Reading Performance of Grade 1 Learners using Marungko Approach

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Abstract

This study determined the level of reading performance of forty-one (41) Grade 1 Learners using the Marungko Approach in Parsolingan Elementary School for the school year 2019-2020. It employed a descriptive-correlation design. In gathering the data, a researcher-made questionnaire and reading performance evaluation were given to the respondents. Descriptive Statistics and Spearman, Point-Biserial Correlation were used to treat the data gathered. Results showed that the level of reading performance of Grade 1 learners using the Marungko Approach was very satisfactory with an overall weighted mean of 16.629 along phonemic awareness, reading in isolation, reading in context and reading comprehension. A slightly strong relationship existed between the reading performance of the Grade 1 learners and the profile variable on mother schedule in teaching reading. The researcher recommends that teachers provide a list of reading- related Youtube links to the parents of Grade 1 learners; plan and schedule a day to visit municipal or barangay library as part of an off-campus activity; consider seeking support from stakeholders for the provision of reading materials appropriate to the level of Grade 1 learners; develop reading program and activities responsive to the Grade 1 learners facing difficulty in reading and use Marungko Approach as an early reading instruction and intervention to Grade 1 learners.

Keywords –Grade 1 Learners, Marungko Approach, reading performance

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a distinct, cognitive human skill that is crucial to life in present societies, but, for about 250 million primary school-aged children in developing countries, learning to read was extremely difficult. Over half of all pupils in second grade cannot read a single word and almost 30 percent of all third-grade learners were zero-word readers [1].

The shortcomings in basic reading abilities are known to have constrained millions of children from taking advantage of the extensive benefits of education. These include achieving high levels of fluency, learning more advanced skills, and progressing to higher levels of education [2].

Findings from neuroscience research indicated that childhood is the ideal time to develop basic reading skills that lead to reading fluency [3]. Thus, it is imperative that a child begins learning to read around first grade. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) aspires to transform pupils into skillful independent readers. This noble aim rationalizes the country's implementation of Kindergarten Education Act or the compulsory kindergarten for Filipino learners as they are expected to be readers by grade 1 [4].

Numerous DepEd initiatives purposed to develop and strengthen Filipino children's capacity to read in the early grades. These include "Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP)," "project D.E.A.R (Drop Everything and Read)," "Reading Assistance Program," "Summer Reading Camp," the observance of "National Reading Month" every November and other school-based reading activities [5].

However, report on the country's 2014 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) revealed alarming results. In letter-sound identification, 10- 25 percent of the pupils tested could not identify a single letter-sound correctly. Whereas, in reading fluency, while the average scores were increasing from Grade 1 to Grade 2, many still cannot read a single one-or-two-syllable word correctly. Comprehension scores, on the other hand, were weak and depending on the language, between 8 percent and 38 percent of the students cannot read a single word of a short story [6].

Nava et al., [7] observed in the 2016 Philippine- Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) the lower performance in silent and oral reading of the pupils in the regions and provinces farther south of the National Capital Region (NCR). Furthermore, reading inventory conducted in the Division of Tanauan City, Batangas pointed out a number of non-reader grade two pupils during the fourth quarter of School Year 2017-2018 are promoted in grade three the following school year.

Relative to this, the DepEd Region X Division of Misamis Oriental Cagayan De Oro City issued a memorandum launching the Arrest the Frustration Reading Program in Grades 1, 2, and 3. The memo indicates that one of the teaching methods to be used in the program is Marungko Approach [8].

Marungko Approach is a reading instruction that is developed to help beginning readers attain reading fluency. This approach suits the early reading needs of the pupils by leading them to understand letter-sound correspondence in order to recognize words instantly. However, instead of the conventional arrangement of letters in the alphabet, there is a proper sequencing of letter and letter sounds to be taught to children capitalizing on the most frequent to the least occurring sounds in the Filipino language [9].

Enclosure 2 of the Division Memo No.93, s. 2013 presents the strategy in teaching reading using the Marungko Approach. According to the enclosure, the sequence of the letter-sounds to be taught, the recommended phonemes in each grading period and the four levels/steps in reading using Marungko are all essential in order to achieve mastery of all the sounds. In fact, Bañez and Urayan acknowledged Marungko approach as an effective tool in honing the pre-requisite reading skills among pupils that can empower them to equally participate in the learning tasks provided by teachers across the K-12 curriculum.

