"Stop, Look, Listen, And Repeat: Improving English Reading Fluency with Libratalks"

Korina Fatima S. Afable, Joshua Dave P. Lausa, Gwyneth F. Monteagodo, Darleen T. Tanguan, Jeanette G. Pedriña

University of Southeastern Philippines Tagum-Mabini Campus, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Fluency is crucial for proficient reading. While various interventions exist to address, a dearth of studies integrate audio and print materials to enhance reading fluency. This study used the web application "LibraTalks" to improve the reading fluency of selected grade 5 learners at a Public Elementary School. Employing an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, thirty (30) students were quantitatively assessed using purposive sampling, and nine (9) participated in the qualitative phase. Data was collected using a pretest-posttest reading assessment with the Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM) tool, validated contextualized stories, the *LibraTalks* application, and in-depth interviews. The quantitative results showed an increase in mean reading fluency scores from 32.57 in the pretest to 64.59 in the posttest, indicating a significant improvement after the intervention. *LibraTalks* functionalities, including simultaneous audio-visual presentation of text, guided pronunciation, and adjustable reading pace, facilitated this improvement. Qualitative analysis revealed the primary theme: *LibraTalks cultivates reading prowess*, with categories such as *LibraTalks facilitates the development of a fluent reader* and *LibraTalks fuels enthusiasm for learning*. This study builds upon prior research that highlights the positive impact of audiobooks on reading fluency, such as that by Tusmagambet (2020), by providing a technical approach on how to integrate audio-print material. It is recommended to use LibraTalks as a reading intervention across different learner samples and levels, and to investigate its potential long-term effects on students' reading attitudes. Further research should explore LibraTalks' scalability and adaptability in various contexts, its long-term impact on students' attitudes toward reading, and the integration of the application with diverse instructional approaches

Keywords: LibraTalks, Reading Fluency, Explanatory sequential mixed-methods

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the essential life skills. All must be able to read. Fluent reading is vital for young students as it bridges the gap between recognizing words and understanding them. In that sense, teaching primary school children to read fluently is a very big challenge for teachers (Friedland et al. 2017).

While are numerous interventions to improve reading fluency, there's a need for more research specifically focused on the integration of audio and print materials. Some studies have explored the use of audiobooks, with Maher (2019) stressing the need for combining them with reading materials and Tusmagambet (2020) finding a positive impact of audiobooks on reading pace. However, further exploration is needed to fully understand how audio and print can be most effectively combined to enhance reading fluency and to explore the underlying mechanisms of improvement.

It is worthwhile to note that studies have explored the utilization of audio and visual features in different educational settings. For example, Yuan And Yang (2024) found that an audio-visual integrated language and art teaching method had a substantial positive impact on Chinese students' art learning motivation and art learning outcomes, compared to print-based instruction. Likewise, Kasuya and Oktavianti (2024) determined that audio-visual ESP books were effective in elevating learning outcomes and student engagement. Similarly,

Bawamenewi et al. The role of audio-visual media helped students who receive Indonesian language learning in understanding, interest in reading explanatory text material (Sari, 2024). These studies highlight the potential of combining audio and visual elements to provide better learning experience in different areas.

Many countries face challenges in developing children's reading fluency (UNESCO, 2021). A study in the US showed that many grade four students lack fluency due to limited emphasis on reading remediation (Rasinski, 2020). The same problem is depicted in the Philippines where tehre is a real struggle with reading proficiency. PISA (2022) results show the country ranking low, with many students only achieving basic reading levels (Level 2) and few reaching higher proficiency (Level 5 or above). This aligns with Balinbin (2020) who found out that some Grade 5 students lacking comprehension, similar to early graders.

Recent data from a Public Elementary School (2023) indicates a significant challenge in reading fluency among grade 5 students, with nearly half, specifically 46%, demonstrating difficulties in areas such as pronunciation, pace, and tone. This considerable percentage underscores the urgency for effective reading interventions. Consequently, this study aims to explore the potential of reading while listening as a strategy to enhance reading fluency among these elementary learners. It aims to determine the effectiveness of using *LibraTalk*s to enhance reading fluency, posing the following research questions: 1. What are the pretest scores of elementary learners in reading fluency without using *LibraTalks*? 2. What are the posttest scores of elementary learners in reading fluency after using *LibraTalks*? 3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of elementary learners on reading fluency using *LibraTalks*? 4. What is the effect size of the use of LibraTalks on the reading fluency of elementary learners? 5. What are the experiences of elementary learners with LibraTalks and its impact on their reading fluency?

This study investigates the use of an audiobook application, LibraTalks, to enhance elementary students' reading fluency. The theoretical foundation of this investigation is built upon several key theories, beginning with the Dual Coding Theory by Clark and Paivio (1991). This theory posits that combining audio and visual input enhances learning, a concept directly applicable to LibraTalks' integration of auditory narration and on-screen text.

