



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



THE USE OF NATIVE FILIPINO LITERATURE FOR COMPREHENSION SKILLS (LIKAS NA PANITIKANG FILIPINO PARA SA KASANAYANG PANG-UNAWA)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of using native Filipino literature, specifically Bicolano legends, folktales, and short stories, in enhancing the reading comprehension skills of Grade 4 students at San Vicente Elementary School, Tabaco City. Recognizing the persistent challenges in literacy, the research explores whether culturally relevant texts can bridge the gap between word recognition and higher-order comprehension skills such as inferencing, identifying main ideas, and critical evaluation. Employing a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design, the study measured students' comprehension before and after exposure to localized literature. Results revealed significant improvements across literal, inferential, and evaluative dimensions, with post-test scores showing marked gains in predicting character actions, analyzing textual clues, and applying lessons to real-life contexts. The findings highlight that contextualized literature not only strengthens comprehension but also fosters cultural identity and engagement. By integrating familiar narratives and regional heritage into instruction, students demonstrated deeper critical thinking, improved focus, and stronger connections between academic learning and lived experiences. This research underscores the pedagogical value of indigenized literature as both an instructional tool and a cultural bridge, offering evidence-based support for the MATATAG curriculum's emphasis on contextualized learning. Ultimately, native Filipino literature proves to be a powerful catalyst for literacy development and cultural appreciation among elementary learners.

Keywords: Bicolano Literature, Reading Comprehension, Grade 4 Students, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

1 INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a cornerstone of academic success, yet many Filipino learners struggle with bridging the gap between word recognition and meaning making. For Grade 4 students, this stage is critical as they transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." However, the disconnection between standardized tests and students lived experiences often hinders comprehension. This study addresses this gap by integrating native Filipino literature—legends, folktales, and short stories rooted in Bicolano culture—into classroom instruction.

Culturally relevant pedagogy emphasizes the importance of connecting learning materials to students' identities, environments, and heritage. By embedding familiar cultural markers such as Mount Mayon and local traditions,

literature becomes more relatable, reducing cognitive load and enabling deeper engagement. This approach aligns with global educational frameworks advocating place-based learning and contextualized instruction.

In the Philippine context, the MATATAG curriculum highlights the need for localized materials to address literacy challenges. Native literature offers a dual benefit: it enhances comprehension skills while fostering cultural pride and identity. For San Vicente Elementary School students, exposure to Bicolano narratives transforms reading into a meaningful, engaging experience that strengthens both academic and personal growth.

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of native Filipino literature in improving comprehension skills among Grade 4 learners. Specifically, it examines changes in literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension, identifies the types of literature most effective, and explores challenges encountered in implementation. By doing so, the study contributes to the discourse on indigenized education and provides empirical evidence supporting the integration of local culture into literacy instruction.

2 MATERIALS

The primary materials used in this study included localized instructional texts derived from Bicolano literature. These consisted of legends, folktales, and short stories adapted for Grade 4 learners. Examples included narratives such as *Daragang Magayon* and selections from the *Ibalong* epic, chosen for their cultural relevance and accessibility. Supplementary instructional materials included lesson plans designed around the 4Ps/4As pedagogical framework, scaffolded activity worksheets, and contextualized graphic organizers.

To support diverse learning styles, visual and manipulative kits such as puppets, sequence jigsaws, and vocabulary word walls were employed. Multimedia tools, including read-along audio tracks and animated slides, provided auditory and visual scaffolding for struggling readers. Assessment instruments included reflective journals where students connected moral themes from the stories to real-life experiences.

The central research instrument was a Reading Comprehension Test developed and validated by experts in language and literature. This test measured three levels of comprehension: literal (recognition of explicit information), inferential (interpretation and prediction), and critical (evaluation and perspective-taking). Pilot testing ensured reliability and appropriateness for Grade 4 learners. Together, these materials provided a comprehensive framework for evaluating the impact of native literature on comprehension skills.

3 METHODS

The study employed a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-post-test design to measure the effectiveness of native Filipino literature on comprehension skills. A purposive sample of Grade 4 students from San Vicente Elementary School was selected, ensuring participants had similar baseline reading competencies. Ethical protocols were observed, including parental consent and school clearance.

Students were first administered a pretest to establish their initial comprehension levels across literal, inferential, and evaluative domains. Following this, they were exposed to instructional sessions using localized Bicolano literature integrated into lesson plans. Activities included guided reading, story-sequence puzzles, cause-and-effect diagrams, and contextualized group tasks.

