

Effectiveness of Marungko Approach in Reading Literacy among Primary Learners

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in enhancing reading literacy among primary learners at Tumulog Elementary School. The participants included Grade 1, 2, and 3 learners for the school year 2025–2026 who demonstrated difficulties in reading, as identified through an initial screening assessment. A one-group quasi-experimental design was employed to measure the impact of the intervention. Pretest results revealed that learners exhibited only an average level of mastery in key literacy domains. After implementing the Marungko Approach, posttest results indicated substantial improvement in word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. A paired t-test analysis showed a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.000$) in learners' performance before and after the intervention. These findings suggest that integrating the Marungko Approach into the early grade curriculum can significantly improve reading outcomes by addressing decoding and fluency challenges through explicit, systematic instruction. Moreover, the study emphasizes how necessary reading intervention is to bridge the literacy gap and promote continuous academic achievement. Given the foundational role of early literacy in academic development, the continued implementation of the Marungko Approach shows strong potential for improving reading outcomes across diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: elementary education, Marungko Approach, intervention, performance, word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, reading comprehension, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Background

Reading literacy in the primary grades is the foundation for all future learning across subjects. During these early years, learners develop essential decoding, comprehension, and vocabulary skills. However, many young learners face challenges acquiring these skills, which can hinder their overall academic progress. Effective reading interventions that emphasize phonemic awareness and sound recognition have been introduced to address these difficulties. These strategies are crucial in improving reading literacy and bridging learning gaps among beginning readers.

Internationally, reading literacy remains a challenge, with the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reporting that 26% of students in OECD countries perform below proficiency levels in reading (OECD, 2020). In the 2022 PISA, only 24% of Filipino 15-year-olds reached the minimum benchmark in reading (Level 2 or higher), compared to the OECD average of 74%, placing the Philippines among the bottom six performers globally (OECD, 2023). This means that just 24% of students in the

Philippines can, at the very least, identify the main idea in a moderate-length text and reflect on the purpose and meaning of what they are reading (Chi, 2023). With an average reading score of 347, significantly below the global average of 476, the country ranked 76th out of 81, highlighting the persistent challenge of low reading literacy among its youth (Ines, 2023). Many students struggle with understanding basic texts, which affects their ability to learn across subjects. This alarming result underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms and targeted interventions in foundational literacy education.

Furthermore, the result of Grades 1, 2, and 3 learners at Sitio Tumulog Elementary School, District IV, Division of Agusan del Sur, in the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) this school year 2024-2025 in the General Screening Test is very low. Out of 10 learners in Grade 1, 80% failed to reach the passing score, while in Grade 2, out of 11 learners, 8 or 73% also belonged to the frustration level, and in Grade 3, out of 8 learners, 6 or 75% failed to meet the passing grade and they were the struggling readers identified last school year 2023-2024. Few pupils can read and cannot comprehend what they are reading. With this result, it is essential to focus on and help them develop their reading ability.

In response to the reading issue, the researcher planned to implement the Marungko Approach, which emphasizes building a strong foundation in phonics and phonemic awareness to aid in word recognition and improve reading comprehension. It is an effective method for teaching reading, incorporating it into the K-12 curriculum as a recommended approach to address the learners' reading problems.

Thus, the study's primary aim determines the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in reading literacy among the primary learners of Tumulog Elementary School. Furthermore, the study would help shape the landscape of literacy education, ensuring that every learner can develop and unlock their reading abilities' full potential.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

This chapter includes the ideas, the finished thesis, and the generalization or conclusion. Those included in this are relevant and the same as the present study.

Reading Literacy

Reading literacy is a critical foundation for all learning, encompassing the skills necessary to decode, comprehend, interpret, and engage with written texts. According to the OECD (2023), reading literacy is essential for academic success and active participation in society. It involves more than just recognizing words—it requires understanding meaning, evaluating content, and applying information in various contexts. In the early stages of education, promoting reading literacy equips learners with the cognitive tools necessary for success in all other subject areas and nurtures their capacity for lifelong learning.

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Reading Difficulties Among School Children. The ability to read for students is seen as a determinant of success in their learning activities at school. It is because all subject matter in various fields of study taught in schools requires understanding concepts and theories that must be understood through reading activities. With the ability to read correctly and reliably, students have the basic capital and the primary determinant of success in various subjects. On the other hand, failure to master the ability to learn to read will be an obstacle or even a source of failure in student studies (Fauzi, 2018).

Word Recognition Problems. Word recognition is a foundational component of reading development, especially in the intermediate years when students transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Ehri (2020) emphasized that students must develop automaticity in word recognition to allocate cognitive resources to comprehension efficiently. Wang, Sabatini, and O'Reilly (2019) found that learners with delayed word recognition tend to perform poorly on higher-order reading tasks. Likewise, Duke and Cartwright (2021) affirmed that fluency in decoding and recognition directly influences reading proficiency.

Moreover, phonological awareness and decoding accuracy are critical predictors of word recognition success. Altani, Protopapas, and Katopodi (2020) highlighted that fluency in reading word lists reflects underlying word-level reading capabilities. Moats (2020) argued that poor phoneme awareness results in labored word recognition and slows reading comprehension. Supporting this, Nordström, Svensson, and Lindeblad (2021) found that assistive technologies can improve word recognition skills among students with reading disabilities, reinforcing the need for early interventions.

Building on these foundational views, Cervetti, Pearson, and Palincsar (2020) reported that intermediate learners with limited word recognition skills exhibit significant gaps in comprehension. Their study emphasized the need for explicit instruction in decoding strategies to build fluency. Similarly, Yoshii and Flaitz (2019) demonstrated that interventions involving picture and word recognition enhanced vocabulary retention among elementary readers. Spaul, Pretorius, and Mohohlwane (2020) stressed that in multilingual contexts, word recognition must be taught in both the home and school language for optimal reading outcomes.

In the Philippines, reading literacy remains a pressing concern, as reflected in the consistently low performance of students in national and international assessments. Bernardo, Cordel, and Teves (2021) revealed that a majority of Filipino students scored below proficiency in reading literacy based on PISA data. Fajardo and Tan (2022) supported this by indicating that even digital reading poses challenges to students in Quezon City.

Similarly, fluency deficits continue to be a major concern in literacy development. Tinapay et al. (2022) reported that modular learning during the pandemic led to weakened fluency skills among primary learners. Also, Casingal (2022) observed that students in rural schools lacked oral reading opportunities, resulting in decreased fluency.

Phonemic Awareness Problems. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes, is a foundational skill in early reading development. However, a number of factors, including a lack of formal education, developmental language delays, and limited exposure to rich oral language situations, make it difficult for many primary learners to master this ability. These challenges affect their ability to accurately spell, decode, and read fluently (Chang, 2019).

In Mindanao, the integration of phonemic awareness programs has been central to addressing early reading difficulties (Gonzales and Casical, 2023). Learners who do not acquire phonemic awareness in their early years are more likely to lag in their reading proficiency throughout their schooling. This problem affects

students from underprivileged homes, where early literacy experiences may be limited (Cartoneros and Galvez, 2022).

Despite these developments, many schools lack targeted programs to support phonemic awareness beyond early grades. Alarcio (2023) noted that most phonemic programs in the Philippines focus on Kindergarten to Grade 1, leaving a gap for intermediate learners. Chang (2019) recommended that policymakers extend phonological training to upper primary to address decoding issues. Likewise, the report by Dabrowski et al. (2024) stressed that foundational skills, including phoneme recognition, remain underdeveloped in most ASEAN classrooms.

Reading Fluency Problems. Reading fluency has been widely acknowledged as a foundational skill influencing overall literacy development among intermediate learners worldwide. Fatemipour (2017) emphasized that fluency contributes directly to reading comprehension in blended-learning environments. It is a matter of fact that primary learners often exhibit reading fluency challenges characterized by slow oral reading, frequent word-decoding errors, and a lack of expression. A 2022 study investigating oral reading fluency (ORF) during the 2020–2021 school year found that second-graders gained only 17.2 words per minute (WPM)—significantly less than the pre-pandemic average of 21.6 WPM—with similar, albeit smaller, setbacks seen in third and fourth graders (Domingue et al, 2022). These deficits in fluency not only hinder reading speed but also limit comprehension and academic growth, as students must expend cognitive resources on decoding rather than understanding text.

