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Enhancing Reading Skills Through Peer Tutoring Strategy

Elvie C. Navarro

Cebu Technological University – Main Campus, Philippines
Email: elvie.navarro@deped.gov.ph

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Abstract— *This study utilized the Peer Tutoring Strategy to enhance the reading skills of Grade 7 students who were identified as struggling readers. The intervention focused on addressing common reading miscues, such as mispronunciation, omission, substitution, and insertion, which often hinder comprehension and fluency. Through structured peer tutoring sessions, learners engaged in collaborative reading activities where higher-performing students guided their peers in decoding, pronunciation, and comprehension tasks. Findings revealed that peer tutoring significantly reduced the frequency of miscues and fostered greater confidence, active participation, and engagement among learners. The study highlights that peer tutoring is an effective, low-cost, and sustainable approach to improving reading skills, particularly for struggling readers in the classroom setting. Moreover, the post-intervention results indicated a noticeable decrease in specific reading miscues, particularly in mispronunciation, omission, substitution, and insertion errors. The structured peer tutoring activities allowed learners to receive immediate corrective feedback, which strengthened their word recognition and decoding skills. These findings affirm that targeted peer tutoring interventions are effective in addressing persistent reading miscues among struggling readers. It is recommended that schools integrate structured peer tutoring programs into their reading enhancement initiatives to support struggling readers and promote a culture of shared responsibility in literacy development.*

Keywords— ***collaborative learning, peer tutoring, reading comprehension, reading miscues, reading skills***

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading difficulties are commonly observed among early and struggling readers. Cruz and Javier (2018) found that Filipino learners, especially in public schools, frequently mispronounced words in both English and Filipino due to a lack of structured phonics instruction. Santiago and Bañez (2018) also found that mispronunciations among Filipino students were largely due to limited phonemic awareness and insufficient reading exposure, especially in English. Castles, Rastle, and Nation (2018) highlight that these types of miscues are often a consequence of inadequate phonics instruction during early reading development.

Omission errors, where a reader skips letters or entire words, are another significant issue. The Philippine Research Journal (Perez, 2019) reported that many elementary pupils omit words when reading aloud, which compromises comprehension. Domingo and Velasco (2021) reported that these errors are common among Filipino bilingual students who rely heavily on context clues to compensate for limited decoding skills. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2019) identified omission and insertion issues in international learners as symptoms of poor visual processing.

Substitution and insertion errors are also prevalent in struggling readers. These errors are often linked to limited vocabulary and weak word recognition. In a study by Santiago and Bartolome (2020) on Filipino students, substitution and insertion were among the most common decoding errors. Repetition, or the unnecessary repeating of words or phrases, often results from a lack of confidence or poor fluency. International studies, such as

those by the National Reading Panel (2000), noted that children who are not fluent often reread words or phrases out of hesitation. In the Philippines repetition has been observed observed frequently among students learning English as a second language, as documented by Medina and Dela Cruz (2021).

One major cause of poor reading performance is the lack of continuity in reading instruction. Many students receive intensive reading instruction in early grades but little structured support beyond Grade 3. This "instructional gap" often leads to stagnation in reading growth, particularly among low-achieving students (Kim et al., 2017).

Another persistent problem is the lack of individualized and sustained intervention. Many programs are time-limited and generalized, failing to address the specific types of miscues that different students exhibit. Domingo and Velasco (2021) highlighted that Filipino students often make reading errors due to a mismatch between their language background and the instructional language. This situation is mirrored internationally, where students from diverse linguistic backgrounds are placed in one-size-fits-all interventions that do not consider cultural or language diversity (Gay, 2018).

To address these reading difficulties, both national and international studies advocate evidence-based interventions. Programs like Reading Remediation and Enrichment have been implemented to offer targeted instruction to struggling readers (Garcia & Reyes, 2020). Recent initiatives by DepEd and partner NGOs have emphasized the importance of diagnostic reading assessments and individualized reading interventions (Cruz & Santos, 2021) Internationally, the use of structured literacy programs such as the Orton-Gillingham approach and Reading Recovery has shown significant improvements in decoding, fluency, and comprehension (Henry & Flynn, 2020). These programs combine phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, and are delivered through systematic, explicit instruction tailored to the learner's specific needs. Although structured literacy interventions have shown measurable improvements in phonological awareness and word decoding, they have not completely addressed the root causes of reading miscues such as substitution, omission, or mispronunciation. For instance, students may improve in word recognition but still struggle with fluency and comprehension, which can perpetuate miscues when reading aloud. According to Castles, Rastle, and Nation (2018), while phonics instruction is essential, it must be combined with vocabulary development and contextual reading strategies to reduce errors like substitution and mispronunciation meaningfully.