Furthermore, the study acknowledges the influence of Vygotsky's (1962) Sociocultural Theory. As Tusmagambet (2020) noted, this theory emphasizes the role of a knowledgeable expert in facilitating learning. In this context, LibraTalks serves the purpose of providing a "knowledgeable assistant" service to students with their educational goals. This is particularly how LibraTalks helps students with fluency by guiding them through audio narration which assists with pronunciation and developing fluency skills. This aligns with how LibraTalks offers guidance through audio narration, aiding students in pronunciation and fluency development.

Finally, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989). The TAM posits that acceptance of a particular technology depends on its perceived usefulness and ease of use. These considerations are especially important in the case of acceptance of LibraTalks. Its effectiveness, in this case, may result from the perceived effectiveness of stimulating reading fluency and the ease of use for the young learners. The study aims at analyzing the impact of LibraTalks with the help of reading fluency theories to outline the relation in which they work..

Figure 1.1 is designed to describe the conceptual framework where the study is focused. This explains the research variables and the process which the study follows. The objective of the current study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the web application known as LibraTalks in enhancing the reading fluency skills of elementary learners. Based on the Dual Coding Theory, the research applies the two pathways of learning: verbal (story recordings) and non-verbal (printed stories) representation for facilitating learning. LibraTalks serves as the independent variable; its development, supported by 4th-year Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) students, was guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), considering perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use to enhance user acceptance. Reading fluency level, the dependent variable, is assessed through a pretest and posttest using a reading assessment developed by the researchers, with the intervention (LibraTalks) administered between these assessments to measure its effect on enhancing grade 5 learners' reading fluency; student narratives were also collected to provide further insights into this effect.
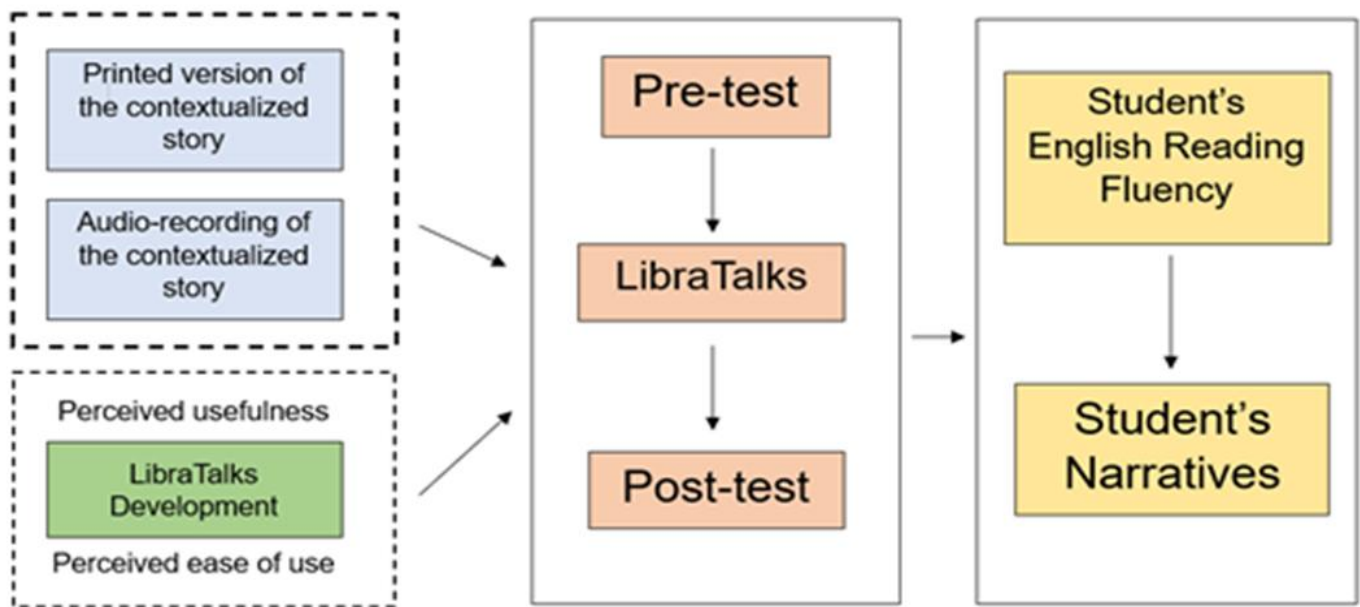
Figure 1.1 Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

Literature Review

Challenges in Reading Fluency

Achieving proficiency in reading is crucial for academic success, with reading fluency being a key aspect. Schools must prioritize improving reading skills. However, achieving reading fluency can be challenging, and poor oral fluency can lead to comprehension difficulties. Teachers must support learners in developing this skill. Fluency is typically measured by evaluating reading speed and comprehension. Language learners are often encouraged to increase reading speed to enhance fluency. However, inadequate attention to the role of sound in reading may hinder progress in improving reading fluency. Reading difficulties can negatively impact performance in other subjects, and academic achievement is often linked to reading ability. Teachers face challenges in helping struggling readers.

