



Local and foreign literary genres on students' reading comprehension and attitude

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Abstract

Local and foreign literary genres on students' reading comprehension and attitude is a study investigating whether local or foreign genres have significant effect on grade 8 students' reading comprehension and attitude. There were 100 respondents involved in the study, 50 from experimental group used with local literary pieces and 50 from controlled group using foreign literary reading materials. The reading comprehension levels of students were identified through a teacher made comprehension test, which was interpreted using the Phil-IRI reading comprehension criterion. On the other hand, students' reading attitudes were determined using a reading attitude test adopted from Tullock-Rhody and Alexander (1980). The data were collected from the eight weeks reading sessions of the two groups and the results were compared through their pre-and post-tests scores. Results showed that there is insignificant difference of the two groups in their reading comprehension level during the post-test or after the intervention. However, students exposed to local literary genres had developed a very positive attitude towards reading while the controlled group had only a positive attitude. Therefore, local literary genres were effective in enhancing students' reading attitude.

Keywords: attitude, foreign literary genres, local literary genres, reading comprehension

Introduction

READING plays a dominant role among the four skills in learning the foreign language for secondary students. As Zhao and Zhu (2012) [27], stated: Today students slant to be passive and reluctant in reading. However, reading is an active and dynamic psychological process rather than a passive and mechanical one, which requires reader's utilization what he has learned to process the reading materials.

The problem the researcher encountered on poor reading comprehension of the students under frustration level every year becomes her concern since she was assigned as the reading coordinator in the school. The availability of literary references in the library have helped developed the culture of reading, but to a few students only. To make these literary pieces functional for reading comprehension activities, she would like to start building on the reading comprehension of the students using local literary genres. After many years of using foreign text content in the pre and post reading tests in gauging reading comprehension, many falls under Frustration at the end of the school year.

The School Reading Profile at Catumbalon National High School indicated the poor reading performance of the students. The Phil IRI's, presentation of the reading comprehension levels independent readers must be 80% - 100%, instructional 59% - 79%, and frustration below 58%. Results show the poor reading capabilities in the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) at Catumbalon National High School during the pre- reading tests on August 2018, 46.79% of the 562 tested falls under frustration level. The data showed that there is a reading problem among the students. Both their reading speed and their reading skills are far from being satisfactory.

On the diagnostic test in reading conducted for incoming Grade 7, the researcher noticed that most of the school graders, who finished elementary, enter high school without having the ability to read and to answer reading comprehension questions on reading passages. Sixty-two per cent (62%) of the 180 students fall under frustration level in the comprehension test.

However, teaching how to read is not just a task for the primary grades and elementary years alone, instead a lifetime task for every individual. In their early years in school, children are taught to recognize simple to complex English words as it is used in most subjects. The success which the children achieve in learning to read is closely related to the satisfaction they attain in their experience in reading. Studies have shown that, pushing students further ahead of themselves devastate their learning morale. Every child's capacity to learn and acquire knowledge must be respected with proper guidance because they have their best ways of becoming skilled (Alonzo, 2013) [2].

Thus, understanding about reading comprehension problems of the learners inspired the researcher to delve more about the solution to this problem and hope to find the best results to improve the readers reading comprehension in Catumbalon National High School.

If there are no interventions made by the teacher to help frustration readers develop their reading comprehension, then they will be unsuccessful in other academic fields and perhaps frustration reader will increase because they have struggles in understanding other content areas as well. This difficulty must be addressed through activating learner's content schemata by using local literary genres that is within the learners' cultural background or knowledge. Students' inability to comprehend due to poor vocabulary and unfamiliarity of the text's content hinders learners' academic performance.

Thus, this problem ignited the researcher to study on local literary genres as cognitive strategies on students' reading comprehension and attitude. The researcher used local myths and stories available in the community to help learners especially those who are still in the frustration level to improve their reading capabilities by providing them with appropriate reading selections using local literary genres.

The need to accumulate reading materials that is based on learner's background awareness in any genres of literature to increase students' reading comprehension is the focus of this endeavor. Being the School's Reading Coordinator and in-charge of the Learning Resource, she feels the importance of having those materials accessible to language reading teachers through utilizing resources that students have cultural background which will be used in gauging their reading comprehension.