Despite years of implementing various interventions—such as phonics-based instruction, structured literacy programs, and teacher-led remediation—problems related to reading miscues (e.g., mispronunciation, substitution, omission, and reversal) persist among many learners. While these approaches improve decoding and fluency for some, they are not always responsive to individual student needs, especially those who require more frequent and personalized feedback. Santiago and Bañez (2018) observed that many Grade 7 students in the Philippines continued to exhibit miscues even after intervention, suggesting that the current methods, though well-intentioned, may be insufficient in fully addressing the depth and variety of reading difficulties. Therefore, while some progress has been made, a more comprehensive literacy approach is needed.

One emerging strategy that could offer a promising solution is peer tutoring, where more proficient students assist struggling peers under guided supervision. Peer tutoring has been shown to be particularly effective in reinforcing reading skills, reducing miscues, and promoting engagement through social interaction. Topping, Buchs, Duran, and Van Keer (2017) highlight that peer-assisted learning enables more frequent opportunities for reading practice and immediate correction of errors, which are critical for students who need more time to master reading fluency and accuracy. Unlike traditional classroom settings, peer tutoring creates a low-stress, collaborative environment where learners are more likely to take risks and learn from mistakes.

Peer tutoring stands out as one of the best interventions for addressing persistent issues in reading miscues including mispronunciation, omission, substitution, insertion, and other decoding errors—because of its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and strong evidence base (Topping, Duran, & Van Keer, 2017). It directly tackles two core challenges in literacy development: the need for increased practice and the demand for immediate, personalized feedback (Wright & Cleary, 2018). Unlike one-size-fits-all interventions, peer tutoring creates a dynamic, interactive environment that supports active engagement, repetition, and correction, all of which are essential in reducing reading errors (Van Keer & Verhaeghe, 2016; Serrano & Fabella, 2019). Both tutors and tutees benefit from these interactions. Tutors improve their own reading fluency and comprehension through teaching, while tutees gain insights into decoding strategies and linguistic patterns.
This study aligns closely with SDG 4: Quality Education, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. By focusing on improving reading skills and

minimizing reading difficulties such as mispronunciation, omission, substitution, and other miscues with peer tutoring as an inclusive and learner-centered intervention, this study promotes equitable learning opportunities, especially for students who are struggling and may not receive adequate individual support in traditional classroom settings (Serrano & Fabella, 2019). Thus, targeting reading miscues such as mispronunciation, omission, substitution, and insertion directly contributes to developing more competent and confident learners, thereby enhancing educational quality at the classroom level.

II. READINGS

This study assumed that PTS (Peer Tutoring Strategy) was effective in improving the reading skills or ability of the struggling readings who were taking remedial classes. This assumption was supported by the following theories: Socio-cultural Theory by Lev Vygotsky, Social Learning Theory by Bandura and Cognitive Load Theory of Sweller.

Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory emphasized the fundamental role of social interaction in learning. According to Vygotsky, students learn more effectively when they engage with peers in meaningful discussions and scaffolded learning experiences. A key concept in this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the range of tasks that a learner can perform with the guidance of a more knowledgeable individual but cannot yet accomplish independently. Peer tutoring aligns with this framework, as the tutor (a more skilled peer) helps the tutee (a struggling reader) by providing support, modeling effective reading strategies, and gradually transferring responsibility as the tutee gains competence. Peer tutoring creates a supportive and collaborative learning environment within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The tutor acts as a scaffold, providing assistance and guidance to the tutee as they navigate challenging reading tasks. This collaborative process allows the tutee to achieve higher levels of cognitive growth and skill development than they could achieve independently (Vygotsky, 1978). The tutor supports the tutee in recognizing and correcting reading miscues such as mispronunciation, omission, and substitution by offering immediate feedback, repetition, and encouragement, which gradually leads to reading fluency and accuracy.

Robison (2022) conducted an experimental study to assess the impact of peer tutoring on the reading comprehension of Grade 10 learners in the Philippines. The study utilized pre-test and post-test assessments to measure improvements in reading skills. The results indicated that students who participated in peer tutoring sessions showed significant gains in reading comprehension compared to those who did not. This suggests that peer tutoring can be an effective strategy for enhancing reading skills among secondary school students. The study also highlighted the importance of structured peer tutoring programs in improving reading outcomes. By pairing students with peers who could provide guidance and support, learners were able to engage in collaborative learning experiences that reinforced their reading skills. This aligns with the principles of socio-cultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development.

