learners' language, literacy and communication skills. Specifically, the study aims to determine whether the use of audiobooks can improve students' motivation, engagement, and fluency in reading, as well as their overall literacy skills, reading comprehension and love of reading. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the potential benefits of audiobooks in addressing the diverse learning needs of kindergarten students, including those with varying levels of reading proficiency and those with special needs. By examining the impact of audiobooks on kindergarten learners, this study aims to provide insights into the development of evidence-based teaching strategies that can support the literacy development of young children.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an action research design to assess the effectiveness of audiobooks in enhancing kindergarten learners' language, literacy, and communication competencies. The study was conducted at Las Nieves Central Elementary School, with a total of 58 kindergarten learners participating. The researcher used the ASSURE model to guide the instructional design, which included analyzing learners, stating standards and objectives, selecting strategies and media, utilizing technology and materials, requiring learner participation, and evaluating and revising. The study utilized a pre-existing kindergarten storybook, "Sa Bukirin ni Bebot," which was converted into an audiobook in three languages: Filipino, Binisaya, and English. The audiobook was exposed to learners for a week, and comprehension questions were asked orally by the classroom teacher. The posttest assessed learners' proficiency based on the adapted eight competencies from the Kindergarten Progress Report. The study's methodology aimed to provide a comprehensive and engaging learning experience for kindergarten learners, leveraging the benefits of audiobooks in improving their language, literacy, and communication skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What is the level of proficiency in language, literacy, and communication competencies among kindergarten learners?

Table 2
Frequency and percentage distribution of the kindergarten across levels of comprehension

Language, Literacy, and Communication Competencies	Level of Proficiency					
	Beginning (B)		Developing (D)		Consistent (C)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Distinguishes between elements of sounds, e.g., pitch (low and high), volume (loud and soft)	33	57%	22	38%	3	5%
2. Listens attentively to stories/poems/songs	49	84%	9	16%	0	0%
3. Recalls details from stories/poems/songs listened to	37	64%	21	36%	0	0%
4. Relate story events to personal experiences	28	48%	27	47%	3	5%
5. Sequence events from a story listened to	29	50%	29	50%	0	0%
6. Infer character traits and feelings	32	55%	26	45%	0	0%
7. Identify simple cause-and-effect and problem-solution relationships of events in a story listened to or in a familiar situation	24	41%	34	59%	0	0%
8. Predict story outcomes	33	57%	22	38%	3	5%

Table 2 shows the distribution of kindergarten learners according to their level of proficiency in language, literacy, and communication competencies before the use of the audiobook. In each of the eight competencies, it can be observed that most kindergarteners have a beginning level of comprehension. Take a look, for example, at item 1; the majority, or 57% (33 out of 58), rarely demonstrate the competency of distinguishing elements of sounds. The same trend of percentage distribution is observed in the other competencies. It further indicates that the majority of kindergarteners rarely demonstrate the expected competency and seldom participate in class activities or initiate independent work. Recognizing this relatively low level of proficiency, an audiobook is designed as an effective intervention.

Problem 2. Based on the baseline data from the Language, Literacy, and Communication Competency in Kindergarten Progress Report, what audiobook can be developed?

Relative to the findings shown in Table 2, it can be observed that the competency, "Listens attentively to stories/poems/songs," has the lowest level of proficiency, with 84% (49 out of 58) at the Beginning Level. Hence, the researcher developed an audiobook. The entertaining audiobook captivated young listeners with a mix of appealing narration, sound effects, and musical elements, all of which are specifically designed to increase their capacity to listen carefully to stories by encouraging focus, comprehension, and enjoyment.

The audiobook must align with the Omnibus of Kindergarten Curriculum, focusing on language, literacy, and communication competencies. It is a valuable resource for educators to enhance learning outcomes in these areas. Thus, the researcher used the storybook "Sa Bukirin ni Bebot," which was written for kindergarten learners, to introduce words that start with the letter "Bb" and familiarize the elements of a story. This material has been converted into three-part audiobook episodes that can be accessed in Tagalog, English, and Binisaya. This enables young students to master multilingual storytelling and expand their vocabulary. Using three languages is in accordance with RA 10533, Section 4 (d), which highlighted that Mother Language, also known as First Language (L1), is the language or languages that a child learns first, which they identify with, which other people recognize as their mother tongue, which they use or are most proficient in.

