

ENHANCED RETELLING ACTIVITY THROUGH COMICS (E-RAC): A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL IN IMPROVING STORY RETELLING ACTIVITY AMONG GRADE 7 STUDENTS AT MAMPLASAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



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ABSTRACT

This study determined the impact of using comic strips in improving the story retelling skills among Grade 7 students at Mamplasan National High School. The researcher utilized one-group pretest posttest research design using modified rating scale for speaking and literary texts in comic strips form. Forty-two (42) Grade 7 students were randomly selected by the researcher to be his participating students for this study. The students underwent speaking tests focusing on areas such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and content. Z-Test was used to determine whether posttest scores of the participating students have significant difference. Results of the study showed that there was a significant improvement to the posttest scores of the students after using comic strips on storytelling. The researcher recommended that comic strips can be used as pedagogical tools. Thus, using this platform can enhance the speaking skills, specifically the storytelling skill, of the students.

Keywords: story retelling, comic strips, pedagogical tool

INTRODUCTION

English language plays a crucial role to weave the world into a single thread (Ahmad, 2016). Hence, the teaching of English in Junior High Schools should be emphasized at helping the students to be able to communicate in English. They have to be fluent in using the target language in both written and oral form. One of the English learning objectives is understanding and/or producing speech and/or written texts which are realized in five skills namely listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing.

Among the skills aforementioned, speaking skill can be considered as the most important skill as it tests out the success of language learning on how a person can carry out a conversation on the target language. Moreover, it is highly important as speaking and human being cannot be separated with which the former is used to be relevant in the civilized world (Sharma, 2018). However, as how essential speaking skill is, many students face troubles in speaking in the target language. Most students encounter difficulties in pronouncing English words. Likewise, they lack the necessary vocabulary items, so the tendency is they find it difficult to form sentences in English. Consequently, students are not willing to participate in the speaking activities or just sat silently at the desk without desire to get involved in the speaking activities. If these upsetting circumstances become constant,

the students would never learn to speak in English comprehensively.

Moreover, students' primary dilemma is not with their classroom environment but within themselves. In fact, they tend to be better at memorizing rather than practicing the skill. (Royanti, 2017) They do better when the lectures need to be memorized rather than to be delivered as performance tasks. This is an indication that students may lack with self-assurance. Consequently, teachers might look into such effective pedagogical strategies that can improve their lack of speaking manners. Storytelling, per se, is one of these strategies. Students tend to speak more when they are interested to what they are talking about. Further, they give more inputs if stories that they are going to retell are relatable to their age.

With terms such as 'effective' and 'interesting', appropriate use of media is an important means. All instructions require the selection and use of at least one medium to deliver lectures and discussions. In order to select the appropriate media, the teacher must contemplate that aside from the pedagogical context of media materials, individual learners between learners, complexities of contents, and desired learning outcomes must work hand in hand and be related to what 'boundary conditions' mean (Bates, 2015).

In the Philippines, K-12 implementation compels teachers to produce innovative materials that

are essential to the development of students' macro skills. Teaching every student in this digital age is the greatest challenge that teachers face today. Students have widely divergent needs, skills, and interests because of the bombardment of media. Perhaps it would be helpful not to compete with the media and the outside world but to incorporate materials like newspapers, magazines, cartoons, video and other media to spark students' interest. This leads the researcher to undertake the study on using comics as a pedagogical tool in teaching speaking as it only has limited studies on its effect.

English Comic, specifically Comic Strips, is one of the many media to teach speaking. English Comics is an art form using a series of static images in fixed sequence. Using comic strips as a means for teaching story retelling can be very pleasing and interesting for the students. By using this, students will be more interested and more active in learning. They will feel something new and different from what they usually get in their class. Consequently, with the use of English comics, they will be active as participants, and they have more chances to express their minds, emotions, feelings and attitudes.

On the other hand, Mamplasan National High School has a total population of 797 students for this school year, 2018 – 2019. Based on the recent result of Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL – IRI) conducted by the school's English

teachers, 122 students were considered as readers in 'frustration' level in both oral and silent reading. This has caused the school to find the roots of the reading comprehension dilemmas of these students.

The school conducted a survey to the 122 readers in frustration level to know their difficulties in reading. The results showed that 52% of the students could not understand reading selections in English, 23% had troubles in recognizing some vocabulary terms, 18% did not read the selections properly, and 7% had various answers.

The alarming number of students who could not comprehend English reading materials paved way to the formation of "Foster-a-Tutee Program" of Grade 7 teachers. The program started last July 2018 which created pairs within the classroom by assigning the independent readers to help improve in reading their classmates who were in frustration level. As of September 2018, after the first reading achievement, 22 out of 36 frustration level readers were raised to instructional level while 14 were considered as independent readers. This program is consistently implemented as it proved that peer teaching could improve the students' reading ability.

