



AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON THE READING ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM AND LITERARY COMPETENCE OF THE GRADE 7 STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This Experimental research study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the reading enhancement program to the Literary Competence of Grade 7 students. It used quantitative methodology in the gathering of data through the pretest and posttest conducted in both experimental and control groups. The subjects of the study were the Grade 7 students of Camanlangan National High School. They were composed of two heterogeneous sections with 40 students per group. The experimental group was exposed to the Different Learning Approaches using the Differentiated Instruction (DI) while the control group used the traditional method of instruction. It was found out that there was a significant gain in the literary competence in the areas of Contextual Knowledge, Knowledge about Reading, Literary Reading Skills, and Textual Knowledge, of the students after the intervention. Furthermore, the students eagerly responded to the application of different teaching strategies as well as the use of Differentiated Instructions. It was therefore concluded that this enhancement program is an effective method of enhancing the Literary Competence and is recommended that the school administration must encourage and support the use of this approach by exposing teachers to different fora and symposia/seminars and workshops to improve their instructional competence in reading delivery so as to provide updated techniques in improving reading skills of the students. They are encouraged to give ample time to discuss the basics of grammar, especially in the rules of subject-verb agreement, the basic sentence patterns, and the different tenses of the verb, which are crucial to developing literary competence in students.

KEYWORDS: Literary Competence, Contextual Knowledge, Knowledge about Reading, Literary Reading Skills, Textual Knowledge, Differentiated Instruction, Experimental research,

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and its Background

Literary competence is a multifaceted construct that encompasses a range of skills and knowledge related to reading and interpreting texts. It has been defined by some scholars as involving a combination of historical, socio-cultural, linguistic, and semiotic awareness (Freire & Macedo, 2020). This definition can be related to the idea of "interpretive competence" proposed by Albers & Harste (2007), which emphasizes the importance of understanding the social and cultural contexts in which texts are produced and interpreted. For learners to develop literary competence, they should possess a range of competencies, including contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading strategies, literary analysis skills, and textual knowledge (Hirsch, 1997; Freire & Macedo, 2020). Moreover, recent research suggests that digital literacy skills are becoming increasingly important for literary competence in the digital age, as individuals must be able to effectively navigate and critically evaluate digital texts (Koltay, 2011).

In a survey conducted in United States (US), second year College students were tasked to calculate the number of hours they spent in reading every day. There are three significant findings on this survey. First, 93% of the



students noted that they do not read daily the literary works that are required in school which implies that only a few number of students read on a daily basis. Second, 69% of the students stated that they read literary works for enjoyment which means that the 31% of the students still do not enjoy reading literary texts. Lastly, 66% of the students said that reading literary works are not their favorite activity which indicates that more than a half of the students do not like reading literary texts. These results manifested the low interest of the College students in reading literary texts (Grigg, Daane & Campbell, 2003).

In the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture Sipocot, where the same study was conducted, Eborde, et al. (2017) found out that most BSEd English major students have adequate performance in the English Proficiency test and literary competence in the past year. Findings showed that 60% or 159 out of 263 takers failed the examination in English. It was found that their literary competence was low, and it was affected by their language proficiency. The 32% of these English plus takers are education students, making it an alarming situation in the College of Teacher Education.

However, there is still no study that has been conducted by experts and researchers to establish an enhancement scheme that shall address the literacy competence of young students. This case exemplifies the unique contribution that this research could make, from discovering new information about the factors that influence literary competence to the interventions that the researchers could provide at the conclusion of this project.

In Camanlangan National High School, many students are having a hard time understanding literary texts. Students do not possess the essential skills towards literary competence. It is evident in the PHIL-IRI results in both English and Filipino subjects where only 15 students out of the 160 population in the Grade-7 level fall under Independent Level and half of its population is under Frustration Level. This is an alarming case which does not only happen in Camanlangan National High School, but also in other public high schools.