Several interrelated factors contribute to reading fluency problems among primary learners, with one of the most significant being limited phonemic awareness and decoding skills (Hudson et al, 2020). Without strong foundational skills in recognizing letter-sound relationships, learners struggle to read words quickly and accurately, which in turn hampers fluency development (Tinapay et al., 2022). A recent study emphasized that children who experience difficulty with phonological processing often read more slowly and with more errors, leading to reduced reading comprehension and motivation (Wanzek et al., 2021). Additionally, limited vocabulary knowledge and weak oral language proficiency can also slow down word recognition, making it harder for students to read fluently and understand connected text (Fuchs et al., 2020).

Problems Associated with Reading Comprehension Among Primary Learners. Various cognitive and linguistic factors influence reading comprehension problems among primary learners. Learners' capacity to comprehend sentences and the main idea of a text becomes difficult when they are unable to understand the meaning of words in the text (Nguyen et al., 2024). Poor vocabulary skill is closely linked with the inability to draw conclusions and integrate concepts throughout a passage; both are crucial skills to comprehension. In the same way, learners with limited prior knowledge frequently find it difficult to connect new and existing knowledge, hindering their ability to generate coherent mental images of the text (Prabawa et al., 2024).

Multilingualism and language transition issues have repeatedly emerged as barriers to reading comprehension in developing contexts. Spaull and Pretorius (2022) identified that learners reading in a second language often lacked foundational comprehension skills. In New Zealand, Edwards (2024) found that international students faced difficulties adjusting to local reading norms. Moreover, learners with limited phonological awareness or poor working memory may find it challenging to track and retain details while reading, further weakening their ability to answer comprehension questions accurately (Rokhman and Pramono, 2025).

In the Philippines, reading comprehension challenges have often stemmed from systemic curriculum gaps and outdated pedagogical strategies. Ocampo, Lucasan, and Gonzales (2020) revealed that the K to 12 program's implementation lacked strong reading interventions in lower grades. Saldivar and Fernandez (2024) indicated the limited adaptation of learner-centered approaches in public schools. Likewise, Bacero and Fillone (2023) noted urban challenges in educational resource allocation that indirectly impact students' literacy development.

In addition, teacher preparedness and instructional design significantly impact reading comprehension among Filipino students. According to Ayuba (2024), many language teachers lack sufficient training in interactive reading models. Masatoshi (2023) further argued that despite national reforms, the Philippine system struggles with implementing a practical reading strategy.

Efforts to improve critical reading have been hampered by shallow curriculum integration and lack of localized materials. Lestari (2024) highlighted the minimal use of project-based learning in elementary schools to foster deeper understanding. Saldivar and Fernandez (2024) pointed out that institutional resistance to reform limits pedagogical innovation. Similarly, Xu and Loo (2025) stressed that libraries in rural Philippine schools are underfunded, resulting in diminished student access to comprehension-enriching content.

Reading Intervention Strategies and Its Advantages. The role of physical and cognitive engagement in enhancing reading comprehension has been gaining attention. Yuliana, Wati, and Amir (2024) found that active learning interventions, such as physical activity, had positive effects on children's reading ability. Likewise, Greenleaf et al. (2023) emphasized that reading apprenticeship strategies help students build disciplinary literacy, improving overall comprehension.

In the global context, technological integration has emerged as an essential tool to support fluency. Chang and Gu (2018) revealed that digital fluency apps increased reading speed and accuracy in ESL learners in China. Similarly, McLean et al. (2020) found that vocabulary breadth significantly predicted reading fluency and comprehension. Kim et al. (2021) further asserted that text reading fluency acts as both a predictor and outcome of successful reading performance, especially in digital assessment environments. In the Philippines, targeted interventions in Bangsamoro communities further demonstrated the value of phonemic awareness in bridging literacy gaps. Utto, Polo, and Ambayon (2024) evaluated the Reading Across Levels (READ AL) program and found improved phonemic awareness and vocabulary development in Lanao del Sur learners. Also, Romupal and Rubio (2021) addressed phonological difficulties through the audiolingual method and Total Physical Response among children in General Santos. Likewise, Diano and Vero (2023) developed the I-Love-Rary approach, showing gains in phonetic decoding among Grade 6 learners in North Cotabato.

Bernabe (2024) emphasized that the Marungko Approach could significantly improve the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils. Moreover, she recommended that teachers should use the Marungko Approach in teaching reading and should conduct LAC Session to parents to capacitate them use the Marungko Approach in teaching their children reading. Methods such as the Marungko Approach, which focuses on phonemic awareness and sound recognition, are particularly relevant for young learners in multilingual and diverse educational settings like the Philippines (Bautista & Bernardo, 2020).

In addition, vocabulary instruction plays a pivotal role in word recognition efficiency. Jones, LaRusso, and Kim (2019) found that students exposed to vocabulary rich interventions developed improved decoding and word analysis strategies. Dijkstra et al. (2019) introduced a computational model that maps word recognition across bilingual learners, emphasizing how cross-linguistic transfer supports

recognition. Meanwhile, Pressley, Allington, and Pressley (2023) highlighted that extensive reading experience and exposure contribute significantly to word familiarity and recognition speed.

Furthermore, mobile learning tools and visual-based literacy innovations are emerging as viable strategies to support phoneme awareness. Casingal and De Vera (2024) reported that mobile sound blending and rhyming recognition applications were effective in kindergarten to intermediate levels. Similarly, Martinez and Caabay (2024) emphasized that pop-art-based reading programs increased phonological sensitivity among Grade 2 learners. In addition, the study by Alera, Paraon, and Vergara (2022) showed that creative phonics materials in remote schools supported oral reading development.

Moreover, word recognition development is influenced by students' reading modality and attitude toward digital versus print reading. Ricohermoso, Alieto, and Abequibel (2020) investigated preservice teachers' reading preferences and found that print reading enhanced lexical processing more effectively than digital formats. In a study on Filipino ESL learners in Central Luzon, Collates and Torres (2020) observed that peer discussion enhanced students' retrieval and recognition of academic vocabulary. Similarly, Leaño and Piragasam (2019) emphasized the relevance of cultural and contextual factors in shaping vocabulary recognition among indigenous learners.

Also, technological literacy has influenced reading fluency approaches in Philippine classrooms. Deluao et al. (2022) found that multimedia reading tools enhanced intermediate students' oral reading fluency and confidence. Daria et al. (2021) explored mobile-assisted reading interventions in Cebu and reported significant improvements in rate and accuracy. Bautista and Onrubia (2020) asserted that integrating technology-supported instruction helped address fluency gaps in large classes.

Innovations in small-group reading and vocabulary-centered strategies have shown measurable success in intermediate classrooms. Sioco and De Vera (2018) demonstrated how grammatical competence programs improved learners' ability to correctly identify and use function words. Meanwhile, Dulay, Cheung, and McBride (2018) noted that early exposure to structured literacy instruction resulted in higher decoding skills among learners from low-income families. Tan and Polong (2020) provided empirical evidence that daily reading exercises tailored to high-frequency words significantly improved word recognition scores. Moreover, Bernabe (2024) emphasized that the Marungko Approach could significantly improve the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils. Furthermore, she recommended that teachers use the Marungko Approach in teaching reading and conduct LAC sessions to parents to capacitate them to use the Marungko Approach in teaching their children reading.

Overall, the findings suggest that reading interventions play a crucial role in addressing reading literacy problems by providing targeted strategies that support struggling readers in developing essential skills like phonemic awareness, decoding, and comprehension. These interventions help bridge learning gaps, promote confidence, and foster a strong foundation for lifelong literacy.

The Marungko Approach in Improving Reading Literacy. The Marungko Approach has been noted for its structured phonemic strategy, aiding early readers in transitioning to fluent literacy. Bañez and Urayan (2019) found that learners exposed to the Marungko Approach demonstrated significant improvement in decoding and identifying sight words compared to those taught using traditional methods. Similarly, Digo (2025) highlighted that the structured phonics instruction embedded in the Marungko Approach enhanced learners' ability to recognize and read high-frequency words accurately and fluently. Abejuela, Akut, and Balane (2023) emphasized differentiated approaches for older learners to bridge fluency and comprehension gaps. Primary learners often require more than phoneme-based reading strategies.

