

Unpacking Pupils' Reading Ability: Examining the Effect of Marungko Approach-Based Intervention Program for Non-Reader Pupils

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Abstract: In attaining inclusivity of learning in the primary grades, schools are tasked to develop among pupils the skills that are essential in helping the learners to succeed in their academic undertaking. The teaching of reading as a foundation skill is given importance and difficulties encountered by pupils in acquiring this essential skill are addressed with proper intervention. Hence, this study determined the efficiency and effectiveness of the Marungko approach-based reading remediation program in developing reading ability of pupils with frustration reading level. The result of the difference analysis between the pre-test and post-test of the participants on reading comprehension in their first language revealed the effectiveness of the reading remediation program utilizing the Marungko approach in increasing pupils' reading comprehension performance. Assessment made by parents of the participants and teachers involved in the program affirmed the efficiency of the reading remediation program as it was implemented with a high level of consistency and conformity while utilizing instructional material that can provide teachers with precise directions for teaching letter-sound relationships. This study calls for a school city division-wide implementation of the Marungko approach-based reading remediation to help pupils with frustration reading level in enhancing their reading ability.

Keywords: Marungko approach, non-reader pupils, reading ability, and reading remediation.

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Introduction

The success of any child in schooling depends on the ability to negotiate meaning within the learning environment in which instruction occurs. This negotiation of meaning requires the construction of ideas through association of new information with one's schema. This process of associating information to prior knowledge entails the acquisition of reading skills. Cramer (2004) acknowledged the importance of reading to pupils' lives as it serves as investment that can fulfil children's need for adventure and quest for knowledge. Gow (2006) described

reading as the foundation of other skills essential in helping pupils' to succeed in their academic undertaking. Oftentimes, this essential skill is correlated with positive academic performance across disciplines. Thus, the role of any elementary school within this contention is to transform pupils into skilful readers. This noble aim rationalizes the Philippines' implementation of mandatory kindergarten for Filipino learners as they are expected to be readers by grade 1 (de Dios, 2013).

Numerous programs on developing Filipino children's capacity to read had been undertaken by the Department of Education (DepEd) which include the Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP), the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), and other school-based reading activities (Cristobal, 2015). However, education trends in the country reveal alarming situations. The Education for All National Review Report (2015) noted the increasing numbers of illiterate children, youth, and adults in the country. Lesnick *et al.*, as cited by de Dios (2013) emphasized that two every five pupils in grade 3 who encountered difficulties in reading were likely to fail upon entering junior high school. Devine and Payan (2006) reported early and intermediate Filipino pupils as struggling readers. Nava *et al.*, (2017) observed lower performance in silent and oral reading of pupils in the regions and provinces farther south of the National Capital Region (NCR). Reading inventory conducted in the Division of Tanauan City also reveals a number of non-reader grade two pupils during the fourth quarter of School Year 2017-2018 who were promoted in grade three the following school year.

Protacio and Sarroub (2013) attributed the dismal reading performance of Filipino children to inadequacy of learning resources, unmanaged curriculum foci, and lack of attention to national examinations. They also challenged reading teachers in the country to hone pupils' reading ability by providing comprehension-based learning opportunities as the main goal of reading instruction. In early intermediate grade in the country's elementary education, achievement on reading comprehension primarily depends on strengthening the skills pre-requisite to reading such as phonemic and phonological awareness. Cramer (2004) clarified phonemic awareness as pupils' capacity to distinguish the sounds within a word, and phonological awareness as knowledge on syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes which are essential to word recognition which can facilitate meaning making through transaction. Hence, it becomes imperative to hone these pre-requisite skills in reading among pupils who are non-readers to bridge their literacy skills that can empower them to equally participate in the learning tasks provided by teachers across curriculum. This bridging of literacy skills requires mastery of the pre-requisite skills through extensive and constant drill and practice.

The Marungko approach in reading instruction is seen as a potent tool in honing the pre-requisite reading skills among pupils to help them develop reading fluency. This reading approach supports culture-based language acquisition since it begins instruction through capitalizing on the most frequent to the least occurring sounds in the learners' native language. The proper sequencing of sounds in consideration to pupils' native language is reinforced with literature-based activities to promote appreciation and enjoyment in reading (Bustos-Orosa and Ferrer, 2013). With proper reading instruction enhanced through activities that are appealing to the learners, pupils with reading difficulties are expected to develop genuine love and appreciation for reading.

This situation calls for the leadership by division supervisors for planning and coordinating division-wide intervention program for non-reader intermediate pupils that can develop and strengthen their skills pre-requisite to learning to read. The proponents who are a Language

professor and an Education Program Supervisor deem the conduct of the study on Marungko approach-based intervention program for non-reader intermediate pupils as significant. This intervention program can provide scaffold for non-readers to master the pre-requisite reading skills that can transform them into fluent readers. Moreover, this transformation can help pupils become life-long learners.