The presented circumstance persuaded the researcher to evaluate the literary competence of students in Camanlangan National High School, Davao de Oro. This is due to the urgency and timely nature of the issue. This study must be carried out because it has the potential to inspire the identified beneficiaries to strive for excellence.

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of the study was to determine the effects of the enhancement program on the literary competence of Grade 7 students in Camanlangan National High School, New Bataan Davao de Oro. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of the literary competence of the students in control and experimental groups as measured on their pretest based on the following:
 - 1.1 contextual knowledge,
 - 1.2 knowledge about reading,
 - 1.3 literary reading skill, and
 - 1.4 textual knowledge?
2. What is the level of the literary competence of the students in control and experimental groups as measured on their posttest based on the following:
 - 1.1 contextual knowledge,
 - 1.5 knowledge about reading,
 - 1.6 literary reading skill, and
 - 1.7 textual knowledge?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and post test in the control and experimental groups?
4. Is there a significant difference in the post test between the control and experimental groups?

Null Hypothesis

HO₁: The null hypothesis which was tested at 0.05 level of significance states that there is no significant difference between the literary competence of the control and experimental groups.

HO₂: The null hypothesis which was tested at 0.05 level of significance states that there is no significant difference between the literary competence of the control and experimental groups.

Chapter II METHODS

This chapter presents the discussion of the research design, research locale, subjects of the study, research instruments, validation of the instrument, research procedures and the statistical treatment of data.



Research Design

This study used the quasi-experimental two-group pretest posttest research design. It is a research that looks like an experimental research but is not true experimental research. Although the independent variable is manipulated, the subjects are not randomly assigned to conditions or orders of conditions (Cook & Campbell, 1979). In this design, the subjects are naturally collected like that in a classroom setting. This design was to investigate whether there will be a significant correlation between enhancement program and the literary competence of the two sections of Grade 7 students of Camanlangan National High School for school year 2022-2023. A pretest was administered to both groups and after the administration of the enhancement program, a posttest will be given to the same group of students.

Subjects of the Study

The subjects of the study were the students in the two sections of Grade 7 who were enrolled in Camanlangan National High School. Table 1 shows the distribution of the research subjects.

Table 1
Subjects of the Study

Grade 7 Students	Total
GOLD	40
PEARL	40
Total	80

Research Instrument

A researcher-made instrument was used to collect answers from the students. It consisted of four indicators concerning the literary competence of the students. There were 10 questions in each of the indicators: contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge.

Validation of Instrument

A panel of external and internal expert validators was assigned to review the adapted instrument before it was given to the participants. The researcher then conducted a test and retest to establish the questionnaire's reliability. Furthermore, the instrument was tried out on a small group of students who were not involved in the study. If no issues were identified during the testing, the administration of the instrument followed.

Research Procedure

The following steps were followed in the gathering of data:

Seeking Permission to Conduct the Study. The researcher wrote a letter of permission to conduct the study to the Schools Division Superintendent, Division of Davao de Oro. A written letter of request was also prepared to the principal of Camanlangan National High School and the researcher asked the cooperation of her prospective subjects of the study during the conduct of the experimentation. Upon receiving the confirmation from the authorities, the researcher prepared test questions for the pretest which was also be used during the posttest. Before the administration of the test, a panel of experts validated it and after which it as administered to both groups, the control and experimental.

Administering the Pretest and Posttest. To start the study, the pretest was administered after the intervention a posttest was administered. The results between the pretest and posttest were treated as the students' mean gain scores. The mean gain scores was the basis in testing the significant difference between the performance of the students in pretest and posttest.

Data Gathering. The researcher gathered all data and encoded them in her personal computer and analyzed them using the instrument. During the intervention, the researcher recorded all the experiences of the students and lesson plans were prepared every lesson.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data obtained were tallied and tabulated. The statistical tools used to ensure the accuracy in the analyses and interpretations of the findings were the following:

Mean. This was used to measure the level of literary competence of the students.

Paired t-test. This was used to determine the significant difference in the level of literacy competence between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental and control group.

Independent t-test. This was used to determine the significant difference in the level of literacy competence in the post-test between the experimental and control groups.



Chapter III
RESULTS

This chapter presents the results obtained from the collected data and the subsequent analyses and interpretations were made based on the problems presented.

Level of Literary Competence in the Pretest between Control and Experimental Groups

Table 2
Level of Literary Competence in the Pretest between Control and Experimental Groups

Group	Contextual Knowledge	Knowledge about reading	Literary Reading Skill	Textual Knowledge	Total Mean Score	Description
Control	2.375	2.225	2.125	2.425	9.15	Low
Experimental	3.225	2.625	2.600	2.600	11.025	Low

As shown in Table 2 is the level of literacy competence in the pretest between control and experimental groups in terms of contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge. The following mean score are obtained each indicator for the control group; 2.375 for contextual knowledge, 2.225 for knowledge about reading, 2.125 for literary reading skill and 2.425 for textual knowledge. On the other hand, the experimental group yielded 3.225 for contextual knowledge, 2.625 for knowledge about reading, 2.600 for literary reading skill and 2.600 for textual knowledge.

It can be gleaned further from the results that all indicators for literary competence in the experimental posted higher means compared to the control group. Evidently, it is also manifested in the total mean score that the control group got a total mean score of 9.15 described as low while 11.025 for the experimental group that is described also as low. This indicates that the level of literary competence needs improvement.

Level of Literary Competence in the Post-test between Control and Experimental Groups

Table 3
Level of Literary Competence in the Posttest between Control and Experimental Groups

Group	Contextual Knowledge	Knowledge about reading	Literary Reading Skill	Textual Knowledge	Total Mean Score	Description
Control	2.850	2.175	2.175	2.575	9.75	Low
Experimental	5.175	4.000	4.100	4.000	17.375	High

Table 3 presents the level literacy competence in the post-test between control and experimental groups in terms of contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge. After the employment, the control group got the following scores among the four indicators in the literary competence, to wit; 2.850 for contextual knowledge, 2.175 for knowledge about reading, 2.175 for literary reading skill and 2.575 for textual knowledge. On the other hand, the experimental group yielded 5.175 for contextual knowledge, 4.000 for knowledge about reading, 4.100 for literary reading skill and 4.000 for textual knowledge.

Moreover, the results further revealed that all indicators for literary competence in the experimental posted higher means compare to the control group same in the pre-test examination. Evidently, it is also manifested in the total mean score that the control group got a total mean score of 9.75 described as low which indicates that the level of literary competence needs improvement. While 17.375 for the experimental group as the mean score described as high which indicates that the literacy competence is very satisfactory in the areas of contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge.

Significant Difference in the Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group in the literary Competence



Table 4
Significant Difference in the Pretest and Posttest
of Experimental Group in the Literacy Competence

Experimental	Mean	p-value	t-value	Remarks
Pretest	9.75	0.000	-7.63	Significant
Posttest	17.38			

Table 4 reflects the significant difference when the pretest and posttest results of the experimental groups are compared. The pretest obtained a mean of 9.75 while the posttest posted a mean of 17.38. To test if there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest result in the mean scores of students, the researcher employed t-test dependent sample at 0.05 level of significance. It was found out that the p-value of 0.000 having a t-value of 14.637 statistically shows that the hypothesis is rejected since there is a significant difference in the mean score between the pretest and posttest of the experimental group.

The result indicates a difference in the results in the mean score of the pretest and posttest in the level of literacy competence of the students. The pretest result is in low level but it lifted to a high level in the post test, therefore, there is a difference in the literacy competence of the students in the experimental group after the intervention. In other words the intervention made by the researcher is effective and the students learned better the lesson than it is facilitated by using the traditional way of teaching.

