



# DECODING PROFICIENCY OF GRADE ONE LEARNERS IN FRUSTRATION LEVEL: BASIS FOR A SCHOOL-BASED BEGINNING READING PROGRAM

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## ABSTRACT

The Study examines Grade One learners' decoding skills, and it seeks to answer the level of decoding proficiency of grade one learners in Filipino and their Mother Tongue. Descriptive non-experimental quantitative approaches were used, and quantifiable data was used in the descriptive study "Decoding Proficiency Of Grade One Learners In Frustration Level: Basis For A School-Based Beginning Reading Program." According to Gay (2006), descriptive-correlation design validates conditions. Questionnaires collect evaluation data. This study includes grade one learners from the following elementary schools in Padada District, Davao del Sur: Padada Central Elementary School, Padada South Elementary School, Paulina J. Dinglasa Elementary School, Mariano Saron Elementary School, and Lower Katipunan Elementary School. Just Grade 1 pupils who were frustrated on the pre-test reading assessment's decoding proficiency level were studied. This study selected 211 Grade 1 pupils from a pool of 445 learners in Padada District for the 2024–2025 academic year. Sample manageability and population representation result. First-graders' decoding skills: Filipino is Satisfactory, Mother Tongue is Outstanding, Omission; Had Not Meet Expectation, Substitution; Very Satisfactory, Repetition; Insertion. Novice readers develop hierarchically ordered sub-skills that improve comprehension, according to Dole et al. (1991). Achieving these attributes makes readers experts. Since Mother Tongue is their first language, grade one students were better at decoding faults in it than Filipino.

**KEYWORDS-** Beginning Reading Program, Decoding Proficiency, frustration level, and Grade One Learners

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching children to read has long been a crucial aspect of education. Throughout history, various methods and resources have been employed by educators to support children's reading development. With advancements in understanding brain development and recognizing the appropriate age for acquiring specific reading skills, it becomes clear that reading instruction must be sequential and tailored to the developmental stage of each learner. This approach ensures that reading lessons are both effective and suitable for the child's cognitive and emotional growth.

Word decoding is a fundamental reading ability that instructs youngsters on the correlation between individual letters or letter combinations and spoken language. Memorizing letter patterns and their corresponding sounds is an essential skill for students learning to read, as it enables them to subsequently focus on advanced literacy skills such as comprehension and writing (Abbott et al., 2022).

This talent, along with phonics and phonemic awareness, constitutes the essential components foundational to phonological awareness. Phonological skills help children understand words composed of sounds (phonemes) represented by various letters (Acha and Perea, 2020).

Phonics instruction aids youngsters in deciphering challenging words that deviate from phonetic principles, which is why classroom teachers also instruct on exceptions to these rules. In the English language, certain words, such as "cough" or "the," are indecipherable to students. As pupils master the decoding of simpler words, they will begin to identify the idiosyncrasies of more complex ones (Achenbach, 2021).

An early reading program can furnish crucial assistance for young learners. Children acquire knowledge at every developmental stage, but the early years are particularly critical for language acquisition and overall learning. Allowing children to enjoy themselves while gradually understanding the science of reading. Reading is an invaluable talent, which is why it is among the initial essential competencies imparted to children in educational settings (Acheson and McDonald, 2023).

Structured literacy is an evidence-based instructional approach rooted in the science of reading. It offers a structured and clear framework for cultivating fundamental reading skills, emphasizing phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This method not only examines the intricate processes involved in learning to read but also strengthens connections between reading and other language skills, such as speaking, spelling, and writing (Adams, 2020).



As children enter their early school years, they are introduced to fundamental skills that boost their learning. The period between pre-K and first grade is pivotal for a child's enduring literacy and prospective academic achievement. Implementing early reading programs can effectively benefit children during this developmental period (Adelman et al., 2024).

Significant progress has been made in both theoretical knowledge and real-world applications of decoding proficiency. Empirical studies demonstrate the advancement of complex theories and interventions designed to enhance reading proficiency, specifically in the context of early childhood education and for struggling readers. The improved utilization of natural language processing and machine learning technologies in creating adaptive reading programs represents a significant advancement in the field. These initiatives use real-time data to target instruction to each student's requirements better and increase decoding proficiency (Smith, 2021).

Developing decoding skills is essential to the development of literacy, particularly in the Philippines, where a variety of linguistic backgrounds may affect students' academic performance. Studies conducted in 2020 have brought attention to the difficulties and methods involved in helping Filipino pupils' decoding abilities. For example, Dela Cruz et al.'s study from 2021 looked at how well phonics-based treatments worked for first-graders in urban schools to improve their decoding abilities. According to the results, students' capacity to decode unfamiliar words improved dramatically with systematic phonics instruction, indicating that focused interventions can successfully repair literacy disparities in early school (Dela Cruz et al., 2021).

The Philippine Department of Education has recognized that decoding is essential to overall literacy and has launched a number of programs to support reading proficiency. The "National Reading Program" integrates phonemic awareness and decoding techniques into the curriculum, emphasizing the value of early literacy interventions (DepEd, 2022).

In the Division of Davao del Sur, specifically in Padada District, many Grade One learners face significant challenges in mastering decoding skills, often struggling with errors that hinder their early reading development. Mispronunciations, omissions, substitutions, and repetitions disrupt fluency, making word recognition and comprehension difficult. This study seeks to analyze these difficulties and provide targeted interventions to enhance early literacy. By identifying specific decoding issues and implementing structured support strategies, the research aims to equip young learners with the foundational reading skills essential for academic success.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This all-encompassing strategy represents a move toward more thorough literacy frameworks that take into account the complexity of reading development. Recent research, for instance, highlights the need for early and continuous intervention by highlighting the role that phonics teaching and phonemic awareness play in the development of decoding skills (Miller & Hughes, 2023).

Policy modifications and educational reforms have progressively emphasized evidence-based methodologies for teaching decoding. These revisions are motivated by an enhanced comprehension of the cognitive processes associated with reading and the efficacy of diverse instructional techniques (Brown, 2024).

To enhance decoding skills, research has increasingly focused on integrating phonics instruction and phonemic awareness into holistic literacy frameworks. Research indicates that systematic phonics instruction is crucial for the development of effective decoding skills, particularly in early literacy education (Ehri et al., 2020).

Enhancing decoding ability has also been greatly aided by technological developments. Adaptive learning technologies are a recent breakthrough that offers targeted practice and individualized feedback to handle individual reading issues more efficiently (Guszcza, 2021).

Furthermore, there has been a discernible trend in the direction of comprehending the cognitive mechanisms that underlie decoding. Studies have indicated that in order to improve decoding abilities, it is crucial to incorporate cognitive science understandings with instructional tactics (Nation, 2022).

The significance of literacy cannot be overstated. Similar to spoken language, written language serves as a medium that enables people to interact with fresh knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and narratives. (Snow, 2016; Cherry & Vignoles, 2020).

A reading error transpires when there is a divergence between the text on the page and the words said by the students during oral reading. The research found that a higher frequency of errors was linked to subpar reading and language proficiency. Nonetheless, the capacity for self-correction of errors was predicted early on, transcending mere reading and linguistic competencies (Aimsweb, 2022).

Children make mistakes when they read aloud and deviate from the text that is being given. Even though they are frequently viewed as mistakes, these mistakes might reveal important information about a child's reading progress and skills. Errors can take many different forms, such as substitutions, reversals, insertions, omissions, and corrections. Distinct mistake types provide distinct diagnostic signals. For example, corrections can reflect a child's



capacity for self-monitoring and context understanding, whereas omissions could point to problems with visual tracking or focus (ThoughtCo 2023).

According to recent research, miscue analysis is crucial for early reading instruction because it gives teachers a thorough grasp of their kids' reading processes and aids in the creation of focused interventions. For instance, the absence of words frequently impairs understanding, indicating the necessity of therapies centered on visual tracking and attention (The Advocate, 2022).

Also, research on L2 Chinese learners emphasizes the complexity of errors in multilingual settings. The results of this study highlight the varied demands of students in various educational environments by showing that some mistake kinds, such as those based on orthographic and syntactic faults, are adversely associated with silent reading comprehension (Eric 2020).

In most situations, the causes of mispronunciation include a lack of vocabulary, practice, learning experiences, lack of direct contact with the language, and a lack of self-confidence. An experienced teacher of non-native speakers of English is able to easily discern the causes of mispronunciation. According to Ambrosa et al.'s research from 2020, individuals who have recently begun engaging in the process of learning English as a foreign language, particularly pupils attending primary schools, as well as teachers of English, are confronted with difficulties in correctly pronouncing words in English.

An interesting fact about speed reading is that even if the learner is a beginner or a very experienced one, the risk of skimming and not reading it correctly is quite high. Chances are that the learner will end up skipping some fundamental details, especially if they tend to like the twists in the books they're reading. Talking about the mispronunciation of words while speed reading is normal to do so as some individuals have to cover more words in a given time compared to an average reader (Andrews and Hersch, 2020).

Subvocalization, or auditory reassurance, is a prevalent tendency among readers. This entails subvocalization during reading, which is a primary factor contributing to sluggish reading rates and difficulties in enhancing reading speed among learners. Sub-vocalization is beneficial for understanding intricate terminology and foreign or technical vocabulary when reading. The objective is for the learners to swiftly peruse the text before commencing the reading of the book. A rapid scanning technique involves using a finger to trace "S" shapes across and down the page while directing one's gaze to follow the tip of the finger during the scan. The objective of this scan is not to acquire understanding but to identify unknown words and concepts (Andrews and Lo, 2022).

Speed reading is a valuable talent for efficiently processing extensive data; nonetheless, it is crucial to maintain a balance between velocity and understanding. When a learner finds that mispronouncing words or other issues are affecting their comprehension of the text, they would have to slow down their reading speed to ensure better comprehension. It's also worth noting that speed reading techniques vary, and some methods may be more effective for one learner than others. The learner may be able to improve their reading speed and comprehension by exploring different techniques and finding what works best for them (Argamon et al., 2023).

Some factors that contribute to mispronunciation of words during reading include mother tongue influence, different accents, word stress position, and the effect of personality. These factors can have a great influence on the learner. Additionally, the phonological forms of words and the focus on spelling can interfere with the way learners process pronunciation, leading to more errors in reading-aloud tasks compared to delayed repetition tasks (Bates et al., 2023).

On several levels of language, omission happens as a general rhetorical approach. On a grand scale, it is linked to the rhetorical tactic called brevity. However, even at the micro level, there are a plethora of omission-based rhetorical strategies and tropes (Beyersmann et al., 2023).

Lesion on the right side of the brain is commonly linked to Neglect Dyslexia, a reading disorder. Most mistakes made when reading single words include the left-side letters being either swapped out or left out entirely. A single mechanism has traditionally been believed to be responsible for these errors (Bice et al., 2024).

Specifically, errors in substitution are caused by a perceptual integration process, while omissions are handled by a visuo-spatial system. Research suggests that increasing letter spacing can make substitutes less common by reestablishing integration processes, but increasing omissions by relocating part of the string more into unattended space can have the opposite effect (Blevins, 2022).

When a learner omits a word while reading, it may indicate deficient visual tracking. Many readers and reading theorists share a "common sense" intuition that such omissions and substitutions during oral reading result from the reader's inability to perceive the omitted or substituted word or from insufficient visual engagement with it (Fuchs et al., 2021).



### Statement of the Problem

This study aims to assess the Decoding Proficiency of Grade One Learners. Furthermore, it aims to address the subsequent sub-problems:

1. What is the level of Decoding Proficiency of Grade One Learners in terms of:
  - 1.1 Mispronunciation
  - 1.2 Omission of Letter
  - 1.3 Substitution of Letter
  - 1.4 Repetition of Letter Sound
  - 1.5 Insertion of Letter
2. Is there a significant difference on the decoding proficiency of grade one learners in frustration level when analyzed as to Mother Tongue and Filipino?
3. Based on the findings drawn out from the study, what School-Based Beginning Reading Program can be proposed and designed?

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

A quantitative research method that is descriptive and does not include experimentation will be utilized for this investigation. It is descriptive due to the fact that the facts are presented in quantitative descriptions on the topic of "Decoding Proficiency of Grade One Learners in Frustration Level: Basis for a School-Based Beginning Reading Program." The descriptive-correlation design, as stated by Gay (2006), is responsible for determining and supporting the current state of affairs. When performing an evaluation, it is common practice to collect the data through the use of a questionnaire.

#### Research Respondents

The respondents to this study will be grade one learners from Padada District elementary schools, specifically Padada Central Elementary School, Padada South Elementary School, Paulina J. Dinglase Elementary School, Mariano Sarona Elementary School, and Lower Katipunan Elementary School, all located in the Division of Davao del Sur. The study will only include learners who are officially enrolled in Grade 1 during the current academic year of 2024-2025, who are identified at a frustration level decoding proficiency level in reading during the pre-test reading assessment.

This study will target a total of 211 Grade 1 learners, carefully selected from a population of 445 enrolled students across the Padada District during the 2024–2025 school year. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, a statistical tool designed to calculate an optimal sample size for a given population while maintaining a margin of error of 5%. This ensures that the sample is both manageable and representative of the larger population.

The distribution of participants includes 112 learners from Padada Central Elementary School, 44 from Padada South Elementary School, 30 from Paulina J. Dinglase Elementary School, 25 from Mariano Sarona Elementary School, and 16 from Lower Katipunan Elementary School. To guarantee equitable representation, a stratified random sampling method was employed. This method not only ensures that the sample reflects the diversity of the overall population but also allows for a more precise analysis of variations across different school contexts.

Stratified random sampling is a statistical technique that entails segmenting a population into specific subgroups, or strata, and then selecting a random sample from each stratum (Ali & Al-Kassab, 2015). This strategy enhances estimate precision by ensuring fair representation of every subgroup, which is particularly beneficial in heterogeneous populations. In comparison to simple random sampling, this method is recognized for yielding estimators with reduced variance. To enhance representativeness and minimize sampling bias, random samples are extracted from each stratum in accordance with their size within the overall population (Goyal et al., 2024). It is beneficial for aggregate queries in data analysis as it aims to enhance statistical precision and reduce estimator variance (Nguyen et al., 2018).

By assessing their reading profiles and learning needs, the study aims to shed light on key factors affecting reading proficiency among grade 1 learners. Their participation will help determine key aspects of literacy performance, reading experiences, and the specific needs of learners struggling with reading in the Padada District. Furthermore, this information will help us gain a better understanding of how to improve early literacy education in these schools and will serve as the foundation for creating a school-based beginning reading program.

#### Research Instrument

In this study, one (1) set of test questionnaires will be used. The test is anchored on the adopted program of the Department of Education using the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), which aims to improve the literacy performance of the pupils. The CRLA assessment tool focuses on letter sounds, isolated words, and sentences in reading in Mother Tongue and Filipino.

#### Data Analysis

For the purpose of organizing and analyzing the data collected for the study, the following statistical tools will be utilized:



Average Weighted Mean. A fundamental measure of central tendency in statistics the mean, which is also commonly referred to as the average, serves as a fundamental measure of central tendency. The mean is the value that is exactly in the middle of a collection of numbers, and the standard deviation is the difference between the mean of the group and the mean of the group, which demonstrates the variety that exists within a group of values (Bland, 2006). For the purpose of determining the degree of the decoding competency of the learners in grade one, this instrument will be utilized to determine the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Following the completion of the analysis and interpretation of the findings, this chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and suggestions that were formulated by the researcher.

This study seeks to determine the level of Decoding Proficiency of Grade One Learners. Moreover, it sought to answer the level of the decoding proficiency of the grade one learners in Filipino and Mother Tongue. Additionally, the research strategy used in this study was a descriptive, non-experimental quantitative approach. The data for "Decoding Proficiency Of Grade One Learners In Frustration Level: Basis For A School-Based Beginning Reading Program" are reported quantitatively, making it a descriptive study. Gay (2006) argues that descriptive-correlation design establishes and validates existing conditions. It is common practice to gather data when performing an evaluation by means of a questionnaire.

The respondents to this study will be grade one learners from Padada District Elementary Schools, specifically Padada Central Elementary School, Padada South Elementary School, Paulina J. Dinglasa Elementary School, Mariano Saron Elementary School, and Lower Katipunan Elementary School, all located in the Division of Davao del Sur. The study only included learners who were officially enrolled in Grade 1 during the current academic year of 2024-2025, who were identified at a frustration level on decoding proficiency level in reading during the pre-test reading assessment.

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### **Conclusions**

The following conclusions are reached from the combined results of this study:

The decoding competencies of the grade one learner are as follows: mispronunciation; Filipino is Satisfactory, Mother Tongue is Outstanding, Omission; Filipino is Did Not Meet Expectation, Mother Tongue Outstanding, Substitution; Filipino is Satisfactory, Mother Tongue is Very Satisfactory, Repetition; Filipino is Satisfactory, Mother Tongue is Outstanding and Insertion; Filipino is Satisfactory, and Mother Tongue is Outstanding.

The results of this study correspond with the research conducted by Dole et al. (1991), which posits that rookie readers develop a series of hierarchically organized sub-skills that progressively enhance their comprehension capacity. Upon mastering these skills, readers are regarded as experts who understand the material they engage with. This study reveals that grade one learners have better performance in decoding in their Mother Tongue than in Filipino all throughout the miscues of decoding. This is because the Mother Tongue is the basic language of the learners.

Research by Genesee and Lindholm-leary (2020) and others consistently shows that students do far better in school when they are able to use their native language. You can find this kind of proof from a variety of places. First, there is strong evidence from recent meta-analyses indicating educational programs that intentionally use students' native languages in their lessons improve students' performance in school.

### **Recommendations**

The following suggestions are made in consideration of the researcher's conclusions from this study:

DepEd Officials may create a policy that would consider beginning reading programs as an integral modality to assist modular instruction in schools. Besides, the department will conduct a reorientation for all school leaders on the mechanics of the conduct of decoding proficiency of grade one learners as the basis for the school-based beginning reading program.

In order for school administrators to implement a program in the classroom that will improve first graders' decoding skills, they need to be aware of the study's results and conclusions. This program is designed to help struggling readers at an early stage through an intervention approach in schools.

Teachers may have extended the extra mile by conducting a beginning reading program to follow up on the lessons given to learners in the modules. Learners can be guided further if teachers give further instruction on the activities they are going to do that are found in the module. The intervention program will run for 30 minutes daily apart from the subjects in the class program.

Future Researchers are enjoined to conduct research on the importance of decoding proficiency as an important skill for reading comprehension across disciplines.



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