

Teachers' Perspectives on Grade 7 Students' Reading Comprehension of Filipino Literature in a Post-Pandemic Face-to-Face Setting

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Abstract - The transition to post-pandemic face-to-face learning has brought about significant changes in the educational landscape, particularly concerning the reading of Filipino literature to Grade 7 students. This phenomenological study, conducted in academic year 2023-2024 in Cebu City. It aims to capture a deeper understanding of the perspectives of teachers related to reading comprehension of Filipino Literature in a Post-Pandemic Face-to-Face Setting. The researchers used the Google Form to administer the online questionnaires to these teachers for gathering the data. Besides, the researchers interviewed ten teachers and used Colaizzi's method for data analysis. The results yielded five major themes: 1) Lost in Translation; 2) Read Like Molasses in January; 3) Think Outside the Box; 4) Light a Fire; 5) Sharpen the Saw. The researchers recommend that teachers utilize interactive teaching methods; promote active reading strategies; offer feedback and reflection; and collaborate with peers and experts. Moreover, researchers recommend that future research be conducted about teachers' perspectives on student needs and how best to support them in this new learning environment.

Keywords - COVID-19, Filipino Literature, Colaizzi's method of data analysis, reading comprehension, digital tool.

Introduction

Considering the gradual reopening of Philippine schools, the Department of Education (DepEd) is exploring various modalities to address the challenges posed by the disrupted learning environment. Traditionally, teaching has been optimized for a face-to-face setting, but the pandemic necessitates a more flexible approach (Alvarez and Palmero, 2022, Derasin et. al., 2021, Villar et. al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a global shift in education, with many schools, including those in the Philippines, relying on remote learning for extended periods (Canque et. al, 2021, Zulueta et. al., 2023). This shift raised concerns about the impact on students' reading comprehension (Cantago et. al., 2024), particularly in Filipino literature. While schools are now reopening for face-to-face classes, educators are encountering a new challenge (Canque et. al., 2024): Students struggling with Filipino literature comprehension (Ondras et. al., 2024). Social distancing and restrictions on movement significantly disrupted traditional teaching methods. While reopening schools after these restrictions are eased presents a new set of challenges with required safety protocols, the most

significant hurdle lies in addressing the learning gaps created by the past two years (Pokhrel and Chhetri, 2021, Romeo et. al., 2023). The focus should not be solely on facilities, but on how educators and students can best respond to this period of interrupted learning. Engaging with Filipino literature fosters a sense of cultural identity, appreciation for the language, and critical thinking skills. Additionally, reading comprehension skills themselves play a vital role in academic success across subjects. Reading comprehension involves a multifaceted process. It encompasses decoding text, understanding vocabulary, and inferring meaning beyond the literal level. As schools in the Philippines reopen for face-to-face instruction, understanding teachers' perspectives on their students' reading comprehension levels is essential for addressing educational challenges and enhancing learning outcomes. By gaining insight into students' reading comprehension abilities, educators can tailor their teaching methods to better support individual needs. This targeted approach can help students improve their overall academic performance and reach their full potential. It is with these views and opinions that the researchers are motivated to conduct the study.

The researchers believed that examining the perspectives of educators on Grade 7 students' knowledge of Filipino literature in a conventional classroom environment post-pandemic helps one to have a greater awareness of the educational influence of the COVID-19 epidemic. Given the major disruptions to conventional classrooms, it is imperative to examine how these developments affect students' understanding of literature and pinpoint suitable approaches to minimize any negative consequences. With an eye on helping students in recovery and improve their reading comprehension, this study intends to use the viewpoints of teachers to gather vital data that may be used to influence educational practices and policies. Making a significant contribution to the more general objective of enhancing and raising the quality of education following the outbreak is the main aim of this research. This would help to encourage students' academic success and personal development.