Objective of the Study

This study determined the effects of the implemented Marungko approach-based reading intervention program among selected grade three pupils in an elementary school at the Division Schools of Tanauan City, Batangas, Philippines. It also described the assessment of the teacher and parent-respondents on the efficiency of implemented reading intervention program.

Specifically, this study sought the answer to the following questions:

1. What are the pre-test and post-test results of the participants on reading comprehension test?
2. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results on reading comprehension test?
3. How do the parent and teacher-respondents assess the efficiency of the implemented Marungko approach-based reading intervention program?

Material and Methods

This study consisting of two phases utilized the action research design. The first phase made use of the one-group pre-test and post-test quasi-experimental design covering the performance of the participants on the reading comprehension test based on the Phil-IRI Group Screening Test (GST) in Filipino for Grade 3 which aimed to assess their literal, inferential, and critical comprehension. The participants were the beneficiaries of the school-based reading remediation program. They were identified based on the results of the conducted reading screening test which specified pupils for reading remediation. These participants covered 13 Grade 3 pupils who agreed to be involved in the study and the reading remediation program through securing consent from their respective parents.

The participants were subjected to reading remediation with integration of Marungko approach to reading instruction and utilization of *Book in a Flashcard*, a Marungko approach-based instructional resource developed by the researchers. Pre-test and post-test were administered among the participants prior and after being subjected to the reading remediation program. In interpreting the level of performance in the administered 20-item pre-test and post-test, the mean scores were grouped and given interpretations based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Phil-IRI Manual 2018. The manual classifies reading comprehension performance of pupils as to independent level (16 to 20 or 80% to 100% correct responses), instructional level (12 to 15 or 59% to 79%), and frustration level (11 and below or 58% and below).

The second phase of the study utilized the survey design in which the total enumeration of six teachers and 13 parents involved in the remedial reading program served as the respondents in evaluating the efficiency of the instructional program and material of the Marungko approach-based reading remediation program. These respondents were provided copies of the researcher-made questionnaire to assess the reading remediation program. The questionnaire underwent content and face validations by experts who are composed of an educator with doctorate degree in English Language Studies, a university junior official who is also a holder

of doctorate degree in Educational Management, and two experienced reading professor and instructor who are holders of master's degree in their respective specializations. These experts had ensured the congruence of the item statements on the constructs measured in the study and other considerations such as clarity of the item statements, balance, and the like. Tabulation and treatment of data using appropriate statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation, and T-test immediately followed after the retrieval of the quantitative data.

Results and Discussion

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Results on Reading Comprehension Test

In order to ascertain the effectiveness of the Marungko approach-based reading remediation program, comparison of the pre-test and post-test results were provided. The pre-test results determined the initial performance of the participants on reading comprehension prior to the implementation of the remediation program. The results had served as basis for selecting participants for reading remediation since it is based on the reading screening test which is intended to identify pupils for remedial reading. The participants of the reading remediation program were the pupils who scored unfavourably in the reading comprehension screening test and were found to be in the frustration level. These pupils with unfavourable reading performance were subjected to remedial reading instruction utilizing the Marungko approach to remediate the pre-requisite reading skills to enhance their comprehension. After being subjected to the Marungko approach-based reading remediation for two consecutive grading periods, the participants took the post-test to determine the effectiveness of the implemented remediation program. Table 1 illustrates the pre-test and post-test results on the reading comprehension test in Filipino for Grade 3 conducted before and after the implementation of the reading remediation program.

Table 1. Pre-test and post-test results on reading comprehension test in Filipino

Category	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	10.31	2.16
Post-Test	14.69	2.49

The mean score of the pre-test suggests that the participants had reading comprehension which falls under the frustration level. This alarming result was found to be detrimental on the participants' academic growth which is likely to be the result of ineffective reading instruction. Cramer (2004) characterized readers in the frustration level as learners with extremely weak comprehension that can lead to minimal growth in reading. Pupils within this poor level of reading can be provided with reading remediation to hone their pre-requisite reading skills that are important in developing their reading comprehension.

The potential of the Marungko approach in reading instruction was utilized in the implementation of the school-based reading remediation program to help the participants to improve their reading ability. The mean score of the post-test indicates an increase of 42% in the reading comprehension performance of the participants when exposed to the Marungko approach-based reading remediation program. This increase in reading comprehension performance seems to illustrate the positive effect of the implemented reading approach to pupils' reading ability. Roxas (2018) noted reading enjoyment and appreciation as key features of the Marungko approach that are contributory to pupils' reading performance. Activities facilitated capitalizing on these key features of the Marungko approach afforded the participants to be engaged in the remedial reading program which enhances their reading performance.

Difference Analysis between the Pre-test and Post-test Results on Reading Comprehension Test

The pre-test and post-test results on the reading comprehension test administered before and after the implementation of the Marungko approach-based reading remediation program were compared. This comparison can provide insights on the effectiveness of the utilized reading approach in enhancing the reading capability of the pupils involved in the remediation program.

