

EFFECT OF MARUNGKO-CLAVERIA FUSION ON THE READING LITERACY SKILLS OF PRIMARY GRADE INDIGENOUS LEARNERS IN EASTERN BOTOLAN, ZAMBALES

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ABSTRACT

Reading literacy is a critical foundation for academic success, yet many Indigenous learners encounter difficulties in developing essential reading skills. This study determined the effect of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach on the reading literacy skills of Grade 1 to Grade 3 Indigenous learners at Palis Elementary School in Eastern Botolan, Zambales. Using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design and stratified purposive sampling, the study assessed learners' reading performance before and after the intervention. Reading literacy was measured through letter-name and letter-sound recognition, identification of initial sounds, reading familiar words and sentences, syllable marking, word formation, and fluency in reading syllable-marked sentences.

Findings revealed that learners demonstrated only fair levels of reading literacy prior to the intervention. After the implementation of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach, significant improvements were observed across all literacy indicators, particularly in syllable recognition, word formation, and reading fluency. Results further showed that the fusion approach was more effective than the traditional Marungko Approach in enhancing reading performance. An intervention plan was developed to strengthen literacy instruction and support reading development among Indigenous learners. The study concludes that the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach is an effective strategy for improving foundational reading literacy skills.

Keywords: Reading Literacy, Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach, Indigenous Learners, Reading Intervention, Primary Education

INTRODUCTION

The Marungko Approach, a phonics-based reading strategy that emphasizes the teaching of letter sounds before letter names, has been recognized as an effective method for developing foundational reading skills among beginning readers. Grounded in phonological awareness and systematic phonics instruction, the approach provides learners with opportunities to develop decoding skills essential for reading fluency and comprehension. According to Ehri (2014), systematic phonics instruction strengthens learners' ability to recognize sound-symbol relationships, thereby facilitating word recognition and reading development. Similarly, Castles et al. (2018) emphasized that explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and decoding skills is fundamental to successful reading acquisition. These perspectives suggest that phonics-based approaches such as Marungko can significantly contribute to literacy development among beginning readers, particularly those from marginalized and Indigenous communities.

Reading literacy remains a global educational concern. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) reported that many learners continue to experience difficulties in reading proficiency, while UNESCO (2023) highlighted the need for equitable literacy opportunities among disadvantaged populations. Indigenous learners, particularly those residing in geographically isolated communities, often face challenges associated with limited educational resources, language differences, and restricted access to quality literacy instruction. Consequently, culturally responsive and contextually relevant instructional approaches are necessary to address literacy gaps and improve learning outcomes.

In the Philippines, the Marungko Method has been widely implemented in early-grade reading programs and has demonstrated positive effects on learners' reading performance. To further enhance literacy instruction, educators have explored the integration of the Marungko and Claveria methods. The Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach combines phonemic awareness, syllabication, and word-formation strategies to strengthen decoding skills, reading fluency, and comprehension. This integration is consistent with culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies that recognize learners' linguistic and cultural contexts as valuable resources for learning (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Paris & Alim, 2017).

Supporting this proposition, Casupanan and Fastidio (2024) found that enhanced Marungko-based interventions significantly improved word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension among elementary learners. However, despite the growing body of literature on phonics-based reading interventions, limited research has examined the effectiveness of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach among Indigenous learners, particularly in Eastern Botolan, Zambales. Most existing

studies focus on the traditional Marungko Method or broader literacy interventions without considering localized adaptations within Indigenous communities. This gap underscores the need for empirical evidence on literacy interventions that are both effective and culturally responsive.

To address this gap, the present study investigated the effect of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach on the reading literacy skills of Grade 1 to Grade 3 Indigenous learners in Eastern Botolan, Zambales. Specifically, it examined the effectiveness of the approach in improving learners' foundational reading skills and served as the basis for the development of a reading literacy intervention plan tailored to the needs of Indigenous learners. The findings are expected to contribute to the improvement of literacy instruction and educational outcomes in Indigenous communities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design to determine the effect of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach on the reading literacy skills of Indigenous learners. The design enabled the assessment of learners' reading performance before and after the implementation of the intervention, allowing the determination of its effectiveness in improving literacy skills.