Furthermore, the Marungko Approach demonstrated potential in improving reading comprehension and fluency in addition to its effects on word recognition and phonemic awareness (Repaso & Macalisang, 2024). Students' oral reading fluency was improved by promoting automaticity in word recognition, which allowed them to read more rapidly and expressively. Therefore, learners could allocate additional attention to comprehending and interpreting the text as decoding demands decreased, leading to greater reading comprehension scores (Santos & De Vera, 2020).

Likewise, Marungko's letter-sound orientation is foundational. Casilac and Gonzales (2023) indicated that learners still struggle with comprehension when decoding is overemphasized. Batain and Molina (2023) reported similar challenges in multigrade schools where reading approaches failed to address comprehension disparities. Likewise, Bañez and Urayan (2019) stressed the importance of contextual reading materials alongside the Marungko method to sustain literacy gains at higher grade levels.

While the Marungko Approach excels at early decoding instruction, it often lacks adaptability for intermediate learners needing higher-order reading skills. Santos and De Vera (2020) further affirmed this by showing that Marungko alone cannot address inferential reading gaps. Similarly, Bustos-Orosa and Ferrer (2020) argued that the absence of vocabulary integration hampers learners' transition to text analysis.

Primary learners require flexible reading strategies, yet the rigid structure of Marungko sometimes restricts adaptive learning. Repaso and Macalisang (2024) revealed that contextualized Marungko materials improved outcomes only when aligned with learners' backgrounds. They further emphasized that the step-by-step structure of the Marungko Approach, from sound recognition to blending and decoding, supports the development of essential phonemic skills needed for early reading success. Aguirre, Buama, and Guache (2024) also found that reading proficiency stalled when instruction lacked real-life connections. Likewise, Saquing (2025) emphasized that Marungko's traditional sequencing must evolve to meet dynamic literacy challenges in modern classrooms.

The Marungko Approach emphasizes phonological awareness, yet many educators face challenges in sustaining learner motivation. Perol (2023) noted that lack of contextual diversity in materials leads to disengagement among intermediate students. Meanwhile, Caño, Hernandez, and Vasquez (2022) advocated for visual scaffolding to enhance the approach's effectiveness. Napier (2024) further stressed the importance of linguistic sensitivity, especially in culturally diverse classrooms where literal decoding may hinder comprehension development.

In terms of reading comprehension, a study by Villanueva (2022) verified that students were able to read with comprehension and use meaning-making techniques more successfully because of the Marungko Approach's organized phonics instruction progression.

Despite its early literacy benefits, the Marungko Approach often underperforms when not supplemented with comprehension-enhancing tasks. Tomas, Villaros, and Galman (2021) found that learners could decode texts yet struggled with inferential reasoning. Mara (2024) reinforced this by showing limited vocabulary growth among learners exclusively trained in Marungko. Rebucias and Mangaron (2024) also highlighted a need for integrative models that combine phonics with critical reading practices.

Research reveals that while the Marungko Approach builds decoding fluency, it may fully support text-level comprehension among primary readers. Further, the Marungko Approach's organized phonics-based methodology helped struggling readers acquire automatic word identification abilities, which are crucial for fluent reading (Abella, 2022). Asañero, Osias, and Comon (2024) further found that the method needed augmentation with multi-sensory tools. Meanwhile, Abejuela et al. (2023) concluded that the repetitive

and progressive structure of the approach helped learners improve their oral reading fluency by reinforcing decoding patterns and increasing reading confidence. Educators increasingly highlight the importance of integrating Marungko with digital tools to adapt to 21st-century learning. Orosa and Ferrer (2023) found that lack of multimedia support limited the method's reach in tech-savvy environments. Macalisang and Repaso (2024) suggested hybrid models for more inclusive literacy instruction. Likewise, Gonzales (2023) argued that tech-supported phonics tools can optimize learner engagement and improve retention.

Moreover, Repaso & Macalisang (2024) investigated the effectiveness of a contextualized Marungko approach-based supplementary reading material in improving the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils. They found out that a significant improvement in the early reading skills of Grade 1 pupils after using the supplementary reading material. This indicated that the reading material effectively enhanced the Grade 1 pupils' reading performance. Likewise, integrating the Marungko Approach could help lessen the number of learners who belong to the frustration level, and improve the percentage of learners who will belong to the independent and instructional level or category of learners (Dagandan, 2024).

Emerging research supports that Marungko should be embedded in broader, scaffolded literacy programs. Bernabe (2024) revealed a significant improvement in reading performance, particularly among non-reader pupils, indicating that the Marungko Approach effectively fosters reading fluency and comprehension. The results suggest that this instructional strategy can be broadly applied in early literacy education, providing a strong foundation for developing reading skills. In a similar way, Tamba & Garces (2024). Findings of the study revealed that most grade 2 non-readers had very low scores during the pre-test and obtained high scores during the post-test after utilizing the Marungko approach. The study results showed that using the Marungko approach in teaching reading was effective for grade 2 non-reader pupils. Meanwhile, Abejuela et al. (2023) stressed a multi-layered reading plan that adapts to learners' varied reading levels and cultural backgrounds for better literacy development.

The Role of Support for Intervention Implementation. Teachers are often expected to implement interventions without much preparation or support. Researchers have found that many interventions fail because teacher beliefs, practices, and values were not considered when initiating interventions. Supporting teachers is imperative when implementing new programs and sustaining those already in place. Traditional in-service professional development providing teachers' support with strategies such as coaching can unequivocally affect intervention efforts. The study will analyze findings from interventions implemented by other teachers that were not highly supported during the implementation process (Hicks, 2018).

Mcmaster et al (2020) stressed out that many educators are unprepared to meet the needs of students with the most intensive reading intervention needs. Teachers provided with professional development to support educators' implementation of intensive reading interventions showed a positive outcome. Further, results of this study indicated the need for researchers to report more detailed descriptions of PD activities, as well as the need for continued research on how best to support teachers' implementation of intensive reading interventions.

To address how important teacher support is when implementing interventions, Jones (2021) evaluated the efficacy of one school's reading intervention program and its impact on struggling readers' reading performance. Participants of the study included administrators and instructional staff in grades third through fifth who directly impacted student learning in reading through reading instruction. Results found out that teachers require quality planning time to prepare effective reading intervention lessons that include strategies attained from strategically designed professional development structured to increase students'

reading ability. Moreover, teachers should be provided additional time to plan reading lessons that augment struggling readers' achievement. It is from this end that teacher support in intervention implementation is vital and significant for the success of the intervention.

Additionally, Aldrich (2019) stated that educators often struggle to fully implement interventions consistently. As a result, students' behavior does not improve. Simply put, students can't benefit from interventions, even those that are evidence-based, if they don't receive them. When students' behavior doesn't improve, students are often referred to more intensive intervention, expensive special education services, or more restrictive placements. This outcome could be avoided for many students if educators are provided support to implement less-intensive interventions fully and consistently over time. The study results also revealed that the more coaching support teachers received throughout the intervention, the better their implementation skills were.

Overall, reading interventions really help learners develop their reading abilities. The intervention will surely address a variety of reading-related issues, such as vocabulary, decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Through the use of individualized, evidence-based solutions and early intervention for reading challenges, educators can enable students to become competent readers, leading to both academic success and a lifetime love of learning.

Synthesis

The reviewed literature consistently underscores that while the Marungko Approach offers strong foundational support in phonics and decoding, its effectiveness among primary learners is often limited without supplementary instructional strategies. As learners advance, mere phoneme recognition does not suffice; higher-order comprehension, vocabulary development, and contextual learning become essential. Studies highlight the need to scaffold Marungko with culturally relevant content, digital tools, and differentiated instruction to sustain learner engagement and bridge comprehension gaps. Ultimately, enhancing reading literacy in intermediate learners requires integrating Marungko within a broader, more adaptive and learner-centered framework.

Thus, the Marungko Approach is important because it introduces reading in the learners' first language using familiar sounds and words, making it easier for beginning readers to grasp basic literacy skills. Its systematic and phonics-based method strengthens early reading foundations, especially among young Filipino learners.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Simple View of Reading Theory proposed by Gough and Tunmer (1986), which posits that reading comprehension is the product of two essential components: decoding (word recognition) and linguistic comprehension. According to the theory, both elements are necessary for successful reading—if either is weak, reading comprehension will be compromised. Decoding refers to the ability to translate written words into their spoken equivalents, while linguistic comprehension involves understanding the meaning of spoken language. The theory suggests that effective reading instruction must address both domains to foster overall reading proficiency.

The relevance of this theory to the current study lies in its alignment with the core objectives of the Marungko Approach, which emphasizes systematic phonics instruction, syllable blending, and oral reading to strengthen decoding skills. In a multigrade setting such as Tumalog Elementary School, where learners demonstrate varied reading levels, the Marungko Approach serves as a targeted strategy to build foundational decoding skills, especially for struggling readers. As learners develop automaticity in word

recognition through structured phonemic instruction, their ability to understand and engage with texts is expected to improve.

The Simple View of Reading guided this study by framing the relationship between the intervention and the four key indicators of reading literacy: word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. As decoding skills improve through the Marungko-based intervention, learners are expected to devote more cognitive resources to understanding texts, thus enhancing comprehension. This theoretical lens supports the hypothesis that when appropriately contextualized, a phonics-based intervention can bridge decoding deficits and improve overall reading performance.

In grounding the study in the Simple View of Reading, the researcher evaluated how the Marungko Approach influences both the mechanical (decoding) and interpretative (comprehension) aspects of reading, thereby offering a comprehensive framework for assessing reading literacy development among primary learners in a multigrade classroom.

The study was anchored on the idea that using the Marungko Approach can significantly improve reading. It is an innovative strategy designed to develop early reading skills among Filipino learners, particularly in the mother tongue. Rooted in phonemic awareness and syllabic reading patterns, the approach systematically introduces letter sounds based on their frequency and utility in Filipino words. This method emphasizes the use of localized and context-relevant materials, enhancing learners' familiarity and ease in decoding texts (Bautista & Bernardo, 2020). The Marungko Approach aligns with the Department of Education's thrust to use mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) to promote more effective learning, especially during the critical years of Grades 1 to 3 (DepEd Order No. 74, s. 2009).

Reading literacy involves the ability to decode, comprehend, and interact with texts, which are essential skills for learners to thrive in school and beyond. In addition, learners with strong reading abilities are more likely to perform better across other subjects and exhibit higher levels of engagement in school. Improving reading literacy, especially in the primary years, is a critical goal for educators, particularly in contexts where early reading proficiency remains a challenge (OECD, 2023).

Moreover, it is directly aligned with the study as it outlines the theoretical and instructional foundations that support using the Marungko Approach in enhancing reading skills. It integrates principles from phonics-based instruction, which collectively explain how structured, context-based reading strategies can effectively improve decoding and comprehension abilities among young learners.

Overall, the concepts and theories discussed have greatly influenced this study and serve as the basis for developing the framework of the study.

Statement of the Problem

This quasi-experimental study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving the reading literacy of primary learners. Specifically, it seeks to examine whether structured Marungko-based reading interventions significantly enhance their ability to recognize words, apply phonemic awareness, read fluently, and comprehend texts effectively.

1. What is the reading literacy level of the primary learners before and after the implementation of Marungko Approach in terms of:
 - 1.1 Word recognition;
 - 1.2 Phonemic awareness;
 - 1.3 Reading fluency; and
 - 1.4 Reading comprehension?

2. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the learners in the implementation of Marungko Approach in terms of:
 - 2.1 Word recognition;
 - 2.2 Phonemic awareness;
 - 2.3 Reading fluency; and
 - 2.4 Reading comprehension?
3. Is there a significant improvement in the posttest scores of the learners after the implementation of Marungko Approach in terms of:
 - 3.1 Word recognition;
 - 3.2 Phonemic awareness;
 - 3.3 Reading fluency; and
 - 3.4 Reading comprehension?
4. What action plan could be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Null Hypotheses

To statistically determine the answers to the research questions, the following null hypotheses were proposed at 0-05 level of significance.

H₀₁. There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the learners before and after the implementation of Marungko Approach.

H₀₂. There is no significant improvement on the posttest scores of the learners before and after the implementation of Marungko Approach.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in enhancing reading literacy among primary learners in a multigrade classroom at Tumalog Elementary School, Sitio Tumalog Zillovia, Talacogon, Agusan del Sur, during the School Year 2025-2026. The research is focused on word recognition, phonemic awareness, fluency, and reading comprehension among Grade 1, 2, and 3 learners. A one-group pre-test and post-test design was used to measure students' reading progress before and after a six-week Marungko-based intervention. The study involved 20 participants: 5 from Grade 1-Upo, 10 from Grade 2-Honest, and 5 from Grade 3-Mango, who will undergo structured phonics instruction and guided reading activities.

This study was limited to the selected students of the multigrade classroom at Tumalog Elementary School, and findings may not be generalizable to other schools, grade levels, or educational settings. The research is focused solely on reading literacy, excluding other aspects of language learning such as writing skills, oral communication, and critical reading analysis. Additionally, external factors influencing reading performance, such as home environment, parental support, and socioeconomic conditions, were not covered.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in enhancing reading literacy among primary learners in a multigrade classroom setting. This study would be beneficial to the following stakeholders:

Learners. The primary beneficiaries of this study would be the Grade 1, 2, and 3 learners in Tumalog Elementary School who would undergo the Marungko-based reading intervention. By improving their word recognition, phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension, this study would help increase their confidence in reading and contribute to better academic performance across all subjects. The results would

highlight the effectiveness of phonics-based instruction in addressing reading difficulties among primary learners in a multigrade classroom setting.

Teachers. This study would provide teachers with empirical data on the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach, helping them enhance their reading instruction techniques. The results would assist teachers in implementing more structured and systematic phonics-based interventions tailored to the needs of struggling readers. Additionally, findings would offer insights into the challenges and advantages of using the approach in a multigrade classroom, allowing educators to refine their literacy instruction strategies.

School Administrators. The study would support school administrators in designing and implementing effective literacy programs within the school. Findings would provide data-driven recommendations for teacher training, resource allocation, and curriculum development to improve reading literacy among multigrade learners.

This study would also help administrators develop policies that emphasize systematic phonics instruction to address literacy challenges in rural and multigrade learning environments.

DepEd Officials. This research would provide DepEd policymakers with insights into the reading difficulties faced by primary learners in multigrade classrooms. Findings would contribute to the development of evidence-based reading intervention programs that support struggling readers in rural schools. The study would also serve as a reference for future curriculum reforms and teacher professional development initiatives aimed at improving reading literacy nationwide.

Future Researchers. This study would serve as a foundation for future research on phonics-based reading interventions, particularly the Marungko Approach in multigrade classrooms. Future researchers would be able to use the findings to explore long-term impacts, comparative studies with other reading methodologies, and additional literacy interventions tailored for primary learners. The study would contribute to the growing body of knowledge on effective reading instruction strategies in diverse educational settings.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a one-group quasi-experimental research design to determine the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving reading literacy among primary learners in a multigrade classroom at Tumalog Elementary School, Sitio Tumalog Zillovia, Talacogon, Agusan del Sur. A one-group pretest-posttest design was used, where the same set of students took a pretest before the intervention and a posttest after the intervention to measure their word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and comprehension. Quasi-experimental research is appropriate for this study as it evaluates an intervention's impact without random assignment, making it suitable for educational settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study involved 20 primary learners from the multigrade classroom, five from Grade 1-Upo, 10 from Grade 2-Honest, and five from Grade 3-Mango. Participants underwent a six-week Marungko-based reading intervention, focusing on phonics instruction, decoding exercises, and guided reading activities. The pretest and posttest assessments evaluated the students' reading proficiency, and the results were statistically analyzed to determine any significant improvements after the intervention. The study did not include a control group, as all participants received the intervention due to the multigrade classroom setup and the need to address reading difficulties among all learners.

Research Locale

This study was conducted at Tumalog Elementary School, located in Sitio Tumalog, Zillovia, Talacogon, Agusan del Sur, under the Division of Agusan del Sur. The school serves a linguistically and culturally diverse population, including Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities such as the Banwaon, Manubo, and Talaandig tribes, who reside in remote rainforest mountain areas. With a multigrade classroom setup and persistent reading literacy challenges among early grade learners—especially in phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension—the school was chosen as an ideal site to assess the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in rural education. Situated in an off-grid area steeped in cultural heritage and historical significance, Tumalog Elementary School reflects marginalized learners' educational struggles. It offers a valuable lens for understanding how IP parents engage in their children's literacy development amidst geographic and resource limitations.

Subjects of the Study

The subjects of this study were Grades 1, 2, and 3 learners from the multigrade classroom of Tumalog Elementary School, Sitio Tumalog Zillovia, Talacogon, Agusan del Sur, during S.Y. 2025-2026. The selection was focused on students who exhibit difficulties in reading literacy, as identified through an initial screening assessment. Participants were selected based on their word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and comprehension levels, which were assessed before the intervention.

A total of 20 students from the multigrade class were included in the study: 5 from Grade 1-Upo, 10 from Grade 2-Honest, and 5 from Grade 3-Mango. These students underwent the Marungko-based reading intervention for six weeks, focusing on phonics instruction, decoding exercises, and guided reading activities. The study utilized a one-group pretest-posttest design, meaning all participants received the intervention, and their reading literacy improvements were measured through pretest and posttest scores.

Table 1
The Participants of the Study

| Grade Level | Number of Students | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| • Grade 1 – Upo | 5 | 25 |
| • Grade 2 – Honest | 10 | 50 |
| • Grade 3 – Mango | 5 | 25 |
| • Total | 20 | 100 |

Table 1 presents the total number of students participating in the study along with their corresponding percentages. These students undergone the Marungko Approach intervention to assess its effectiveness in improving reading literacy in a multigrade classroom setting.

Research Instrument

This study utilized the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), a standardized assessment tool developed by the Department of Education (DepEd) to evaluate students' reading proficiency across various grade levels. As a widely implemented instrument in public schools in the Philippines, the CRLA would be appropriate for this research due to its alignment with national reading standards. In this study, the CRLA will serve as both the pretest and posttest to measure the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving reading literacy among Grade 1, 2, and 3 learners in a multigrade classroom at Tumalog Elementary School.

The CRLA is a reading assessment that covers four key indicators of reading literacy: word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. These components are critical in evaluating the holistic development of reading skills among primary learners. The comprehension component of the CRLA includes grade-level reading passages followed by questions designed to assess three levels of understanding: literal, inferential, and evaluative. Literal comprehension will measure students' ability to recall directly stated information; inferential comprehension will evaluate their ability to interpret implicit meanings; and evaluative comprehension will assess their capacity to analyze and judge textual content.

Given the study's multigrade setup, the CRLA administration was contextualized to accommodate varying proficiency levels among Grades 1, 2, and 3 learners. Oral reading and comprehension prompts were adapted to ensure fair and inclusive assessment procedures. The pretest was conducted before the intervention to establish the students' baseline reading literacy levels. After a six-week intervention using the Marungko Approach, the same CRLA tool was administered as the posttest to determine improvements in reading proficiency.

The intervention phase involved structured Marungko-based reading sessions developed and facilitated by the researcher. These sessions included systematic phonics instruction such as letter-sound association drills, consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) word formation, sight word reading, sentence fluency exercises, and guided paragraph comprehension. Each weekly session was designed to support the development of word recognition, phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension among learners, progressively building their literacy skills over six weeks.

The data from the CRLA pretest and posttest were quantitatively analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Descriptive statistics, including the mean were computed to summarize learners' performance before and after the intervention. A paired sample t-test was used to determine whether significant differences exist between the pretest and posttest scores. The use of a standardized, validated instrument such as the CRLA ensures the objectivity, reliability, and validity of the assessment process in evaluating reading gains among multigrade learners.

Validation of Research Instruments

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments used in this study, all assessment tools, including the Pretest, Posttest, and Marungko Approach Implementation Guide, underwent expert validation before administration. These instruments were evaluated by three experts specializing in literacy education, including reading specialists, elementary education professors, and curriculum developers. Their feedback and recommendations were incorporated to refine the instruments, ensuring content validity, clarity, and alignment with the study's objectives.

A pilot testing procedure was conducted before the formal administration of the instruments. This pilot test involved a small group of intermediate students who were not part of the study but shared similar reading literacy challenges. The pilot test aimed to assess the clarity of test instructions, appropriateness of reading exercises, and overall readability of passages. Feedback from the pilot test would help revise and improve the assessment tools before their official implementation.

The pretest was administered to determine the students' initial reading literacy levels, focusing on word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and comprehension. Following the six-week Marungko-based reading intervention, the posttest was administered using the same assessment measures to determine improvements in reading proficiency.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the test items to ensure the reliability of the assessment tools. This statistical method would determine whether the reading literacy test produces consistent and reliable results. The validation and reliability testing processes ensure that the instruments used in this study effectively measure the impact of the Marungko Approach on students' reading literacy performance.

Research Procedure

The study followed a structured process to ensure accuracy, reliability, and adherence to ethical research standards. Since it employs a quasi-experimental design, specific steps were taken to properly implement the Marungko Approach intervention and assess its impact on reading literacy among Grade 1, 2, and 3 learners at Tumulog Elementary School, Sitio Tumulog Zillovia, Talacogon, Agusan del Sur.

Before data collection, ethical clearance and approval were sought from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of Agusan del Sur and the school principal to obtain formal permission. Additionally, the researcher coordinated with teachers and parents to explain the purpose of the study, ensuring transparency and securing informed consent from the participants and their guardians. All ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection were strictly followed.

A preliminary screening assessment was administered to identify eligible participants and determine reading difficulties among students. Learners with challenges in word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and comprehension were selected to participate in the study. A total of 20 students from the multigrade class were included, consisting of 5 from Grade 1-Upo, 10 from Grade 2-Honest, and 5 from Grade 3-Mango.

Before implementing the intervention, a pretest was conducted to establish students' baseline reading literacy levels. This assessment evaluated their ability to recognize words, decode phonetic patterns, read fluently, and comprehend written texts. The pretest results served as a benchmark for measuring progress after the intervention.

Participants underwent a six-week Marungko Approach intervention, where structured phonics instruction and guided reading exercises were implemented. The intervention was focused on developing letter-sound associations, improving decoding skills, and enhancing reading fluency. Teachers facilitated sessions using systematic phonemic drills, storytelling techniques, and comprehension exercises to strengthen literacy skills in a multigrade classroom setting.

Following the intervention period, a posttest was administered to measure improvements in reading proficiency. The posttest used the same literacy assessment tool as the pretest to compare students' progress in word recognition, phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension. The difference between the pretest and posttest scores determined the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving reading literacy.

To ensure the reliability of results, the data collected from the pretest and posttest were statistically analyzed. The findings would provide insights into whether the Marungko Approach intervention significantly enhanced reading literacy among multigrade learners. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were strictly observed to uphold academic integrity and participant confidentiality.

Scoring and Quantification of Data

A descriptive scale was used to interpret the results to determine the learners' reading literacy level. The following range of mean scores and descriptive equivalents was used to categorize learners' performance in each of the four indicators of reading literacy:

Table 2
Interpretation on the Score of the Participants

| Scores Percentage Ranges | Verbal Remarks |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 96% - 100% | Mastered |
| 86% - 95% | Closely Approximating Mastery |
| 66% - 85% | Moving Towards Mastery |
| 35% - 65% | Average Mastery |
| 16% - 34% | Low Mastery |
| 5% - 15% | Very Low Mastery |
| 0% - 4% | Absolutely No Mastery |

This interpretation scale was applied consistently to both pretest and posttest results, enabling a clear and measurable evaluation of student progress. As shown in table, students who have mean percentage ranges from 96% - 100%, 86% - 95%, and 66% - 85% interpreted that they have Mastered, Closely Approximating Mastery, and Moving Towards Mastery respectively the competencies while students who have mean percentage ranges from 16% - 34%, 5% - 15% and 0% - 4% can be interpreted that they have Low Mastery, Very Low Mastery and Absolutely No Mastery respectively before and after the reading intervention Marungko Approach.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data gathered from the pretest and posttest results were compiled, organized, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to determine the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving reading literacy among Grade 1, 2, and 3 learners at Tumalog Elementary School, Sitio Tumalog Zillovia, Talacogon, Agusan del Sur. The following statistical treatments were applied:

Mean. The mean was calculated to determine students' average reading literacy scores before and after the intervention. This would provide an overview of their word recognition, phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension levels. The mean scores served as a basis for measuring students' overall progress in the pretest and posttest assessments.

Percentage. This was used to get the mean rating of the students' performance before and after the Marungko Approach intervention.