Significant Difference between the Control Group and Experimental Group Post-test in the level of Literacy Competence among Grade 7 Students

Table 5
Significant Difference of the Posttest between the Control
and Experimental Groups in the Level of Literacy Competence

Experimental	Mean	p-value	t-value	Remarks
Control	11.03	0.000	-6.35	Significant
Experimental	17.38			

Table 5 displays the significant difference between the control group and experimental group post-test in the level of literacy competence among Grade 7 students. Students under the control group attained a mean score of 9.75 while the posttest while those who were in the experimental group posted a mean of 17.38. To test if there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest result, the researcher employed t-test for independent sample at 0.05 level of significance.

The data revealed that the p-value of 0.000 with a t-value of 14.637 statistically shows that the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean score between the control group and experimental group is hereby rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the post test examination results between the control and experimental group in the level of literacy competence in the areas of contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge among Grade 7 students in Camanlangan National High School.

Chapter IV
DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Discussions

Level of Literacy Competence in the Pretest of the Control and Experimental Groups. The level of literacy competence in the pretest between control and experimental groups in terms of contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge indicates that the level of literacy competence needs improvement which obtained a low level. This is manifested on their poor understanding on the written and spoken text, regardless of whether the text is educational or not. They lack familiarity with the development of literature over time, including the works of authors, their writing styles, and literary genres and the ability to read between the lines.

According to Jiménez & Duke (2011), readers would pay little or no attention to some historical legends or other texts that must be read because they are not all interesting in nature. Moreover, lack of motivation implicates poor literary abilities. This occurrence is often associated to students in secondary and tertiary levels which are bombarded to read and examine different kinds of texts in their literature subjects. This high demand caused the students to lose interest which deteriorates their motivation in improving their literary skills. However, if the students will condition themselves and decide to develop positive feelings towards reading, their interest and motivation would be restored, giving a great possibility for the readers to improve their literary competence (Melekoglu & Wilkerson, 2013).



Vocabulary has been identified as one of the crucial factors that could affect literary competence. It is defined as the building blocks of language. It covers the knowledge of someone on the vast body of words utilized in a language. In reading literary texts, a reader is required to have knowledge on both easy and complex words to stimulate comprehension (Dickinson & Porche, 2011).

Level of Literary Competence in the Posttest of the Control and Experimental Groups. There is a low level of literary competence in the posttest for the control group and a high level for the experimental group in terms of contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge. This indicates that with the intervention being employed by the teacher, a meaningful result which is evidently manifested in the literary competence of the students after the academic process of utilizing strategies purposively carried out to elevate students' comprehension level.

Additionally, students do not instantly acquire literary competence. It requires nurturing and growth. Through practice and drills, we should instill this trait in the students. Additionally, a reader establishes a connection between what they read and their own experiences during the stage of meaning-making. According to Rosenblatt (2010), this would have been the combination of what the individual knows and what they have been through.

Literary competence is also dependent on the students' reading culture, which includes their reading habits and exposure. Because of the learners' orientation and experiences, age does not guarantee a learner's literary competence. So, even a young child can be a good reader if they have a solid foundation, which will help them develop their literary skills (Hennig, 2010).

Cañon (2015) in her study that bears more or less the same variable as this present research yielded also the same result as Barrett's. Accordingly, the quality of instruction in the classroom with a diverse group of students who learn poetry in manifold ways and different rates can be enhanced using differentiated instruction. The use of differentiated instruction puts more of the learning responsibility on the students. It also provides students some choice in learning activities, which leads to greater student motivation and increased student achievement.

Significant Difference in the Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group. The result implies a difference in the results in the mean score of the pretest and posttest the experimental group. In the result, the pretest result is in low level but it lifted to a high level in the post test. The effectiveness of the reading enhancement program is evidently observed after the intervention has been carried out. It can be gleaned from the result that there is really an improvement in the literary competence of the students. There is a potential effect on the reading comprehension of the students as the intervention has been applied to the students. This statistically implies that the program is effective to the students who have been experiencing difficulty in reading. An experimental study at Gaza schools contended that using differentiated instruction enables students with disabilities to overcome their disability, meets the needs of diverse students with a variety of learning styles, stimulates creativity and helps students understand ideas at higher levels of thinking than teaching through rote memorization alone. The results of the study indicated that students in the experimental group were more aware of reading comprehension skills. In addition, the students who studied reading through differentiated instruction became more successful in answering the reading comprehension questions (Bhlool, 2013).

