



ENHANCING ENGLISH WORD RECOGNITION AND READING COMPREHENSION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH SHARED READING INTERVENTION

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Abstract

Shared reading is one way to support students' reading performances, as it builds a strong foundation for reading literacy and fosters collaboration. However, its role in supporting local students' academic reading performances remains underexplored. This study examined the effectiveness of shared reading as an English reading intervention in enhancing primary school students' word recognition and reading comprehension. Determining the significant differences in their reading performance before and after the intervention was included. Ten Grade 3 students from a primary school in Tinoc, Ifugao, Philippines, who were evaluated with English reading frustration levels, were purposively selected as participants. Using classroom action research, pre- and post-tests were administered to measure their reading progress. Results indicated that the students generally improved significantly in their academic reading performances after using the shared reading intervention. Although some students still experienced frustration levels in their word recognition and comprehension, most were determined to achieve instructional and independent levels by the end of the shared reading sessions. This suggests that the shared reading intervention effectively enhanced the students' word recognition and reading comprehension. This study emphasizes the significance of structured reading interventions at the primary level in enhancing reading proficiency and equipping young students with the essential skills necessary for academic reading success.

Keywords: English reading performance, primary school students, reading comprehension, reading intervention, shared reading, word recognition, Ifugao, Philippines

Introduction

Reading is one of the cornerstones of human communication and knowledge acquisition. Whether delving into literature for enjoyment, seeking information, studying academic texts, or reading in digital formats, reading empowers individuals to engage with information, think critically, and communicate effectively. It is essential for every student's academic success in learning. Reading is a cognitive activity that derives meaning from written texts (Bugtong et al., 2025; Canuto et al., 2024; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Through reading, individuals explore diverse perspectives, expand their worldviews, and enhance their cognition. Its primary objective is to comprehend the intended message of the passage or what the writer aims to

convey (Al Aziz & Yusanti, 2020; Bugtong et al., 2025). It is a multifaceted cognitive process that involves decoding written symbols into meaningful information, comprehending the text's message, and critically engaging with its content. Reading literacy does not simply refer to the ability to identify and articulate words. It is a complex process, not solely recognizing written or printed texts, but, more importantly, assigning meaning to them and drawing a unified thought from them (Cline et al., 2006; Snow, 2002).

Reading skills comprise several interrelated components, such as word recognition and comprehension, that facilitate understanding and meaning-making. Word recognition is the process of instantly and unconsciously identifying a word's pronunciation upon visual inspection (Murray, 2016). Meanwhile, reading comprehension involves concurrently extracting and constructing meaning through engagement with written language (Snow, 2002). It involves making connections between ideas, drawing inferences, and evaluating the author's purpose and perspective. Reading comprehension skills include identifying main ideas, summarizing information, making predictions, and analysing text structures and features (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Snow, 2002; Zhu et al., 2020).

Some students struggle and often lack basic reading skills, which negatively impacts their reading performance. It is noted that low reading skills affect both word recognition and reading comprehension of primary school students (Murray, 2016; Paige, 2020; Snow, 2002; Tomas et al., 2021). In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) language curriculum emphasizes that acquiring complex reading skills at the Grade 3 level is crucial for students (typically aged 8 – 9). By Grade 3, the English language curriculum becomes more content-heavy, requiring students to decode words and understand, analyse, and synthesize information from texts (DepEd, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2023). Students should develop complex reading skills to enhance their comprehension of the material they are learning in their classes. It is the crucial level where the students leap from learning to read to reading to learn. If this academic challenge is not overcome, students may find themselves behind their peers, struggling with reading, while more proficient individuals acquire new information quickly. Therefore, it is imperative to identify and address reading difficulties among Grade 3 students to ensure academic success.

During the most recent global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, schools implemented modular and distance learning models (Choycawen et al., 2024), limiting opportunities for student-teacher interaction. This condition had a profoundly negative impact on students' reading literacy progress (Ludewig et al., 2022). Indications have emerged that some primary school students were not engaged in the learning process during the pandemic, necessitating an evaluation of their reading capabilities. However, this may change as students recommence their reading education (Bugtong et al., 2025; Canuto et al., 2024; Ludewig et al., 2022). Teachers are more focused on conducting reading interventions for primary school students to ensure that literacy deficits from the pandemic and its aftermath are well addressed. This ensures that students develop the skills to read with confidence and understanding, enhance their reading proficiency, and foster a love for reading.

One of the targeted reading interventions involves shared reading. It is a periodic activity conducted by a trained facilitator, during which literary passages are read aloud and analysed (Järvholm et al., 2025). It can be done by sharing or reading a book with peers, adults, or others (Noble et al., 2019). Its purpose is to aid students in reading a long text, thereby fulfilling a reading activity under teacher guidance and providing students with an opportunity to enjoy reading (Savaşkan, 2017). Shared reading facilitates early language acquisition and literacy by involving adults in reading aloud to children, engaging in questioning, commenting on the story, and elaborating on children's responses to encourage interaction (Boyle et al., 2019). It enables students to gain new language experiences, a key teaching method that helps young children develop literacy skills at an early age (Karasu, 2020).