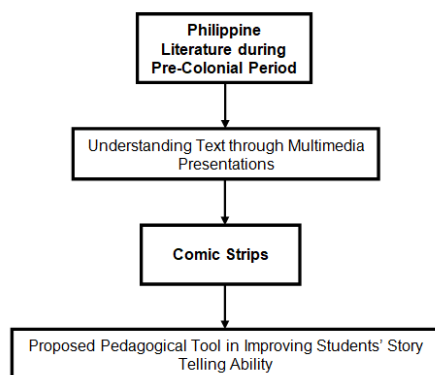
However, one of the ambiguities that were observed during the achievement test was the Oral Examination part where most of the test takers failed to retell the story they had read. Some could not

genuinely express their thoughts while others had problems in their syntactical and lexical construction. The researcher, as part of the facilitators of the program, had an assumption that one of the many factors of the reading difficulties of the students is their lack of improvement in speaking skills, particularly in story retelling skills.

After the thorough process of gathering information, with the use of the PHIL-IRI results and the first Achievement Test result of their “Foster-a-Tutee Program”, the researcher aimed to enhance the speaking skills of the Grade 7 students, particularly their story retelling skills. Thus, upon knowing that English Comics can be utilized as pedagogical tools, the researcher proved how effective it is in improving the story retelling ability of the students.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the conceptual framework below in order to conduct the study following a strict implementation of its process.



This figure shows the paradigm that governed this paper. The study used selected Philippine literary pieces during Pre-Colonial period. The selected texts were based on the Learner's Material in Grade 7 English provided by the Department of Education.

The respondents were selected through random sampling method. The researcher chose 7 students per section with 4:3 ratio of male and female students. Consequently, they are the current students of the researcher in English 7 class for the school year 2019 – 2020.

Forty two (42) grade 7 students were randomly selected by the researcher to be his participating students for this study.

The selected literary pieces were presented in a multimedia form which is comic strips, self-conceptualized versions of the texts. The materials used by the researchers are the comic-strip-type versions of the different literary texts from the English Learning 7 Manual aligned with the K to 12 Curriculum. The comics were created prior the start of the study. Since this is a pilot testing for the said pedagogical tool, the researcher focused on the literary texts from the first quarter lessons.

The researcher used a modified rating scale aligned with David P. Harris and Walter Bartz' rating scale to score the students' result in speaking test. This is a 5-level

rating scale. This rating scale measures the students' speaking skills especially in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

This study is a proposal for English teachers of Grade 7 in utilizing innovative pedagogical tools in improving the speaking ability of their students, as per advised by the K-12 Curriculum.

RESULTS

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed them by using statistical analysis. The researcher transcribed the students' oral test on paper and then scored the result of oral test. This was conducted to find out whether using English comics as medium to improve students' ability in story retelling is effective or not.

To check the significant difference between the pretest and posttest using comic strips of the participating students, as well as the effectiveness of the pedagogical tool, the z – test was used with the help of the computer software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

After the thorough analysis, the following results are discussed below:

1. For pronunciation, the absolute value of z is 6.37. The result is significant at z critical two tail value 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

2. For grammar, the absolute value of z is 6.47. The result is significant at z critical two tail value 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.
3. For vocabulary, the absolute value of z is 5.55. The result is significant at z critical two tail value 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.
4. For fluency, the absolute value of z is 5.54. The result is significant at z critical two tail value 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.
5. For content, the absolute value of z is 7.03. The result is significant at z critical two tail value 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

To determine the effectiveness of comic strips on students' story retelling skills, z-test was also utilized. The results shows that the absolute value of z is 7.02. The result is significant at z critical two tail value 1.96. The null hypothesis is rejected; therefore, the comic strip is an effective pedagogical tool in improving students' speaking skills.

DISCUSSION

After the thorough processes, the researcher concluded that comic strips as a pedagogical tool is

effective in improving students' story retelling ability.

For Department of Education, in lieu with the department's goal which is to make Filipino globally competitive, using multimedia presentations as pedagogical tools can follow the digital trend in teaching-learning process. The officials can modify the curriculum through introducing new literary text formats like comic-strip format or video-clip format. They can also include understanding and creating multimedia presentations as part of integrated language arts domain.

For the students, they should be more engaged in speaking the target language if they want to continuously improve their retelling ability. Pedagogical tool like comic strips was proven an effective material in enriching such skill. However, what still matters the most is how they will practice further to overcome their speaking problems.

For the teachers, they should not neglect the importance of teaching speaking skills towards their students. Thus, they might look into such effective pedagogical strategies that can improve their lack of speaking manners. Comic strips can be utilized not only as a reading material but also an activity that can enhance their summarizing skills.

For regional research, upon knowing the effectiveness of comic strips as a pedagogical tool, this action research can be further

strengthened as this proposed reading tool can be a potential innovative reading text. With more budgets being allocated for this modified reading material, students will have innovative and interesting reading experience, as well as improved story telling ability.

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