The audiobooks were crafted with interactive narrative— incorporating the narrator's voice, sound effects like animal noises, and background music that made the audiobooks more interactive and engaging for children, immersing them in the story and enhancing their imagination. Unlike a physical book, which requires you to flip back and forth, the audiobooks have playback settings that provide flexibility. It can change the narration speed to listen quicker or slower based on the learner's preferences, as well as rewind or fast-forward to certain parts of the audiobook. Through following along, visualizing scenes, and actively engaging with the content, children's understanding of the story was enhanced.

The Audiobook Sa Bukirin ni Bebot – is composed of three versions: Tagalog version, Episode 1 (Kabanata 1) is a 1-minute, 9-second video, Episode 2 (Kabanata 2) is a 1-minute, 14-second video and Episode 3 (Kabanata 3) a is 1-minute, 32-second video; Binisaya version, Episode 1 (Yugto 1) is a 1-minute, 16-second video, Episode 2 (Yugto 2) is a 1-minute, 15-second video and Episode 3 (Yugto 3) a is 1-minute, 43-second video; and for English version, Episode 1 is a 1-minute, 07-second video, Episode is a 1-minute, 08-second video and Episode 3 a is 1-minute, 11-second video. It was narrated in Tagalog, Binisaya, and English languages, with text and subtitles along each part of the story.

Episode 1 focuses on the first part of the story, where the elements of the story and the target letter, which is the letter Bb, are introduced. In this episode, the competencies, such as distinguishing between aspects of sounds, e.g., pitch (low and high), volume (loud and soft), and listening attentively to stories/poems/songs, were observed. Episode 2 focuses on the climax part, where the conflict and the resolution happen. It is where competencies, such as relating story events to personal experiences and inferring character traits and feelings, were observed. Episode 3 is where the comprehensive questions can be found. This episode focused on the competencies, such as recalling details from stories/poems/songs listened to, sequencing events from a story heard, identifying simple cause-and-effect and problem-solution relationships of events in a story listened to or in a familiar situation and predicting story outcomes.

Problem 3. How valid is the developed audiobook?

Table 3
Validity test results on the audiobook per DepEd Standards

Criteria for Validity	Standard	Actual Score	Highest Score	Remarks
Content	Must score at least 21 points out of the maximum 28 points to pass this criterion.	27	28	Passed
Format/Technical Design	Must score at least 9 points out of the maximum 12 points to pass this criterion.	12	12	Passed
Presentation and Organization	Must score at least 12 points out of the maximum 16 points to pass this criterion.	16	16	Passed
Accuracy and Up-to-dateness of Information	Must score at least 18 points out of the maximum 24 points to pass this criterion.	24	24	Passed

Table 3 supports the validity of the audiobook material relative to DepEd standards. In particular, the said audiobook has passed the four evaluation criteria, namely, content, format, presentation and organization, and accuracy and Up-to-dateness of information, which obtained the respective passing scores of 27, 12, 16, and 24. Consequently, the quantitative evidence confirms that the audiobook material is valid based on the standards set by DepEd.

The developed audiobook can be accessed through these links:

- Sa Bukirin ni Bebot (Filipino) - <https://bit.ly/bebotfilipino>
- Sa Bukirin ni Bebot (Binisaya) - <https://bit.ly/bebotbinisaya>
- Sa Bukirin ni Bebot (English) - <https://bit.ly/bebotenglish>

The Department of Education (DepEd) Learning Resources (LR) quality assurance implementation ensures that all learning resources undergo a thorough assessment, review, and modification process before being approved, uploaded, published, and eventually used in public schools (2019, Department of Education).

According to Weitzman (2023), great audiobooks need to go beyond the quality of the story and how well it is written. A good audiobook has a good narrator, high-quality content, sound effects implementation, proper pacing, enunciation, and inflections. The researcher's developed audiobook possesses these factors; thus, it is valid and can be used as reliable learning material.