Methods and Materials

The study employed a descriptive phenomenological design to achieve its purpose. This design allowed the researchers to explore the lived experiences of the participants in depth. The researcher employed interviews and observations to collect comprehensive and intricate data regarding the individuals' experiences and perspectives. This approach facilitated a more profound comprehension of the intricate social issues under investigation. By utilizing a descriptive phenomenological design, the study was able to capture the essence of the participants' experiences and gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives. This methodology enabled the researchers to uncover nuanced insights into the complex social issues being examined. The researchers used convenience sampling to identify 10 educators with modular, online and blended remote learning experiences. Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological data analysis was used to arrange and analyze the participants' responses to uncover emergent themes and broader categories. Moreover, to analyze the data, the researcher utilized the Colaizzi method, which is a rigorous, methodical strategy to extract and explain participants' experiences in phenomenological

research. This procedure has numerous steps. To fully grasp the individuals' experiences, the researchers read and reread their responses. Data is then used to identify essential assertions about the phenomena. These key statements stem from participants' remote learning accounts. Each relevant theme is analyzed to reveal its significance, translating participants' language into more abstract and generic phrases that reflect their experiences. The meanings are then grouped into themes to reflect data trends and insights. Clusters identify bigger categories with numerous significant statements. Based on the grouped themes, the researchers describe the phenomenon in detail and nuance, capturing the participants' perceptions. This extensive explanation is condensed into a brief phrase that conveys the phenomenon's essential structure and data insights. Researcher member checking involves returning to participants to verify interpretations to guarantee validity and dependability. They review the findings and provide input to ensure their experiences are appropriately portrayed. Colaizzi's strategy allowed researchers to analyze educators' remote learning experiences thoroughly. This technique identified new themes and bigger categories that reflect distant learning's complexity and multidimensional character. Colaizzi's method adds legitimacy and depth to the study and sheds light on educators' opinions.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, the researchers made a consent form to provide information and assurances about taking part in the research study. The participants' involvement in research is voluntary and free to withdraw their participation. The participants were well-informed about the main objective. The researchers ensured an adequate level of confidentiality in the data they gathered. Moreover, the research participants were not exposed to any harm or violence while doing this research study.

Participants

Table 1. Profile of the Teacher Participants

Participants	Age	Gender	Area
1	34	Male	Calerjohan, Dalaguete, Cebu
2	36	Female	Poblacion, Dalaguete, Cebu
3	28	Female	Cawayan, Dalaguete, Cebu
4	35	Female	Oslob, Cebu
5	29	Female	Cebu City
6	29	Female	Cebu City
7	35	Female	Argao, Cebu
8	41	Female	Lapu-Lapu City
9	30	Female	Cebu City
10	26	Female	Mandaue City

Table 1 provides a detailed description of the participant instructors, who range in age from twenty-six to forty-one (26-41). The majority of the participant teachers are female, with a diverse range of teaching experience and educational backgrounds. They bring a wealth of knowledge and perspectives to the study, enhancing the overall research findings.

Table 2. Background of Teaching Experiences

Participants	Grade Level Teaching	Experience in Teaching	Current School Teaching
1	Grade 7,8	11 years and 5 mos.	Caleriohan Elementary School
2	Grade 7-10	5 years	Cawayan Central Elementary School
3	Junior High School	4 years	Dumanjug National High School
4	All levels	8 years	Oslob Central Elementary School
5	Grade 7-10	6 years	Guadalupe Alegria School
6	All levels	5 years	Idea English School Inc.
7	All levels	8 years	Sacred Heart School-Hijas de Jesus
8	Junior High School	5 years	Asian Learning Center
9	Grade 7-10	6 years	Sacred Heart School-Hijas de Jesus
10	Grade 7-10	4 years	Tingub Elementary School

Table 2 analyzes the grade level at which teachers are now teaching, their teaching experiences, and the school where they are employed. The bulk of individuals in this group are junior high school instructors with diverse teaching backgrounds, and most of them work in public schools.

Results and Discussions

Based on the thematic analysis done of the transcripts of the unfiltered narrations of the informants, five general themes were generated, namely Lost in Translation, Read Like Molasses in January, Think Outside the Box, Light a Fire and Sharpen the Saw

Theme no. 1: Lost in Translation

The participants revealed that their students struggle to grasp Filipino literature because of a lack of background knowledge. Participant 5 stated: **“One of the major striking differences that I've noticed is the students' gap in background knowledge making it difficult to grasp the context of the Filipino literature as it commonly references historical events, cultural practices, or social issue”**

Participant 5 revealed that students' lack of background knowledge makes it difficult for them to understand Filipino literature, which often references historical events, cultural practices, and social issues.