Review of Literature

Reading comprehension

Sabatim (2013) acknowledged reading to be the most stable and durable of the second language modalities. That means, learners may lose their productive skills but still be able to comprehend texts with some degree of proficiency. He also pointed out that some learners require instructions in the native language for success in school.

Reading is defined by Zhao and Zhu (2013) as one of the important skills in English learning. It is acknowledged that language comprehension is the very important key link that we can't feel directly but it does exist. They said that when people comprehend, they need to combine their own background knowledge with the information in a text. In this process, the prior knowledge and knowledge structure works effectively in people's cognitive activities.

Reading requires knowledge of content, formal, and linguistic schema. Reading is also a meaning-making process involving an interaction between the reader and the text. Thus, students should be guided how to read interactively that they must learn to interact with the text they are reading. Reading strategies like developing questions in the mind upon reading or making prediction what is likely to happen in the text.

Readers use mental activities in order to construct meaning from text. These activities are generally referred to as reading strategies or reading skills. Goodman and Smith (1986) suggest that readers go through an on-going process while reading which involves the continuous process of sampling from the input text, predicting what will come next, testing and confirming predictions, and so on. Readers do not read word for word, but rather use their background knowledge, and various strategies such as predicting and confirming to comprehend text.

The above description implies an important concept that reading teachers should consider in designing reading activities that would activate the learners' schemata or background knowledge which is stored in the learners' memory that needs to be activated for them to connect the new information of what they had already known. This strategic concept of dealing problem readers has not been extensively understood by the teachers. Knowledge of reading in a foreign language, in particular English is so necessary nowadays for most learners.

When preparing for the classes, teachers can combine the text's content and students' knowledge and experience, and then design some efficient questions. Through questioning at the pre-reading stage, teachers can create the active classroom atmosphere and arouse students' reading interest which makes students activate their previous knowledge (Zhao & Zhu, 2013).

Whenever students decide on questions to be answered by reading, they are activating prior knowledge. These questions tend to be able to help the reader focus his attention on the reading material and provide for purposeful reading. Teachers can also prepare questions in advance. This will help in guiding readers to a full understanding of their reading assignment.

Brainstorming involves students in a rapid-fire, free-association listing of concepts or ideas or facts or feelings relevant to some topic or context. In these sessions, teachers ask students to examine together the title of the selection they are about to read. The teacher lists on the board all the information that comes to mind as students read the title. These pieces of information are then used to further recall, and in the process considerable knowledge will be activated. It creates an atmosphere for students to choose previous background knowledge from the brain.

Pre-testing is that before reading students are tested about the known knowledge. Tests can be multiple choice or true or false items. By testing, students are more sensitive to the passage's content so that the comprehension affects knowledge and experience in their minds. This activity requires teachers design several topics before classes for students to discuss in the classes. While-reading Activities In the pre-reading activities, students' schemata are activated and expanded.

While it is possible to activate existing schemata with a given topic, it does not necessarily follow that a student can use this activated knowledge to develop new knowledge and skills. Build on what they already know, students are required to expand on the terms and information they already understand, elicit a large number of associations by the prior knowledge they already possess and make clear connections (Mazzone, 2015).

Xiaoguang Zhao and Lei Zhu (2012) ^[27] said that reading under the guidance of teacher and discussing with partners are all effective on-class activities which benefit the development of students' reading abilities. Reading is an active process and readers are not the passive receivers of text information. So teachers should cultivate students' prediction capability in order to make students experience how the schema plays a predictive part. It is impossible that any text provides all the details. In many cases, authors make omissions which he or she assumes readers understand. More often, authors' intention can only be found between the lines. All this requires students develop their ability to infer information from the existed one. To achieve this, class discussion is quite effective. Class discussions and informal talks in and out of class all serve as techniques to discover more about what students bring to their reading (Xiaoguang Zhao & Lei Zhu, 2012) ^[27]. It will facilitate students' oral communication ability in that they will be more active in class discussions. It is best to divide students into several groups so that more students will have more chances to speak in class. Over a period of time, teachers can begin to get some idea as to what their students know and can adjust how much time needs to be spent on background information.