Paired Sample t-Test. A paired sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores from the pretest and posttest. This statistical test determined whether there is a significant improvement in students' reading literacy after the intervention. If the test results show a statistically significant difference, the Marungko Approach notably impacted the students' reading proficiency.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical research standards to ensure the protection, privacy, and well-being of all participants. Since the subjects are Grade 1, 2, and 3 learners, special precautions were taken to uphold ethical compliance, including obtaining necessary permissions, ensuring confidentiality, and maintaining voluntary participation. The research conducted with full transparency and accountability, following the ethical guidelines set by the Department of Education (DepEd) and Republic Act No. 10173 - Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Approval and Permissions. Before conducting the study, formal approval was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of Agusan del Sur and the school principal of Tumalog Elementary School.

The researcher also coordinated with teachers and school officials to ensure that all research activities align with the school's academic policies and students' well-being.

Informed Consent and Assent. Since the participants are minors, informed consent was secured from their parents or legal guardians, detailing the study's purpose, procedures, benefits, and voluntary nature. Additionally, assent was sought from the students to confirm their understanding and willingness to participate. Participants were informed that they could withdraw without any negative consequences.

Privacy and Confidentiality. To protect the privacy and identities of participants, all collected data were anonymized using coded identifiers instead of real names. The data was stored securely, with restricted access limited to the researcher. No identifying information was disclosed in reports or publications. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, all collected data were permanently deleted after the completion of the study to ensure confidentiality.

Social Value and Benefits. This study holds significant social value as it aimed to address reading literacy challenges among multigrade learners in rural educational settings. The expected benefits include improved word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and comprehension, which can contribute to better academic performance in other subjects. Furthermore, the study may serve as a basis for future literacy interventions in similar learning environments.

Risks and Ethical Responsibility. There were no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study, as it only involves reading literacy assessments and phonics-based interventions. Participants received encouragement and individualized guidance throughout the intervention process to ensure a positive and supportive learning environment. Any modifications in the research process were communicated to participants, parents, and school officials to maintain complete transparency and ethical responsibility.

Fair Selection of Participants. The selection process ensured fairness and inclusivity, with equal opportunities for all eligible students experiencing reading difficulties. Participants were chosen based on preliminary literacy assessments, without bias related to gender, socio-economic status, or ethnicity. Since the study follows a one-group pretest-posttest design, all selected students received equal intervention and instructional time to maximize their reading development.

Transparency and Ethical Compliance. The study was conducted with full ethical compliance, ensuring fair treatment and respect for all participants. Research findings were shared with school administrators and teachers to help improve existing literacy programs. All research activities were aligned with DepEd ethical guidelines and educational research standards, upholding integrity, fairness, and academic responsibility.

RESULTS

Reading Literacy Level of the Primary Learners Before and After the Implementation of Marungko Approach

This section presents the results to the first statement of the problem that examines the reading literacy level of the learners before and after the implementation of the Marungko Approach. Displayed in the following tables are the results of each category in reading literacy.

Learners' Performance in Word Recognition. The table below presents the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the learners in terms of word recognition.

Table 3
Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Scores of the Learners in terms of Word Recognition

| Constructs | Pre-test Mean Score | Remarks | Post-test Mean Score | Remarks |
|------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Grade 1 | 49.6% | Average Mastery | 92.3% | Closely Mastering |
| Grade 2 | 50.5% | Average Mastery | 93.5% | Closely Mastering |
| Grade 3 | 52.6% | Average Mastery | 94.9% | Closely Mastering |

Prior to the implementation of the Marungko Approach, the pretest mean scores of the learners indicated only average mastery level: Grade 1 learners scored 49.6%, Grade 2 learners scored 50.5%, and Grade 3 learners scored 52.6%. Following the intervention, a significant improvement in learner performance was observed in the posttest results. Grade 1 learners achieved a mean score of 92.3%, while Grade 2 learners attained 93.5%, both indicating a level of closely approximating mastery. Likewise, Grade 3 learners recorded a mean score of 94.9%, which corresponds to a remark of approximating mastery level. These results clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in enhancing the word recognition of the learners across all three grade levels.

Learners' Performance in Phonemic Awareness. Displayed below is the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the learners in terms of phonemic awareness.

Table 4
Pre-Test and Posttest Mean Scores of the Learners in terms of Phonemic Awareness

| Constructs | Pretest Mean Score | Remarks | Posttest Mean Score | Remarks |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Grade 1 | 44.0% | Average Mastery | 84.0% | Moving Towards Mastery |
| Grade 2 | 48.5% | Average Mastery | 87.0% | Closely Mastering |
| Grade 3 | 47.8% | Average Mastery | 91.3% | Closely Mastering |

Before the implementation of the intervention, the pre-intervention assessment results indicated that the learners demonstrated only an average level of mastery in phonemic awareness. Specifically, the mean scores were 44.0% for Grade 1, 48.5% for Grade 2, and 47.8% for Grade 3. These results suggest limited proficiency in foundational reading skills prior to the intervention. However, a substantial improvement was observed in the post-intervention assessment. Grade 1 learners achieved a posttest mean score of 84.0%, while Grade 2 learners attained 87.0%, falling within the closely approximating mastery category. Grade 3 learners recorded a mean score of 91.3%, corresponding to the approximating mastery level. These findings provide empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in significantly enhancing phonemic awareness among early grade learners.

Learners' Performance in Reading Fluency. Gleaned in the table below is the learners' pre-test and post-test mean scores in terms of reading fluency.

Table 5
Pre-Test and Posttest Mean Scores of the Learners in terms of Reading Fluency

| Constructs | Pretest Mean Score | Remarks | Posttest Mean Score | Remarks |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Grade 1 | 51.3% | Average Mastery | 85.2% | Moving Towards Mastery |
| Grade 2 | 43.0% | Average Mastery | 90.0% | Closely Approximating Mastery |
| Grade 3 | 48.8% | Average Mastery | 87.2% | Closely Approximating Mastery |

The findings of the pre-intervention tests prior to the application of the Marungko Approach showed that students' proficiency in reading fluency was only in the average mastery level. The mean scores were 51.3% for Grade 1, 43.0% for Grade 2, and 48.8% for Grade 3, reflecting limited competence in foundational reading skills. After the intervention, a marked improvement was evident in the post-assessment outcomes. Grade 2 learners achieved a mean score of 90.0%, and Grade 3 learners reached 87.2%, both categorized as closely approximating mastery. Meanwhile, Grade 1 learners obtained a mean score of 85.2% and is moving towards mastery level. These results provide compelling evidence of the Marungko Approach's effectiveness in enhancing the reading fluency among primary grade learners and demonstrate its potential as a valuable instructional strategy for improving early literacy achievement.

Learners' Performance in Reading Comprehension. Table 8 shows the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the learners in terms of reading comprehension.

Table 6
Pre-Test and Posttest Mean Scores of the Learners in terms of Reading Comprehension

| Constructs | Pretest Mean Score | Remarks | Posttest Mean Score | Remarks |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Grade 1 | 38.0% | Average Mastery | 90.0% | Closely Approximating Mastery |
| Grade 2 | 53.3% | Average Mastery | 91.7% | Closely Approximating Mastery |
| Grade 3 | 55.7% | Average Mastery | 91.4% | Closely Approximating Mastery |

The results of the pre-intervention assessments conducted prior to the implementation of the Marungko Approach revealed that learners demonstrated only an average level of mastery in reading comprehension. Specifically, the mean scores were 38.0% for Grade 1, 53.3% for Grade 2, and 55.7% for Grade 3, indicating limited proficiency in foundational reading skills. Following the intervention, substantial gains were observed in the post-assessment results. Grade 1 learners achieved a mean score of 90.0%, while Grade 2 learners attained 91.7%, both falling under the classification of closely approximating mastery. Similarly, Grade 3 learners recorded a mean score of 91.4%, corresponding to the level of approximating mastery. These findings offer strong empirical support for the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in significantly improving reading fluency and comprehension among primary grade learners.

T-test for Paired Samples Analysis on the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of the Learners

This section presents the results to the second statement of the problem that examines if there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean score of the learners. Shown in following tables are the results of each category in reading literacy.

Statistical Test of the Null Hypothesis on Word Recognition Pre-test and Post-test mean Scores.