Participant 2 said: **“As a teacher, my observations regarding the comprehension of Filipino literature among Grade 7 students is decreasing. Nowadays, students in this generation are more interested in the trends and cultures of other countries than their origins. Knowing social media could be a huge influence on the youth, and most social media contains modern and trending content, not classical or traditional”**

Participant 2 observes a decline in comprehension and attributes it to a growing fascination with trends and cultures from other countries, as opposed to the Philippines' own. Social media, overflowing with modern content, is seen as a potential influence, contrasting with the classical and traditional themes often found in Filipino literature.

Participant 7 also said: “My observation is that, students are having a hard time to comprehend and they have difficulties in understanding what they read especially in Filipino literature.”

Participant 7 revealed that students struggle to understand what they read, particularly in Filipino literature.

Theme no. 2: Read Like Molasses in January

The participants revealed that students in online learning settings often struggle with reading and pronouncing words accurately. This difficulty can impact their comprehension and overall learning experience.

Participant 3 stated: **“A lot of things that are needed to improve for these students, from the pronunciation if we are going to read it out loud.”**

Participant 3 noticed many areas where these students could improve their reading. One of them is pronouncing words clearly, especially if they're going to be reading aloud.

Participant 6 said: **“Students evidently struggle with reading fluency due to less practice during modular learning.”**

Participant 6 found that students have trouble reading smoothly because they didn't get enough practice reading during the online learning period.

Participant 7 also said: **“Encountered from my students was, it is hard for the students to learn how to read especially online.”**

Participant 7 noticed that their students find it difficult to learn how to read, especially when learning online.

Theme no. 3: Think Outside the Box

The study demonstrated that integrating technology into examinations for Filipino literature effectively addresses the different needs and learning styles of students. This methodology enables the implementation of examinations that are more dynamic and captivating, hence enhancing student motivation and comprehension of the subject matter. Furthermore, it offers pupils the chance to demonstrate their expertise and abilities in several mediums, promoting ingenuity and analytical reasoning.

Participant 3 stated: **“I assess students' comprehension of Filipino literary works through various methods like quizzes, discussions, essays, and presentations. Since the pandemic, I've integrated more technology for assessments, ensuring flexibility and inclusivity while maintaining rigor in evaluating students' understanding.**

Participant 3 said that he/she used a variety of methods, including more technology since the pandemic, to assess student learning in Filipino literature in a way that's fair and adaptable to different needs.

Participant 7 said: **“Creating interactive presentations about Filipino Literature as it encourages deeper understanding and communication skills. Additionally, this type of assessment also acknowledges the diversity of our learners”**

Participant 7 I believe that creating interactive presentations is a valuable assessment tool because that fosters deeper understanding, hones communication skills, and celebrates the diversity of learners in the classroom.

Participant 4 also said: **“They were given time to provide varied activities through digital tools that is relevant to the to their interests. It is effective since we can guide and observe them face to face. Whenever they have questions, we can addressed it directly”**

Participant 4 sees this approach as effective because it combines the benefits of technology (engaging activities, diverse learning styles) with the advantages of face-to-face interaction (personalized guidance, immediate support).

Theme no. 4: Light a Fire

The participants emphasize the importance of

engaging strategies to capture student attention and promote a deeper understanding of Filipino literature.

Participant 2 stated: **“Incorporating interactive activities like group discussions, multimedia presentations, and role-plays has significantly enhanced students' comprehension of Filipino literature in our face-to-face classes post-COVID-19. These engaging approaches foster deeper understanding and encourage active participation in the learning process.**

Participant 2 highlights interactive activities like discussions, presentations, and role-plays, encouraging active participation and moving beyond passive learning.

Participant 7 said: **“With the use of multimedia tools and reinforcements, I was able to get their attention.**

Participant 7 focuses on using multimedia tools, suggesting that incorporating visuals, audio, or other media elements can enhance engagement.

Participant 8 also said: **“Make an interactive game related to your lessons“**

Participant 8 suggests creating interactive games, another engaging strategy to make learning more enjoyable and interactive.

Theme no. 5: Sharpen the Saw

The participants revealed that training and resources like workshops, and online databases, act as tools to help teachers become more effective educators. By providing these tools, teachers can enhance their skills and stay up to date with the latest teaching methods and technologies. This ultimately leads to improved student outcomes and a more engaging learning environment.

Participant 2 stated: **“Additional resources such as online databases of Filipino literary texts, professional development workshops focusing on innovative teaching strategies, and peer collaboration opportunities would greatly support teachers in further enhancing students' comprehension of Filipino literature in face-to-face settings post-COVID-19.”**

Participant 2 suggests a need for ongoing training to equip teachers with new approaches for post-pandemic classrooms.

Participant 3 said: **“Teachers must undergo training which can help her/him to find more strategies which is related to teaching to students who lack**

of comprehension. Through training, he/she has enough knowledge of how he/she will handle a student who has difficulties in understanding what they read (like poems and stories).”

Participant 3 highlights the need for targeted strategies to support students who might struggle.

Participant 8 also said: **“Training on incorporating technology effectively for assessment, creating engaging presentations, or utilizing online resources to supplement Filipino literature lessons.**

Participant 8 emphasizes the importance of equipping teachers with the skills to leverage technology in their teaching.

Discussion

The study revealed that their students struggle to grasp Filipino literature because of a lack of background knowledge. Boligol et. al. (2023), contend that the restricted availability of different and culturally relevant reading materials aggravates the problems with the Filipino educational system. Many times, lacking enough prior knowledge or context for the literature under study, textbooks, and instructional tools makes it difficult for students to completely understand and value the works (Abojon et. al., 2023). Moreover, language competency is influenced greatly. Students who speak English more fluently than they speak Filipino may find difficulties reading Filipino literature, particularly if the works contain regional dialects or antiquated vocabulary (Zulueta et. al., 2023). Although the bilingual education program in the Philippines aims to increase English competency, occasionally it results in a reduced emphasis on the Filipino language, therefore hindering students' capacity to properly interact with Filipino literary works (Martin, 2014). Moreover, the study also revealed that students in online learning settings often struggle with reading and pronouncing words accurately. This difficulty can impact their comprehension and overall learning experience. According to Thomas (2021), the implementation of distance learning programs, which rely on technology for remote instruction, may have had a significant impact on students' reading abilities. Likewise, the study demonstrated that integrating technology into examinations for Filipino literature effectively addresses the

different needs and learning styles of students. According to Tait (2018), Technology helps students learn in ways they like, making them better at different things such as problem-solving and critical thinking. This can lead to increased engagement and motivation in the learning process (Carredo et. al., 2022). Furthermore, technology provides students with access to a wealth of information and resources that can enhance their understanding of various subjects. By incorporating technology into education, teachers can create more interactive and personalized learning experiences for their students. The study highlights the need to employ effective ways to captivate student interest and foster a more profound comprehension of Filipino literature. Gao and Sun (2020) suggest that educators are increasingly favoring the utilization of games as instructional tools, rather than relying solely on conventional computer applications. These tactics facilitate student learning through play. There exist numerous effective methods to encourage the acquisition of knowledge. These programs predated the COVID-19 pandemic; however, their usage was limited. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the utilization of them by both teachers and students (Colinares and Derasin, 2023). Finally, the study expounded that effective professional development initiatives are critical to enabling educators to advance their careers and stay current with emerging technology and pedagogies. According to Guskey and Yoon (2009), training courses and workshops perform best when they offer opportunities for introspection and hands-on learning. Furthermore, as demonstrated by Tondeur et al. (2016), online databases and resources offer flexibility and access to a wide range of knowledge, as well as ongoing support and communities of practice. Encouraging professional development programs is critical to the career growth of educators as well as their ability to stay current with evolving technologies and teaching methodologies.

Conclusion

Teachers encounter difficulties in improving the understanding of Filipino literature among junior high school pupils after the epidemic due to the absence of translation and reduced reading speed.

In order to tackle this issue, educators integrate technology into evaluations, employ captivating activities, and enhance their expertise through professional development. In order to enhance students' understanding, educators should employ interactive instructional techniques, encourage the utilization of active reading skills, provide constructive feedback, and engage in collaborative efforts with both peers and subject matter specialists. Additional investigation is required to comprehend educators' viewpoints about the requirements of students and the most effective methods to assist them in this novel educational setting.

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