In the Philippines, a study by Guzman and Pinca-Atutubo (2023) at Sinipit Bubon Elementary School revealed that half of the Grade 4 students showed frustration with their reading abilities. Similarly, Ditona and Rico (2021) found that a significant number of grade two students in Eastern Schools of Botolan North and South District, Division of Zambales, were at the frustration level. These findings highlight the urgency to address declining reading proficiency among Filipino students. Reading fluency is influenced by factors such as automatic word identification and reading accuracy, and deficiencies in fluency can impair comprehension. Reading is fundamental for learning across subjects, and intermediate learners are expected to transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn". Therefore, teachers must prioritize developing strong reading skills using various interventions, including audiobooks.

Benefits of Audiobooks

Audiobooks are defined as books read aloud and recorded in various formats. Their popularity has increased with the availability of digital devices, and they can be used with printed materials for simultaneous reading and listening. Audiobooks are considered valuable tools for reading instruction, using engaging contextualized stories and to support reading skills development. Mohamed (2018) noted the advantages of integrating written and auditory information and the increasing popularity of audiobooks due to technological advancements. Audiobooks offer teachers technological tools to engage students, provide more reading time, improve verbal fluency, and enhance reading comprehension for struggling readers.

Rosales (2021) found that technology-based interventions can significantly enhance reading proficiency among

Grade 6 pupils in a local area in the Philippines. This aligns with the potential of audiobooks to improve reading skills. Research suggests that combining audiobooks with written texts (Reading While Listening or RWL) is more effective than reading or listening alone. RWL can strengthen knowledge and enhance listening abilities. Audiobooks provide auditory reinforcement, aiding in text understanding through correct pronunciation, intonation, and pacing. The dynamic nature of audiobooks and the ability to multitask can increase students' interest and involvement in reading, fostering a positive attitude towards literacy.

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of audiobooks in learning English. Amin (2022) found that Reading while Listening to mobile applications improved college students' reading fluency and comprehension in Saudi Arabia. Wood et al. (2018) also indicated that read-aloud tools like audiobooks support students' reading comprehension. Sukham et al. (2017) suggested that strategies like previewing vocabulary and group practice reading with listening can enhance comprehension skills. Lubua (2016) found that RWL facilitated vocabulary acquisition, a crucial aspect of reading comprehension, and that participants had a positive attitude towards this method. This highlights the potential of audiobooks to not only improve comprehension but also increase student motivation.

It has also been demonstrated that audiobooks improve reading engagement and motivation. It is highlighted in the findings of the study of Knutson (2019) that struggling readers demonstrated greater engagement and effort when given access to audiobooks. Best and Clark (2021) reported that listening to audiobooks increased the motivation of 21.7% of children and young adults in the UK to read books. Similar findings were made by Catalan and Marcelo (2022) in the Philippines' Division of Pampanga, where audiobooks improved story comprehension and increased reading practice engagement. These results highlight how audiobooks can help students have a more enjoyable and stimulating reading experience, which is especially important in the Philippine setting where reading motivation may be an issue.

Bolanos (2020) also emphasized the emotional bond that audiobooks can produce by utilizing a range of vocal tones, pitch, rhythm, and loudness. This emotional engagement can improve the reading experience even more and possibly lead to better understanding and a more enthusiastic approach to reading. Additionally, Waite (2018) emphasized that improved vocabulary, phonemic awareness, fluency, and other skills can help emerging readers gain confidence by listening to audiobooks.

Limitations of Audiobooks

Despite the numerous benefits, some issues have been raised about the use of audiobooks. Best (2020) noted that some people criticize audiobooks due to learning style considerations, as they may pose challenges for non-auditory learners. Visual and tactile learners may find extended listening frustrating. In response to concerns that audiobooks could endanger traditional literature, Reily (2019) argued that these concerns are baseless because audiobooks provide advantages that print books do, like increased vocabulary and sharper focus. Recognizing these limitations is essential for providing a balanced perspective and consider strategies to address them, such as incorporating multimodal approaches like RWL.

To summarize, the literature reviewed highlights the challenges in developing reading fluency, particularly among elementary learners, and the potential of audiobooks as an intervention to address these challenges. Studies indicate that audiobooks can enhance reading fluency, comprehension, motivation, and engagement. Research conducted in the Philippines supports these findings, demonstrating the positive impact of technology-based interventions, including audiobooks, on reading proficiency. While concerns exist regarding learning styles, the evidence suggests that audiobooks, when used strategically, can be a valuable tool to support reading development and foster a more positive reading experience for students. Further research is needed to explore optimal implementation strategies and address the needs of diverse learners in various contexts, particularly in the Philippines.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative

approaches to comprehensively understand the LibraTalks intervention. Quantitative data from pretest and post-test assessments were used to measure the intervention's impact on reading fluency, while qualitative data from post-test interviews provided in-depth explanations of these findings. The study also used a one-group pretest-posttest design, assessing the same participants before and after the intervention to determine changes in reading fluency as measured by the words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) tool.

