

## **LITERATURE IN TEXT-TALK STYLE (LITTS): THE USE OF TEXT-TALK STORIES IN IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS AMONG GRADE 8 STUDENTS**



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### **ABSTRACT**

It was reported in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that Philippines had an average reading score of 340, which is more than 100 points below the OECD's average which is 487. This showed that out of the 78 country examinees, Philippines ranked the lowest (San Juan, 2019). This lead the researcher to think of ways to improve the reading comprehension among the learners despite the current challenges brought about by COVID-19. Since Philippines is still transitioning to distance learning, the researcher thought of ways to improve the reading comprehension skills of the learners while accessing multimedia leading the researcher to select the use of text-talk stories to teach literature and improve the reading comprehension of the learners in Mamplasan National High School. The learners were first subject to read a selection that is presented in traditional paragraphs, after which they took a 15-item comprehension test and the average scores of the learners can be interpreted as instructional. Afterwards, the researcher then presented series of literature to them in the style of text-talk, 15-item comprehension tests were given to them after each literary text is read and that resulted to an independent level of competency among the learners.

**Keywords:** Mamplasan National High School, text-talk, reading comprehension

## INTRODUCTION

Whenever the topic of reading problems arises, the first thing that comes to mind is learners who fail to translate written text into spoken words. These learners are the ones who take a very long time trying to figure out what many of the words in a text are and struggle with phonological skills. On the other hand, many learners can read a text and sound beautifully but have troubles when it comes to understanding literal and figurative meaning as well as vocabulary. Since these learners are usually the ones less noticeable, they are usually glossed over until they fail tests that call for reading comprehension (Parrish, 2020).

Reading comprehension is the process of understanding written text. According to K12 Reader (2016), reading comprehension is a premeditated, dynamic, and collaborative act that happens all throughout the reading process. Reading is merely just gazing through the symbols on a page and translating them to spoken words without comprehension. One may appreciate the words aesthetically and even obtain some tads of meaning from the page, but not really reading the story. Words on a text are basically just symbols. They have no meaning. People read for vast reasons with understanding as a vital part for that purpose. Reading comprehension is significant because without it, reading will not do the reader any information. Comprehension, or obtaining meaning from what one is reading, is the terminal of every reading process. ("Comprehension: The Goal of Reading", 2021). Proficient readers sometimes may ignore and forget to appreciate the reading comprehension

skills required. It is an act that is mutually interactive and strategic. Instead of just passively reading words, a reader must examine them, internalize them, and retain them.

In December 2019, it was revealed that the result of the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that the Philippines had an average reading score of 340, which is more than 100 points below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) average which is 487. This also showed that out of the 78 countries that took the test, Philippines ranked the lowest (San Juan, 2019).

As the reading teachers struggled to ease this burden, it became even more difficult to help the learners improve their reading ability when the entire island of Luzon was placed under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in March 16, 2020, which enacted a lockdown among the citizens of the island (Esguerra, 2020), therefore prohibiting all Filipino students from going to school. The pandemic crisis has pushed schools to temporarily close in almost 200 countries, disrupting the learning process of more than 1.7 billion children, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In order to adapt to the current educational situation, most governments together with the Philippines had no choice but to acquire distance learning modalities to guarantee the continuity of education, focusing on what learners might have learned or missed during school closures (Business World, 2021). COVID-19 exacerbated the quality of Philippine education system that was

already tricky before the global health crisis happened, according to youth group SPARK – Samahan ng Progresibong Kabataan (2020). Schools within the country have expressed their struggles on accessibility especially for the poor, and the lack of infrastructure sets more hurdles to it.

In the past decade, a swift innovation took place with multimedia used in education. Multimedia is a word that describes a hypertext system utilizing a range of digital media aside from text, including graphics, animation, video, audio, and hypertext links. Multimedia has a huge potential in the teaching process, with a lot of benefits for encountering and familiarizing with literary texts. One of its important helps is that it offers a method that is fresh and appealing as compared to traditional materials. This not only fosters learners' active involvement in the pedagogical process as they comprehend, analyze, and assess different literary texts through multimedia applications, but it also corresponds with the belief that the learners have to be more self-directed and independent and multimedia is a powerful tool that can empower independent learning as the student conceptualizes meanings and organizes ideas (Bakar, 2011).

One unique feature of multimedia-based literature is the text-Talk novel (Cabs, 2017). Text-Talk Novels are stories told through dialogues in a social network. It can be in the form of text messages, e-mails, instant messages, or blogs. Generally, it is the kind of literature written in cellphones. The plots of this kind of literature are usually about love and passion. This type of literature started in Japan and its popularity has

gained attention internationally including countries like China, United States, Germany, South Africa, and other Asian countries. The first published text-talk was written by a man who calls himself Yoshi in 2003. His first cellphone novel called Deep Love tackles the story of a teenager who engaged in subsidized dating in Tokyo.

Text-talk novels per se, is a literary genre that suits the reading capabilities and academic needs of 21st century learners in the sense that it uses short sentences and colloquial language while discussing the theme of the story. Its conversational form makes it easier to read for learners. This action research is proposed by the teacher researcher as he seeks to explore what benefits text-talk novels can bring to the reading comprehension skills of the learners.

Reading comprehension is a key skill all learners must be proficient in especially in their current learning set-up which is the modular distance learning. Basing on the teacher-researcher's observations of the grade 8 students in Mamplasan National High School, reading comprehension is a skill the learners must improve in so they could perform successfully in all of their subjects and in their future endeavors in general. By reading text-talk stories, they have improved the productivity they have in answering their modules.

