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Enhancing Grade 7 Students' Literary Comprehension Through Role-playing Activities in Philippine Folk Narrative Lessons

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Abstract

Reading comprehension remains a persistent challenge among Filipino students, as reflected in national assessments and classroom performance. This study explores the effectiveness of role-playing activities in enhancing the literary comprehension of Grade 7 students, focusing on the Philippine folk narrative *Ibong Adarna*. Conducted during the 2024–2025 school year, the research was implemented in a purposively selected Grade 7 class known for low performance in reading comprehension. Employing a classroom-based action research design, the study utilized pre-tests and post-test to collect data. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, percentage, and standard deviation, alongside using a paired sample t-test. Results revealed that students initially exhibited limited comprehension of the literary text. However, after the integration of role-playing activities, students demonstrated significant improvements in understanding narrative structure, character development, and cultural context. The intervention also increased classroom engagement and student confidence in interpreting literary texts. The findings confirm that role-playing is an effective, interactive, and culturally responsive strategy for teaching literature. The study recommends its integration into literature instruction and further exploration of performance-based strategies in other grade levels and literary forms.

Keywords: Literary Comprehension; Philippine Literature; Role-Playing; Student Engagement; Teaching Strategies

1. Introduction

1.1. Context and Rationale

Students faced eight challenges when it came to reading comprehension of literary works. This included mastering vocabulary, drawing conclusions, detecting the author's bias or opinion, summarizing and paraphrasing, recognizing figurative language, assessing the author's style, analyzing poetry or sound devices, and examining the story's components. Information on students' challenges with reading comprehension of a range of literary texts is provided by the findings (Erniwati et al., 2023).

Because academics realized how urgent it was to gather, preserve, and publish the oral traditions of indigenous groups, folkloric studies have surged in the Philippines. These indigenous cultures' history, values, and worldviews are embodied in oral traditions, which must be conserved for future generations (Makgabo et al., 2024).

Students have countless opportunity to express themselves through literature, and they learn best when they appreciate and critically analyze it (Bustamante, 2022). However, students' primary challenges include identifying various

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developmental patterns including comparison and contrast, definition, description, and narration in texts; assessing a text's organization, coherence, grammar, and mechanics; lacking a strong vocabulary; and figuring out how to choose and arrange information (Urbano et al., 2021).

A prior study demonstrated that de-automatization and (re)construction-related abilities and dispositions can account for a portion of students' development in literary interpretation skills (Koek et al., 2019).

Reading is particularly challenging because there are so many factors to consider. However, some studies show that there are ways to support readers in improving their reading abilities. This study tested students' comprehension of short stories based on Philippine fables. Background knowledge, active reading skills, critical thinking, intense reading, reading background, story comprehension, the impact of short stories, and the use of short stories in language learning are all indications of reading comprehension (Federe et al., 2023).

Students' commitment to learning is the main factor in a successful literary lesson assignments created by educators to meet learning objectives. This preferred interaction on students' comprehension of how the material they have learnt relates to their own life can have an impact on their learning assignments. This discrepancy suggests that in order for students to become literary competent, they must master the necessary abilities particularly reading abilities to close the observed gap between their perceived relevance and their performance (Bañez et al., 2019).

Teachers must plan engaging, creative, and contextualized instruction so that students achieve higher learning outcomes and are more driven to learn (Saptonon et al., 2020). One teaching strategy that gives students a chance to interact with the content in a different way in the classroom is role-playing. Students can act out characters they have created, read pre-written scripts, or play characters shown on role cards during a classroom role-play. Role-playing exercises can improve students' memory, comprehension, and engagement with the course material regardless of the exact strategy used (Piscitelli, 2020).

Role-playing has been recognized as a strategy to enhance student engagement and comprehension. However, most studies focus on its use in teaching English literature or general language skills. Hence, the researcher identified an apparent knowledge gap in prior research concerning the use of role-playing in improving students' comprehension of Philippine folk narratives. In addition, prior studies did not address the subject of Philippine folk narratives as a medium for developing literary appreciation and critical thinking. This encompasses several unexplored dimensions that have recently attracted research attention in other fields (Miles, 2017).

This action research aims to enhance Grade 7 students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives in one of the secondary schools in Misamis Occidental during the S.Y. 2024-2025. The study will focus on improving comprehension skills among students using role-playing activities as a teaching strategy. It will target a specific group of students, which will limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. The research will center exclusively on the comprehension of folk narratives, excluding other forms of literature such as poetry or modern fiction. The study will be conducted over a limited timeframe, capturing only short-term impacts on students' comprehension skills. Additionally, it will utilize a pre-defined set of role-playing scenarios, leaving other instructional strategies and materials unexplored. These parameters are designed to provide a focused analysis while suggesting avenues for future research to expand upon.

This study addresses the challenge of improving literary comprehension among Grade 7 students in Philippine folk narratives, a critical skill for appreciating cultural heritage and achieving academic success. By integrating role-playing activities, the research introduces an innovative teaching method that enhances student engagement and promotes a deeper understanding of literary texts.

2. Strategy

Role-playing has a big impact on how well students understand concepts and develop their creative skills (Gamanik et al., 2019). Critical thinking and student involvement are indeed supported by the role-playing educational approach. By immersing students in genuine, real-world situations, this approach allows them to investigate other viewpoints and interact with the material to gain new insights and create new meaning (Berry and Kowal, 2022).