After the intervention, a post-test was conducted using the same validated comprehension instrument. Statistical analysis involved descriptive measures (mean and standard deviation) to describe performance and inferential tests (paired and independent samples t-tests) to determine significant differences between pretest and post-test scores.

This methodology allowed the researcher to assess whether improvements in comprehension were attributable to the intervention rather than chance. By comparing pretest and post-test results, the study provided empirical evidence of the impact of native literature on literacy development.

4 RESULTS

The findings revealed substantial improvements in students' comprehension skills following exposure to native Filipino literature. The overall weighted mean of 4.67 in the post-test indicated a strong positive impact, with all indicators rated "Strongly Agree."

Students demonstrated marked gains in predictive inferencing, with the highest score (4.90) reflecting their ability to anticipate character actions. Critical evaluation also improved significantly (4.85), showing enhanced decision-making

and analytical skills. Faster identification of content (4.75) and clearer sequencing of events (4.70) highlighted improvements in structural comprehension.

Inferential skills were strengthened, as evidenced by better understanding of textual clues (4.60) and deeper explanations (4.65). Students also showed improved ability to apply lessons to real-life contexts (4.35), though this scored slightly lower compared to other indicators.

The types of literature most effective were regional legends and stories, which scored highest (4.35) among instructional materials. Standard textbooks and short stories yielded moderate results, while modern digital resources and non-fiction texts scored lowest, indicating limited use or accessibility.

Overall, the results confirmed that culturally relevant literature significantly enhances both lower-order and higher-order comprehension skills. The integration of Bicolano narratives provided students with familiar contexts, reducing cognitive barriers and fostering deeper engagement with texts.

5 DISCUSSION

The results underscore the pedagogical value of native Filipino literature in literacy instruction. By embedding familiar cultural contexts into reading materials, students were able to connect more meaningfully with texts, leading to improved comprehension outcomes. The high scores in predictive inferencing and critical evaluation suggest that localized literature fosters higher-order thinking skills, enabling learners to move beyond mechanical decoding toward analytical reasoning.

The findings align with theories of culturally relevant pedagogy, which argue that contextualized learning reduces cognitive load and enhances engagement. For Grade 4 learners, exposure to Bicolano legends and folktales provided a scaffold for comprehension, allowing them to leverage prior knowledge and cultural familiarity.

Challenges noted included limited access to diverse localized materials and insufficient integration of modern digital resources. Teachers relied heavily on regional lore, while standardized textbooks lacked cultural relevance. This highlights the need for curriculum developers to decentralize instructional materials and prioritize localized anthologies.

The study also demonstrated that contextualized literature strengthens cultural identity, fostering pride in language and heritage. This dual benefit—academic improvement and cultural appreciation—positions native literature as a critical instructional tool within the MATATAG curriculum framework.

6 CONCLUSION

This study concludes that native Filipino literature, particularly Bicolano legends and folktales, is a highly effective instructional tool for enhancing reading comprehension among Grade 4 students. The quasi-experimental design revealed significant improvements across literal, inferential, and evaluative domains, with posttest scores consistently rated “Strongly Agree.”

By integrating culturally relevant texts, students demonstrated stronger predictive inferencing, clearer sequencing, deeper explanations, and more critical evaluation. These gains confirm that contextualized literature not only improves comprehension but also fosters higher-order thinking skills essential for lifelong learning.

The findings emphasize the importance of indigenization in education. Standardized textbooks and generic materials often fail to resonate with learners, creating cognitive barriers. In contrast, localized narratives rooted in students’ cultural heritage provide immediate relevance, reducing disengagement and enhancing focus. This supports the MATATAG curriculum’s call for contextualized learning and offers a practical solution to national literacy challenges.

Beyond academic outcomes, the study highlights the cultural impact of native literature. Students developed a stronger appreciation for their identity as Bicolano’s, reinforcing the role of education in preserving heritage while promoting literacy. This dual achievement—academic and cultural—demonstrates the holistic value of integrating native literature into instruction.

For policymakers and educators, the results advocate for the decentralization of curriculum materials, investment in localized anthologies, and training for teachers in culturally responsive pedagogy. Addressing resource gaps, particularly in digital integration, will further strengthen literacy outcomes.

Ultimately, this research proves that native Filipino literature is not merely supplementary but essential. It bridges comprehension gaps, nurtures cultural identity, and equips learners with the critical skills needed to thrive academically and socially.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest should be disclosed.

Statement of ethical approval

This study was conducted in compliance with institutional ethical standards and approved by the Schools Division Office of Tabaco City.

Statement of informed consent

All participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Written consent was obtained from students and their parents prior to participation.

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