In Parsolingan Elementary School, the first graders of various backgrounds are facing difficulties in reading. Most of them are unfamiliar with the perception between letters and their sounds. Some of them have no confidence and feel that reading is too hard for them. They show a very strong hesitation and confusion in naming and sounding out the letters to recognize the words. They also have difficulties blending and seem to rely on memorization of the given words when reading. For these reasons, the need for Marungko Approach to improve the level of reading performance of the Grade 1 Learners motivated the researcher to conduct this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the level of reading performance of Grade 1 Learners using the Marungko Approach in Parsolingan Elementary School. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions: (a) what is the profile of the Grade 1 Learners in terms of sex, ECCD checklist scaled score on Expressive Language, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' average monthly income, parents' time and schedule spent in teaching reading, and printed and technology- based reading materials at home?; (b) what is the level of reading performance of the Grade 1 Learners exposed to Marungko Approach in terms of phonemic awareness, reading in isolation, vocabulary, reading in context, and reading comprehension?; (c) is there a significant relationship between the reading performance of the Grade 1 Learners and the selected profile variables?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The descriptive- correlation methods of research was used in the study. It is descriptive because it aimed to describve the profile variables and the level of reading performance of the Grade 1 Learners in Parsolingan Elementary School. It is correlational because it determined the relationship between the level of reading performance of Grade

1 Learners exposed to Marungko Approach and their selected profile variables.

Samples of the Study

The population of the study involved the 41 Grade 1 Learners from section Magalang, Parsolingan Elementary School, Gerona South District, Parsolingan Gerona, Tarlac under the K-12 Curriculum for the school year 2019-2020 and the 82 parents of the Grade 1 Learners in Parsolingan Gerona Tarlac.

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedures

In this study, a five – point Likert – type researcher - made questionnaire and reading performance evaluation served as research instruments. The questionnaire is about the profile of the respondents and the reading performance evaluation includes phonemic awareness, reading in isolation, vocabulary, reading in context and reading comprehension. In gathering the data needed for the study, the researcher asked permission from the schools division superintendent and school heads to conduct the study. Next, she got the consent of the parents where the questionnaires were floated. After which, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the parents and were also retrieved the same day. While the reading performance evaluation last for 30 minutes a day for 4 weeks every Friday. The data gathered were given to the statistician for thorough tabulation and analysis.

Statistical Analysis of Data

To analyzed the data gathered, descriptive statistics and Spearman, point-biserial correlation were used. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, and histogram were employed to present and analyze the data gathered for the first and second problems. Further, for the third problem, Spearman point-biserial correlation was used to identify the relationship between the level of reading performance of Grade 1 Learners and their selected profile variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Grade 1 Learners

Table 1 (found in the original article) presents the Grade 1 Learners' profile on sex, ECD checklist scaled score on Expressive Language, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' average monthly income, parents' time and schedule in teaching reading, and printed and technology-based reading materials at home.

On Sex. The table shows that 54.7 percent of the Grade 1 Learners in Parsolingan Elementary School are female while 46.3 percent are male. This implies that there is sex parity among Grade 1 learners who participated in the study.

On ECD Checklist Scaled Score on Expressive Language. The table also reveals that 92.7 percent of the Grade 1 learners get within 7-13 correct points in the Expressive Language domain while 7.3 percent get within 4-6. This implies that their ECD scaled score on Expressive Language was appropriate to their level of developing basic language skill as this is a prerequisite to the development of self-confidence, good interpersonal relations and active participation in class activities in Grade 1.

On Parents Highest Educational Attainment. It also reflects in Table 1 that 23 of the mother complete their high school education while 7 of them attain only elementary level. For the father, the corresponding numbers are 21 and 14, respectively. This shows that the parents who participated in the study have seemingly lacking adequate educational background which is critical in the learning to read phase of their children.

On Parents Average Monthly Income. It can also be gleaned from Table 1 that 28 of the parents earn an average monthly income within Php 0- 9, 520 while only one has a take home monthly gross within Php 19, 041- 38, 080. This reveals that most of the Grade 1 families have low income which implies that their financial resources are limited to only meeting the basic needs of the family and that the provision of reading materials at home is seemingly not afforded which put them vulnerable for language impediment.

On Parents Schedule and Time Spent in Teaching Reading. Table 1 also presents that 34 of the mothers teach their children to read in the afternoon while only 3 of them teach their children to read in the morning. For the father, the corresponding numbers are 26 and 7 respectively. This denotes that more mothers have a schedule in the afternoon dedicated for teaching reading than the fathers. Interview with both the mother and the father show that the preference to teach reading in the afternoon lie on early class dismissal in the afternoon.

Level of Reading Performance of Grade 1 Learners

Table 2 (found in the original article) reveals the Grade 1 Learners' level of reading performance along phonemic awareness, reading in isolation, vocabulary, reading in context, and reading comprehension.