Post-reading Activities Schema theory views that the more schema students have, the better students predict. So, it is necessary to do the post-reading activities to solidify and enlarge students' schema. Otherwise, the problems students meet in the pre-reading stage and the while-reading stage needs to be cleared more after class. There are several effective ways, such as outlining, abbreviation and so on, which are helpful to students' comprehension. Analyzing passage structure of a text can help students predict how the information is developing in the passage. After class discussion is another good way to solve the remaining problems and deepen their comprehension. It can also stir up students' interest of continuing to read other materials of the same or related topic, which surely enhances their schemata.

Local and Foreign Literary Genres

Ozkan and Tongur (2014), stated that the use of literary works in the teaching of English has been a matter of concern for many years as part of search for better, more efficient and more constructive reading comprehension activities. Developing reading materials to assess students' reading comprehension using local literary genres is important element in English language because it provides the basis for their understanding of the texts content. Though reading is not the only skill to be taught in the language classroom, it is definitely one of the most important for many EFL learners. Reading comprehension is important "in all levels of education as it enables learners who are struggling with their academic and literary tasks to overcome their challenges. Using literary material that is relevant and appealing to learners in order to gain from the advantages of literary texts in teaching reading comprehension is also a valuable asset. In addition to all types of written material, literary works are precious materials to be exploited for reading comprehension activities because literary texts provide students with the opportunity to expand on the limits of the text by integrating readers' experiences and beliefs into meanings of the text. Understanding the reader is one important piece of the comprehension puzzle but features of the text also influence the transaction where comprehension happens. The structure of the text—its genre, vocabulary, language, even the specific word choices—works to make each text unique. Some would even argue that it is at the word or microstructure level that meaning begins (Pardo, 2002).

How well the text is written, whether it follows the conventions of its genre or structure, and the language or dialect it is written in is all factors of the text. The content of a specific text, the difficulty or readability of it, and even the type font and size are factors of a text that can influence a reader's interaction. These features collectively are referred to as "surface features," and studies have shown that the quality of the text at the surface level is important for readers to be able to make meaning effectively. While Ghasemi (2011) said that many ESL/EFL experts agree that content knowledge is an important factor in the learning process of reading comprehension. The interaction and reciprocal, collaboration of literature and language teaching has been the subject of interest to many foreign language teaching researchers, especially in the 20th century. Using literature as a vehicle for the teaching of a second or foreign language has proved very beneficial to the EFL and ESL students' learning experience. Reading comprehension, as a fundamental language skill, requires a complex acquisition process which can account for the way that learners comprehend what they read. Many researchers and educators have made untiring attempts to find more efficient ways of enabling the learners to become more proficient readers. However, it is necessary to point out that reading is not simply a linguistic decoding; rather, it is the comprehension of the text's meaning. A good number of ESL/EFL experts do agree that content knowledge is an important factor in the learning process of reading comprehension. A valuable source of knowledge is, undoubtedly, literary texts, and more appropriately for reading comprehension purposes like the short story. In the long run, the teacher's role is a facilitator who guides the students as they draw inferences and form learning experiences through personal involvement with the text. The exposure of the students to literature as ESL material can ensure that they enjoy, understand and appreciate a life-like material while they are improving their linguistic proficiency.

Reading Attitude

Llemit (2015) in his study, students were assessed using a 10 –item objective question from the story "Home is where?" The result reveals that 50% of the students have a low level of achievement. The performance of Grade 9 students in reading comprehension was not affected by the readability result.

While Gooden, B. et al. (2007) provides further evidence to support the metacognitive instruction. In his study, students in the intervention school whose vocabulary instruction required generating synonyms, antonyms, and other related words saw greater increase on the vocabulary measure (40%) than students who wrote the vocabulary word and used it in a sentence. It appears that constructing synonyms, antonyms, and other related words creates a deeper understanding of a word, which in turn heightens the ability to recall meaning. The use of vocabulary webs created a more visual representation of the word's meaning and conceptual understanding over the traditional use of memorizing a definition and using the word in a sentence.

On the other hand, reading attitude does not depend on the group they belong. It may depend on the influence of parents, social circle, gender and library (Heyman, 2016).

Moreover, the findings of Ongcoy (2015) also supports to the result of this study, which claims that there is a significant relationship between the reading attitude and students' reading comprehension. Students' willingness to read is a factor in improving their comprehension skill.