Given the crucial role of reading in students' academic success and lifelong learning, addressing the challenges of reading literacy at the Grade 3 level becomes an urgent educational priority. The lingering effects of disrupted learning during the pandemic and the natural transition in reading highlight the need for effective and engaging interventions, such as shared reading. In this context, the present study aimed to determine the effectiveness of shared reading as an academic intervention in enhancing primary school students' reading performance, particularly in English word recognition and reading comprehension. Through this, the study aspires to contribute insights that may help teachers design evidence-based literacy practices to enhance students' reading proficiency and support long-term academic growth.

Literature Review

Shared Reading as an Academic Reading Intervention

In light of the challenges students face, competent teachers have a role in supporting their knowledge acquisition and development (Balabal & Canuto, 2026), ultimately leading to their accomplishments. The teacher can design and conduct academic interventions to support struggling students, providing additional help and resources, addressing their specific learning needs, meeting educational standards, improving student outcomes, and helping them achieve their full potential. As such, when enhancing reading skills, shared reading is a compelling academic intervention that supports students' reading performance (Altamimi & Ogdol, 2023; Järholm et al., 2025; Kindle, 2011).

Reading materials for shared reading may include flashcards, poetry, and Big Books. A flash card is a collection of cards that contain information, words, or numbers on one or both sides. They are utilized in classroom exercises or individual study and are commonly employed as a learning technique involving repeated interval exposure (Hamera & Rohimajaya, 2018). Poetry evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through a chosen language and is arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm. It is used in reading because of its effectiveness, from its artistic creation to its rhyming and matching words, which facilitates quick retention (Nichols et al., 2018). Using Big Books with vibrant images can enhance students' enthusiasm (Canuto et al., 2024). They contain concise narratives with uncomplicated yet captivating plots, prominent visual depictions, rhythmic linguistic structures, recurring phrases, and extensive vocabulary (Colville-Hall & O'Connor, 2006).

Numerous studies have emphasized the importance of shared reading in enhancing students' word recognition and overall reading comprehension. For instance, Altamimi and Ogdol's (2023) study concluded that shared reading has a positive impact on students' reading comprehension. The students demonstrated a rudimentary level of comprehension by asking questions and providing responses. They demonstrated that shared reading is an educational approach that enhances students' reading fluency and fosters a deep comprehension of the text. Likewise, the synthesis of shared reading by Gonzalez et al. (2014) demonstrated that students saw beneficial outcomes in their early reading skills, specifically vocabulary and comprehension.

Although shared reading is widely supported, there is no precise method for its implementation, leading to significant variation in how it is implemented in classrooms. The effectiveness of shared reading as an educational experience or a leisurely activity is contingent upon the teacher's approach. The teachers have complete authority over the selection of passages and books, as well as their distribution (Kindle, 2011). The importance of the teacher as the knowledgeable individual who imparts and facilitates the reading content cannot be emphasized enough.

Concerning sustainable development set by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 (UN, 2026), shared reading can be an effective tool for advancing several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, in SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, shared reading can include stories that discuss health and well-being. Notably, reading can have a positive impact on both mental and physical health in children (Shulman et al., 2024). SDG 4: Quality Education can promote comprehension skills and reading literacy by engaging students in reading together. Teachers can use it to create inclusive reading environments where all students, including those with different learning needs or backgrounds, can engage with texts together. For SDG 5: Gender Equality, shared reading can address gender stereotypes and promote gender equality by selecting diverse texts that represent a variety of gender roles and experiences (Bando et al., 2024; Lumidao et al., 2024). For SDG 13: Climate Action, selecting passages that address environmental issues and climate change can raise student awareness (Williams et al., 2024). Shared reading can spark discussions about the importance of protecting the planet and inspire students to take action in their own lives.

Shared Reading and Informal Reading Inventory

Shared reading can be used to support an informal reading inventory that addresses and supports students' reading difficulties. An informal reading inventory program is designed to provide more significant insights into students' reading levels in relation to a specific passage, allowing teachers to tailor instruction to meet students' needs (DepEd, 2018). In the country, the DepEd mandates the implementation of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) program. This program is a standardized classroom evaluation tool that quantifies and explains students' reading proficiency. This assessment tool assesses students' language proficiency in Filipino, the country's national language, and English (DepEd, 2018).

The two primary components of Phil-IRI are oral and silent reading tests. An oral reading test assesses a student's ability to read a passage aloud fluently and accurately, with a focus on word recognition, pronunciation, and pacing. On the other hand, the silent reading test assesses students' comprehension of what they read silently, using multiple-choice questions based on the text. This test gauges their ability to identify main ideas, recall details, make inferences, and draw conclusions from the text they read. The Phil-IRI assessment is administered individually for oral reading tests and in groups for silent reading tests. It is conducted twice a year. It is done as a pre-test at the beginning of the academic year to identify students' reading skill gaps. It is administered as a post-test at the end of the academic year to measure students' reading proficiency (DepEd, 2018). The Phil-IRI is implemented among students in Grades 3 to 6 in public primary schools nationwide. The data collected from the evaluation aids classroom teachers in formulating and delivering appropriate reading instruction for students. This study used the Phil-IRI English oral reading test and individual evaluation to measure students' English word recognition. Likewise, the English silent reading test and group evaluation were used to measure the students' English reading comprehension.

