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“The Marungko Strategy in Teaching Reading in Filipino: An Experimental Study”

Linde Lou C. Mendoza^{1*}, Elmer A. Taripe, PhD-Filipino, EdD²

^{1,2} Assumption College of Nabunturan, Philippines

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*Corresponding author: Linde Lou C. Mendoza

Abstract

Aims: This study aims to determine the efficacy of the Marungko Strategy in teaching Filipino among Junior High School students.

Study Design: One Group Pretest-Posttest Design

Place and Duration of Study: The study's respondents are thirty-eight (38) students currently enrolled at Zillovia National High School, Talacogon District, Division of Agusan del Sur, in 2025-2026.

Methodology: In this research, the researcher selects an entire group (one class or section) from three groups of students. Rather than selecting typical students, a random sample of the whole group is selected.

Results: This study shows that the Marungko Strategy significantly improves Filipino reading skills among Junior High School students. This indicates that the results provide sufficient grounds to recommend applying this strategy more broadly in Filipino reading instruction at the Junior High School level.

Conclusion: This study provides clear evidence that the Marungko Strategy is an effective way to improve the reading skills of Junior High School students, especially in word recognition and reading comprehension. The noticeable improvement in students' performance from the pretest to the posttest suggests that organized and step-by-step instruction plays an important role in developing reading ability. In addition, the recommendations aim to extend the use of this strategy both inside and outside the classroom and to guide future researchers conducting similar studies. Overall, this study not only adds to existing knowledge but also supports the continued improvement of reading instruction in the Filipino context.

Keywords: Marungko Strategy, Reading, Comprehension, Phonics-Based Instruction, Pre-test-Post-test Design.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important skills in education as it is the foundation of learning in all subject areas. When students struggle with reading, they are unable to comprehend lessons and perform well academically. Reading is an important skill, but many learners still face difficulties, especially in understanding what they read. These issues are often associated with the unavailability of reading materials, a lack of motivation and the need to employ more effective instructional strategies to support diverse learners.

International studies have shown that difficulty in reading among secondary students remains a significant problem. Many middle and secondary students continue to read below their expected grade level.(Capin et al., 2022), and some of these students are already struggling before they reach higher grade levels. Their research indicates the need for systematic interventions such as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and direct instruction in phonics, decoding, and word recognition. This suggests that systematic and explicit teaching is critical for enhancing students' reading performance. Students' reading performance in junior high school remains a challenge in the Philippine setting.

Monfero (2025) study found out that many students who saw themselves as non-readers improved significantly when they used appropriate intervention materials and systematic reading strategies. The study shows how important it is to build vocabulary, improve comprehension, and develop active reading skills. It also points out that teachers should keep updating their methods to better help students with reading difficulties.

The same concerns have also been noted at Zillovia National High School based on the results of the Phil-IRI reading assessment. Many students still have difficulty with reading comprehension and word recognition, which also affects their performance in other subjects. Such problems could be caused by limited vocabulary, limited exposure to reading materials, lack of reading practice and teaching strategies that may not meet all the needs of individual learners. Given their socio-economic conditions, students may not have many opportunities to read.

This study is conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Marungko Strategy in teaching Filipino to Junior High School students in addressing these challenges. Specifically, it aims to assess students' word recognition and comprehension performance before and after the intervention and to determine whether there is a significant difference between the two. The results of this study may provide useful information to improve reading instruction and strengthen literacy programs in school settings.

Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on Lev Vygotsky's (1978) view on the role of society in learning. He believed that learning does not happen in isolation. Instead, it occurs through interaction with others, guidance from more experienced individuals, and the active use of language within a learner's environment. For Vygotsky, understanding is not formed solely in the mind; rather, it develops through continuous interaction—through conversations with teachers, support from classmates, and meaningful classroom experiences.

In terms of the Marungko Strategy, the teacher is the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) who assists students in reading by introducing letter sounds, forming syllables, reading words, and simple paragraphs. . This approach is consistent with Vygotsky's

concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners can perform tasks they cannot accomplish alone but can with appropriate guidance and support.