Furthermore, in the study conducted by Simmons and Olicia (2015), Effectiveness of Differentiated Instruction in Teaching English found out that differentiated instruction is an effective way to provide students with meaningful and tailored lessons. Research shows that when instruction is individualized for student's strengths and needs, they are more likely to make progress. When differentiated instruction is integrated, students are likely to make growth. The results from these studies show that when students are provided with the opportunity for differentiated instruction they are likely to make growth in terms of reading level. The results also show that when the student is engaged in literacy and has a personal, emotional connection to it, they are more likely to make growth. In Bohol, Barrete (2013) in her study on Reinforcing Reading Skills through Creative Dramatics performed an experiment, and the results of the study revealed that Creative Dramatics is effective in enhancing reading skills especially in literary appreciation skills, a sub skill in reading comprehension and projection, a sub skill in oral reading. It has to be remembered that Creative Dramatics is one of the examples of developing interpersonal skills as part of multiple intelligences among the learners.

Significant Difference of the posttest results between the Control and Experimental Groups. Based on the analysis of the data, the results of the study indicate that students in both experimental and control groups were composed of unique individuals. The study reveals that the experimental group achieved better in literary competence after they were given the intervention compared to those students in the control group who were taught traditionally. There is a significant difference in the literary competence between the control and experimental groups. Furthermore, the results give a clear information that if the intervention program is well implemented and if the students are exposed to a set of consistent and effective learning and reading comprehension strategies their performance would improve. In this research it revealed that the teachers are challenged to plan activities and implement them seriously which evidently would result to the academic success of the students.



Teachers should acquire and teach finer reading strategies to scratch the illusion of some readers who content themselves in poor standards of literary competence. This is to help the students acquire and put into practice strategies to encourage more advanced achievement to comprehension in relation to literary competence (Grabe, 2009).

Conclusions

The result revealed that the level of literacy competence in the pretest between control and experimental groups in terms of contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge indicates that the level of literary competence needs improvement which obtained a low level. Both groups lack familiarity with the development of literature over time, including the works of authors, their writing styles, and literary genres and the ability to read between the lines. There is a low level of literary competence in the posttest for the control group and a high level for the experimental group in terms of contextual knowledge, knowledge about reading, literary reading skill and textual knowledge. This indicates that with the intervention being employed by the teacher, a meaningful result which is evidently manifested in the literary competence of the students after the intervention which utilizes strategies purposively carried out to elevate students' comprehension level. A difference in the literacy competence of the students in the experimental group is significantly evident.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion derived from the results of the study, the following recommendations are hereby drawn:

1. Since the result provided the effectiveness of the reading enhancement program as one of the potent tools in improving reading comprehension and literary competence of the students, it is recommended to make this academic activity regularly practiced and implemented all throughout the course of the subject. Monitoring from the teachers and supervision from the administration are highly encouraged.

2. It is also recommended that reading teachers should be sent to different fora and symposia/seminars and workshops to improve their instructional competence in reading delivery so as to provide updated techniques in improving reading skills of the students. They are encouraged to give ample time to discuss the basics of grammar, especially in the rules of subject-verb agreement, the basic sentence patterns, and the different tenses of the verb, which are crucial to developing literary competence in students. They may provide activities to improve the students' creativity in dealing with the literary text. They may think of other ways to strengthen and intensify the students' love for reading.

3. The study does not address whether the intervention might be more or less effective with the larger sample and big schools in other areas. It is recommended to widen the scope so as to offer very comprehensive results in the areas where academic concerns like language proficiency and reading comprehension be addressed.

4. Improving adolescent reading comprehension and literacy are both a parental and administrative concerns. Thus, it is recommended that the school administration may scheme an effective program aside from reading enhancement program that shall get mobilize parental engagement as reinforcement.

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