Language Curricula and English as a Second Language in the Philippines

The Philippines uses English as a second language (ESL) for several historical, social, economic, and educational reasons. The widespread use of English in the country is rooted in its colonial history. During American colonial rule, English was established as a major part of the educational system, becoming the primary language of schooling. Even after the country's independence from the Americans, English remained entrenched in the country's political, legal, professional, and educational systems.

The Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) Curriculum is the current educational framework in the Philippines, which provides a 12-year basic education program. This includes kindergarten and 12 years of primary education (Grades 1 – 6) and secondary education (Grades 7 – 12) (DepEd, 2019). Most recently, the country has been slowly transitioning to a new reformed curriculum called the MATATAG Curriculum. It still maintains the same grade-level structure, but with modified topics and learning competencies for kindergarten up to Grade 10. MATATAG stands for “1) MAke the curriculum relevant to produce competent, job-ready, active, and responsible citizens; 2) TAke steps to accelerate the delivery of basic education facilities and services; 3) TAke good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusive education, and a positive learning environment; and 4) Give support to teachers to teach better” (DepEd, 2024).

Focusing on language education for both the K-12 and MATATAG Curricula, the Philippines operates under a bilingual education policy that designates Filipino and English as the official languages (DepEd, 2006, 2008, 2023). While Filipino is the national language used for everyday communication, English is the primary medium of instruction in formal education. Filipino is used in locally based subjects, while English is used extensively as the medium of instruction, particularly in subjects such as science, mathematics, social studies, and technology (DepEd, 2008, 2023). Proficiency in English is necessary for students to understand and excel in these subjects. Many of the world’s leading academic institutions, textbooks, and scholarly articles are published in English, providing Filipino students with access to these valuable resources.

Students’ English Reading Performances in the Philippines and the Locality

The most recent Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022, conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), ranked the Philippines last in English reading comprehension. This is similar to the result of the 2018 PISA. Despite an increase from 340 points in PISA 2018 to 347 points in PISA 2022, the reading literacy score in the Philippines remained significantly below the global average points. It indicates no percentage point increase in the performance of high-achieving students nationwide. In contrast, low-achieving students experienced a decrease in reading comprehension proficiency (OECD, 2023).

In recent years, results of the nationwide Phil-IRI have shown the proliferation of students with frustrated reading levels in English. Tomas et al. (2021) found that most primary school students have poor English word recognition and reading comprehension skills. Most students were at the frustration level, and only a few reached independent proficiency. Some were even categorized as non-readers. Paguyan and Taoc (2022) determined that most Grade 3 students struggled with English reading comprehension. They could read the passages but could not comprehend their meaning. These students also demonstrated average fluency when reading. In the locality, Canuto et al. (2024) found that most Grade 4 students in a particular class were identified as at risk of reading difficulties in English, considering that most had reading skills below their grade level. Another local study by Bugtong et al. (2025) determined that Grade 5 students had low reading comprehension. Almost half of the class were assessed to be at the frustration level. In the selected school where the study was conducted, the Phil-IRI results, specifically word recognition and reading comprehension for a Grade 3 class section, indicated that the prior assessment showed most students’ reading performance was below the expected passing rate.

Research Gap

Reading is profoundly significant as it serves as a gateway to knowledge acquisition and critical thinking. However, over the years, particularly due to the recent pandemic, a decline in students' English reading literacy has been observed (Canuto et al., 2024; Ludewig et al., 2022). The observed decline is evidenced by an international assessment (OECD, 2023). Additionally, the Phil-IRI results underscore the growing number of students at the frustrated reading level in English (Paguyan & Taoc, 2022; Tomas et al., 2021), which is concerning. It reveals an increasing number of non-readers, and necessary actions must be taken to address the underlying problem. Therefore, reading intervention activities, such as shared reading, must be planned, implemented, and evaluated. In conjunction, only a few local studies (Bugtong et al., 2025; Canuto et al., 2024) have been conducted on the use of reading interventions to address students' English reading issues. A knowledge gap exists in the use of shared reading as an academic reading intervention for local primary school students.

Research Focus

This study focused on determining the effectiveness of a shared reading intervention on English word recognition and reading comprehension among primary school students at a local school. While Filipino is important for initial literacy development, English is critical in accessing global academic content, especially in higher grades. As mentioned, English is significant at this stage since it marks a critical transition in students' language development. If word recognition and reading comprehension in English are weak at this stage, it could hinder academic progress in other areas that rely heavily on reading skills. If students do not develop English reading skills early on, they may struggle to comprehend advanced subjects as they progress through their education. Moreover, focusing on English rather than Filipino is important for aligning with national educational goals and global competencies. English proficiency is often linked to broader academic and career opportunities, both locally and internationally. Understanding how well primary school students comprehend English texts can inform curriculum development, teaching strategies, and resource allocation, ensuring learners are on track to become proficient English users.

Research Significance

This study holds significance as it responds directly to the documented decline in English reading literacy among local primary school students. By examining the effectiveness of shared reading as an academic intervention, the study moves beyond merely describing poor reading outcomes. Instead, it provides empirical evidence on a practical, classroom-based strategy that can address foundational reading difficulties, particularly in word recognition and reading comprehension. The study is significant within the local educational context, where empirical research on structured reading interventions in English remains limited. While national reading assessments, such as the Phil-IRI, have consistently reported high numbers of learners at the frustrated reading level, there is a lack of intervention-based studies that evaluate how specific pedagogical approaches can improve reading outcomes. By focusing on shared reading, this research helps fill a critical knowledge gap and provides contextually relevant evidence to guide teachers, school administrators, and curriculum planners in designing targeted reading programs. Moreover, the study offers practical insights into refining educational practices to support early English literacy development in resource-constrained school settings. In an international context, the value of this study lies in its contribution to the broader discourse on post-pandemic literacy recovery and early language intervention. By investigating

shared reading in an ESL environment, the study adds to the global evidence base on how interactive, teacher-mediated reading practices can support literacy development beyond first-language settings. The findings have implications for other countries facing similar challenges, demonstrating how shared reading can be adapted and implemented to strengthen foundational reading skills and promote equitable access to academic content. The findings of this study are meaningful because they inform educational decision-making and highlight shared reading as a viable intervention to improve early English literacy in contexts where struggling young readers are increasingly prevalent.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of shared reading as an academic reading intervention in enhancing primary school students' English word recognition and reading comprehension. It also aimed to determine whether there was a significant difference in students' academic reading performance before and after the shared reading intervention. The specific research questions included the following:

1. What are the students' levels of word recognition and reading comprehension performances in English after the shared reading intervention is implemented?
2. Are there significant differences in the students' word recognition and reading comprehension performances before and after the shared reading intervention is implemented?

Research Methodology

Design

The study employed a quantitative design and classroom action research, specifically following Susman's (1983) model: diagnosing, planning, taking action, evaluating, and specifying learning outcomes. A quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-test assessments was used to measure students' English word recognition and reading comprehension. This method is a quick and convenient way to evaluate a specific group undergoing an intervention. It facilitates the application of established statistical methods to analyse data (Stratton, 2019). The tests enabled prompt evaluation of the shared reading intervention and offered a glimpse of students' word recognition and reading comprehension performances. The pre- and post-test scores of the students were determined following the Grade 3 Phil-IRI English assessment. An English language teacher headed this study. The researchers were directly involved in implementing the shared reading intervention among the students. The study was conducted from February to April 2023.

Participants

Ten Grade 3 students from a primary school in Tinoc, Ifugao, Philippines, were involved in the study. In particular, the students comprised 40% ($N = 4$) males and 60% ($N = 6$) females. The students were selected based on their identified reading frustration levels, as determined by their Class Adviser through the Phil-IRI English pre-test assessment. They were assigned pseudonyms S1 to S10. Selecting the ten students with frustration reading levels and using a small sample for the intervention process allowed for a more focused, intensive approach, enabling the researchers to provide individualized attention and support. It was beneficial as it required close monitoring or customization to students' needs. It facilitated greater flexibility and adaptability, as the researchers easily adjusted the intervention process in response to emerging student feedback. No other criteria were used in the selection process.

Procedures

The researchers presented the study to their affiliated institution, which facilitated its refinement and subsequent approval by the ethics review committee. A letter seeking permission was given to the School Head and the Class Adviser of the participating school. Upon approval, the researchers informed the participants of their involvement in the study. Informed consent was obtained from students' parents or guardians, who were informed of the study's aims and procedures, the students' anonymity, potential benefits, and their right to withdraw from the study without penalty. Assent forms were also solicited from the students. The students' English word recognition and reading comprehension pre-test scores were collected from the Class Adviser. These scores were already recorded and readily available since the pre-test was done at the beginning of the school year. During the intervention, the researchers personally conducted the English shared reading sessions. Students' attendance was closely monitored to ensure their full participation in the shared reading sessions. After the intervention, the students' post-test scores on academic reading performance were measured using a similar pre-test Phil-IRI assessment. Data tabulations and analyses were carried out. The shared reading was conducted within a month, scheduled three times a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, creating a routine and predictable structure that helped students develop good reading habits. It was conducted during recess and class dismissals. Each reading session lasted approximately 20 – 30 minutes. All in all, each student had 12 reading sessions, totalling around 5 – 6 hours.

The shared reading intervention was conducted following Susman's (1983) classroom action research model. First, the students' English reading skills were assessed during the diagnostic stage. This included an inquiry from the Class Adviser about the students' specific struggles with English reading. As identified, the students struggled with word recognition and reading comprehension. This stage helped identify the students with frustration levels who underwent the shared reading intervention.

Second, during the planning stage, an action plan was developed to enhance students' word recognition and reading comprehension through shared reading intervention. This stage involved determining the student pairings for shared reading. The students' classroom served as the venue for the intervention since it was where they were most familiar and comfortable, making it easier to engage them in reading activities. The reading texts and passages were selected from the Grade 3-level reading materials borrowed from the Class Adviser. Ten short texts with repetitive sentence structures and a gradual increase in text complexity were selected. The preparation stage also involved encoding the texts and designing and printing the reading materials, including Big Books, poetry, and flashcards. Before printing, the designed reading materials were submitted to the Class Adviser and the School Head to solicit their comments, suggestions, and approval. Since the shared reading was done in pairs, the reading materials were prepared in five sets each.

