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Article

Language Learning Strategies and Reading Attitudes as Determinants of Reading Proficiency among Grade Three Learners

June Venus Llanto

Corresponding Author: junevenuspostanes25@gmail.com

Abstract: This study determined the language learning strategies, reading attitudes, and reading proficiency of Grade Three learners. Specifically, it assessed the learners' profile, language learning strategies in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, reading attitudes, and reading proficiency. It also examined the relationship between language learning strategies, reading attitudes, and reading proficiency. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design. Using total enumeration sampling, all 583 Grade Three learners served as respondents. Data were gathered using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990), a Reading Attitude Questionnaire, and the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). Frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Chi-square Test of Independence were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that the learners generally demonstrated very satisfactory language learning strategies and reading attitudes. Most learners were classified as transitioning readers, while a substantial number had attained grade-level reading proficiency. Moreover, language learning strategies and reading attitudes were found not to have a significant relationship with learners' reading proficiency. The study concluded that favorable language learning strategies and positive reading attitudes alone were insufficient determinants of reading proficiency. Therefore, the implementation of Project READERS: Reading Enhancement and Development for Effective Reading Success, a Reading Skills Enhancement Program, was recommended to strengthen learners' reading competencies and support literacy development.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Language Learning Strategies, Reading Attitudes, Reading Proficiency

Introduction

Reading is a foundational competency that enables learners to acquire knowledge, communicate ideas, and participate meaningfully in school and society (Niculescu & Dragomir, 2023). Contemporary research on the science of reading emphasizes that literacy development requires coordinated instruction in word recognition, oral

language, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Petscher et al., 2020). Systematic instruction in letter–sound relationships and word recognition is particularly important during this developmental period because it supports accurate and increasingly automatic reading (Ehri, 2020). At the same time, comprehension instruction must help learners connect textual information with their vocabulary, background knowledge, and reasoning abilities (Duke et al., 2021). Grade Three is therefore a critical stage because reading development at this level depends on the interaction of several linguistic, cognitive, and self-regulatory processes rather than on decoding alone (Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

The development of reading proficiency is also influenced by the strategies learners use before, during, and after reading. Strategic readers establish a purpose, activate prior knowledge, monitor their understanding, identify important information, and respond when meaning breaks down (Afflerbach, 2022). Evidence from reading intervention research indicates that explicit strategy instruction can improve the comprehension performance of learners who experience persistent reading difficulties (Filderman et al., 2022). However, learners' willingness to use reading strategies may also depend on their motivation and confidence. A meta-analysis conducted by Toste et al. (2020) found a meaningful relationship between reading motivation and reading achievement among elementary and secondary learners. Similarly, motivational reading instruction has been shown to produce positive effects on both reading performance and learners' willingness to participate in literacy activities (McBreen & Savage, 2021). Regular engagement in appropriate reading materials may further create a reciprocal relationship in which reading practice supports comprehension while improved comprehension encourages additional reading (Torppa et al., 2020).

Despite the importance of foundational literacy, many children throughout the world remain unable to read and understand age-appropriate texts. Global learning data have revealed substantial differences in the quality of learning opportunities available to children across countries and socioeconomic groups (Angrist et al., 2021). This concern is reflected in the continuing problem of learning poverty, which refers to children's inability to read and understand a simple text by approximately ten years of age (World Bank et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified the problem because prolonged school closures and uneven access to remote instruction resulted in measurable losses in student learning (Betthäuser et al., 2023). Young learners from disadvantaged households were particularly vulnerable because they often had limited access to books, educational technology, adult guidance, and literacy-rich learning environments. International evidence has consequently emphasized the need to assess foundational reading and numeracy skills early so that struggling learners can receive appropriate support (UNICEF, 2022). Global education monitoring has also highlighted the importance of ensuring that technology, educational resources, and literacy interventions reduce rather than widen existing inequalities among learners (UNESCO, 2023).