The Marungko Strategy also employs scaffolding. From the start of the learning process, students are closely guided as they practice reading sounds and forming syllables. As they gradually improve, the teacher slowly reduces assistance, allowing learners to read more independently and with growing confidence. Vygotsky also emphasized that language plays a central role in learning, as it is the primary tool for developing understanding and communication. Because of this, the Marungko Strategy can be seen as an effective reading approach, grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction, teacher guidance, and the active use of language in learning.

Research Objectives

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Marungko Strategy in teaching reading to Junior High School students. It aims to determine whether this approach helps improve students' reading skills.

To achieve this goal, the study is guided by the following specific research questions:

1. What is the level of the students' reading skills in the pretest before the implementation of the Marungko Strategy, in terms of:
 - 1.1. Word Recognition
 - 1.2. Reading Comprehension
2. What is the level of the students' reading skills in the posttest after the implementation of the Marungko Strategy, in terms of:
 - 2.1. Word Recognition
 - 2.2. Reading Comprehension
3. Is there a significant difference in the students' reading performance before and after using the Marungko Strategy, in terms of:
 - 3.1. Word Recognition
 - 3.2. Reading Comprehension

Statement of Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in students' reading skills before and after using the Marungko Strategy.

METHODS

Research Design

This study follows an experimental research approach, specifically a one-group pretest-posttest design. In experimental research, a pre-test and a post-test are administered to measure the effect of an intervention on participants. The pre-test serves as the starting point where the students stand in terms of their reading skills before the intervention is introduced, while the post-test reveals how much they have improved after the intervention.

As Fraenkel et al. (2019) pointed out, the One-Group Pretest-Posttest is a form of experimental research that is particularly useful in situations where forming a control group is either or not necessary or does not fit the nature of the study. What makes this design work is the intervention itself. In this case, the Marungko Strategy is the key variable the researcher actively applies to observe its effect on reading ability. Even without a control group, the design remains valid and scientifically sound because its primary goal is not to compare two groups but to demonstrate how

the Marungko Strategy affects the reading ability of the same group of students before and after the intervention.

The use of an experimental design in applying the Marungko Strategy for teaching Filipino to Junior High School students was a suitable approach because it allowed for a clear and systematic evaluation of the strategy's effectiveness as a reading intervention. By comparing students' pretest and posttest oral reading results, both in word recognition and reading comprehension results, it was possible to determine whether there were real, meaningful improvements in their reading, spelling, and vocabulary skills after the strategy was implemented.

According to Creswell and Guetterman (2024), experimental designs are one of the most reliable methods for identifying cause-and-effect relationships in educational research. With this, the results obtained from pretest and the posttest after using the Marungko Strategy as an intervention can be considered more credible and evidence-based. Ultimately, this strengthens the conclusion that the strategy may play a valuable role in improving the literacy skills among students.

Location of Study

This study examines Grade 8 students at Zillovia National High School in Talacogon District, Agusan del Sur. The respondents were selected to determine the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in teaching reading to junior high School. Conducting the research within the school made it easier for the researcher to administer the intervention and get the results conveniently.

Research Instruments

The study adopted reading passages and questionnaires from the Phil-IRI materials developed by the Department of Education. Both the pre-test and post-test consisted of 20 items. The answer sheets and the teacher's observations used to assess Word Recognition were also based on Phil-IRI tools.

The researcher administered the pre-test and post-test using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) materials, a standardized assessment used by the Department of Education to measure students' reading levels.

The results of both the pre-test and post-test were recorded and analyzed. These results were then examined to determine whether the use of the Marungko Strategy in teaching reading in Junior High School was an effective way to increase the number of students with reading skills reaching the Independent Reader level, while also reducing the number of students at the Frustration and Instructional levels.

Research Respondents

The study's respondents are thirty-eight (38) students currently enrolled at Zillovia National High School, Talacogon District, Division of Agusan del Sur, in 2025-2026.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents

School	Grade/Section	No. Of Students
Zillovia National High School	8-Narra	38
Total		38

Research Procedure

Following clearance from the panel and evaluator, as well as an endorsement letter from Assumption College of Nabunturan (ACN), the researcher will gather data using the procedures listed below: The researcher will compose and send a letter to the Schools' Division Superintendent in Agusan del Sur requesting permission to conduct research at the identified school. Once accepted, the latter will use it to request authorization from the school Principal and to acquire access to respondents. Upon approval of the letter, the researcher will furnish a copy of the Informed Consent and Assent form for the respondents and their parents/to complete. The respondent's responses will likewise remain confidential. The data collection procedure starts with a pretest. The questionnaire will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. After the pretest, the researcher will then conduct the intervention using the Marungko approach for six (6) weeks. After the intervention, the posttest will follow. The researcher will gather the results and interpret them if there is a significant difference in students' reading skills before and after the intervention using the Marungko Approach.