Problem 4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the kindergarten learners after they were exposed to audiobooks?

Table 4
Paired t-test results on the difference between the pre-and post-test scores of the pupils

Language, Literacy, and Communication	Level of Proficiency								
	Beginning (B)		P-value	Developing (D)		P-value	Consistent (C)		P-value
	Before	After		Before	After		Before	After	
Distinguishes between elements of sounds, e.g., pitch (low and high), volume (loud and soft)	33	2		22	20		3	36	
Listens attentively to stories/poems/songs	49	0		9	0		0	58	
Recalls details from stories/poems/songs listened to	37	2		21	21		0	35	
Relate story events to personal experiences	28	1	0.001	27	27	0.017	3	30	0.001
Sequence events from a story listened to	29	1		29	24		0	33	
Infer character traits and feelings.	32	0		26	14		0	44	
Identify simple cause-and-effect and problem-solution relationships of events in a story listened to or in a familiar situation.	24	2		34	20		0	36	
Predict story outcomes	33	2		22	17		3	39	

Note: The reduction in frequency counts is statistically significant at a 5% level of significance

Table 4 presents the comparative distribution of kindergarten in terms of their level of proficiency in all competencies before and after the use of the audiobook. It can be observed that after the use of the audiobook, the majority of the kindergarten demonstrated a consistent level of proficiency. The results of the T-test calculation show that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and posttest after being exposed to the developed audiobook. Moreover, as emphasized in the footnote, the differences in the frequency count before and after the use of the developed audiobook are highly significant at a 5% level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Problem 5. Based on the study's findings, what revision can be designed to improve the audiobook for kindergarten learners?

Given the findings provided and revealed by the results obtained in Problems 1, 3, and 4, there is a notable improvement in the language, literacy, and communication competencies of the respondents after the utilization of the developed audiobook. Nonetheless, there is one thing to be revised based on the comments and recommendations of the experts on the material on the Level 2 DepEd Evaluation Rating Sheet for Video and Audio Recordings, which is to provide a subtitle text for the English and Binisaya versions. After that, the material was approved for possible use in public schools, provided that the needed revision was made.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

1. Based on the quantitative analysis of the level of proficiency of language, literacy, and communication competencies among kindergarten learners before the use of the audiobook, it can be concluded that most young learners struggle to achieve the required level of competency.

2. Since DepEd promotes the widespread use of various modes of instruction, the researcher developed an audiobook. The developed audiobook is intended to improve the level of proficiency in language, literacy, and communication competencies among kindergarten learners; thus, careful planning and crafting were made by the researcher.

3. The developed audiobook is well-crafted as it passed the standards set by DepEd.

4. The level of proficiency in the language, literacy, and communication competencies of kindergarten learners has improved after the use of the audiobook. Hence, it can be deduced that learners can significantly learn when exposed to various modes of instruction.

5. Improving the audiobooks by providing subtitle text for the English and Binisaya versions infers that learners can effectively learn by incorporating varied learning modalities such as visual and auditory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

School Administrators. When considering the inclusion of audiobooks in kindergarten education, school administrators may invest in high-quality audiobook resources and technical solutions. They may regularly assess the impact of the audiobook program on students' skills, making data-informed decisions for improvements. Educators may also be trained to use audiobooks as tools for language and literacy instruction.

Kindergarten Teachers. To enhance student's language, literacy, and communication abilities and expose them to languages, teachers may integrate audiobooks into their lessons by utilizing audiobooks as a springboard in teaching letter names and letter sounds. It is recommended that educators create another audiobook focusing on other target letters.

Learners. May utilize audiobooks to enhance vocabulary, knowledge retention, and the love for reading.

Parents. May support their children's learning by engaging with them, asking questions, having discussions, and listening to audiobooks.

Future Researchers. Research on the long-term effects of using audiobooks on language development in kindergarten. Future researchers may also expand this developed audiobook to become an animated storybook and incorporate interactive elements.

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