Research Instruments

The study utilized four research instruments to gather data and implement the intervention. First, the researchers developed eight contextualized stories for the LibraTalks intervention, using the Narrative Framework based on Freytag's Pyramid: Five Act Structure, a widely accepted framework for various genres. One story was used for pretest and post-test assessments, while the remaining seven were used during the intervention. These stories were carefully developed by identifying the respondents' interests, needs, and learning levels, and by choosing engaging topics and relevant characters. To ensure accuracy, the contextualized stories were validated by three experts. Second, the Words-Correct-Per-Minute (WCPM) tool was used to measure participants' reading fluency in the pretest and post-test, with scores calculated using a WCPM calculator. Third, the LibraTalks web application, developed by the researchers in collaboration with BSIT students, served as the intervention. LibraTalks is a platform that offers contextualized audiobooks and incorporates several key functionalities designed to enhance the reading experience. These features include: adjustable playback speed, enabling students to customize the audio pace; adjustable playback speed for practice words, providing syllabic pronunciation of challenging vocabulary; a student dashboard for easy selection of stories; an interface that displays the audiobook, title, and author; and administrative functions for teachers to add and manage stories. To access LibraTalks, the teacher opens the local host, and students connect to the network to access the link. Finally, an interview protocol was used to guide the in-depth interviews and enhance the reliability and validity of the qualitative data; two sets of interview protocols were developed in the Cebuano language, validated, and pilot tested.

Subjects and Participants

The study participants comprised 30 Grade 5 learners from a Public Elementary School. These participants were selected from one class based on their Phil-IRI scores. All 30 students participated in the pretest and post-test phases of the study. Subsequently, nine participants were purposively selected to participate in in-depth interviews, allowing for the collection of detailed perspectives on their experiences with the intervention. It is important to acknowledge that the researchers also served as the participants' practice teachers. This dual role presents a potential source of bias, as familiarity with the students could influence data collection and intervention delivery. This limitation was recognized and addressed through strict adherence to the research protocol and the use of standardized instruments.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection. Quantitative data were collected through pretest and post-test assessments to measure changes in reading fluency, while qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews to provide richer insights into the participants' experiences. The data gathering process involved several key steps. First, the researchers obtained approval from the school and division to conduct the study. Second, participants were selected based on Phil-IRI data. Third, preliminary procedures included simulation and orientation sessions to prepare for the intervention. Fourth, the pretest was administered to assess initial reading fluency. Fifth, the LibraTalks intervention was implemented over four weeks. Notably, the researchers also served as the participants' practice teachers; to mitigate potential bias from this dual role, the intervention followed a structured protocol, and the LibraTalks application provided a standardized learning experience. Sixth, the post-test was administered to measure reading fluency after the intervention. Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data and provide a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study explored the effectiveness of reading while listening to

LibraTalks for Grade 5 learners. Quantitative data from pre- and post-test assessments were analyzed using mean and t-tests to assess changes in reading fluency, where the mean represents average test scores and the t-test determines significant differences between the results. In addition to the mean and t-test, Cohen's d was calculated to measure the effect size. Cohen's d is frequently used in statistical analysis to express the magnitude of the difference between two group means in terms of standard deviations, making it easier to understand and compare effect sizes across studies and domains. The resulting quantitative findings were then explained and enriched by qualitative data from interviews. Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to explore participants' perceptions of the intervention's effects on their reading fluency, engagement, and motivation. This thematic analysis involved identifying recurring patterns and themes in the translated interview responses, focusing on those relevant to the research questions, to support the study's conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers adhered to ethical standards. These included obtaining permission, ensuring confidentiality, obtaining informed consent and assent, ensuring anonymity, minimizing harm, and protecting data privacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RQ1. What are the pretest scores of elementary learners in reading fluency without using LibraTalks?

Table 3.1 presents the pre-test scores of learners' reading fluency in words correct per minute (WCPM) before the intervention. The table shows that the 30 learners achieved a mean pre-test score of 32.57 WCPM, with a standard deviation of 15.24. This mean score falls within the 'fairly satisfactory' range, indicating that, on average, the learners demonstrated low skills in English reading fluency at the beginning of the study. The standard deviation of 15.24 suggests a considerable spread in the learners' initial reading fluency levels, which may be attributed to varying levels of prior reading experience and language exposure. These results align with the findings of Tusmagambet (2020) and Yen et al. (2021), both of which also reported low initial reading fluency scores in their respective treatment groups, further emphasizing the need for effective interventions.

Table 3.1 Level of Pretest Scores without the use of LibraTalks

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
Pretest	32.57	15.24	Fairly satisfactory- This denotes a low skill in reading fluency

RQ2. What are the posttest scores of elementary learners in reading fluency after using LibraTalks?

Table 3.2 presents the post-test scores of learners' reading fluency in WCPM after the LibraTalks intervention. The mean post-test score was 64.59 WCPM, with a standard deviation of 15.74. This mean score falls within the 'very satisfactory' range indicating a notable improvement in the learners' reading fluency.