Table 7 displays the t-test paired samples analysis on the pre-test and post-test mean scores the learners in terms of word recognition.

Table 7
Paired T-Test Analysis Between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores in terms of Word Recognition

| Constructs | Pretest Mean Scores | Post-test | Statistic | p-value | Remarks |
|------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Grade 1 | 49.6% | 92.3% | -13.17 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Grade 2 | 50.5% | 93.5% | -25.16 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Grade 3 | 52.6% | 94.9% | -22.37 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

To test that the pretest a mean score of the learners is statistically significantly different from their posttest mean scores, a paired t-test analysis was performed. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention scores across all grade levels, with t-values of -13.17 (Grade 1), -25.16 (Grade 2), and -22.37 (Grade 3), all yielding p-values less than .05 ($p = 0.000$). These findings indicate that the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant improvement in learners' word recognition performance following the implementation of the Marungko Approach.

Statistical Test of the Null Hypothesis on Phonemic Awareness Pre-test and Post-test mean Scores.

The paired t-test analysis between the learners' mean phonemic awareness scores on the pretest and posttest is shown in the table.

Table 8
Paired T-Test Analysis Between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores in terms of Phonemic Awareness

| Constructs | Pretest Mean Scores | Post-test | Statistic | p-value | Remarks |
|------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Grade 1 | 44.0% | 84.0% | -6.71 | 0.001 | Highly Significant |
| Grade 2 | 48.5% | 87.0% | -21.0 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Grade 3 | 47.8% | 91.3% | -31.62 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

To determine whether the difference between the learners' pretest and posttest mean scores was statistically significant, a paired sample *t*-test was conducted. The results of the paired sample *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention scores across all grade levels. Specifically, the computed *t*-values were -6.71 for Grade 1 ($p = 0.001$), -21.00 for Grade 2 ($p = 0.000$), and -31.62 for Grade 3 ($p = 0.000$), all of which are below the threshold of significance ($p < 0.05$). These findings lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirm that the implementation of the Marungko Approach resulted in a statistically significant improvement in learners' phonemic awareness.

Statistical Test of the Null Hypothesis on Reading Fluency Pre-test and Post-test mean Scores. The table below presents the results of the paired sample *t*-test analysis comparing the learners' mean reading fluency scores before and after the intervention.

Table 9

Paired T-Test Analysis Between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores in terms of Reading Fluency

| Constructs | Pretest Mean Scores | Post-test | Statistic | p-value | Remarks |
|------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Grade 1 | 51.3% | 85.2% | -8.05 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Grade 2 | 43.0% | 90.0% | -33.07 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Grade 3 | 48.8% | 87.2% | -18.83 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

To assess whether the difference in learners' mean scores between the pretest and posttest was statistically significant, a paired sample *t*-test was employed. The analysis indicated significant differences across all grade levels following the intervention. The computed *t*-values were -8.05 for Grade 1 ($p = 0.001$), -33.07 for Grade 2 ($p = 0.000$), and -18.83 for Grade 3 ($p = 0.000$), all of which fall below the accepted significance level ($p < 0.05$). These results support the rejection of the null hypothesis and provide strong evidence that the Marungko Approach significantly enhanced learners' reading fluency.

Statistical Test of the Null Hypothesis on Reading Comprehension Pre-test and Post-test mean Scores. The paired *t*-test analysis between the learners' mean reading comprehension scores on the pretest and posttest is presented in the table below.

Table 10

Paired T-Test Analysis Between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores in terms of Reading Comprehension

| Constructs | Pretest Mean Scores | Post-test | Statistic | p-value | Remarks |
|------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Grade 1 | 38.0% | 90.0% | -26.0 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Grade 2 | 53.3% | 91.7% | -15.06 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Grade 3 | 55.7% | 91.4% | -15.81 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the learners' pretest and posttest mean scores, a paired sample *t*-test was conducted. The analysis revealed significant differences across all grade levels, with computed *t*-values of -26.00 for Grade 1, -15.06 for Grade 2, and -15.81 for Grade 3, all having *p*-values of 0.000, which are below the accepted significance level ($p < 0.05$). These

results lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirm that implementing the Marungko Approach significantly improved learners' reading comprehension performance.

Significant Improvement in the Posttest Scores After the Intervention

This section presents the results to the third statement of the problem that examines if there is a significant improvement in post-test mean score of the learners in the experimental group. Shown in following tables are the results of each category in reading literacy.

Learners' Gain Scores in Word Recognition. Displayed in the table below is the gain score performance of the students in terms of word recognition.

Table 11
Gain Score Performance of the Learners in terms of Word Recognition

| Constructs | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Gain Score |
|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Grade 1 | 49.6% | 92.3% | 42.7% |
| Grade 2 | 50.5% | 93.5% | 43.0% |
| Grade 3 | 52.6% | 94.9% | 42.3% |

Table 12 illustrates a marked improvement in student performance across all grade levels following the intervention. Grade 1 learners demonstrated an increase of 42.7%, Grade 2 learners showed a gain of 43.0%, and Grade 3 learners achieved an improvement of 42.3% in their scores. This consistent upward trend implies that the Marungko Approach effectively enhanced learners' word recognition regardless of grade level.

Learners' Gain Scores in Phonemic Awareness. The table below shows the score performance of the students in terms of phonemic awareness.

Table 12
Gain Score Performance of the Learners in terms of Phonemic Awareness

| Constructs | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Gain Score |
|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Grade 1 | 44.0% | 84.0% | 40.0% |
| Grade 2 | 48.5% | 87.0% | 38.5% |
| Grade 3 | 47.8% | 91.3% | 43.5% |

Table 13 demonstrates a substantial improvement in learners' performance across all grade levels following the implementation of the intervention. Specifically, Grade 1 learners showed a 40.0% increase, Grade 2 learners improved by 38.5%, and Grade 3 learners achieved a 43.5% gain in their scores. These consistent improvements across grade levels indicate the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in strengthening learners' phonemic awareness competencies.

Learners' Gain Scores in Reading Fluency. Table 13 presents the learners' gain scores in reading fluency, reflecting their performance improvements following the intervention.

Table 13
Gain Score Performance of the Learners in terms of Reading Fluency

| Constructs | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Gain Score |
|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Grade 1 | 51.3% | 85.2% | 33.9% |

| | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Grade 2 | 43.0% | 90.0% | 47.0% |
| Grade 3 | 48.8% | 87.2% | 38.4% |

The table presents a notable enhancement in learners' performance across all grade levels subsequent to the implementation of the intervention. Grade 1 learners demonstrated a 33.9% increase in scores, while Grade 2 and Grade 3 learners exhibited gains of 47.0% and 38.4%, respectively. These consistent improvements across grade levels provide empirical support for the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in enhancing learners' reading fluency.

Learners' Gain Scores in Reading Comprehension. Gleaned in the table is the gain score performance of the learners in terms of reading comprehension.

Table 14
Gain Score Performance of the Learners in terms of Reading Comprehension.

| Constructs | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Gain Score |
|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Grade 1 | 38.0% | 90.0% | 52.0% |
| Grade 2 | 53.3% | 91.7% | 38.4% |
| Grade 3 | 55.7% | 91.4% | 35.7% |

The table presents a significant improvement in learners' performance across all grade levels following the implementation of the intervention. Grade 1 learners recorded a 52.0% increase in scores, while Grade 2 and Grade 3 learners achieved gains of 38.4% and 35.7%, respectively. These consistent positive outcomes provide strong empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving reading comprehension among primary grade learners.

Action Plan for the Integration of the Marungko Approach in Primary Grades

This section presents the developed action plan based on the fifth statement of the problem.

Drawing from the findings presented, a comprehensive action plan was designed to facilitate the effective integration of the Marungko Approach into the teaching and learning process. This action plan serves as a pedagogical framework aimed at improving early-grade reading literacy, with a specific focus on word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and comprehension. Central to the plan are evidence-based strategies, including targeted teacher training, the development of culturally relevant and contextualized instructional materials, structured classroom implementation, and the continuous assessment of learner progress. These components are grounded in literacy development theory and aligned with best practices in foundational reading instruction.