The same literacy concerns are evident in the Philippine educational system. Results from the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics showed that many learners in the

region, including Filipino learners, experienced difficulty applying reading skills to increasingly complex texts and tasks (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization [SEAMEO] & UNICEF, 2020). The Philippines has also been identified as having a high level of learning poverty, indicating that many Filipino children have not developed the expected level of reading comprehension by late primary school (World Bank, 2022). In response to these challenges, the Department of Education included literacy improvement, learning recovery, teacher development, and equitable access to educational resources among the priorities of the Basic Education Development Plan 2030 (Department of Education [DepEd], 2022). Nevertheless, results from the Programme for International Student Assessment continued to show serious difficulties in reading comprehension among Filipino students, especially in locating, interpreting, and evaluating information from texts (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023). The implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum therefore placed greater emphasis on foundational competencies, curriculum decongestion, and the mastery of essential literacy and numeracy skills during the early grades (DepEd, 2024a).

At Canduman Elementary School, teachers continuously implemented reading activities and intervention programs to strengthen the literacy skills of Grade Three learners. However, classroom observations, school reading assessments, and monitoring records indicated that some learners continued to experience difficulties in word recognition, vocabulary development, inferential comprehension, and sustained engagement in reading tasks. These school-level concerns reflected the broader need for systematic learning recovery identified in the National Learning Recovery Program, which encouraged schools to provide targeted support based on learners' assessed needs (DepEd, 2023). The persistence of foundational learning gaps across Philippine schools has likewise been documented as a significant concern requiring coordinated action from teachers, school leaders, families, and government institutions (Second Congressional Commission on Education [EDCOM II], 2024). Programs such as Catch-up Fridays were introduced to provide additional opportunities for reading, values formation, health education, and other learning activities intended to address identified learning deficiencies (DepEd, 2024b). Research on supplementary instruction has shown that intensive and well-structured academic support can substantially improve learning outcomes, particularly when instruction is aligned with the learner's specific level and needs (Nickow et al., 2024). The establishment of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program further emphasized the importance of sustained intervention for learners who have not attained expected competencies in reading, mathematics, and science (Republic of the Philippines, 2024).

Understanding how learners listened, spoke, read, wrote, monitored comprehension, and responded emotionally to reading tasks could provide a more comprehensive explanation of their literacy performance. Learner and family characteristics, including parental educational attainment, household composition, and family income, also required consideration because these factors could affect access to

reading materials and support at home. Hence, this study examined the language-learning strategies, reading attitudes, and reading proficiency of Grade Three learners at Canduman Elementary School.

Literature Review

Language learning in the elementary grades develops through the integrated use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing rather than through isolated activities. Young learners benefit from varied and learner-centered strategies, including storytelling, language games, picture-based activities, collaborative tasks, journaling, and technology-supported instruction. These approaches can strengthen vocabulary, oral communication, comprehension, and written expression while sustaining learners' interest and classroom participation. Technology-based materials, such as animated videos, podcasts, and audiovisual resources, may also improve listening and understanding. Since learners differ in preferences and difficulties, teachers should select strategies appropriate to their developmental levels and needs. Assessing these strategies can therefore guide responsive instruction. Reading attitudes influence learners' willingness to engage with texts, practice regularly, and persist when reading becomes difficult. However, positive attitudes alone may not always result in high comprehension because reading performance is also affected by motivation, language ability, instructional quality, and access to appropriate materials. A Philippine study found that learning motivation, rather than reading attitude alone, significantly predicted elementary learners' comprehension. Among younger learners, reading motivation and school well-being were positively associated with literacy and language skills. Structured comprehension programs can improve reading attitudes, fluency, motivation, and comprehension (Lin, 2025). Moreover, parent-supported reading activities likewise promote comprehension and favorable attitudes.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive–correlational, non-experimental, and cross-sectional research design. It described the language learning strategies, reading attitudes, and reading skills of Grade Three learners and examined whether language learning strategies were significantly associated with reading performance. This design was appropriate because the variables were measured under their natural classroom conditions without manipulation or intervention. Similar educational studies have used descriptive–correlational designs, questionnaires, reading measures, and correlation analysis to examine factors associated with learners' reading performance. The study was conducted at Canduman Elementary School, a public elementary school in Barangay Canduman, Mandaue City, under the DepEd Mandaue Division, during School Year 2025–2026. The respondents consisted of 583 officially enrolled Grade Three learners from fifteen sections. Total enumeration was employed to obtain adequate representation of the learners across all classes. Before data

collection, permission was secured from the school authorities, teachers, parents or guardians, and learners.

The principal instrument was an adapted learner survey questionnaire composed of three parts. Part I gathered the respondents' age, gender, parents' highest educational attainment, number of siblings, and combined family monthly income. Part II measured language learning strategies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing using age-appropriate statements adapted from Kaur and Embi's language learning strategy inventory. Part III measured learners' reading attitudes through simple statements concerning enjoyment, interest, confidence, and participation in reading activities. The questionnaire underwent expert validation by language, reading, and research specialists and pilot testing to determine clarity and internal consistency.

Reading skills were measured using available school-standard assessment results, particularly the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, which classified learners according to their reading level. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used for descriptive analysis. Pearson's correlation or Spearman's rho was applied, depending on data distribution, to determine relationships between variables at the .05 significance level. The findings served as the basis for developing a Reading Skills Enhancement Plan.

Results

Table 1. Level of the Language Learning Strategies of the Learners in terms of Listening

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Ask for clarification if I do not understand it the first time around.	4.21	0.91	Outstanding
Ask speakers to repeat what they said if it wasn't clear to me.	4.22	0.86	Outstanding
Listen for key words that seem to carry the bulk of the meaning.	4.28	0.89	Outstanding
Try to predict what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.	3.71	1.00	Very Satisfactory
Listen to talk shows on the radio, watch TV shows or movies in the English language.	4.22	0.90	Outstanding
Draw on my general background knowledge to get the main idea.	4.12	1.01	Very Satisfactory
Try to understand what I hear without translating it word-for-word.	4.03	0.96	Very Satisfactory
Listening to people who are speaking in English and try to understand what they are saying.	4.20	0.97	Very Satisfactory
Pay special attention to specific aspects of the language.	4.12	0.98	Very Satisfactory
Practice sounds in the target language that are different from sounds in my own language.	4.08	1.00	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Mean	4.12		Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.95	

Table 1 presents the level of the learners' language learning strategies in terms of

listening. The findings revealed an aggregate mean of 4.12 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.95, verbally interpreted as Very Satisfactory, indicating that the learners frequently employed listening strategies in learning English. Among the indicators, "Listen for key words that seem to carry the bulk of the meaning" obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.28, with a standard deviation of 0.89, and was described as Outstanding, suggesting that learners effectively focus on essential information when listening. In contrast, "Try to predict what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far" received the lowest weighted mean of 3.71, with a standard deviation of 1.00, although it was still interpreted as Very Satisfactory, indicating that learners were somewhat less confident in using predictive listening strategies.

Table 2. Level of the Language Learning Strategies of the Learners in terms of Speaking

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Ask for help from my conversational partner.	4.14	0.79	Very Satisfactory
Plan out in advance what I want to say.	4.16	0.74	Very Satisfactory
Encourage others to correct errors in my speaking.	4.11	0.79	Very Satisfactory
Practice saying new expressions to myself.	4.20	0.78	Very Satisfactory
Initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible.	4.12	0.85	Very Satisfactory
Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation.	4.10	0.76	Very Satisfactory
Make up new words or guess if I don't know the right ones to use.	3.82	0.94	Very Satisfactory
Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level in using them.	4.13	0.87	Very Satisfactory
Try topics even when they aren't familiar to me.	3.99	0.87	Very Satisfactory
Direct the conversation to familiar topics.	4.17	0.77	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Mean	4.09		Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.82	

Table 2 indicates that the learners' language learning strategies in speaking were rated Very Satisfactory, with an aggregate mean of 4.09 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.82. Practicing new expressions independently obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.78, showing that learners often rehearse

unfamiliar expressions before using them. In contrast, making up new words or guessing when the correct terms are unknown received the lowest weighted mean of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 0.94. Overall, learners effectively use speaking strategies but need more practice in managing unfamiliar vocabulary during conversations.