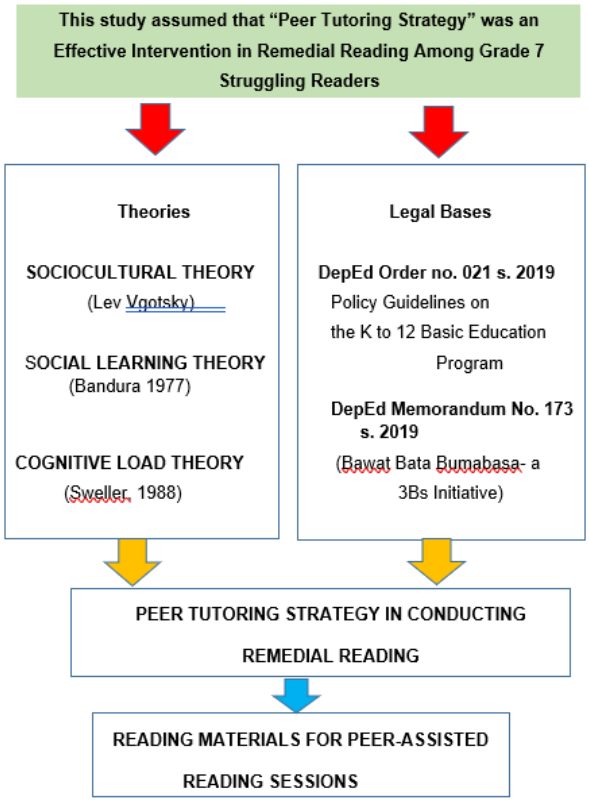

Figure 1. schematic diagram of the theoretical - conceptual framework of the study

According to Okilwa and Shelby (2016), structured peer tutoring programs have demonstrated significant improvements in reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation among at-risk students. These improvements are often attributed to the interactive and personalized nature of peer learning, which provides scaffolding in line with Vygotsky's principles. In remedial reading, peer tutoring provides struggling readers with access to a supportive, collaborative environment where they receive real-time assistance from more proficient peers. This guided interaction allows learners to reduce reading miscues such as mispronunciation, omission, substitution, and repetition by engaging in meaningful dialogue, shared

reading experiences, and immediate corrective feedback (Van Keer & Verhaeghe, 2016; Serrano & Fabella, 2019; Wright & Cleary, 2018).

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) emphasized that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling within a social context. According to Bandura, individuals, especially children, learn new behaviors and skills by watching others perform them, particularly if those behaviors are reinforced (Bandura, 1977). This theory is especially relevant to reading interventions, where learners with reading difficulties can benefit from observing reading behaviors demonstrated by peers.

Rosas and Ranier (2019) observed that students improved their oral reading fluency and comprehension after participating in structured peer tutoring sessions. These gains were attributed to repeated exposure to fluent reading behaviors, immediate corrective feedback, and positive reinforcement from peers. Similarly, Calderon, Bernardo, and Reyes (2020) noted that peer tutors naturally exhibit behaviors that serve as social models for struggling readers, and that students often mirror their peers' intonation, decoding, and even metacognitive strategies during reading sessions. This process results in increased confidence and competence among learners who were previously prone to miscues like mispronunciation, omission, and substitution.

Sanches-Ferreira et al. (2022) investigated the effects of an online peer tutoring intervention on the reading skills of elementary students, focusing on fluency and accuracy. The study found that students who participated in the online peer tutoring sessions showed significant improvements in both reading fluency and accuracy compared to those who did not. This suggests that online peer tutoring can be an effective method for enhancing reading skills in young learners.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory contributed further to the theoretical foundation of peer tutoring by highlighting the significance of observational learning and peer modeling. In literacy settings, students emulate proficient readers, gaining skills through imitation, feedback, and social reinforcement (Schunk, 2016). Contemporary research supports the idea that peer modeling is particularly effective in improving reading fluency and motivation among struggling readers. For instance, Vallerand and Verner-Filion (2020) found that peer relationships and supportive learning environments increase students' intrinsic motivation to read, which in turn enhances performance

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), developed by John Sweller, supports that effective instruction should manage the cognitive load, the amount of mental effort required to process information, to optimize learning outcomes. CLT categorizes cognitive load into three types: intrinsic load (the inherent difficulty of the content), extraneous load (the way information is presented), and germane load (the mental effort directed toward learning). In the context of remedial reading, peer tutoring can be an effective strategy to manage these cognitive loads.