Furthermore, the plan emphasizes the significance of home-school partnerships in reinforcing reading outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are integrated throughout the process to track implementation fidelity and learner outcomes, while post-intervention analysis is conducted to support ongoing improvement. Overall, the plan offers a data-informed, sustainable framework for improving early literacy outcomes and closing foundational reading gaps among primary learners.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussions

Competency Level of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Learners in Word Recognition. The results of the study revealed a significant improvement in learners' word recognition skills, as evidenced by the substantial increase in post-test scores across all grade levels following the implementation of the Marungko Approach. This reading intervention effectively addressed the learners' difficulties in decoding and recognizing words, leading to notable gains from their pre-test performance. The observed improvements affirm that the Marungko Approach is a highly effective intervention for enhancing early reading competencies. These findings imply that systematic and explicit instruction in word recognition, as provided by the Marungko Approach, can significantly strengthen foundational literacy skills among primary-grade learners.

Ehri (2020) emphasized that students must develop automaticity in word recognition to efficiently allocate cognitive resources to comprehension. Wang, Sabatini, and O'Reilly (2019) found that learners with delayed word recognition tend to perform poorly on higher-order reading tasks. Likewise, Duke and Cartwright (2021) affirmed that fluency in decoding and recognition directly influences reading proficiency.

Further, the findings are supported by the study of Bañez and Urayan (2019) who found that learners exposed to the Marungko Approach demonstrated significant improvement in decoding and identifying sight words compared to those taught using traditional methods. Similarly, the research conducted by Digo (2025) highlighted that the structured phonics instruction embedded in the Marungko Approach enhanced learners' ability to recognize and read high-frequency words accurately and fluently.

Competency Level of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Learners in Phonemic Awareness. The findings of the study revealed a significant increase in the post-test scores of learners in phonemic awareness following the implementation of the Marungko Approach, indicating its effectiveness as an instructional intervention. Learners across all grade levels demonstrated notable gains from their pre-test scores, reflecting improved abilities in identifying, segmenting, and manipulating individual sounds in words. This consistent upward trend suggests that the systematic and explicit phonics instruction provided by the Marungko Approach effectively enhances phonemic awareness, a foundational skill in early reading.

The claims are supported by the study of Repaso and Macalisang (2024), who emphasized that the step-by-step structure of the Marungko Approach, starting from sound recognition to blending and decoding, supports the development of essential phonemic skills needed for early reading success. On the other hand, learners who do not acquire phonemic awareness in their early years are more likely to lag behind in their reading proficiency throughout their schooling. This problem affects students from underprivileged homes, where early literacy experiences may be limited (Cartoneros and Galvez, 2022).

Competency Level of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Learners in Reading Fluency. The Marungko Approach proved to be an effective targeted intervention, as evidenced by the study's findings, which showed a significant improvement in learners' reading fluency scores from the pre-test to the post-test. Learners exhibited enhanced ability to read with greater accuracy, indicating stronger automaticity and decoding skills. This progress across all grade levels aligns with the structured phonics instruction in the Marungko Approach, which emphasizes consistent practice in letter-sound relationships and word recognition. The findings imply that integrating the Marungko Approach into early-grade reading instruction can significantly strengthen learners' reading fluency.

Reading fluency has been widely acknowledged as a foundational skill influencing overall literacy development among intermediate learners worldwide. Jones, LaRusso, and Kim (2019) found that students exposed to vocabulary-rich interventions developed improved decoding and word analysis strategies. Further, the Marungko Approach's organized phonics-based methodology helped struggling readers acquire automatic word identification abilities, which are crucial for fluent reading (Abella, 2022). On the contrary, without strong foundational skills in recognizing letter-sound relationships, learners struggle to read words quickly and accurately, which in turn hampers fluency development (Tinapay et al., 2022).

Competency Level of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Learners in Reading Comprehension.

The results of the study revealed a significant improvement in the reading comprehension scores of learners from pre-test to post-test following the implementation of the Marungko Approach. Across all grade levels, learners showed substantial gains, indicating enhanced ability to understand, interpret, and respond to text. This improvement can be attributed to the systematic and phonics-based instruction provided by the Marungko Approach. The findings imply that the Marungko Approach is effective in developing basic reading skills and promoting higher-order reading abilities, making it a valuable intervention for improving reading comprehension among primary grade learners.

The claims are supported by the study of Bernabe (2024), who revealed a significant improvement in reading performance, particularly among non-reader pupils, indicating that the Marungko Approach effectively fosters reading fluency and comprehension. The results suggest that this instructional strategy can be broadly applied in early literacy education, providing a strong foundation for developing reading skills. In a similar way, Tamba & Garces (2024). Findings of the study revealed that most grade 2 non-readers had very low scores during the pre-test and obtained high scores during the post-test after utilizing the Marungko approach. The study results showed that using the Marungko approach in teaching reading was effective for grade 2 non-reader pupils.

The Impact of Marungko Approach on the Reading Literacy of the Learners. The Marungko Approach significantly impacted primary school students' reading literacy, especially in word identification, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. The Marungko Approach is a structured, phonics-based teaching method that helps students recognize words more rapidly and accurately by introducing letter-sound associations and moving toward blending and decoding. This was demonstrated by the significant increase in learners' post-test scores in phonemic awareness and word identification, which showed improved capacity to recognize, divide, and work with sounds in spoken words. Because of the method's repetition and focus, learners could strengthen their core abilities and process written material more accurately and confidently.

Bernabe (2024) emphasized that the Marungko Approach could significantly improve the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils. Moreover, she recommended that teachers use the Marungko Approach in teaching reading and conduct LAC sessions to parents to capacitate them to use the Marungko Approach in teaching their children reading.

In addition, the Marungko Approach demonstrated potential in improving reading comprehension and fluency and its effects on word recognition and phonemic awareness (Repaso & Macalisang, 2024). Students' oral reading fluency was improved by promoting automaticity in word recognition, which allowed them to read more rapidly and expressively. Therefore, learners could allocate additional attention to comprehending and interpreting the text as decoding demands decreased, leading to greater reading comprehension scores (Santos & De Vera, 2020).

Research reveals that while the Marungko Approach builds decoding fluency, it may fully support text-level comprehension among primary readers. Abella (2022) reported that the structured phonics-based nature of the Marungko Approach allowed struggling readers to develop automatic word recognition skills, which are essential for fluent reading. In terms of reading comprehension, a study by Villanueva (2022) verified that students could read with comprehension and use meaning-making techniques more successfully because of the Marungko Approach's organized phonics instruction progression.

Moreover, Repaso & Macalisang (2024) investigated the effectiveness of a contextualized Marungko approach-based supplementary reading material in improving the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils. They found out that a significant improvement in the early reading skills of Grade 1 pupils after using the supplementary reading material. This indicated that the reading material effectively enhanced the Grade 1 pupils' reading performance. Likewise, integrating the the Marungko Approach could help lessen the number of learners who belong to the frustration level thus, it improves the percentage of learners who will belong to the independent and instructional level or category of learners (Dagandan, 2024).

Conclusion

The results of the study support the Marungko Approach's effectiveness in improving primary school learning literacy, especially in word recognition, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. The Marungko Approach's structured, phonics-based instruction successfully develops the fundamental reading skills of learners, as evidenced by the significant improvements in post-test scores across all grade levels. The continuous improvement in students' performance emphasizes the need for methodical teaching in high-frequency word recognition, decoding, and blending, which are critical for early reading success.

Moreover, the study suggests incorporating the Marungko Approach into the core curriculum can significantly improve literacy results. The strategy addresses the difficulties presented by early learners with trouble with decoding and fluency by reiterating key reading competencies through explicit and progressive instruction. Furthermore, the results encourage educators and policymakers to implement organized phonics programs like Marungko to close the reading gap and promote long-term academic success. The long-term application of the Marungko Approach offers encouraging results for young learners in a variety of contexts, considering the critical role that early literacy plays in overall educational development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings regarding the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving reading literacy among primary learners, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. Schools and educational policymakers should consider integrating the Marungko Approach as a standard teaching strategy in the primary curriculum, especially in Grades 1–3.
2. Teachers should receive comprehensive training on how to apply the Marungko Approach effectively.
3. The Department of Education and local school divisions should produce and disseminate developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant instructional materials aligned with the Marungko Approach.
4. Regular assessment and research should be conducted to monitor the impact of the Marungko Approach across various learner groups and contexts.

5. Further studies should examine the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach among diverse learner populations, including learners with reading difficulties, or learners from indigenous and multilingual communities, to assess its inclusivity and adaptability

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