Table 3. Level of the Language Learning Strategies of the Learners in Terms of Reading

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Use a dictionary to get a detailed sense of what individual words mean.	4.20	0.83	Very Satisfactory
Read a story or dialogue several times until I understand it.	4.27	0.82	Outstanding
Guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the context of the reading material.	4.00	0.87	Very Satisfactory
Skim an academic text first to get the main idea and then go back and read it more carefully.	4.04	0.87	Very Satisfactory
Find reading material that is at or near my level.	4.17	0.81	Very Satisfactory
Read as much as possible in the target language.	4.10	0.82	Very Satisfactory
Pay attention to the organization of the text, especially headings and subheadings.	4.19	0.78	Very Satisfactory
Make predictions as to what will happen next.	3.79	0.98	Very Satisfactory
Try to find things to read for pleasure in the target language.	4.12	0.81	Very Satisfactory
Make ongoing summaries of the reading either in my mind or in the margins of the text.	4.06	0.80	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Mean	4.09		Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.84	

Table 3 shows that the learners' language learning strategies in reading were rated Very Satisfactory, with an aggregate mean of 4.09 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.84. The highest-rated indicator was reading a story or dialogue several times until it is understood, which obtained a weighted mean of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.82, interpreted as Outstanding. This suggests that learners commonly use repetition to improve comprehension. Meanwhile, making predictions about what will happen next received the lowest weighted mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.98,

although it remained Very Satisfactory. Overall, the findings indicate that learners apply reading strategies effectively, but prediction skills may require further classroom practice and guidance.

Table 4. Level of the Language Learning Strategies of the Learners in Terms of Writing

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Use reference materials such as a glossary, a dictionary, or a thesaurus to help find or verify words in the target language.	4.22	0.72	Outstanding
Review what I have already written before continuing to write more.	4.24	0.73	Outstanding
Revise my writing once or twice to improve the language and content.	4.19	0.77	Very Satisfactory
Try to get feedback from others, especially native speakers of the language.	4.16	0.83	Very Satisfactory
Wait to edit my writing until all my ideas are down on paper.	4.13	0.81	Very Satisfactory
Practice writing the alphabet and/or new words in the target language.	4.16	0.81	Very Satisfactory
Take class notes in the target language as much as I'm able.	4.15	0.84	Very Satisfactory
Find different ways to express the idea when I don't know the correct expression.	4.15	0.84	Very Satisfactory
Plan out in advance how to write essays by writing an outline of the essay first.	4.11	0.80	Very Satisfactory
Try writing different kinds of texts in the target language.	4.18	0.79	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Mean	4.17		Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.79	

Table 4 presents the learners' language learning strategies in terms of writing. The results revealed an aggregate mean of 4.17 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.79, verbally interpreted as Very Satisfactory, indicating that the learners frequently employed writing strategies during language learning activities. Among the indicators, reviewing what had already been written before continuing to write more obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 0.73, interpreted as Outstanding. Conversely, planning essays by writing an outline first received the lowest weighted mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 0.80, although it remained Very Satisfactory. Overall, the findings suggest that the learners consistently applied effective writing strategies but could further strengthen their planning and pre-writing skills.

Table 5 shows that the learners' reading attitudes were rated Very Satisfactory, with an aggregate mean of 3.79 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.83. The highest-rated indicator was reading English books every day, which obtained a weighted mean of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 0.73.

Table 5. Level of Reading Attitudes of the Learners

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
I read English books every day.	3.94	0.73	Very Satisfactory
I only read English books at school.	3.73	0.79	Very Satisfactory
I read English books at home.	3.88	0.89	Very Satisfactory
I only read books in my first language in my leisure time.	3.85	0.80	Very Satisfactory
I read English books during my leisure time.	3.93	0.78	Very Satisfactory
I would be bored without a book.	3.53	0.90	Very Satisfactory
Do you read outside of class?	3.80	0.88	Very Satisfactory
I read with friends.	3.73	0.77	Very Satisfactory
I read with my family.	3.76	0.93	Very Satisfactory
I read social media platforms on my cell phone.	3.80	0.81	Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Mean	3.79		Very Satisfactory
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.83	

This suggests that many learners regularly engage with English reading materials. In contrast, the statement that learners would be bored without a book received the lowest weighted mean of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 0.90, although it remained Very Satisfactory. Overall, the findings indicate generally positive reading attitudes, but stronger encouragement may still be needed to develop deeper enjoyment, sustained interest, and voluntary reading habits among Grade Three learners.