Peer tutoring reduced intrinsic cognitive load by breaking down complex reading tasks into smaller, manageable steps, allowing struggling readers to process information more effectively. By providing immediate feedback and tailored support, peer tutors helped minimize extraneous cognitive load, ensuring that instructional materials are presented. Furthermore, the interactive nature of peer tutoring promotes germane cognitive load by encouraging learners to engage actively with the material, facilitating deeper understanding.

Research showed that peer tutoring helped students handle mental effort more effectively. Duran and Topping (2017) found that peer tutoring not only improves academic performance but also supports how students think and learn by matching teaching methods to how their minds naturally work. Similarly, Paas and Sweller (2016) emphasized the importance of instructional designs that consider cognitive load principles to improve learning efficiency. Cognitive Load Theory suggested that learning was optimized when instructional methods reduced unnecessary cognitive burden, a benefit peer tutoring provides through personalized pacing and immediate feedback (Sweller, Ayres, & Kalyuga, 2019).

Canoy and Loquias (2022) examined the relationship between reading miscues and reading performance among students undergoing an oral reading verification test in English. The study identified common reading miscues, such as omissions, substitutions, and mispronunciations, and analyzed their impact on overall reading performance. The findings indicated that students who made fewer miscues tended to have better reading comprehension and fluency.

The study also highlighted the importance of addressing reading miscues in the development of effective reading programs. By identifying and analyzing these errors, educators can tailor interventions to target specific areas of difficulty, thereby improving students' reading skills. The authors recommended incorporating strategies to minimize reading miscues, such as focused practice on pronunciation and comprehension, into intensive reading programs.

Chu et al. (2017) explored the effects of an online formative peer-tutoring approach on students' learning behaviors, performance, and cognitive load in

mathematics, although the findings have implications for reading instruction as well. The study found that peer tutoring, especially in an online format, significantly reduced students' cognitive load while enhancing their problem-solving skills. Peer tutors guided their peers through challenging tasks, providing explanations and strategies that helped manage the cognitive demands of learning. The study highlighted that the collaborative nature of online peer tutoring allowed students to ask questions and receive instant feedback, which reduced confusion and enhanced learning outcomes. These findings reinforced the idea that peer tutoring was an effective strategy for enhancing reading comprehension by managing cognitive load and promoting active engagement

The theoretical framework supporting Peer Tutoring Strategy emphasized active, student-centered learning and engagement. The combination of Socio-Cultural Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Cognitive Load Theory created a rich learning environment and provided a strong foundation for peer tutoring as a remedial reading intervention. Socio-Cultural Theory emphasized learning through social interaction and scaffolding, enabling struggling readers to improve skills like decoding and fluency within their Zone of Proximal Development. Social Learning Theory highlighted the power of observation and modeling, allowing tutees to adopt effective reading strategies demonstrated by their peers, which helped reduce miscues such as mispronunciations or omissions. Meanwhile, Cognitive Load Theory supported peer tutoring by promoting simplified, learner-paced instruction that reduced mental effort, making it easier for students to focus on core reading skills and correct errors in real time. Together, these theories explained how peer tutoring enhanced reading skills in a student-centered, supportive environment.

In line with DepEd Memorandum No. 173, s. 2019, "Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa," a 3B's initiative which aims to make every learner a proficient reader, and in support of the implementation of the K-12 Basic Education Program, the Department of Education (DepEd) is continuously fulfilling its mandate to produce productive and responsible citizens equipped with essential competencies and skills for lifelong learning. To make every learner a proficient reader, schools across the country are tasked to help learners develop their reading skills. However, such initiatives are still not enough based on the recent results of national assessments for student learning.

By promoting individualized support through peer-assisted learning, the study upheld the policy guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum with emphasis on foundational literacy, collaborative learning, and equity in education, ensuring that no learner is left behind in achieving the basic reading skills. Peer tutoring, as a form of peer-assisted learning, directly supported these objectives by providing personalized attention to learners, particularly those who may be struggling with reading. This approach fostered an inclusive learning environment where students received the necessary scaffolding to achieve basic reading skills at their own pace, with support from their peers.

III. METHODOLODY

The study utilized a quasi-experimental design using a pre-test and post-test approach to evaluate the effectiveness of peer tutoring as an intervention for conducting remedial reading among struggling Grade 7 students at Tugbongan National High School. This design was appropriate as it allows the comparison of student performance before and after the implementation of the intervention, providing insight into the effectiveness of the peer tutoring strategy. To assess students' performance and feedback, a survey questionnaire was administered.