By using a questionnaire approved by English experts, the reading comprehension skills of the learners were tested. This helped the teacher-researcher determine whether the learners gained benefits from reading a text-talk novel. The improvement in their reading comprehension meant an overall improvement in the learners'

academic performance especially in the modular distance learning modality.

### METHODOLOGY

This action research introduced the use of text-talk stories as a 21st century literature to learners and a literary teaching technique to teachers to improve learners' reading comprehension skills. Literary texts within the curriculum were used as the basis of the stories that will be published. After tasking the learners to read the text-talk stories, reading comprehension questions were given to test whether the literary genre has made an impact to their reading comprehension skills.

The new normal in the educational system forced the learners of Mamplasan National High School to go for the modular distance learning. With reading as the key skill in answering all of their modules, what is the level of reading comprehension among learners? This lead the teacher-researcher to seek for text-talk stories as a possible solution to help improve learners' reading comprehension.

The research adopted the Solution Strategy Flowchart in order to conduct the study following a strict implementation of its process.

**Figure 1. Solution Strategy Flowchart**

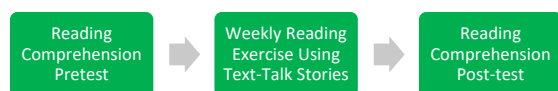


Figure 1 presents the course of the research starting from the reading comprehension pretest after the reading of a selection presented to the learners in paragraphs. Afterwards, the learners will have a weekly reading exercise using

text-talk stories to which the reading comprehension post-test will be based from.

With the learners' weekly reading exercise using text-talk stories, the learners have improved in their reading comprehension skills. This is a skill that is a key to the success in answering their modules and further learning in their future endeavors.

The modular distance learning features the so-called "Self-Learning Modules" or SLMs which subjects the learners to autonomous learning. Studying alone attests the learners reading comprehension skills which is a key skill to learn in all subjects. Because of the lack of varied strategies in teaching reading during the time when learning was conducted face-to-face, some learners struggle in grasping the context of the lessons in their different subjects.

This action research is a quasi-experimental study. The researcher disseminated traditional literary texts to the learners that were purposively selected for pre-test. A 15-item comprehension test approved by 3 English experts were given to them. The teacher-researcher then used text-talk approach to teach literary texts among learners as intervention. 15-item comprehension tests approved by 3 English experts were given to them after each literary text to check on their comprehension.

### RESULTS

After all necessary data were gathered, the teacher-researcher analyzed and compared the pretest and posttest results with the help of a statistician. After recording all the scores, a Likert scale was used to make a verbal

interpretation of the data. This was done to prove the impact of text-talk stories on the reading comprehension skills of the learners.

To identify the reading comprehension level of the learners, a rating scale based on the 2018 Phil-IRI will be used for their pretest and posttest. To solve the mean score of both pretest and posttest, the Average Weighted Mean (AWM) was utilized through Microsoft Excel. To determine the significant difference on whether the learners improved in their pretest and posttest, the independent t-test was used through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

After the thorough analysis, the research arrived to the following conclusions:

**1. Mean Score of the Students in the Pretest and Post-Test**

Based on the gathered data, the average weighted mean of the learners' scores for the pretest is 12.68 which can be verbally interpreted as instructional. Their performance improved in the post-test as the average weighted mean increased into 14.40 which can be verbally interpreted as independent.

**2. Significant Improvement in the Reading Comprehension Skills of the Students After LITTS**

The average weighted mean for the pretest is 12.68 and for the posttest is 14.40. On average, the post-test scores were 1.725 points higher than pretest scores. The p-value is  $<0.001$  which rejects the null hypothesis. Through the p-value and the r-value of 0.687, we can conclude that the pretest and post-test scores were moderately and positively correlated. The t-value of 6.023 suggests that there is a significant average

difference between pretest and post-test scores. In conclusion, there is a significant improvement in the reading comprehension skills of the students after reading text-talk stories.

## **DISCUSSION**

LITTS or Literature in Text-Talk Style is a contemporary approach to teach reading comprehension to learners using screenshot of text message conversations from the characters in the story. These materials can be accessed through the use of ICT materials such as smartphones, tablets, or laptops. They can also be disseminated to learners by being printed. LITTS was birthed to provide a non-traditional manner of presenting texts to learners so that they can find an interest and motivation in reading without noticing it.

As we all know, reading is an ever-consistent struggle every generation learners have even without the proof of literature review. As teachers in any field, we become affected of the difficulties learners experience in our various subjects and topics when they struggle in reading alone, and more so in reading comprehension. LITTS aimed to improve the level of competency among the learners by presenting the text in a conversational manner, making the learners feel as if they are the main character and that they are the ones texting with the other character from the other side of reality. This active involvement that they have with the reading selection is what motivates and encourages them to know more about the story. Using language slangs that are relevant to the Generation Z in the Philippines, the researcher attempted to tell the stories to the learners as if the

readers are actually getting to know each character in the story on a personal level.

In conclusion, the results of this research signify that using LITTS as a method to present reading selection to learners can be applied to all subjects within and across the curriculum. This also encourages the researcher to explore other facets of presenting reading selections to learners that can be applied to them while they are currently under the modular distance learning and what reading selection presentation techniques can be adapted up to the time when we all go back to our old ways where learners come to school everyday to learn.

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