Methodology

The study utilized a quasi-experimental design where it tries to find out the causal impact of an intervention on target participants. The total sample size of the study consisted of 100 students from Grade 8 High School students of Catumbalon National High School, Valencia City. They were chosen through Purposive Sampling based on their reading levels, with 50 participants for experimental group (exposed to local literary) and 50 also for the controlled group (exposed to foreign literary). Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher secures an ethic statement from the division superintendent. After the approval of the division superintendent, the researcher obtains an informed consent from the participants.

Moreover, the researcher formulated 100 item questions for reading comprehension test using the table of specifications which includes identifying main ideas, making inference, predicting outcomes and drawing conclusion. Local stories include Why the Rice Grains are Small?, Why We Have Sticky Rice, The Kind-Hearted Gabi, How the Butterflies Came to Be, The Mosquito, The Monkey and the Turtle, How the World Began, and The Princess the River Claimed, while The Story of Blue Lake, The Great Buddha and The Killer Leopard were used for the foreign genres. It was then pilot tested to another DepEd secondary school with the t-test reliability of $\alpha = 0.787$ (Very good test). Only sixty item tests were retained and were employed in the pre and post reading test for the experimental group while the sixty item test questions for the pre and post-test for the controlled group were taken from the Science Research Association (SRA) reading materials.

Additionally, the researcher adapted the twenty-item Likert Attitude Assessment survey questionnaire from Tullock –Rhody and Alexander (1980) [23]. This was used to determine students' attitude towards reading.

Thirty minutes reading activity was spent every morning for both groups for eight weeks. After the eight weeks reading sessions, the post test for reading comprehension and attitude were administered to find out the significant differences prior and after the intervention period.

Findings

The group used with local literary genres (LLG) has 10% increase in the number of Independent Readers, on the other hand the foreign literary genres (FLG) has 4% increase in the post test, so there is a higher 6% difference of the experimental group compared to the controlled.

In the instructional level, both have almost the same increase, 38% in LLG and 40% in the FLG, while there is a tremendous decrease of frustration readers by 36% in the LLG and 20% in the FLG. The difference of 24% shows that students exposed to local literary genres (LLG) helped frustration readers become better readers. It is the reason why local literary genres should be used in developing students' comprehension as Sabatim (2013) posits that some learners require instructions in the native language for success in school. Similarly, in building the students reading comprehension, local text types enhance their comprehension skills and are likely to comprehend better the text they are reading when they have cultural background or orientation.

Table 1: Students' Reading Comprehension Level using Local Literary Genres and Foreign *Literary Genres*

Reading Level	Group using L LG				Group using FLG			
	Pre- test		Post-test		Pre- test		Post test	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Independent	0	0	5	10%	0	0	2	4%
Instructional	6	12%	19	38%	12	24%	20	40%
Frustration	44	88%	26	52%	38	76%	28	56%
Scale:	Range		Qualitative Description					
	80-100%		Independent Levels					
	59% - 70%		Instructional Levels					
	58%		Frustration Levels					

The attitude of the students towards reading was also examined before and after the intervention using Tullock-Rhody and Alexander (1980) [23] questionnaire. As shown in Table 2, the LLG group had an overall mean of 4.66 (very positive) after the use of the local reading materials while FLG gained an overall mean of 3.99 (positive). It

means that the group used with local literary texts developed a very positive attitude towards reading compared to FLG which the students only had a positive attitude towards reading. Nonetheless, the FLG group used with foreign literary genres increased 0.437 while the LLG group immersed with local literary genres increased 1.13, which is bigger than the prior one. As Ozkan & Tongur (2014) claimed that developing reading materials to assess students' reading comprehension using local literary genres is an important element in English language because it provides the basis for their understanding of the texts content. Once understanding of the text is achieved then there is a likelihood that students' motivation will increase. Ongcoy (2015) claims that there is a significant relationship between the reading attitude and students' reading comprehension. Students' willingness to read is a factor in improving their comprehension skill.

Table 2: Pre and post test scores on reading attitude of LLG and FLG

	Group using L LG		Group using FLG	
	Pre- test	Post-test	Pre- test	Post test
Overall Mean	3.45	4.66	3.54	3.99
Legend				
Range	Qualitative Description			
4.51 - 5.00	Very Positive			
3.51 - 4.50	Positive			
2.51 - 3.50	Moderately Positive			
1.51 - 2.50	Negative			
1.00 - 1.50	Highly Negative			

The difference between the reading comprehension levels of the two groups helped identify whether the intervention made an impact on the scores of the students. The difference was identified through Analysis of covariance.