Table 3.2 Level of Posttest Scores after the Use of LibraTalks

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
Posttest	64.59	15.74	Very satisfactory- This denotes an above-average skill in reading fluency

Consequently, the increase in the mean score from 32.57 to 64.59 demonstrates a substantial gain in reading fluency following the intervention. While the post-test standard deviation (15.74) is similar to the pre-test standard deviation (15.24), it suggests that even with the improvement in average scores, there remained some variability in student performance. This could be due to differences in student engagement or learning pace during the intervention. This result is consistent with study conducted by Tusmagambet's (2020) study, the results indicated that audiobooks are significantly effective in developing students' fluency, especially reading speed, in one of the public schools in Aktobe, Kazakhstan..

RQ3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of elementary learners on reading fluency using LibraTalks?

Table 3.3 presents a comparison of the pretest and posttest results of Grade 5 learners' reading fluency after the implementation of LibraTalks [1] . The statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between the pretest (mean = 32.57) and posttest (mean = 64.59) scores, with a t-value of 8.02 and a p-value of 0.00 [2] . Since the p-value was less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis, which stated no significant difference between the pretest and posttest results, was rejected. This indicates that LibraTalks had a statistically significant impact on improving the learners' reading fluency. The higher posttest scores suggest a beneficial effect of the intervention.

Table 3.3 Significant Difference between pretest and posttest results of Grade five (5) learners after implementing LibraTalks

	Mean	t-value	p-value	Decision
Pretest	32.57	8.02	0.00	Significant
Posttest	64.59			

The researchers compared the significant value ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the p-value (p = 0.00) to determine whether the null hypothesis should be rejected. The null hypothesis was rejected since the p-value ($\alpha = 0.00$) is less than the 0.05 significance level. As a result, learners' reading fluency scores on the pre- and posttests change significantly. This indicates that the respondents' posttest scores were higher than their pretest scores, suggesting that using LibraTalks had a beneficial impact on their performance.

To further understand the magnitude of this impact, the effect size was calculated. Table 3.4 shows a Cohen's d of 2.10. This large effect size reinforces the finding that LibraTalks had a substantial positive influence on the Grade 5 learners' reading fluency.

Table 3.4 Effect Size of the Use of Libratalks on the reading fluency of elementary learners

	Effect Size
Cohen's d	2.10

Note. H_a $\mu_{pretest} \neq \mu_{posttest}$

This finding supports the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which posits a difference between the means of the pretest and posttest scores. In essence, the Cohen's d of 2.10 reveals a large difference in reading fluency between pretest and posttest scores when using LibraTalks. This substantial effect size suggests that LibraTalks had a considerable impact on enhancing Grade 5 learners' reading fluency, demonstrating the intervention's effectiveness.

While these results suggest the effectiveness of LibraTalks, it's important to acknowledge that other factors could have influenced the outcomes. For instance, the study did not account for the learners' prior exposure to audiobooks, which might have affected their familiarity with the audio format and influenced their reading fluency development. Additionally, the socioeconomic background of the learners could be a contributing factor, as access to resources and support for literacy development can vary significantly. Future research could explore these external factors to provide a more nuanced understanding of the intervention's impact.

The quantitative results of the study give a numerical picture of the reading fluency of grade 5 students before and after the intervention. They include the mean scores of the pretests and posttests as well as the significant

differences between them following the implementation of LibraTalks. Moving into the qualitative discussion, the researchers will use in-depth interviews to investigate the educational experiences of nine individuals. Through the identification of emergent themes, categories, and codes through qualitative analysis, a greater knowledge of the viewpoints and experiences of the learners on LibraTalks will be provided.

RQ4. What are the experiences of elementary learners in using LibraTalks on the reading fluency of elementary learners?

Figure 3.1 illustrates the emergent theme, categories, and codes derived from the qualitative analysis of nine Grade 5 learners' experiences with LibraTalks, highlighting its impact on improving reading fluency.

The figure is structured linear manner: the emergent theme, 'LibraTalks cultivates reading prowess,' is at the left, with two main categories branching below it: 'LibraTalks facilitates the development of a fluent reader' and 'LibraTalks fuels enthusiasm for learning.' Each category is further divided into codes. The first category, 'LibraTalks facilitates the development of a fluent reader,' comprises the codes 'Improves Reading Fluency,' 'Provides Guidance for Pronunciation,' and 'Hones Reading Expression.' The second category, 'LibraTalks fuels enthusiasm for learning,' includes the codes 'Enhances Comprehension and Engagement' and 'Increases Motivation in Reading'.