Third, in taking action, the shared reading intervention was implemented. This involved executing the shared reading intervention as planned and closely monitoring the process. The researchers facilitated the shared reading sessions. Students' active participation was sought through discussions, questioning, and reflection. Their engagement and participation were continuously monitored. The students were closely observed during the sessions to identify any related issues they were facing. The researchers provided additional help to students who struggled with reading. Strategies such as modelling, speaking aloud, repetition, highlighting key words, and encouraging peer collaboration were employed. Most of all, the students were encouraged to read the text aloud with their partners. After each shared reading activity, sight-word discussions and comprehension questions were conducted. Having a checklist of sight words and comprehension questions for students who struggled helped at this stage. Some of the texts in the reading materials were underlined and highlighted for emphasis during the

reading sessions. The students were also allowed to write notes directly on the text to support their word recognition and reading comprehension.

The flash cards were used to introduce sight words to the students. The cards contained only words based on the texts used in the poetry and Big Books. The cards were shown to the pair of students in sequence. The students then read the word aloud together, reinforcing their sight word recognition. Poetry and Big Books were used for word recognition and reading comprehension. Poetry texts and copies of the Big Books were given to the pair of students. Together, the pair read the texts aloud. Since the texts were short, the researchers allowed the students to reread them multiple times for different purposes. In the first and second readings, the students were exposed to the exact lines and words, enabling them to recognize words quickly. During the third and or fourth reading, focus on text meaning and comprehension was done. Comprehension questions on the theme, characters, actions, plot, and message served as guides. The researchers prompted the students to visualize what they read, deepening their understanding of the texts. The students were encouraged to engage in peer discussions with their partners. A close examination of the specific words or phrases that were new or unfamiliar, and of where the students struggled with them, was conducted across the flashcards, poetry, and Big Books. Modelling, repetition, and word definition were carried out. This helped expand students' word recognition and reading comprehension of the texts used.

Fourth, during the evaluation stage, a post-test was administered to determine the effectiveness of the shared reading intervention and whether it had successfully addressed students' word recognition and reading comprehension of the texts used. The researchers facilitated the post-test assessment. The procedures and guidelines in conducting the Phil-IRI English assessment for the grade level were rigorously applied. The same Phil-IRI English assessment tool was used in the pre-test and the post-test. Separate score sheet templates used in the assessment tool were prepared for word recognition and reading comprehension. For word recognition, the researchers conducted an individual oral reading test. Lifted from the Phil-IRI English assessment for the grade level, a passage containing 124 words was prepared. Separate copies were printed for students' use and the researchers' copy. As the students read, the researchers followed along using their own copy of the passage, which contained word-by-word text and space for marking miscues. The miscues marked included mispronunciations, substitutions, omissions, insertions, incorrect word readings, and hesitations lasting more than five seconds. Students' self-corrections were not counted as errors. The students were not interrupted during their reading unless they paused too long and needed prompting. The students' total scores were converted to percentages and used to determine their word recognition levels at the frustration, instructional, and independent levels.

For the reading comprehension assessment, a group silent-reading test was used. The passage and comprehension questions were based on the Phil-IRI English assessment tool for the grade level. The comprehension questions consisted of nine multiple-choice test items. The passage and the questions were printed on the same page. They were distributed individually among the students. The students read the passage silently. Then, the students answered the comprehension questions based on the passage. Afterward, the researchers collected and checked the papers. Each correct answer was given one point. The earned scores were converted to percentages to determine students' reading comprehension levels at the frustration, instructional, and independent levels. The data were tabulated and analysed in accordance with the study's aims. Moreover, students' feedback about the shared reading intervention was collected. This helped reflect student engagement and behavioural changes following the reading intervention.

In the final stage of specifying learning, the researchers reflected on the entire reading intervention, generalized their findings, and decided on the necessary changes for future practice. Several steps were done, including summarizing what was learned about students' reading needs regarding word recognition and reading comprehension, and identifying which parts of

the shared reading intervention were most successful. Aside from sharing the results with the students, they were also shared with the Class Adviser and the School Head. Recommendations for scaling or refining the intervention for future iterations were formulated.

Data Analysis

The Phil-IRI formula was used to measure students' academic reading performance. The formula below was used for word recognition performance. The results were presented in percentages.

$$\text{Word recognition} = \frac{\text{Number of miscued words}}{\text{Total number of words in the passage}} \times 100$$

The results were compared using the Phil-IRI criteria, shown in Table 1, which specify the different levels for each student, along with word recognition.

Table 1
English Word Recognition Performance Scores and Levels Based from Phil-IRI

Word Recognition Performance Scores	Reading Levels
97% – 100%	Independent
90% - 96%	Instructional
89% and below	Frustration

The Phil-IRI formula below was used for reading comprehension performance. The results were also presented in percentages.

$$\text{Reading comprehension} = \frac{\text{Number of correct answers}}{\text{Total number of question items}} \times 100$$

The results were compared using the Phil-IRI criteria, shown in Table 2, which indicate the different levels for each student, along with reading comprehension.

Table 2
English Reading Comprehension Performance Scores and Levels Based from Phil-IRI

Reading Comprehension Performance Scores	Reading Levels
80% – 100%	Independent
59% – 79%	Instructional
58% and below	Frustration

For both word recognition and reading comprehension, frustrated readers can read words but lack the motivation and ability to understand the text fully. Students with frustration reading levels tend to withdraw from reading by refusing to engage in reading activities. Furthermore, frustration level reading does not enhance literacy and may lead to negative emotions toward reading. Students at the frustration level tend to experience tension. Students at the instructional level can only read when being guided. Students at the independent level can easily read alone, even without the teacher's guidance (Bugtong et al., 2025; Canuto et al., 2024; DepEd, 2018; Ilter, 2018).

The mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) were used to assess students' overall word recognition and reading comprehension. Likewise, to determine whether there was a significant difference in the students' academic reading performance before and after the shared reading intervention, a paired-samples *t*-test was used on the students' pre- and post-test scores. Cohen's

d was also computed to determine the magnitude of the intervention's effect, providing an estimate of the practical significance of the observed differences beyond statistical significance.

Research Results

Table 3 presents the students' pre-test English reading levels, as reported by their Class Adviser. Results indicate that all the students were at low levels of frustration in their word recognition and reading comprehension performances. This highlights the need for effective intervention to enhance their reading performance.

Table 3

Students' Word Recognition and Reading Comprehension Performance Scores and Levels Before the Shared Reading Intervention

Students	Word Recognition Performance Scores (in %)	Word Recognition Levels	Reading Comprehension Performance Scores (in %)	Reading Comprehension Levels
S1	75	Frustration	33	Frustration
S2	51	Frustration	33	Frustration
S3	85	Frustration	67	Frustration
S4	78	Frustration	50	Frustration
S5	83	Frustration	67	Frustration
S6	81	Frustration	50	Frustration
S7	66	Frustration	33	Frustration
S8	71	Frustration	33	Frustration
S9	58	Frustration	50	Frustration
S10	80	Frustration	50	Frustration
Mean	72.80	Frustration	46.60	Frustration

Based on the post-test results, the shared reading intervention positively improved students' English word recognition, as illustrated in Table 4. Overall, the students were at an instructional level for word recognition. Most students correctly recognized 124 words. Remarkably, nine out of ten students reached this instructional level during the post-test, while the remaining student were at the frustration level. However, this student still attained a high score for correctly reading words.

Table 4
Students' Word Recognition Performance Scores and Levels After the Shared Reading Intervention

Students	Number of Words Read Correctly	Word Recognition Performance Scores (in %)	Word Recognition Levels
S1	115	94	Instructional
S2	101	81	Frustration
S3	114	92	Instructional
S4	117	94	Instructional
S5	117	94	Instructional
S6	120	97	Independent
S7	111	90	Instructional
S8	117	94	Instructional
S9	115	92	Instructional
S10	112	90	Instructional
Mean	113.90	92.02	Instructional

Table 5 shows that the post-test results indicate that students reached a higher level of English reading proficiency following the intervention. Most students achieved both instructional and independent reading levels, earning high correct scores on all nine items. Notably, more than half successfully reached the independent level. One student achieved a perfect score, answering all questions correctly on the post-test. Among the ten students assessed, only one continued to demonstrate a frustration level in reading comprehension.

Table 5
Students' Reading Comprehension Performance Scores and Levels After the Shared Reading Intervention

Students	Correct Answers	Reading Comprehension Performance Scores (in %)	Reading Comprehension Levels
S1	6	67	Instructional
S2	5	56	Frustration
S3	9	100	Independent
S4	7	78	Instructional
S5	8	89	Independent
S6	8	89	Independent
S7	8	89	Independent
S8	8	89	Independent
S9	7	78	Instructional
S10	8	89	Independent
Mean	7.4	82.22	Independent

Table 6 shows the difference in the students' English word recognition performance scores before and after the shared reading interventions. The results imply a significant difference between the pre- and post-test mean scores for students' word recognition performance during shared reading. Results also indicate a large effect size, suggesting that the shared reading had a substantial effect on students' word recognition skills.

Table 6
Differences in the Students' Overall Word Recognition Performance

Word Recognition Performance	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Pre-test	72.80	11.29	9	-6.84*	.001	2.25
Post-test	92.02	4.34				

Note: * = significant ($p < .05$); ns = not significant ($p > .05$); Cohen's $d = \sim .20$ is small effect; $d = \sim .50$ is moderate effect; $d = > .80$ is large effect

Table 7 shows the students' English reading comprehension performance. The data indicate a significant difference in the students' pre- and post-test comprehension performance mean scores after the shared reading intervention. Moreover, the results demonstrate a large effect size, indicating that the intervention had a notable effect on students' reading comprehension.