The flow of the study on Fig. 2 shows the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model used to structure the study. The study began by assessing the input variables, which included the level of the respondents' pre-test performance in reading, the level of respondents' post-test performance in reading, the significant difference between pre-test and post-test results, and the students' perceptions regarding the use of the Peer Tutoring Strategy. These inputs served as the foundational data to evaluate how intervention influences reading performance and how students perceived peer-assisted learning methods.

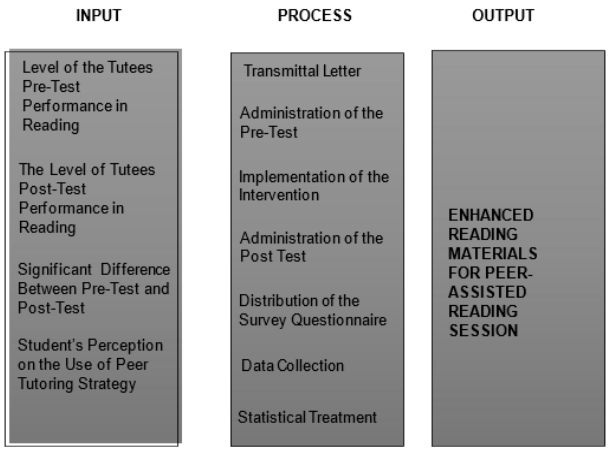

Figure 2. flow of the study

The process involved a series of systematic steps to gather and analyze the data. It started with the preparation and dissemination of a transmittal letter. The researcher then administered the pre-test respectively, to measure

baseline reading performance of the respondents particularly in the following miscues: (mispronunciation, omission, substitution, insertion, repetition, transposition, and reversal). Next, the intervention, which focuses on peer-assisted reading strategies, was implemented to enhance the reading skills. After the intervention, a post-test was conducted to measure any changes in reading performance.

Additionally, a survey questionnaire was distributed to capture students' perceptions of the peer tutoring approach with regards to perceived benefits, perceived effectiveness, and challenges encountered by the respondents during the conduct of the intervention. The collected data underwent statistical treatment to identify significant differences between the pre-test and post-test results and to analyze the respondents' feedback on the peer tutoring strategy.

The study was concentrated on a single research group that underwent both pre-test and post-test using the same instrument. This group was composed of thirty-eight (38) Grade 7 students, with twenty (20) males and eighteen (18) females and went through an individualized reading assessment (pre-test), focusing on addressing the first statement of the problem. The data collected established a baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention contributed to the statistical analysis required to determine any significant differences in reading performance. The same group received remedial reading instruction using the Peer Tutoring Strategy, which aimed to enhance their reading skills through peer-led support and was also provided with post-test which directly addressed the second statement of the problem. Data from their post-test performance were compared to their pre-test results to determine whether there was a significant difference, addressing the third statement of the problem. Additionally, the group contributed insights into the fourth statement of the problem by sharing their perceptions of the Peer Tutoring Strategy, particularly in terms of its perceived benefits, effectiveness, and the challenges they encountered using the Peer Tutoring Strategy.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Respondents

Grade 7	Frequency	Percentage
Male	20	52.63
Female	18	47.37
Total	38	100

The study utilized two research instruments. The first was a pre- and post-test, adopted and modified from the DepEd PHIL-IRI Assessment Tool. This instrument assessed the respondents' word reading scores by identifying specific miscues, including mispronunciation, omission, substitution, insertion, repetition, transposition, and reversal The results of this assessment determined the students' oral reading levels, categorizing them as frustrated, instructional, or independent readers. The next instrument employed was a survey questionnaire adapted and modified from existing tools related to peer tutoring and reading interventions. It was designed to assess the respondents' perceptions of the Peer Tutoring Strategy. The instrument underwent content validation by experts to ensure its relevance, clarity, and reliability. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections: perceived benefits, perceived effectiveness, and challenges in peer tutoring. A five-point Likert scale was utilized to measure the respondents' level of agreement allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the students' attitudes and experiences toward the strategy.

The data-gathering process began with a formal communication letter submitted to the School Head of Tugbongan National High School, Tugbongan, Consolacion, Cebu, requesting permission to conduct the study. Upon securing the necessary approval, the pre-test was administered to the participants. This test was an individualized assessment designed to evaluate the respondents' oral reading levels. During the reading assessment, the teacher recorded each participant's oral reading performance to identify and analyze reading miscues. To enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected, two additional reading teachers were engaged as inter-raters. These teachers independently assessed and rated the students' oral reading skills using the recorded performances.

For the statistical treatment of data, descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to present the students' reading levels in the pre-test and post-test, categorizing them as frustrated, instructional, or independent readers. The mean and standard deviation were computed to describe the central tendency and variability of the pre-test and post-test scores. To determine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, a paired sample t-test was conducted. This statistical test was appropriate for comparing two related samples and assessed the effectiveness of the Peer Tutoring Strategy. The statistical analysis provided insights into the impact of the intervention and the students' attitudes toward it, thereby addressing the study's research questions comprehensively.

To evaluate the respondents' performance level in the reading test, the following scoring procedure was utilized.

Table 2

Oral Reading Profile

Oral Reading Level	Word Reading Score (in %)
Independent	97-100 %
Instructional	90-96 %
Frustration	89% and below

The pre-test results were collected and analyzed to classify students into three categories: independent, instructional, or frustrated readers. After gathering the pre-test scores, the Peer Tutoring Strategy was implemented to enhance their reading skills. Each participant was provided with a schedule for the intervention, and the sessions were conducted from 1:00 to 2:00 in the afternoon after their regular classes. Upon completion of the intervention period, the post-test was administered to assess changes in the students' reading performance. The post-test data were collected and compared with the pre-test results to determine whether there was a significant difference in reading levels. The use of multiple raters enabled data triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility of the study's findings.

Additionally, a survey questionnaire was distributed to gather insights into the students' perceptions of the Peer Tutoring Strategy in terms of perceived benefits, perceived effectiveness, and challenges encountered. Once all data had been gathered, they were statistically processed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Peer Tutoring Strategy. This research also adopted a five-point Likert scale to gather information on the students' perceptions of the use of the Peer Tutoring Strategy, which was interpreted using the scoring procedure as indicated.

Table 3

Students' Perception on the Use of Peer Tutoring Strategy

Scale	Range	Descriptive Equivalent	Verbal Description
5	4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	The student completely agrees on the use of Peer Tutoring Strategy.
4	3.41- 4.20	Agree	The student somewhat agrees on the use of Peer Tutoring Strategy.
3	2.61-3.40	Neutral	The student neither agrees nor disagrees on the use of Peer Tutoring Strategy.
2	1.81- 2.60	Disagree	The student somewhat disagrees with the use of Peer Tutoring Strategy.
1	1.00- 1.80	Strongly Disagree	The student completely disagrees with Peer Tutoring Strategy

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before implementing the Peer Tutoring Strategy, it was necessary to determine the initial reading performance of the students through a pre-test. Establishing their baseline performance provides a clear picture of their existing strengths and weaknesses in reading, which serves as a foundation for measuring the effectiveness of the intervention. Recent research highlights the essential role of pre-assessment in identifying learners' current reading levels and instructional needs, enabling educators to design targeted tutoring interventions. For example, Frontiers (2022) conducted an online peer tutoring study that incorporated pre-, intermediate-, and post-test assessments of reading fluency and accuracy, demonstrating how such staging can be used effectively to tailor instruction and track progress. By analyzing the pre-test results, this study similarly classified learners into frustration, instructional, and independent reading levels—offering valuable insights into their reading proficiency prior to the peer tutoring sessions.

Table 4

The Performance Level of the Tutees in Reading Skills Prior to the Implementation of the Peer Tutoring Intervention

Performance Level	Frequency	Percentage
FRUSTRATION	12.00	31.58
INSTRUCTIONAL	26.00	68.42
INDEPENDENT	0.00	0.00
Total	38.00	100.00
Average	90.62	Instructional

Legend: 0-89 Frustration; 90-96 Instructional; 97-100 Independent

Before the implementation of the peer tutoring strategy, most students were at the Instructional level (68.42%), while a considerable number were at the Frustration level (31.58%). No student reached the independent level. The average performance score was 90.62, which falls under the Instructional level. This suggests that while some students had basic reading ability, they still required teacher guidance and support, and many struggled significantly. The pre-test results further reveal that the students' miscues reflect underlying gaps in word recognition, phonemic awareness, and fluency. Mispronunciations such as "said" to "sid" and "live" to "layb" indicate challenges in applying correct phonetic rules and sight word recognition, which are essential for reading accuracy. Similarly, the omission of words like "now" read as "no," and the confusion between "lived" and "live," show that some learners tend to skip or alter words that they find difficult, which interrupts the meaning of the text. Repetition miscues involving common function words like *is, a, the, she, maybe, but,* and *her* also suggest hesitancy and lack of confidence in decoding, often resulting from limited vocabulary exposure and insufficient fluency practice. These patterns imply that the students are still developing automaticity in word recognition, which significantly affects comprehension and overall reading performance. The pre-test results confirm that prior to the intervention, students had not yet achieved

mastery in foundational reading skills, leaving them vulnerable to frustration when faced with unfamiliar texts.

After the implementation of the Peer Tutoring Strategy, a post-test was conducted to evaluate the progress and improvement of the students' reading skills. Post-assessment serves as a vital measure to determine the effectiveness of an intervention by comparing learners' achievements against their baseline performance. In this study, the post-test results reveal the extent to which peer tutoring contributed to enhancing the reading proficiency of the tutees, specifically in moving them from lower levels of performance toward independence in reading.

The students' performance significantly improved. A majority (63.16%) reached the *Independent level*, while the rest (36.84%) were at the *Instructional level*. Notably, no student remained at the *Frustration level*. The mean score increased to 96.11, reflecting an overall shift toward independent reading ability. Table 5 illustrates the data.

Table 5
The Performance Level of the Tutees in Reading Skills After the Implementation of The Peer Tutoring Intervention

Performance Level	Frequency	Percentage
FRUSTRATION	0.00	0.00
INSTRUCTIONAL	14.00	36.84
INDEPENDENT	24.00	63.16
Total	38.00	100.00
Average	96.11	Instructional

Legend: 0-89 Frustration; 90-96 Instructional; 97-100 Independent

These findings align with current evidence that peer tutoring effectively enhances reading skills. For example, Hasnani and Ismail (2020) reported the mean reading score increased from 23.1 (cycle one) to 73.1 (cycle two) when using Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) in a high school context UIN Alauddin Makassar Journal. Flores Coll (2015) also emphasized that peer tutoring is an effective approach to improving reading skills in educational settings.

The post-test results indicate that while students demonstrated notable improvement in their reading performance, certain miscues persisted, underscoring areas that still require targeted intervention. Mispronunciations such as reading *ate* as the Filipino word "ate," *house* as "hose," or *while* as "whale" reveal ongoing struggles with distinguishing visually similar or phonetically related words. These errors suggest that although learners gained fluency, they continue to face challenges in orthographic and phonological processing, which are critical for accurate word recognition (Ehri, 2020).

Omission errors, such as reducing *decided* to *decide* or *cannot* into *can't*, imply that some students simplify words to align with their comfort level. This pattern indicates a reliance on partial decoding strategies rather than full word recognition, which can hinder comprehension in more complex texts. Similarly, substitution errors (e.g., "was" into "has") and transposition errors (e.g., "tried" into "tired") highlight difficulties with verb tense recognition and word structure, reflecting that students still need support in morphological awareness—a skill closely tied to reading fluency and comprehension (Kuo & Anderson, 2021).

Repetition of high-frequency words such as *with, the, I,* and *they* suggests hesitancy and a lack of confidence in decoding or retrieving the next word. Such miscues are often associated with developing readers who are not yet fully automatic in word recognition, requiring greater exposure and practice to transition from controlled decoding to effortless, fluent reading (Rasinski, 2017).

Together, these findings show that peer tutoring was effective in reducing many reading difficulties and building fluency, but it was not sufficient to eliminate all miscues. The persistence of errors indicates that continuous and complementary interventions such as focused vocabulary instruction, guided oral reading, and phonics reinforcement are still necessary. These findings show that while peer tutoring may have reduced some reading miscues, continuous intervention is needed to strengthen pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, and reading automaticity.

To further determine the effectiveness of the Peer Tutoring Strategy, it was essential to statistically analyze the differences between the students' pre-test and post-test scores. This comparison provides more than just descriptive insights, as it objectively establishes whether the observed improvements in reading skills are significant and attributable to the intervention rather than chance. Recent research underscores the importance of measuring statistical significance in intervention studies to validate the reliability of findings and evaluate the true impact of instructional strategies. Alegre et al. (2021) employed a pre-test/post-test design in evaluating peer tutoring for learning statistics and probability among middle school students. Their results revealed no significant differences at pre-test, followed by statistically significant improvements post-intervention ($p < .01$) and a medium to large effect size (Hedges's $g = 0.72$), demonstrating how statistical analysis substantiates the measurable gains produced by peer tutoring.

Table 6
Test of Significant Difference Between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Tutees in Vocabulary

Level of Performance	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Statistic	p	Decision	Interpretation
POSTTEST	96.1	2.35	5.49	7.27	< .001	Reject	Significant
PRETEST	90.6	4.71				Ho	

Effect Size =1.18
*Significant if p < 0.05
Note. H_a μ Measure 1 - Measure 2 ≠ 0

The statistical analysis Table 6 revealed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. The mean score improved from 90.6 to 96.1, with a mean difference of 5.49. The test statistics were 7.27, and the p-value < .001, which is well below the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, confirming that the peer tutoring strategy had a significant positive effect on students' reading performance. The effect size of 1.18 indicates a large effect, meaning the improvement was not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful.