The use of role-playing could boost motivation, encourage active learning, foster active engagement, and enhance higher-order thinking in students. More chances to demonstrate their thinking are given by the exercise, which boosts their enthusiasm for language acquisition (Aflah and Fajar, 2022). Moreover, students were able to freely express their

emotions and explore their creativity in more ways by using the semi-scripted role play, which helped them prepare for real life (Yusuf and Setyamardani, 2020).

Role-playing is a tactic to boost involvement that is not explicitly taught to educators for use and typically forgotten. By offering role-playing-based professional development and education, it gives teachers an additional way to boost student achievement and engagement. Outlining the advantages of role-playing and methods for overcoming teachers may gain a deeper comprehension of role-playing as a result of challenges within the classroom (Ceballos, 2024).

Similarly, role plays have the potential to boost students' interest in the material being covered within the classroom. Additionally, it might raise the degree of student involvement. This will offer a chance to record everyone's lessons learned. This will assist in completing the task in a way that synthesizes the lessons from the activity while causing students to reflect carefully on their experience (Tursunova and To'Rayeva, 2022).

The proposed strategy for enhancing Grade 7 students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives will integrate role-playing activities as an interactive teaching approach. This strategy aims to immerse students in the content of folk narratives by having them act out characters and situations, allowing them to better understand the cultural context and themes within the stories. Role-playing activities offer an engaging way for students to actively apply critical thinking skills, engage in dialogue, and express their interpretations of the narratives.

The researcher will design a set of role-playing scenarios that are aligned with specific Philippine folk narratives. These scenarios will allow students to explore different characters and perspectives within the stories, thereby fostering deeper comprehension. The role-playing sessions will be structured with pre-assigned roles, and students will be encouraged to collaborate, improvise, and critically analyze the narratives they are representing.

To effectively implement the role-playing strategy in enhancing Grade 7 students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives, the intervention will be conducted in several structured steps.

First, the teacher will introduce the selected Philippine folk narratives to the students. This will include reading the stories aloud, discussing their themes, characters, and cultural significance, and ensuring that students understand the basic elements of the narratives. To support comprehension, the teacher will provide guiding questions and explanations of unfamiliar words or concepts.

Students will be grouped and assigned specific folk narratives with pre-designed role-play scenarios. Each student will portray a character or narrator, expressing thoughts and emotions through their roles. Semi-scripted dialogues may be provided to support creativity and improvisation. Rehearsals will follow, with the teacher guiding students on character portrayal, voice, expressions, and body language. Feedback and questions will help enhance understanding of the story.

After rehearsals, each group will present their role-play in front of the class. Following each performance, a reflective discussion will take place where students share their thoughts about the story, how they felt during the role-play, and what insights they gained. The teacher will prompt students to analyze the story's themes, character motivations, and moral lessons.

Lastly, students will complete a written reflection or answer comprehension questions related to the folk narrative they performed. This will serve as an assessment tool to measure their understanding and to reinforce key learnings from the activity. The teacher will review these reflections and provide additional support if needed to ensure that all students have a deeper grasp of the literary elements presented in the folk narratives.

This structured approach ensures that role-playing is used as an interactive and meaningful tool to enhance literary comprehension, making learning more engaging and culturally relevant for students.

3. Action research questions

This action research aimed to enhance Grade 7 students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives during the S.Y. 2024-2025. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the level of students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives before the implementation of the role-playing activity?

- What is the level of students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives after the implementation of the role-playing activity?
 - Is there a significant difference in students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives before and after the implementation of the role-playing activity?
 - What additional improvements in engagement, critical thinking, and understanding of cultural values were observed following the use of role-playing activities in Philippine folk narrative lessons?
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4. Action research methods

4.1. Research Design

This action research utilized a classroom-based action research design to enhance Grade 7 students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives through role-playing activities. The action research design was a recognized methodology that supported problem-solving through cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, which allowed for the direct application of the intervention and the continuous evaluation of its effectiveness in the classroom (Cronholm and Göbel, 2022). This design was appropriate for the study because it enabled the direct application of role-playing in the classroom while monitoring its effects on students' comprehension skills.

4.2. Site

The study was conducted at a public secondary school in Misamis Occidental, focusing on Grade 7 students. The school served a diverse student population, welcoming learners from different backgrounds and abilities.

4.3. Participants

The study involved 44 Grade 7 students from one section, chosen using purposive sampling. These students were selected based on their participation in the Filipino subject and their willingness to engage in the research. The group consisted of students with varying levels of comprehension in literary texts, including those with moderate to low performance. Students from other sections within the same grade level were not included to maintain a controlled group for the study.

4.4. Instruments

The study used the following instruments to gather and implement data

4.4.1. Paper-and-Pencil Tests

Pre-tests and post-tests were designed to evaluate the students' performance and improvement in Filipino. A 40-item test on Ibong Adarna was used to measure students' comprehension skills before and after the intervention. The test was validated by experts and pilot tested with selected students to ensure reliability. The researcher conducted a pilot test with a separate group of participants not included in the study and ensured that the instrument achieved a Cronbach's Alpha between 0.7 and 1.0. The same instrument was used for both the pre-test and post-test.

4.4.2. Lesson Plans

The lesson plans guided daily instruction for each chapter of Ibong Adarna, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives. They included inquiry-based activities and were reviewed by a critic teacher to ensure quality and appropriateness for the students.

4.4.3. Role-playing Strategy

This was implemented following the structured steps in the intervention. Students were assigned roles based on Ibong Adarna, rehearsed their scenes, performed in front of the class, and participated in reflective discussions to deepen their understanding of the story.

4.4.4. