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**LEARNERS' READING DIFFICULTIES IN *HILIGAYNON*: BASIS FOR REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM**

**JENELYN M. MENDIOLA**

**TEACHER I**

Hibao-An Integrated School  
mendiolajenelyn6@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

The study was conducted to determine the Grade 1 learners' reading difficulties in *Hiligaynon* as basis for Remedial Reading Program at District VII- Mandurriao, Schools Division of Iloilo City, for school year 2022-2023. The research method utilized in the study was descriptive using in-depth interviews. The study used phenomenology under qualitative research design. The participants of the study were 10 Grade I teachers from District VII- Mandurriao, Schools Division of Iloilo City. Based on the results of the in-depth interview with the Grade 1 teachers regarding learners' reading difficulties in *Hiligaynon*, it was found that Grade 1 learners had difficulty recognizing and blending letter sounds, limited vocabulary, and poor comprehension skills. It was also found out that Grade 1 teachers manage the learners' reading difficulties in *Hiligaynon* through constant reading practice, individualized reading instruction, integration of games and engaging activities, and utilization of ICT-based reading instruction.

**Keywords:** *Learners, Reading Difficulties, Hiligaynon, Remedial Reading Program*

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is the foundation for academic achievement and future opportunities, but many children need more time or training to develop this foundation. Children who lack the necessary literacy skills may fall behind quickly and suffer long-term consequences.

Teaching children to read from a young age is critical to improving educational outcomes. Children who do not learn to read in the early grades have a more difficult time developing more advanced skills that are often absorbed through reading.

According to research, reading in one's mother language early in school helps minimize dropout rates and makes education more engaging, relevant, and fun for youngsters. Children who benefit from mother-tongue instruction and learning also perform better in their second language (Dankyi, 2017).

In the K to 12 Curriculum, students in the early grades start learning in their mother tongue, the language they know best. It helps them build a strong foundation before they learn other languages (Department of Education, 2016).

To create lifelong learners in their Language 1 (Mother Tongue), Language 2 (Filipino, the national language), and Language 3 (English, the global language), the learners are more than ready to develop their skills in the different learning areas. It will serve as their passport to enter and achieve well in the mainstream educational system and, in the end, contribute productively to their community and the larger society (Department of Education, 2016).

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In line with this policy, teachers in the early grades teach reading in their mother tongue language, which is Hiligaynon. It is also used as the medium of instruction in all subject areas except Filipino and English from Kinder to Grade 3.

However, beginning reading in the early grades is one of the problems that most teachers encounter. First-grade learners are expected to read fluently and comprehend text in Hiligaynon. However, based on reports, most teachers were challenged to make all learners master their reading skills in reading Hiligaynon. Reading difficulties arise over time because of the different factors that affect it.

According to some studies, pupils who enter Grade 1 class with limited academic language skills are typically left behind with other school children in reading. If this problem is not solved, it will continue and reach higher grades (Bon, 2020).

In the above circumstances, it is crucial to determine the learners' reading difficulties in Hiligaynon so that teachers can plan an appropriate remedial reading program. Otherwise, all the initiatives in this regard will be unsuccessful. The learners will not be able to learn the target competencies, and the objectives of the curriculum will not be achieved. If this problem still needs to be solved, it will continue and reach higher grades.

On these observations, the researcher tried to determine the Grade I learners' reading difficulties in Hiligaynon as a basis for coming up with a remedial reading program.

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## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis used in this study. The purpose of this study was to determine the Grade 1 learners' reading difficulties in Hiligaynon as a basis of the remedial reading program in District VII-Mandurriao of the Schools Division of Iloilo City during the school year 2022-2023.

### Research Method

The research method utilized in the study was qualitative research using in-depth interviews (Hogg, 2020).

The interviewer with the interviewee during the interview was allowed to sit together at a distance and to think about the series of questions about a certain issue. The aim was to get the main or the necessary views of the participants on a certain issue in a social context through the responses of the participants to the questions.

### Research Design

The study used a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to conducting qualitative research. By concentrating on a person's subjective

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perceptions of what she encounters, phenomenology seeks to understand how others see the world and how this view differs from commonly held beliefs. Phenomenology is commonly utilized in domains such as psychology, sociology, and social work and involves interviewing subjects to learn their impressions.

According to Smith (2008), phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality; it's being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.

### Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were ten purposely selected Grade 1 teachers in District VII-Mandurriao in Schools Division of Iloilo City.

### Sampling Design

A purposive sampling design was used in the study to focus on a particular population that shares certain issues that have unique cases.

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A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling (Crossman, 2020).

## Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule. The interview schedule has four questions focusing on the purpose of the study. Voice and video recorders were used for data gathering and documentation, depending upon the permission of the participants.

## Validity of the Research Instrument

Prior to the determination of the validity of the interview schedule made by the researcher, the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School then a panel of jurors who were considered for their expertise in the field of research, testing, and assessment, and English, were requested to validate each question for review and modification.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of inferences a researcher makes. In content-related evidence of validity, the content and format must be consistent with the definition of variables and a sample of subjects to be measured and also helpful in validating the items in the questionnaire (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

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Comments, corrections, and suggestions of the panel of validators regarding the interview schedule were considered using the appropriate form of Good and Scates (Appendix A).

## Data Gathering Procedures

Permits from the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Office of the District Supervisors, School Heads, and individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally visited the schools/communities/places convenient for the part of the participants to conduct the interview.

The researcher conducted an interview with the participants, but prior to this, the researcher encouraged the participants to sign a waiver or permission relative to the conduct of the study. Minimum health protocols mandated by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), Department of Health (DOH) guidelines amidst the pandemic, DepEd orders on the health protocols, Local Government Units, and the barangay health protocols were strictly observed and followed during the conduct of the study.

Using in-depth interviews, a voice and video recorder were provided to capture the interviewee's words completely. The researcher consolidated all the collected data after a series of interviews.

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## Data Analyses

The information gathered was analyzed using a thematic approach.

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. According to Maguire & Delahunt (2017), the aim of thematic analysis is to identify themes, such as patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is summarizing, analyzing, and interpreting the data gathered and making sense of it.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was conducted to determine the Grade 1 learners' reading difficulties in *Hiligaynon* as a basis for a remedial reading program at District VII, Schools Division of Iloilo City, during the school year 2022-2023.

The research method utilized in the study was descriptive using in-depth interviews.

The study used phenomenology under qualitative research design.

The participants of the study were ten purposely selected Grade 1 teachers in District VII-Mandurriao in the Schools Division of Iloilo City.

The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule. Voice and video recorders were also used for data gathering and documentation, depending upon the permission of the participants.

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A panel of experts validated the interview schedule and considered all comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the tool.

Permits from the individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools/community/place convenient on the part of the participants to conduct the interview, and virtual instruction was done prior to the interview.

Minimum health protocols mandated by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), Department of Health (DOH) guidelines amidst the pandemic, DepEd Orders on the health protocols, Local Government Units, and the barangay health protocols were strictly observed and followed during the conduct of the study.

Using in-depth interviews, voice and video recorders were provided to completely capture the interviewee's words or responses. The researcher consolidated all the collected data after a series of interviews.

The information gathered was analyzed using a thematic approach.

The following are the findings of the study:

Based on the results of the in-depth interview with the Grade 1 teachers as to learners' reading difficulties in Hiligaynon, it was found that Grade 1 learners had difficulty recognizing and blending letter sounds, limited vocabulary, and poor comprehension skills.

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It was also found that Grade 1 teachers manage the learners' reading difficulties in Hiligaynon through constant reading practice, individualized reading instruction, integration of games and engaging activities, and utilization of ICT-based reading instruction.

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

The grade one learners' reading abilities in Hiligaynon were very crucial because these serve as the foundational skills in reading, and they can use them throughout their schooling. They should develop the essential skills in reading Hiligaynon in first grade to prepare them for learning the Filipino and English language.

Recognizing sounds of letters, blending them together, and reading with comprehension were some reading skills that a grade one learner should develop to master the necessary skills in reading Hiligaynon.

Some learners have also difficulty understanding what they are reading in Hiligaynon because of the language barrier and limited vocabulary in their mother tongue language. It also observed that they do not have a sufficient vocabulary in Hiligaynon. Some can read the word, but they have difficulty understanding what they are reading because some students were more exposed to the English language than Hiligaynon because of the influence of social media and the language used at home.

Teachers applied varied teaching strategies that suit the individual needs of learners to manage the reading difficulties of grade one learners in Hiligaynon.

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Early intervention was also utilized to improve learners' reading skills and help them develop the necessary skills in reading.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

The school, feeder barangays, and stakeholders may commit their support for the remedial reading program, which is designed to outgrow shared responsibility and partnership. This would also help the barangay's literacy program, which will make a difference in the lives of the learner recipients with commitment and collaboration.

Teachers may attend training workshops on effective reading remediation strategies and maximize the knowledge gained in the training to improve the reading skills of Grade I learners in Hiligaynon.

To enhance ICT-based reading instruction, DepEd officials should prioritize the upgrading and availability of school I.C.T. equipment for teachers' usage.

Any supplementary reading materials to be utilized in the reading program should be subject to quality assurance for content analysis as well as strict quality verification and control.

To be effective and productive, the reading program should be implemented in partnership with teachers, master teachers, the school head, and parents.

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Good relationships among school heads, teachers, parents, including other stakeholders should be maintained and sustained by creating a program purposely for the institutionalization of good relationships in the school system.

Teachers should be innovative and creative in their use of available resources and the availability of a variety of supplementary reading materials and books to give adequate reading remediation to students.

To sustain parents' interest and excitement in supporting the school and their children's education, parents should be educated on how to teach reading to their children at home.

A copy of the remediation program should be given to the Schools Division Office, Regional Office, and Central Office for them to approve and implement.

If a copy of this recommended remediation and enrichment programs would not be approved, school heads are encouraged to implement these in a local arrangement base only.

A similar study is also encouraged to be conducted in the future and consider other variables not used nor mentioned in the study.

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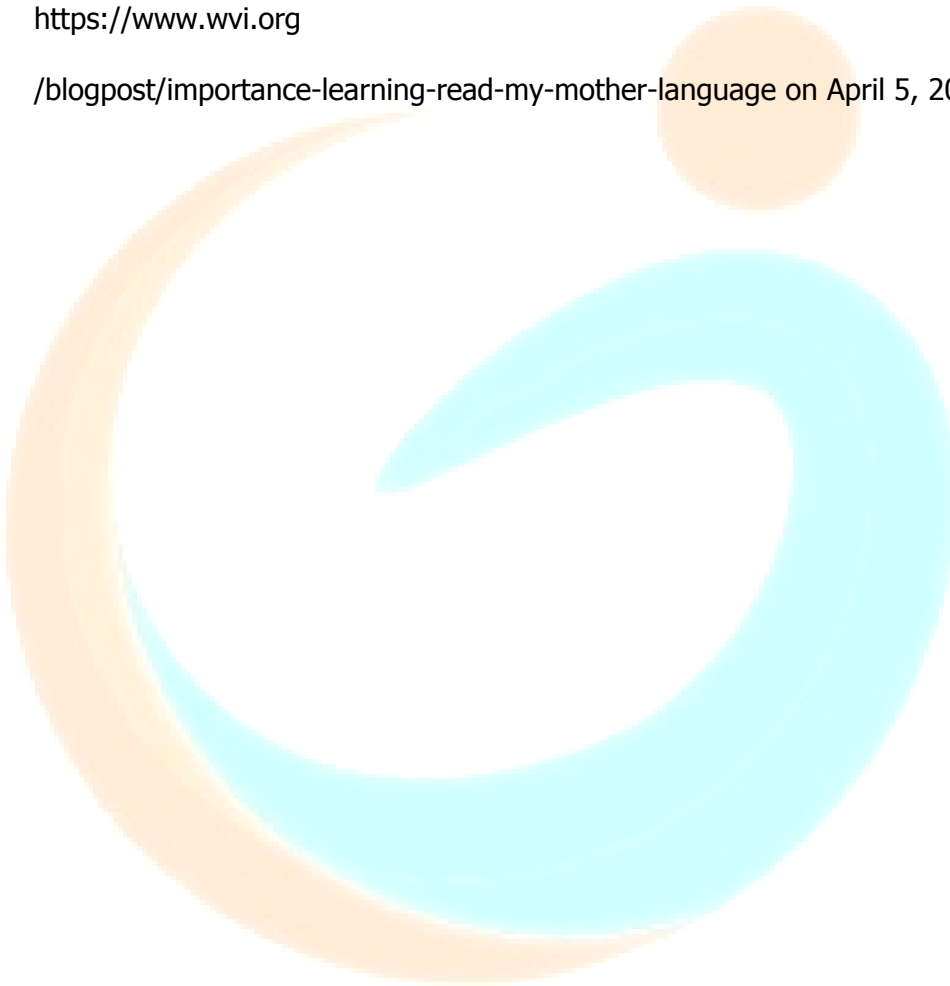


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