Data show that the level of reading performance of the Grade 1 Learners is very satisfactory as indicated by the overall weighted mean of 16.629. This implies that the Grade 1 Learners are learning to read as evaluated in all the specified reading skills.

It could be deduced from the data that the Grade

Learners have excellent level of reading performance in terms of phonemic awareness (18.024), reading isolation (18.390), and reading in context (17.000). As Sheridan in Psycholinguistic Theory posited, the learner's success in reading depends on her knowledge of oral processes, including word order and the use of words in context.

On Phonemic Awareness. The table shows that 33 of the Grade 1 Learners achieved a score within 17-20 which means excellent while one of them got a score ranging within 5-8 which mean fair. The average mean is 18.024 which suggest that the level of reading performance is excellent. This reveals that 39 of the Grade 1 Learners showed mastery in hearing, identifying, and manipulating individual sounds which was very crucial as it lays the basic foundation for reading words.

This finding is in line with Gray & McCutchen [10]   views that the contribution of phonemic awareness, to children's reading abilities has mostly focused on word recognition. Using their understanding of the grapheme-phoneme relationship is one of the strategies/skills children use to decode words in printed form. Ehri et al., [12] agreed on this as they concluded that phonemic awareness is the best predictor to the beginning reading proficiency of children.

The finding is supported by the observations and interviews conducted by the researcher. When observed, the 33 Grade 1 learners posed minimal difficulty in responding to the phonemes and made consistent progress throughout the four-week Marungko teaching sessions. The parents of these Grade 1 learners when interviewed confirmed the result as they never fail to follow up their children at home. While the two Grade 1 learners were observed to add short sound /a/when blending the is, im, os, om, and ob. These Grade 1 learners were asked to stay after class to correct the error they were committing.

On Reading in Isolation. Table 2 also shows that 34 of the Grade 1 Learners achieve excellent mark after they gain a score within 17-20 while three learners strike a satisfactory descriptive rating after totaling a score within 9-12. The average mean is 18.390 which is

equivalent to excellent reading performance. This reveals that 38 of the Grade 1 Learners are able to recognize the sounds the letters make and blend the phonemes together to read the given words with ease and automaticity.

The finding supports the study of Bejiga [14] that revealed that at the end of September, there are about 131 kindergarten learners who can already read simple words out from the syllabicated letters. Though not all of them are fast readers and recognizant of the words presented, Bejiga [13] confirmed that the kindergarten participants in her research can read words.

During class observations, the 34 Grade 1 Learners were showing no sign of experiencing difficulty reading. Throughout the four-week Marungko teaching sessions, they were able to read the given words although not fast and were constantly improving. While, the three Grade 1 Learners who achieved a satisfactory descriptive exhibited rote recall ma me mi mo mu, sa se si so su, and ba be bi bo bu relying on the conventional counting of fingers to identify the letter sounds in the given word. The parents when asked during interviews acknowledged that they were teaching their children the traditional approach at home and even instructed them to use their fingers when reading so they would not make an error.

On Vocabulary. As shown in Table 2, results on the level of reading performance of the Grade 1 Learners in terms of vocabulary fall the most on excellent with 22 learners getting a score within 17- 20 while four students attain fair for managing to arrive at the score of 5-8. The average mean is 15.878 which indicate that the Grade 1 Learners perform a very satisfactory level of reading performance. This reveals that 34 of the Grade 1 Learners know and remember the meaning of the words presented to them during the four-week Marungko teaching sessions. In the study of Echaure & Torno [14], results revealed that for vocabulary study, pre-test performance of pupils was rated fair with weighted mean of 25.10 while post-test was rated very good with weighted mean of 45.11. Thus, the pupils exhibited greater improvement in terms of their performance after the intervention which supported the findings of this study.

During vocabulary teaching time, the Grade 1 learners were observed to be having a hard time describing and remembering the meaning of some of the words inspite of the supported images that come along with them. The words that posed difficulty on them were aasa, maamo, amo, oso, and bibo. Part of the perceived reason for the trouble in Vocabulary was the Grade 1 learners' first time hearing and seeing these words. They did not encounter these words before and when asked what these words meant based on what the pictures showed, some were hesitant and shy to speak up.

On Reading in Context. Table 2 also shows that 29 of the Grade 1 Learners attained excellent with 17-20 markings while six of them struggled on fair with a total sum within 5-8. The average mean is 17.000 which correspond to performing on the excellent level in terms of reading in context. This reveals that 35 of the Grade 1 Learners could read aloud with confidence the sentences presented to them. Though, there were six Grade 1 Learners who found it difficult to successfully respond to printed text, still the overall statistic claim that most were readers.