Beyond the test scores, it is equally important to consider how students themselves perceive the Peer Tutoring Strategy, since their experiences and attitudes directly influence the effectiveness and sustainability of the approach. Learners' perceptions provide valuable insights into the benefits they gained, the challenges they encountered, and their overall evaluation of the strategy as a tool for improving reading skills. Recent studies emphasize that students' voices are critical in assessing educational interventions, as positive perceptions often correlate with higher engagement and motivation, while identified challenges guide future refinements (Rahman & Arifin, 2022; Santoso & Fitria, 2021). In this study, the perceptions of the tutees highlight not only the academic impact of peer tutoring but also its role in shaping their confidence, collaboration, and attitudes toward reading.

Table 7

The Tutees' Perceptions Regarding the Use of the Peer Tutoring Strategy.

Perception	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	SD	Mean	Verbal Description
Perceived Benefits	0	1	4	22	11	0.50	3.99	Agree
Perceived Effectiveness	0	0	6	19	13	0.49	4.05	Agree
Challenges Encountered	3	18	14	3	0	0.61	2.64	Neutral

Legend: 1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 Disagree; 2.61-3.40 Neutral; 3.41-4.20 Agree; 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree

Most students agreed that peer tutoring brought positive benefits. With a mean of 3.99 (*Agree*), learners recognized that the strategy enhanced their reading skills, confidence, and engagement. Very few students disagreed, which suggests strong acceptance of the intervention. Students also rated the peer tutoring as effective, with a mean of 4.05 (*Agree*). This shows that they found the method useful in helping them understand reading tasks better, improve fluency, and achieve greater independence in reading.

In terms of the challenges, the perception was rated *Neutral* with a mean of 2.64. Some students noted difficulties such as mismatched pacing between tutors and tutees, possible communication barriers, or uneven participation. However, since the response leaned toward neutral rather than disagree, it suggests that challenges existed but were not overwhelming. These findings are consistent with prior research, which has reported that although peer tutoring promotes academic gains, issues such as pacing differences and communication barriers may occasionally arise (Alegre et al., 2021; Chan & Lam, 2017).

The results of this study also demonstrate that the Peer Tutoring Strategy is a powerful tool in enhancing reading skills. Students transitioned from instructional and frustration levels toward independence, showing significant improvements supported by statistical analysis. This aligns with the findings of Flores Coll (2015) and Topping, Buchs, Duran, and Van Keer (2017), who emphasized that peer tutoring effectively fosters independence, improves reading proficiency, and strengthens learner confidence.

V. CONCLUSION

The study's findings reveal that the Peer Tutoring Strategy (PTS) is an effective intervention in enhancing the reading skills of the tutees. The pre-test results showed that most of the students were at the *Instructional level*, while some were at the *Frustration level*, and none achieved the *Independent level*, indicating that learners generally needed guidance in reading prior to the intervention. After the implementation of PTS, the post-test results demonstrated a remarkable improvement, with a majority of the students progressing to the *Independent level*, while the rest remained at the *Instructional level*, and no student was left in the *Frustration level*. A test of significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores confirmed that the gains were not due to chance. This establishes that PTS had a substantial and meaningful impact on improving students' reading performance. In terms of perceptions, the tutees expressed positive views toward the use of PTS. They agreed on its benefits such as increased confidence, enhanced comprehension, and better engagement in reading tasks. They also agreed on its effectiveness acknowledging that peer tutoring helped them become more independent and motivated readers. On the other hand, their responses regarding challenges were

neutral, suggesting that while difficulties such as pacing and communication differences existed, these were manageable and did not outweigh the positive effects of the strategy. Prior to peer tutoring, common errors included mispronunciations, omissions, and substitutions, which hindered reading fluency and comprehension. After the implementation of PTS, these miscues were noticeably reduced, reflecting an improvement in word recognition, accuracy, and overall reading fluency. Overall, the findings affirm that the Peer Tutoring Strategy not only improved students' reading performance but also fostered positive learner perceptions, thereby supporting it as an instructional approach to enhance reading skills. Based on the findings, the Peer Tutoring Strategy (PTS) proved to be an effective intervention in enhancing the reading skills of the students. The results showed that learners who initially performed at the frustration and instructional levels significantly improved after the implementation of PTS, with the majority progressing to the independent level.

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