Figure 3.1 Emergent Theme, Categories, and Codes in the Experiences of Elementary Learners in utilizing the LibraTalks to Improve Reading Fluency
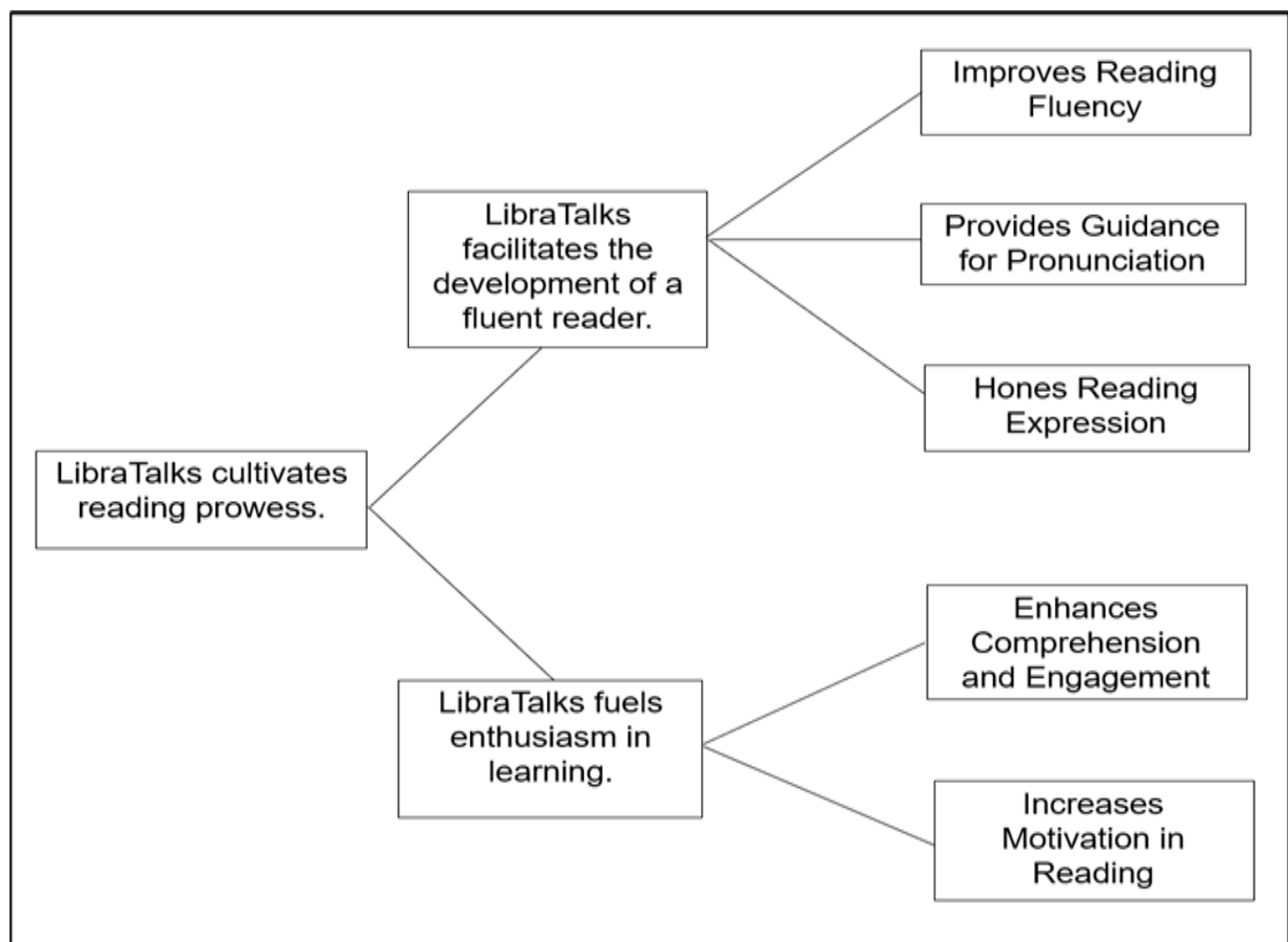
The responses from participants revealed a major theme: LibraTalks cultivates reading prowess. There are two (2) categories under this area: LibraTalks facilitates the development of a fluent reader, and LibraTalks fuels enthusiasm for learning. Based on the responses from the participants, the theme that LibraTalks cultivates reading prowess has emerged. The participants responded positively to using the LibraTalks, such as cultivating reading prowess and increasing the learner's enthusiasm for reading.

Category 1: LibraTalks facilitates the development of a fluent reader.

This category discusses how LibraTalks facilitates the development of a fluent reader. Three (3) codes are generated under this category: Improves Reading Fluency, Provides Guidance for Pronunciation, and Hones Reading Expression.

Improves Reading Fluency emerge from the participants responses, indicating LibraTalks' usefulness in cultivating reading abilities. LibraTalks was able to help the learners to read faster, as evidenced by their statements.