Correspondingly, Buendicho [15] in her research revealed that Tysel's book help children be readers within five months. Results reveal that all 27 Grade 1- Ilang-ilang learners who could not read in the pre-test successfully become readers in the post-test. Further findings indicate that these learners in the study are on Level C and Level D in reading skills, consisting of 10 and 17 learners respectively.

During Marungko teaching sessions and individual practice reading time, no Grade 1 learners was observed to be refusing to read when called. Only six were reading using a voice that was hardly audible. Six were pointing to each word with their finger and did word by word reading. And the remaining was reading with ease.

On Reading Comprehension. Table 2 also shows that 17 of the Grade 1 Learners reach the excellent level as their scores fall within the score 17-20 while five of them perform poor for slipping within 0-4 score. The average mean is 13.854 which is equivalent to very satisfactory level of reading performance. This reveals that 31 of Grade 1 Learners could comprehend what they read while others did not. The results suggest the need to develop further this skill because this is the most significant predictor to learning.

In the 2014 Philippine Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), report on reading comprehension scores reveal that a weak performance is manifested among students in Grade 1 with the average percentage of questions answered correctly close or below 50 percent in all languages [16]. Considering this worrying result, according to Davis et al. [17], the use of teachers' adjustments, strategies, scaffolds and the follow-up WH questions could help improve the reading comprehension performance of every learner.

During individual practice reading comprehension, it was observed that the Grade 1 Learners could already read but when asked questions related to the short story paragraph they finished reading, many could not give the correct response. Few kept quiet while others admitted that they did not know the answer. Only 17 among the entire Grade 1 Learners were found to have understood the text and were able to answer the questions correctly. Throughout the four weeks teaching and practice time, considerable improvement in reading comprehension of the Grade 1 Learners were seen however there were still those who were left behind particularly those 5 Grade

1 Learners who scored poorly that's why the researcher opted that these learners undergo reading remediation on comprehension every afternoon after class for 30 minutes.

Relationship between the Reading Performance of Grade 1 Learners and the Selected Profile Variables

Table 3 shows the significant correlation between the level of reading performance of the Grade 1 learners along phonemic awareness, reading in isolation, vocabulary, reading in context, and reading comprehension and the selected profile variables on sex, ECD checklist scaled score Expressive Language, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' average monthly income, and parents' time and schedule in teaching reading.

On Reading Performance and Sex. As shown in Table 3, reading performance along all areas and sex variable has very weak relationship as indicated by the significance values that are all greater than
0.05 and eta values that fall within 0-0.166. This implies that the null hypothesis stated as there is significant relationship between the level of reading performance and variable sex are not significantly related with each other. Thus, this means that the sex of the learners does not influence their reading performance.

The finding is consistent with existing studies of Vlachos and Papadimitriou [18] which state that sex did not play an important role in reading performance and Buendicho [19] which reveal that sex had no significant relationship on children's capacity to learn to read. Likewise, Wheldall and Limbrick [20] suggested boys and girls were more alike than different on most psychological variables including reading.

On Reading Performance and ECD Scaled Score on Expressive Language. The Spearman's rho column in Table 3 reveal that almost all the computed values fall within 0.167-0.332 which describe that the link between reading performance and ECD variable is weak. The significant column also indicates that all the computed values are greater than 0.05 thereby rejecting the null hypothesis there is significant relationship between the level of reading performance and ECD. This implies that ECD does not affect the reading performance of the Grade 1 Learners along all areas. The result conforms to that of Buendicho [21] study which found out that ECD background had no significant relationship on children's capacity to learn to read. Moreover, ECD checklist results, as cited in Philippine Education For All 2015: Implementation and Challenges, is used for determining the readiness of Grade 1 entrants to face the rigors of formal schooling.

On Reading Performance and Parents Highest Educational Attainment.

As can be gleaned from Table 3, both the mother and father highest educational attainment as indicated by the computed significant values (>0.05) and Spearman's rho values (0-0.166.) show very weak relationship with reading performance. This implies that the null hypothesis there is significant relationship between the level of reading performance and parents' highest educational attainment must be rejected. Hence, this means that the parents' highest educational attainment does not influence the reading performance of the learners.

This finding does not support the research done by Westerlund and Lagerberg [22] which stated that the level of parental education is a determining factor in children's reading abilities and achievement. Likewise, Egalite [23] in his research- based article found that highly educated parents were more likely to read to their children than their less-educated counterparts. As an end result, these children were capable of more complex speech and have more extensive vocabularies before they even start school. Conforming to this position, Benner et.al, [24] in their journal asserted that parents' attitudes and support for their children's learning influence performance on literacy tests irrespective of the level of parental education.