Statistical Data

The pretest and posttest data were tallied and displayed in tables showing frequencies and percentages. A Paired T-Test was conducted to assess significant differences in respondents' reading skills before and after the Marungko Approach intervention. Pearson's r correlation was used to examine relationships between variables. The mean, calculated by dividing the sum of all values by the number of values, was used as a measure of central tendency to indicate the central value of the data set.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reading is an important skill that enables learners to acquire knowledge, to think critically, to communicate and to succeed academically. By reading, students enhance their vocabulary, comprehension, and ability to grasp different ideas and perspectives. However, many learners struggle with reading and this can impact their performance in school and their confidence in learning. Reading interventions are, therefore, an important part of the solution to the problem of poor literacy skills of struggling readers. Effective reading interventions can improve phonological awareness, comprehension and language development, all of which are essential for successful reading achievement (Margaret J. Snowling and Charles Hulme).

According to the Phil-IRI 2018 Manual, the reading skills of students are categorized into three reading levels: Independent Level, Instructional Level, and Frustration Level. These levels are used to measure how well learners can read and understand a text appropriate to their grade level. The Independent Level refers to students who can read fluently with little or no assistance from the teacher. Learners at this level can recognize words accurately and understand the meaning of the text on their own, showing strong comprehension and confidence in reading. The Instructional Level describes students who can read and understand the text with the guidance and support of a teacher. Although they may commit some errors or experience difficulty in comprehension, they can still improve through proper instruction and reading interventions. On the other hand, the Frustration Level refers to students who struggle significantly in reading. Learners at this level have difficulty recognizing words, understanding passages, and answering comprehension questions, even with teacher assistance. Because of these challenges, students in the frustration level

require intensive reading intervention and continuous practice to develop their literacy skills. The Phil-IRI assessment helps teachers identify the reading level of learners so that appropriate teaching strategies and intervention programs can be provided to improve their reading performance.

Results of the study showed that Marungko approach in teaching reading signified a significant change in the reading skills of the students. It showed that Posttest reading skills of students has improved both in word recognition and comprehension skills from the pretest results.

Table 2

Pretests Results of the Reading Skills of Grade 8 Narra Students

Reading Skill	No. of respondents	Mean	Class Proficiency	Competency Level
Word Recognition	38	93.29	93%	Instructional Level
Comprehension	38	8.3	42%	Frustration Level

Table 2 shows the reading skill level of the participants based on two aspects: word recognition and comprehension. In terms of word recognition, the students obtained a mean score of 93.29 or 93% level of proficiency in the class, which indicates that they are at the instructional level, where they can read words with minimal guidance. Meanwhile, in comprehension, they only achieved a mean score of 8.3 or 42% level of proficiency in the class, which falls under the frustration level, indicating a low ability to understand what they read even with guidance.

The findings are supported by the study of Santos and De Vera (2020), which examined the reading performance of Grade 1 learners using the Marungko Strategy. Their study revealed that before the intervention, the pupils demonstrated only beginning skills in word recognition. However, after the implementation of the Marungko Strategy, there was a significant improvement in their reading performance. This result is consistent with the present study, where the pretest scores reflected an instructional level of reading ability, indicating that the learners still needed guidance and appropriate reading intervention to further enhance their skills.

For comprehension skills, the study conducted by Funa (2025) on the Phil-IRI assessment of Junior High School students found out that reading comprehension was generally weaker among

secondary learners compared to their ability in word recognition. The cross-sectional study revealed that students tended to perform better in oral reading, which reflects word recognition skills, than in comprehension tasks. This finding highlights the common gap between students' ability to recognize words and their actual understanding of the text they read.