Out of 30 points, the average score of the students used with LLG is 16.92 while the FLG is 16.66. The group used with LLG has a little mean difference score compared to the group used with FLG. Such little difference can be explained by the level of significance the test gained which is 0.882. This implies that whether local or foreign text types introduced to students employed would help students develop their comprehension skills. This means that the hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension level of the students used with local and foreign literary genres in the pre and post reading test is accepted.

Studies of Imam (2013) also provide a solid ground why both groups had almost the same mean scores due to some considerations like copy of the reading material, the kind of genre, the readers educational background and the language are all factors of comprehending the text. Some would even argue that it is at the word or microstructure level that meaning begins (Butcher & Kintsch, 2003). These features collectively are referred to as "surface features," and studies have shown that the quality of the text at the surface level is important for readers to be able to make meaning effectively (Pardo, 2002).

Table 3: The Difference between the Reading Comprehension Level of the Students in the LLG and FLG

Group			Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental (Used with Local Literary Genres)			16.92	4.53	50
Control (Used with Foreign Literary Genres)			16.66	4.01	50
Total			16.79	4.26	100
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	213.76(a)	2	106.88	6.51	.002
Intercept	1433.34	1	1433.34	87.84	.000
Pretest	212.07	1	212.07	13.00	.000
Group	.363	1	.363	.022	.882
Error	1582.83	97	16.32		
Total	29987.00	100			
Corrected Total	1796.59	99			

Table 4 further presents the mean scores of groups used with local literary genres (4.21) and foreign literary (3.99). The f value of the test was 27.61 and a probability value of .000. The result implies that there is a significant difference between the reading attitude of the students used with local and foreign literary genres. The significant difference entails that the change of scores between the groups was observable and was enough to claim that local literary genres that students more positive attitude significantly compared to FLG.

In a related study, Guthrie and colleagues (2006) confirmed that a high number of stimulating tasks increased student motivation and that motivation has a positive effect on reading comprehension. Tasks must be integrally

connected to the content of texts and students' interests to increase motivation. Reading comprehension instruction that explicitly combines motivation practices with strategy instruction increases reading comprehension compared with strategy instruction alone or traditional instruction.

As a whole, the use of local literary genres in teaching reading would help improve their reading attitude. Local literary genres allowed students encounter a different kind of experience in their reading activities. They were given the opportunity to enjoy and explore local legends, myths and stories within their cultural orientation.

Table 4: Comparison of post test scores in attitude test of the experimental used with local literary genres and controlled used with foreign literary genres.

Group			Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental (Used with Local Literary Genres)			4.21	.202	50
Control (Used with Foreign Literary Genres)			3.99	.206	50
Total			4.09	.232	100
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.42(a)	2	.71	17.65	.000
Intercept	22.38	1	22.38	557.91	.000
Pretest	.17	1	.17	4.31	.041
Group	1.12	1	1.11	27.61	.000
Error	3.89	97	.04		
Total	1684.26	100			
Corrected Total	5.31	99			

R Squared = .267 (Adjusted R Squared = .252)

Conclusions

All the participants in the FLG and LLG belong to frustration reading level mostly in the pre-test and in the post test more progress is seen to both two groups, frustration readers decrease and become instructional readers, and few reaches the independent level. Also, participants in the controlled group used with FLG remained to have positive attitude and the experimental group used with LLG. An increase was observed on the reading attitude mean score of the LLG, which has higher increase in the post test compared to the FLG at the end of the intervention. This means that both groups benefited the reading instruction whether in the FLG or LLG group. However, better results can be seen in the LLG group because of higher mean score gained in the post attitude test. However, there is an insignificant difference between the post test scores on the reading comprehension between two groups. It means that local literary genres used has no impact on the reading comprehension of the participants. But, there is a significant difference between the reading attitude of the students in the FLG and LLG in the pre and post reading test. This means that students in the LLG group are motivated to read and have developed positive attitude towards reading.

There are also limitations of the study that could be taken into consideration with the conclusion. The experimentation time which lasted for eight weeks could be the reason for the slight increase of post test results of the reading comprehension test. The researcher believes that when enough time was allotted for the experimentation the students' comprehension skills would be better enhanced.

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