On Reading Performance and Average Monthly Income.

Table 3 also reveals that there is no significant relationship between the level of reading performance and average monthly income since the computed significance values are all greater than 0.05 and the Spearman's rho values fall within 0.167-0.332 implying a very weak relationship between the two variables. This means that the average monthly income does not influence the reading performance of the learners in all the specified areas.

On the contrary, according to Duncan et al., children from low-income families were less frequently to hear language and of lower quality than their middle- and high-income counterparts, which placed them at risk for language delays that may persist upon kindergarten entry and throughout formal schooling.

On Reading Performance and Parents Schedule in Teaching Reading.

The results on Table 3 reveal that all the computed significant values on mother schedule in teaching reading are all less than the alpha value 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis there is significant relationship between reading performance and mother schedule in teaching reading must be accepted. This means that the mother schedule influences reading performance of the learners along phonemic awareness, reading in isolation, vocabulary, reading in context and reading comprehension. Furthermore, the computed eta value 0.605 along phonemic awareness fall within 0.500-0.666. This implies that the phonemic awareness and mother schedule strength of correlation is moderately strong. Moreover, the computed eta values along reading in isolation,

vocabulary, reading in context, and reading comprehension are 0.471, 0.443, 0.483, and 0.492, respectively, fall within the interval 0.333-0.499. This implies that the strength of correlation between those variables and mother schedule is slightly strong.

Table 3 elicits also that the father schedule influences the learners' vocabulary and reading comprehension as evident by the computed significant values of 0.043 and 0.030, respectively, which are less than the alpha value 0.05. This indicates that the null hypothesis stated that there is significant relationship between reading performance along vocabulary and reading comprehension and father schedule must be rejected. Furthermore, the computed eta values along vocabulary and reading comprehension are 0.341 and 0.280 respectively. This means that the strength of correlation between reading performance along vocabulary and reading comprehension is slightly strong and weak respectively. However, the computed significant values along phonemic awareness, reading in isolation, and reading in context are 0.199, 0.539, and 0.136 respectively which are obviously greater than 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis must be rejected. Therefore, we cannot determine a general pattern regarding the correlations between the variables.

The findings do not correspond with Mwangi [25] study which found a strong relationship between both parents' involvements in children's reading at home and their performance in Kiswahili reading comprehension. Likewise, Lumapenet & Andoy [26] study revealed that parents' assistance in reading significantly influence the oral and silent reading abilities of the children and that their parental self – motivation and empathy were found to be the best predictors of pupils' reading abilities. Thus, the parents should enhance and strengthen their role to the education of their children. On the other hand, Caroll [27] study found that both parents' teachings during shared book reading predict alphabet knowledge and print awareness but not oral language abilities.

On Reading Performance and Parents Time Spent in Teaching Reading. Looking at the significant column, all the computed values are greater than the alpha value 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis there is significant relationship between the level of reading performance and parents time spent in teaching reading must be rejected. This means that the parents time spent in teaching reading does not influence the reading performance of the learners in all the specified areas.

The result does not support the report of 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) that the more time parents spend on reading at home, the better is the reading performance of their children and the more books children had at home, the better were their reading abilities. Children are more prone to developing a reading interest and good reading habits

if there is a rich collection of books at home and they constantly have access to a variety of books. Moreover, the views of Boonk *et.al* [28] suggest that it is the quality of shared reading experience that determines the effectiveness in nurturing literacy skills. More crucial than whether the parents read to the child every day or less often, is the extent of the child's active participation in shared reading activities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It was found out that most of the Grade 1 Learners are female. Majority of them score seven to thirteen in the Expressive Language domain using the ECCD checklist. More than half of the number of parents is high school graduates. Nearly every one of them belong to low income families and more than half of the parents spend roughly 30 minutes teaching their children to read storybooks and Youtube video lessons and songs as printed and technology-based reading materials. Majority of the Grade 1 learners perform on excellent level in reading performance in terms of phonemic awareness, reading in isolation, and reading in context while quite a number of them attain a very satisfactory level of reading performance in terms of vocabulary and reading comprehension. There is no significant relationship between the level of reading performance of the Grade 1 learners exposed to Marungko Approach in teaching reading and their selected profile variables.

Therefore, it is recommended that the teachers provide a list of reading-related Youtube links to the parents of Grade 1 learners; plan and schedule a day to visit municipal or barangay library as part of an off-campus activity; consider seeking support from stakeholders for the provision of reading materials appropriate to the level of Grade 1 learners; develop reading program and activities responsive to the Grade 1 learners facing difficulty in reading; and use Marungko Approach as an early reading instruction and intervention to Grade 1 learners.

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