"I can learn how to read words, ma'am, because I do not know how to pronounce some of the words, and now I can remember how to pronounce them". (IDIS1_7-9)

"I learned how to read fast" (IDIS8_20)

"Back then, Teacher, I had difficulty pronouncing certain words and was confused about how to pronounce them. However, when I listened to the audiobook, I learned to read them fast, Teacher." (IDIS8_9-13)

The responses from the participants highlighted that LibraTalks improves the reading fluency of Grade 5 learners by assisting them in gaining reading abilities. LibraTalks plays a role in coordinating the visual and auditory components of reading when participants follow along with the narrated stories. The results corroborate the study of Zeat (2021), which highlighted that audiobooks allow students more time to read, demonstrate verbal fluency, and enhance the reading comprehension of frustrated readers

The code Provides Guidance for Pronunciation has also emerged Some participants expressed positive experiences with LibraTalks, including improved pronunciation, word identification, and reading confidence.

"There were words we had pronounced incorrectly, but with the help of the app, it became easier for me to read them because there is a voice that guides us on the proper pronunciation." IDIS4_5-11

"Through the app, we can learn how to pronounce words we do not know how to pronounce."(IDIS2_7-9)

 "It is beneficial because it helps me correct my pronunciation at the same time; I can avoid pronouncing the words wrong." (DIS6_8-11)

"I can now pronounce those tricky words. I like it when the app teaches us how to pronounce words that we do not know how to pronounce." (IDIS7_7-)9

"I have noticed that I can now pronounce the words correctly" (IDIS9_16-17)

"It is very effective because someone in the app is teaching us how to read words". (IDIS6_6-11)

"If we make a mistake in pronouncing the words, I can watch and listen to the app to know how to pronounce them correctly and then read the paper as well" (IDIS6_16-17)

The result of this study corroborates with the research conducted by Rosales (2021), where he investigated the efficiency of Technology-Based Intervention in boosting the reading competency of Grade 6 students. The results also implied significant benefits associated with utilizing the LibraTalks. By engaging with this platform, learners experienced an increased interest in audiobooks, leading to a heightened level of attentiveness toward the narratives and a deeper comprehension of the overall context.

The code Hones Reading Expression emerges as few participants also noticed their progress in using the app, particularly in recognizing punctuation cues, understanding when to pause or stop, and adopting the right tone while reading.

"I now know how to read every time there is an exclamation point, comma, or period. Then knew when to stop" (IDIS3_9-10)

"Now I know, Teacher, how to read with the right tone and then read the words fast. Moreover, I also like it because it pronounces difficult words slowly" (IDIS5_6-11)

"Through the app, I have noticed that while reading, I have learned when to stop or pause." IDIS9_15-16

The collected responses from participants indicate that LibraTalks positively influences grade 5 learners in enhancing their reading skills by helping them acquire basic skills. These skills include reading with the right tone, recognizing punctuation cues, and mastering the art of pausing or stopping. The findings agree with the idea of Waite (2018), who claims that there are considerable advantages that emerging readers can gain from incorporating audiobooks into their learning experiences. The benefits extend to enhanced fluency, enriched vocabulary, heightened phonemic awareness, and increased confidence in their reading abilities.

Category 2: LibraTalks fuels enthusiasm for learning

The LibraTalks develops reading fluency and fuels the readers' enthusiasm for learning. Two (2) codes are generated under this category: Enhances Comprehension and Engagement and Increases Motivation in Reading. Based on the responses, the LibraTalks is engaging and helps enhance comprehension, facilitates a better understanding of the story, and encourages engagement with the text. In line with this, Kartal and Simsek (2017) stressed the positive impact of audiobooks and how they increase elementary learners' motivation to read.

Enhances Comprehension and Engagement Some participants emphasized that listening to LibraTalks is engaging, and they also discussed how the app enhances comprehension, facilitates a better understanding of the story, and encourages engagement with the text.

"When I look at the app and have the printed version, I can understand the story immediately and then read the other words." (IDIS2_14-15)

"We were listening to that audiobook, and we also had a piece of paper that we held so we could follow and understand the story in the audiobook" IDIS3_14-17

"While reading, I heard the story, which is why I understood what I was reading" IDIS9_14-15

"I like it when I read, and there is an app to listen to the story. Also, it is straightforward for me to practice reading because I will read the story along with it, and then I will also understand the stories better" (IDIS4_16-19)

"I like the app because I can imagine the story" IDI7_10-11

The findings indicated that the participants exhibited increased engagement, putting in more effort than their pre-audiobook exposure. Participants developed favorable attitudes towards reading and reading abilities, feeling more capable and independent. The results also implied significant benefits associated with utilizing the LibraTalks. The findings of this study substantiate the concept proposed by Bolanos (2020) that audiobooks elicit emotions in listeners through various vocal tones to make stories come alive.

Increases Motivation in Reading Some participants expressed positive sentiments and recommendations regarding using web apps, likely LibraTalks, to improve their reading skills. The participants mentioned their excitement and motivation to read, highlighting the appeal of the stories.

"I like the stories that's why I feel excited every session of reading" (IDIS3_24-25)

"I recommend other students to try the app. So that, they can also be good at reading and feel motivated to read." (IDIS6_23-25)

"I want them to try the audiobook so they can love reading because they will be taught how to pronounce the words correctly." (IDIS7_18-20)

"I recommend that they listen because it helps improve their reading, and the stories are also fascinating."