Table 7
Differences in the Students' Overall Reading Comprehension Performance

Reading Comprehension Performance	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Pre-test	46.60	13.41	9	-9.34*	.001	2.71
Post-test	82.22	12.91				

Note: * = significant ($p < .05$); ns = not significant ($p > .05$); Cohen's $d = \sim .20$ is small effect; $d = \sim .50$ is moderate effect; $d = > .80$ is large effect

Discussion

The pre-test results (Table 3) indicate that all students were functioning at the frustration level in both word recognition and reading comprehension, demonstrating substantial difficulty in independently decoding words and in constructing meaning from the English texts used. This highlights the severity and pervasiveness of their reading challenges at the outset of the study. This reading performance level reflects students' low academic reading performance, as evidenced by the international assessment of OECD (2023) and the local reading assessments reported by Bugtong et al. (2025), Canuto et al. (2024), Paguyan and Taoc (2022), and Tomas et al. (2021). A closer examination of the pre-test performance reveals that although students could correctly recognize some words, their decoding skills were insufficient for functional reading. Errors in word recognition likely disrupted fluency and hindered smooth text processing, thereby compounding comprehension difficulties. The consistently low comprehension scores suggest limited capacity to move beyond surface-level decoding, indicating weaknesses in vocabulary knowledge, sentence-level understanding, and the use of comprehension strategies. These findings imply that prior reading instruction may not have sufficiently emphasized meaning-making, interactive reading, or scaffolded comprehension support, which does not fully align with DepEd's (2018) reading goals. These baseline results, therefore, justify implementing

the shared reading intervention, as they demonstrate the need to provide systematic teacher modelling, repeated reading opportunities, and guided interaction with texts to address students' foundational reading difficulties. As Altamimi and Ogdol (2023), Gonzalez et al. (2014), and Kindle (2011) cited, shared reading is a practical approach for improving both word recognition and comprehension.

Against this backdrop of low reading performance, the effects of the shared reading intervention become more evident in the post-test results. Both the individual (Table 4) and overall (Table 6) post-test results demonstrate a marked improvement in students' English word recognition. Most students advanced from the frustration level to the instructional level, and one student reached the independent level, indicating that they could recognize words accurately with minimal teacher support. The significant increase in mean scores and the large effect size confirm that shared reading had a substantial and meaningful impact on students' decoding and word recognition skills of the reading materials. This pattern directly aligns with Altamimi and Ogdol (2023) and Gonzalez et al. (2014), who emphasized that shared reading promotes fluency and decoding efficiency. It also affirms that the intervention can effectively respond to word recognition issues by creating supportive, interactive reading environments that promote fluency and confidence in reading, as reflected in the contexts described by Tomas et al. (2021), Paguyan and Taoc (2022), and Canuto et al. (2024).

Beyond statistical gains, the improvement in word recognition reflects meaningful instructional progress. The high number of words students read correctly indicates improved accuracy, automaticity, and familiarity with the reading materials. Repeated exposure to texts, teacher modelling, and guided reading interactions appears to have reduced the cognitive effort required for word processing, allowing students to read more smoothly and confidently. This supports the role of structured reading programs and the provision of support necessary to move students toward instructional and independent reading levels, as mandated by DepEd (2018). This shift from frustration to instructional and independent levels has important educational implications, as improved word recognition reduces barriers to fluent reading and provides a stronger foundation for higher-level comprehension, particularly in ESL contexts.

While improvements in word recognition were evident, it was equally important to examine whether these gains translated into stronger reading comprehension. The post-test results (Tables 5 and 7) indicate a substantial improvement in students' English reading comprehension following the shared reading intervention. The overall students' reading comprehension performance, the group's classification at the independent level, and the significant difference reflect a notable advancement. The large effect size further underscores that the intervention had a substantial, meaningful impact on students' ability to understand and interpret texts. This suggests that the shared reading intervention not only supported basic understanding but also strengthened students' ability to interpret texts meaningfully. It equipped them with strategies and confidence to engage with texts more effectively, and the intervention bridged gaps in their reading comprehension. This improvement reflects the kind of profound, practical impact on reading comprehension that Altamimi and Ogdol (2023) and Gonzalez et al. (2014) determined in their synthesis of shared reading outcomes.

Further analysis of reading level classifications shows that most students reached instructional or independent levels, demonstrating growth in higher-order comprehension skills such as identifying main ideas, recalling details, and making inferences. The fact that more than half of the students attained the independent level suggests increased autonomy and confidence in reading. In contrast, a perfect score by one student highlights the potential of shared reading to facilitate mastery when learners are actively engaged and supported. These outcomes align with the diagnostic intent of tools such as the Phil-IRI, which DepEd (2018) identifies as a basis for structured reading intervention. Additionally, this highlights the importance of ongoing assessment and adaptive instruction to support learners who may need extra guidance to fully benefit from the intervention.

Despite these generally positive outcomes, one student remained at the frustration level in both word recognition and reading comprehension. This result underscores individual variability in response to the intervention, as students differ in prior knowledge, language proficiency, and learning pace. This may help explain why one learner may progress more slowly despite overall group gains, echoing the observations of Kindle (2011) and Tomas et al. (2021). Although this student showed notable improvement and relatively high scores, remaining decoding errors and difficulties with independent comprehension kept the student below the instructional cutoff. However, this does not mean the student made no progress. Although labeled at the frustration level, the student's performances had substantially improved compared to those of typical frustration-level readers. It can be described that the student was in a transitional stage, moving toward instructional-level reading but not yet demonstrating stable mastery. Rather than indicating failure, this outcome reflects a transitional stage toward instructional-level reading and highlights the need for extended or more individualized support. As DepEd (2018) emphasizes, such results should be viewed as indicators of instructional need rather than a lack of learning. It also implies that shared reading, while effective as a core intervention, may need to be supplemented for learners with more complex or specific reading challenges. Rather than viewing the frustration-level outcome as a failure of the intervention, it should be interpreted as diagnostic information that helps teachers refine reading instruction.