Table 3

Posttests Results of the Reading Skills of Grade 8 Narra Students

Reading Skill	No. of respondents	Mean	Class Proficiency	Competency Level
Word Recognition	38	95.3	95%	Instructional Level
Comprehension	38	11.13	59%	Instructional Level

The table presents the participants' level of reading skills in two areas: word recognition and comprehension. In terms of word recognition, the students obtained a mean score of 95.29, or 95% proficiency in class, which is classified as the instructional level. This indicates that they are able to read words with only minimal assistance. Similarly, in reading comprehension, they achieved a mean score of 11.1, or 55% proficiency in class, which is also at the instructional level. This suggests that they still need guidance in understanding what they read.

This result is consistent with the findings of Tamba and Garces (2024), who examined the effectiveness of the Marungko Strategy in teaching reading among Grade 2 non-reader pupils at Datu Dumagkal Danial Elementary School in General Santos City. Their study showed that most students who initially obtained very low pretest scores were able to achieve high posttest scores after the use of the Marungko Strategy. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the approach in improving learners' word recognition skills.

The comprehension result is in line with the findings of Boltron and Ramos (2021), who studied the improvement of early reading skills through the Marungko Strategy. According to their research, comprehension usually develops more effectively once students have strengthened their word recognition skills and phonemic awareness. This is because learners are able to focus more of their mental effort on understanding the text when they are no longer struggling heavily with decoding words.

Table 4

Paired Sample T-test of Pretest and Posttest

Reading Skills	No. of Respondents	Mean(Pretest)	Mean (Posttest)	T-value	P-value	Interpretation
Word Recognition	38	93.29	95.3	-12.17	<0.001	Significant (p<0.05)
Comprehension	38	8.3	11.13	-8.461	<0.001	Significant (p<0.05)

Based on the pre-test and post-test results of 38 students, there is a noticeable improvement in their reading skills after the intervention. The results of the Paired Samples T-Test show a significant difference in the students' word recognition skills before and after the use of the Marungko Strategy (T = -12.17, p <

.001). This indicates a clear increase in post-test mean scores compared to the pre-test, suggesting that the strategy had a positive effect on students' ability to recognize words. As a result, the null hypothesis for this area of the study is rejected.

The Paired Samples T-Test also revealed a significant difference in the students' reading comprehension before and after the implementation of the Marungko Strategy ($T = -8.461, p < .001$). The higher post-test mean score indicates an improvement in how well the students understand what they read. Therefore, the null hypothesis is likewise rejected, confirming that the Marungko Strategy is effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

Based on the available data, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions:

This study provides strong evidence that the Marungko Strategy is an effective intervention for improving the reading skills of Junior High School students, particularly in word recognition and comprehension. The significant improvement in their performance from pre-test to post-test shows that systematic and structured instruction plays an important role in developing reading ability.

It has a positive and significant effect on improving the reading skills of Junior High School students in Filipino. The findings provide strong evidence to support the recommendation of using this strategy more widely in teaching reading in Filipino at the Junior High School level.

RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study may serve as a basis for revising policies and programs aimed at improving the overall reading performance of students. Reading Coordinators should also conduct regular training and monitoring of Filipino teachers on the proper use of the strategy, while improving instructional materials based on the identified needs of learners. Furthermore, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions may be organized for parents to help them support the use of the Marungko Strategy at home, as parental involvement has been shown to play an important role in the success of reading interventions.

It is also recommended that the Marungko Strategy continue to be used as part of regular reading instruction in Filipino at the Junior High School level, especially for students with instructional and frustration-level reading skills, due to its proven effectiveness in improving reading performance. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct studies with larger samples and across more schools to strengthen the generalizability of the findings, as well as to compare the Marungko Strategy with other reading interventions to determine its relative effectiveness.

CONSENT

As per international standards or universities standard, respondents' signed consent was the author(s) collected and preserved the materials.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The researchers followed and adhered to all of the criteria for conducting the study, including the assessment methodology and standardized criteria. Voluntary participation, privacy, confidentiality, and permission. The Assumption College of Nabunturan Ethics Review Committee's requirements for organizational/location and technology issues were strictly adhered to. The researchers gained certification for carrying out the investigation.

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