Table 6. Level of Reading Skills of the Learners

Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Reading at Grade Level	204	34.99
Transitioning Reader	291	49.91
Developing Reader	68	11.66
High Emerging Reader	11	1.89
Emerging Reader	9	1.54
Total	583	100.00

Table 6 presents the distribution of the learners' reading skills based on their reading

proficiency levels. The findings reveal that 291 learners, or 49.91%, were classified as Transitioning Readers, representing the largest group. This was followed by 204 learners, or 34.99%, who were Reading at Grade Level. Meanwhile, 68 learners (11.66%) were identified as Developing Readers, while only 11 learners (1.89%) and 9 learners (1.54%) were classified as High Emerging Readers and Emerging Readers, respectively. Overall, the results indicate that although a considerable proportion of learners have attained or are approaching grade-level reading proficiency, many remain in the transitioning stage and would benefit from targeted reading interventions to strengthen their reading skills and achieve grade-level competence.

Table 7. Test of Significance of the Relationship between the Language Learning Strategies and the Reading Skills of the Learners

Variables	χ^2 -value	df	P-value	Decision	Result
Language Learning Strategies and Reading Skills	13.954	9	0.124	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant

Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table 7 presents the test of significance of the relationship between the learners' language learning strategies and their reading skills. The computed chi-square value of 13.954 with 9 degrees of freedom yielded a p-value of 0.124, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating no significant relationship between language learning strategies and reading skills among the Grade Three learners. This finding suggests that although the learners generally demonstrated satisfactory language learning strategies, these strategies were not significantly associated with their reading proficiency. Hence, other factors beyond language learning strategies may have contributed to the learners' reading skills and should be considered in planning appropriate reading interventions.

Table 8. Test of Significance of the Relationship between the Reading Attitudes and the Reading Skills of the Learners

Variables	χ^2 -value	df	P-value	Decision	Result
Reading Attitudes and Reading Skills	9.249	12	0.681	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant

Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table 8 presents the test of significance of the relationship between the learners' reading attitudes and their reading skills. The computed chi-square value of 9.249 with 12 degrees of freedom yielded a p-value of 0.681, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating no significant relationship between reading attitudes and reading skills among the Grade Three learners. This finding suggests

that although the learners generally exhibited Very Satisfactory reading attitudes, these attitudes were not significantly associated with their level of reading proficiency. Consequently, factors other than reading attitudes may have influenced the learners' reading skills and should be considered when designing interventions to improve reading achievement.

Discussion

The findings show that the Grade Three learners generally demonstrated strong language learning strategies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They also displayed positive attitudes toward reading and regularly participated in different reading activities. However, most learners were still classified as Transitioning Readers, while only a smaller proportion had reached grade-level reading proficiency. This indicates that using appropriate learning strategies and having positive reading attitudes may not be sufficient to ensure strong reading performance. Learners may still require structured guidance, repeated practice, vocabulary development, and differentiated reading activities to improve their comprehension and overall proficiency. The results further revealed that language learning strategies and reading attitudes were not significantly related to reading skills. This means that learners who frequently use language learning strategies or show positive attitudes toward reading do not necessarily achieve higher reading levels. Other factors may influence their reading performance, such as instructional methods, home literacy support, access to reading materials, prior knowledge, and individual learning needs. Therefore, teachers should not rely solely on learners' strategies and attitudes when planning interventions. A comprehensive reading enhancement program that includes assessment-based instruction, targeted remediation, guided reading, and continuous progress monitoring may better address the learners' specific reading difficulties.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the Grade Three learners demonstrated very satisfactory levels of language learning strategies and reading attitudes, reflecting active engagement in language learning and generally positive perceptions toward reading. Most of the learners were classified as transitioning readers, indicating progress toward grade-level reading proficiency, although some still required additional literacy support. The findings further suggested that reading proficiency was influenced by factors beyond language learning strategies and reading attitudes alone. Thus, the study underscored the need to strengthen literacy instruction, implement targeted reading interventions, and develop responsive school programs and policies that support learners' reading development and achievement.

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