Observational data further support the effectiveness of shared reading as an educational approach. Unlike traditional reading activities that offer limited interaction, shared reading provided a structured, collaborative, and engaging environment where students could ask questions, receive immediate feedback, and learn alongside peers, as Järvholm et al. (2025) and Noble et al. (2019) posited. Students' enjoyment of reading and active participation were evident during the intervention, consistent with findings by Savaşkan (2017) and Boyle et al. (2019). This collaborative setup made reading more accessible and enjoyable. The students demonstrated strong skills in word recognition and text comprehension, allowing them to confidently and proficiently engage with the reading materials. This suggests they can appropriately select other reading materials from the list of prescribed texts for their grade level, navigate texts effectively, and extract meaning independently, as DepEd (2018) stated.

Viewed holistically, both the results and observations point to the educational value of shared reading in addressing students' reading difficulties. In light of the results and observed outcomes, it is evident that the shared reading intervention played a significant role in addressing the students' English reading challenges. The students' initial frustration levels in word recognition and reading comprehension reflected a critical need for structured, supportive, and engaging literacy instruction. The significant gains in reading performance, alongside the shift from frustration to instructional and even independent reading levels, affirm the effectiveness of shared reading among the student participants regarding the texts used in the reading materials. This resonates with the advocacy for interactive and socially driven reading practices to support struggling readers.

Conclusions and Implications

Reading at the primary level is critical, as it establishes the foundational skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning. Early reading proficiency supports comprehension across subject areas while fostering cognitive development and critical thinking. In this context, shared reading serves as a structured, interactive literacy approach that strengthens reading skills while promoting collaboration, discussion, and active engagement with texts, thereby cultivating positive reading habits among young learners. This study examined the effectiveness of shared reading as an academic reading intervention among selected primary school students who were initially identified as frustrated in English word recognition and

reading comprehension. The findings clearly demonstrate that the shared reading intervention significantly improved students' overall academic reading performance on the selected texts. Most students progressed from frustration to instructional and independent reading levels, reflecting meaningful gains in decoding accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. These outcomes affirm that shared reading effectively supports struggling readers through guided exposure to text, consistent teacher modeling, and opportunities for supported practice.

Although individual differences in learning pace were evident, these variations did not undermine the overall effectiveness of the intervention. Instead, they underscore the importance of sustained and responsive instruction for learners who require additional scaffolding. Overall, the results provide strong evidence that shared reading is a powerful instructional approach for enhancing word recognition and reading comprehension at the primary level. Beyond improving reading proficiency, the intervention fostered greater student engagement, motivation, and confidence in reading. The literacy strategies and skills developed through shared reading suggest that students are better prepared to apply these competencies independently in future reading tasks. Consequently, this study highlights the value of structured shared reading interventions in strengthening foundational literacy skills and nurturing a positive reading culture among primary school students.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, a key limitation of this study is the small sample size, which inherently restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalized. With a limited number of participants drawn from a single Grade 3 class, the results primarily reflect the reading development of this specific group of primary school students rather than representing broader student populations. Variations in educational contexts, language exposure, teacher expertise, and learner characteristics in other schools or regions may yield different outcomes if the same intervention were implemented. However, the small sample size also represents a deliberate methodological choice aligned with the study's classroom action research design. Working with the small group enabled the researchers to implement the shared reading intervention with high instructional fidelity and intensity. Each student received close monitoring and frequent feedback, which may have amplified the observed gains in their word recognition and reading comprehension of the used texts. This level of individualized attention, while beneficial for examining instructional processes and learner responses in depth, may not be easily replicated in larger classroom settings, where teacher time and educational resources are more constrained. Thus, the results are best viewed as evidence of the potential effectiveness of shared reading under intensive, well-supported conditions.

Second, the study focused on short-term outcomes following the shared reading intervention. Although significant improvements were observed, the design does not allow for conclusions about the long-term retention or transfer of reading skills. The absence of follow-up assessments limits understanding of whether the students' gains in word recognition and comprehension were sustained over time. Finally, based on the Phil-IRI program, the study focused only on English word recognition and reading comprehension. Other reading elements, such as fluency, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and phonics, were not included. Given the study's small sample size, short-term nature, and limited scope, incorporating the measurement of other variables would have introduced additional complexity, requiring broader data-collection methods beyond the intended design of this reading intervention-focused research. Future studies may build upon these results by integrating a more holistic investigation that includes a larger population and external variables to provide a more comprehensive view of the multifaceted nature of reading development. Nonetheless, investing in robust reading

intervention and literacy education at the primary level is imperative to equip students to thrive academically, intellectually, and personally throughout their educational journey.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed to the review editing, literature review writing, planning, and implementing the research. All authors contributed to the data collection and analysis. All authors have read and approved the published version of the article.

Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm no conflict of interest concerning this article's authorship and publication.

Ethics Declaration

The Ifugao State University (IFSU) - Tinoc Campus reviewed and approved this study for ethical clearance.

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