Table 2. Comparison of the pre-test and post-test results on reading comprehension test

Category	Mean	SD	Computed t-value	Tabular t-value	Decision (Ho)	Interpretation
Pre-test	10.31	2.16	-18.18	2.18	Reject	Significant Difference
Post-Test	14.69	2.49				
df = 12, $\alpha=0.05$						

The computed t-value of -18.18 was found to be higher compared with its tabular t-value of 2.18 at 12 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. This result affirmed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the participants on the conducted reading comprehension test before and after the implementation of the reading remediation program: hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result acknowledged that the integration of the Marungko approach in reading remediation and the utilization of instructional resources congruent with the integrated approach are helpful in making pupils perform better in reading tasks. Roxas (2018) noted that the integration of the Marungko approach in reading instruction combined with culturally and age-appropriate instructional resources can help pupils improve their achievement in reading.

Parents and teachers' assessment on the efficiency of the implemented Marungko approach-based reading intervention program

To further analyse the effectiveness of the Marungko approach-based reading remediation in helping pupils to enhance their reading ability, the conducted remedial reading program was evaluated to understand how its implementation became contributory in developing pupils' reading comprehension performance. Parents of the participants and teachers involved in the reading remediation program were asked to assess the efficiency of the instructional program and material of the implemented reading remediation.

Table 3 illustrates the assessment of the parents and teachers on the efficiency of the Marungko approach-based reading intervention program.

Table 3. Assessment on the efficiency of the Marungko approach-based reading intervention program

Item Statements	Parent-Respondents			Teacher-Respondents		
	\bar{x}	SD	VI	\bar{x}	SD	VI
1. The reading remediation program has documented evidence of improving student achievement.	3.38	0.48	A	3.67	0.47	SA
2. The instructional resource utilized in reading remediation includes selected set of letter-sound	3.00	0.55	A	3.5	0.50	A

relationships that are organized into a logical sequence.						
3. The Marungko approach-based instructional material can provide teachers with precise directions for teaching letter-sound relationships.	3.46	0.49	A	3.83	0.37	SA
4. Ample opportunities are provided for pupils to apply what they are learning about letters and sounds to the reading of words, sentences, and stories.	2.92	0.47	A	3.33	0.47	A
5. Remedial instruction bridges learning phonics and applying phonics in independent reading of text.	2.92	0.47	A	3.16	0.37	A
6. Instruction is explicit and includes direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, and application.	3.38	0.49	A	3.00	0.00	A
7. The reading remediation program and material are implemented with a high level of consistency and conformity.	2.69	0.46	A	3.00	0.00	A
Composite Mean	3.11	Efficient	3.35	Efficient		
3.51-4.00: Strongly Agree (SA)/Highly Efficient (HE); 2.51-3.50: Agree (A)/Efficient (E); 1.51-2.50: Slightly Agree (SLA)/Slightly Efficient (SE); 1.00-1.50: Disagree (D) /Not Efficient (NE)						

Both parents and teachers assessed the Marungko approach-based reading remediation program as efficient by garnering composite mean scores of 3.11 and 3.35 respectively. The teacher-respondents strongly agreed that the Marungko approach-based instructional material can provide them with precise direction of teaching letter-sound relationships as this item statement obtained the highest mean of 3.83. Similar observation was found with the response of the parents for the same item which garnered the highest mean of 3.46. Although obtaining the least mean scores of 2.69 for the parent-respondents, and 3.00 for teacher-respondents, both groups of respondents agreed that the reading remediation program and material are implemented with a high level of consistency and conformity. These characteristics of the remedial reading program utilizing the Marungko approach are found to be efficient in helping teachers in improving pupils’ reading ability. This efficiency of Marungko approach in enhancing reading ability is affirmed by Roxas’ (2018) notion that the Marungko approach is designed to equip pupils the necessary materials to improve their achievement in reading.

Conclusion and recommendation

The success of a remedial reading program highly depends on the rigour of its implementation and availability of culturally and age-appropriate instructional resources that are designed to address the needs of the learners. The implemented Marungko approach-based reading remediation program became successful in increasing the reading comprehension performance of pupils who were identified to be in the frustration level. Engagement in Marungko approach-based reading tasks designed to develop pupils’ enjoyment and appreciation of reading through instruction that greatly considers the natural

sound-sequence of pupils' native language can yield favourable results in developing reading ability. The difference analysis of the results of the pre-test and post-test on reading comprehension administered before and after the implementation of the Marungko approach-based reading remediation affirmed the effectiveness of the approach in helping pupils to make transition from frustration reading level to independent level.

In line with the results of this study, the Marungko approach-based reading remediation program may be considered for wide implementation to help pupils with frustration reading level within the entire school city division to enhance their reading ability. The education program supervisor in charge of the first language instruction may spearhead activities that may encourage language teachers to design and develop Marungko approach-based instructional materials to supplement available resources in teaching reading.

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