(IDIS8_23-24)

A few participants also noted that LibraTalks encouraged them to try the app, emphasizing its positive impact on reading proficiency and motivation.

"I am now motivated to read, and I want others to feel motivated too if they get the chance to try the app." (IDIS5_22-23)

"It can help other students because it indeed helped me in reading. Also, they can be motivated to read because the stories are wonderful" (IDIS9_21-22)

The analysis of the participants' responses revealed that LibraTalks was perceived to cultivate reading prowess and increase learners' enthusiasm for reading.

The relationship between the two main categories, 'Facilitates Development of a Fluent Reader' and 'Fuels Enthusiasm for Learning,' appears to be synergistic. While improved reading skills (as evidenced by codes like 'Improves Reading Fluency,' 'Provides Guidance for Pronunciation,' and 'Hones Reading Expression') contribute to a sense of accomplishment and thus fuel enthusiasm, the increased motivation and engagement (as seen in codes like 'Enhances Comprehension and Engagement' and 'Increases Motivation in Reading') likely lead to more practice and focused attention, further enhancing fluency. For example, a participant stated, 'I learned how to read fast' (IDIS8_20), which falls under 'Improves Reading Fluency'. This improvement can create a positive feedback loop, where learners are motivated to use LibraTalks more, leading to greater fluency gains.

These findings imply a positive association between using the LibraTalks and the desire to engage in reading. Learners eagerly express enthusiasm and motivation from reading and listening to contextualized stories. LibraTalks is a tool for young learners or students to develop a love for reading. It can increase their motivation. The result of this study corroborates with the idea of Zeat (2021), focusing on the importance of combining a beneficial and entertaining approach to learning, as it can effectively motivate students to become independent learners.

It's important to consider potential biases that might have influenced these positive responses. The study did not explicitly address participants' pre-existing attitudes toward technology or audiobooks. Learners who were already comfortable with or excited about using technology might have been more likely to report positive experiences. Conversely, those with less exposure or a negative predisposition might have had different experiences that weren't fully captured in the data.

While the provided quotes offer valuable insights, a deeper analysis could explore patterns or differences in participants' experiences. For instance, while many participants expressed increased motivation, the intensity of this enthusiasm might have varied. Some learners may have shown a greater improvement in specific areas of reading fluency than others. Further analysis could examine whether factors such as prior reading ability or learning styles influenced the degree to which individuals benefited from LibraTalks.

Mixed method data analysis

The quantitative data demonstrated a significant improvement in reading fluency scores (WCPM). Specifically, the qualitative data explains how this improvement occurred. Learners reported that LibraTalks improved their reading fluency by providing guidance on pronunciation, helping them read faster, and honing their reading expression. For instance, one student stated, "I learned how to read fast" (IDIS8_20). This qualitative evidence supports the quantitative finding of increased WCPM, providing specific examples of how LibraTalks contributed to this improvement.

Furthermore, the quantitative results showed a substantial effect size, indicating a strong impact of LibraTalks on reading fluency. In addition, the qualitative findings help explain the magnitude of this effect. The increased motivation and engagement reported by learners suggest that LibraTalks not only improved their skills but also fostered a positive learning environment. Consequently, this increased motivation likely led to more consistent use of the intervention and greater effort in reading, contributing to the substantial effect size observed in the

quantitative data. For example, learners expressed excitement and a desire to read more.

In summary, the qualitative findings provide a rich contextual understanding of the quantitative results. They explain the process of improvement and the reasons for the effectiveness of the interventions, offering a more complete picture of how LibraTalks cultivates reading prowess in elementary learners

CONCLUSIONS

This study evaluated the effectiveness of LibraTalks, a web application, in enhancing the reading fluency of Grade 5 pupils. Participants' initial reading pretest scores indicated a need for intervention, with scores falling below the average range. Following the implementation of LibraTalks, a significant improvement was observed in their reading fluency levels, as evidenced by increased word-correct-per-minute scores and a shift to an average level of reading fluency. This quantitative finding was further supported by qualitative data, which revealed that learners experienced improved pronunciation, enhanced word recognition, and increased reading confidence through the use of LibraTalks.

The convergence of both quantitative and qualitative results suggests that LibraTalks is an effective tool for enhancing reading fluency in Grade 5 learners within the context of this study. The positive impact of LibraTalks may be attributed to its ability to facilitate the development of fluent reading skills and foster enthusiasm for learning, as highlighted by the qualitative findings.

While this study provides strong evidence for LibraTalks' effectiveness with Grade 5 learners, it is recommended to utilize LibraTalks as a reading intervention in different samples and levels of learners. Further research is needed to determine its scalability and adaptability to other grade levels and contexts. Future studies could explore the potential of LibraTalks to support reading fluency development in younger or older students, as well as its effectiveness in diverse educational settings. Additionally, exploring the potential long-term effects of LibraTalks on students' attitudes toward reading and investigating the integration of LibraTalks with different instructional approaches could provide valuable insights for teachers seeking to optimize its use.

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