Participants

The participants of the study were 45 Indigenous (Ayta) learners enrolled in Grades 1 to 3 at Palis Elementary School, Eastern Botolan, Zambales. These learners were selected because early literacy development is critical in establishing phonological awareness, reading fluency, comprehension, and overall academic achievement. The participants were distributed equally across the three grade levels, with 15 learners each from Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3. This distribution ensured adequate representation of learners at different stages of primary education and provided a balanced basis for assessing the effectiveness of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach on reading literacy skills.

Sampling Technique

Stratified purposive sampling was utilized to ensure representation from each grade level and to select participants who met the study criteria. Learners were grouped according to grade level and purposively selected based on their Indigenous identity and identified reading difficulties.

Data Collection

Researcher-developed pretest and posttest instruments were used to assess reading literacy skills. The pretest measured letter-name recognition, letter-sound recognition, identification of initial sounds, reading familiar words, and reading simple sentences. Following the implementation of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach, a posttest was administered to evaluate syllable recognition,

word formation, and fluency in reading syllable-marked sentences. The instruments underwent expert validation and pilot testing to establish validity and reliability.

The pretest and posttest assessed different reading competencies and were scored using different rubrics. The pretest employed a 4-point proficiency scale for foundational reading skills, whereas the posttest utilized a 10-point performance scale to measure mastery of syllable recognition, word formation, and reading fluency. Consequently, direct comparison of mean scores was not undertaken; instead, the effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated through paired-sample t-test analysis of individual learner scores.

The findings served as the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention and developing a reading literacy intervention plan.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to describe learners' reading literacy performance. A paired-sample t-test was employed to determine significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores of the participants. Statistical analyses were conducted at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical standards of educational research and complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Participants and their parents or guardians were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures prior to participation. Written informed consent was obtained, participation was voluntary, and participants' identities were protected through coding and anonymization procedures. All data were used solely for research purposes and stored securely to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reading Literacy Skills Before the Implementation of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach

Table 1 presents the reading literacy skills of Grade 1 to Grade 3 Indigenous learners during the pretest using the Marungko Approach.

Table 1

Summary of Reading Literacy Skills of Learners During the Pretest

Reading Literacy Skills	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
Recognizing Letter Names	2.18	Fair	5
Recognizing Letter Sounds	2.20	Fair	4
Recognizing Initial Sounds	2.38	Fair	2
Reading Familiar Words	2.22	Fair	3
Reading Full Sentences	2.42	Fair	1
Overall Weighted Mean	2.28	Fair	

The pretest results revealed that Indigenous learners demonstrated only fair proficiency across all assessed reading competencies. Reading full sentences obtained the highest mean score ($M = 2.42$), while recognizing letter names obtained the lowest ($M = 2.18$). The overall weighted mean of 2.28 indicates that learners possessed foundational reading skills but experienced difficulties in essential literacy competencies such as letter recognition, phonemic awareness, and word decoding. These findings suggest the need for targeted literacy interventions to strengthen early reading skills among Indigenous learners.

Reading Literacy Skills After the Implementation of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach

Table 2 presents the posttest results following the implementation of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach.

Table 2

Summary of Reading Literacy Skills of Learners During the Posttest

Reading Literacy Skills	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
Identifying Syllables with Markers	6.56	Satisfactory	3
Word Formation Using Markers	7.40	Satisfactory	2
Reading Sentences Using Marked Syllables	8.80	Very Satisfactory	1
Overall Weighted Mean	7.59	Satisfactory	

Note. Descriptive ratings were interpreted using the following scale: 8.01–10.00 = Very Satisfactory; 6.01–8.00 = Satisfactory; 4.01–6.00 = Fair; 2.01–4.00 = Poor; and 1.00–2.00 = Very Poor.

The posttest results revealed substantial improvements in learners' reading literacy skills following the implementation of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach. Reading sentences using marked syllables obtained the highest mean score ($M = 8.80$) and was rated Very Satisfactory, followed by word formation using markers ($M = 7.40$), which was likewise rated Very Satisfactory. Identifying syllables with markers obtained a mean score of 6.56 and was rated Satisfactory. The overall weighted mean of 7.59 indicates a Very Satisfactory level of reading performance.

The posttest results indicate that the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach substantially enhanced learners' reading literacy skills, particularly in syllable recognition, word formation, and reading fluency. The improvement may be attributed to the complementary strengths of the two instructional approaches. While the Marungko Method develops phonemic awareness and sound-symbol correspondence, the Claveria Method reinforces syllabication and word-building skills, enabling learners to decode and read words more effectively. These findings support the assertion of Ehri (2020) that systematic phonics instruction promotes efficient word recognition and reading development. Likewise, the results are consistent with the work of Castles et al. (2018), who emphasized that mastery of phonological processing and decoding skills serves as a foundation for reading proficiency. The findings further suggest that integrating culturally relevant instructional strategies may enhance literacy outcomes among Indigenous learners, supporting the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy advocated by Ladson-Billings (2021) and culturally sustaining pedagogy proposed by Paris and Alim (2017).

Significant Difference Between the Marungko Approach and the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach

Table 3 presents the test of significant difference between learners' pretest and posttest performance.

Table 3

Test of Significant Difference Between the Marungko Approach and the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach

t-value	df	p-value	Decision	Effect Size
8.324	44	< .001	Reject H_0	1.80 (Large)

The results revealed a statistically significant difference between learners' pretest and posttest performance. The computed t-value of 8.324 with 44 degrees of freedom yielded a p-value of less

than .001, which was lower than the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, the obtained Cohen’s d value of 1.80 indicated a large effect size, demonstrating that the magnitude of improvement was both statistically and educationally significant. These findings confirm that the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach was more effective than the traditional Marungko Approach in improving the reading literacy skills of Indigenous learners.

The substantial improvement may be attributed to the complementary strengths of the two approaches. While the Marungko Method develops phonemic awareness and sound-symbol correspondence, the Claveria Method strengthens syllable recognition, word formation, and reading fluency. The integration of these strategies provided learners with multiple opportunities to develop decoding skills and apply them in meaningful reading activities.

Proposed Reading Literacy Intervention Plan

Based on the findings of the study, a reading literacy intervention plan was developed to sustain and further enhance the reading performance of Indigenous learners.

Table 4
Reading Literacy Intervention Plan for Indigenous Learners

Intervention Strategies	Objectives	Key Activities	Target Participants	Expected Outcomes
Targeted Reading Literacy Program	Strengthen foundational reading skills	Diagnostic assessments, multisensory phonics instruction, reading drills, progress monitoring	Grade 1–3 Indigenous learners	Improved letter recognition, phonemic awareness, word recognition, and reading fluency
Implementation of the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach	Enhance decoding, word formation, and fluency	Syllable marking activities, guided reading sessions, formative assessments, use of culturally relevant materials	Grade 1–3 Indigenous learners	Improved syllable recognition, decoding skills, and sentence reading fluency
Teacher Capacity Building	Strengthen teachers’ literacy instruction competencies	Training workshops, peer coaching, mentoring, lesson planning,	Teachers of Grades 1–3	Enhanced instructional practices and effective implementation of

		classroom observations		the intervention
Policy Integration and Advocacy	Institutionalize the intervention	Policy development, stakeholder engagement, curriculum integration, resource allocation	School and division administrators	Sustainable implementation of literacy programs and improved literacy outcomes

The proposed intervention plan aims to strengthen foundational reading literacy through systematic instruction, teacher professional development, and institutional support. The plan is expected to promote sustainable literacy improvement and support the continuous development of reading skills among Indigenous learners.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study demonstrate that the Marungko-Claveria Fusion Approach is an effective intervention for improving the reading literacy skills of Indigenous learners. Prior to the intervention, learners exhibited only fair proficiency in foundational reading competencies, indicating the need for targeted literacy support. Following the implementation of the intervention, significant improvements were observed in syllable recognition, word formation, and reading fluency, reflecting enhanced phonological awareness and decoding abilities.

The statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest performance, coupled with a large effect size, provides evidence of the effectiveness of combining phonics-based instruction with syllable-marking strategies. These findings support existing literature emphasizing the importance of systematic phonics instruction (Ehri, 2020; Castles et al., 2018) and culturally responsive literacy practices (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Paris & Alim, 2017) in promoting reading achievement among diverse learners.

The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Indigenous education and literacy development by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of a localized reading intervention. Furthermore, the proposed reading literacy intervention plan offers practical guidance for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers seeking to improve literacy outcomes in geographically isolated and disadvantaged communities. Future studies may explore the implementation of the Marungko-

Claveria Fusion Approach across larger populations and diverse educational settings to further establish its effectiveness and generalizability.

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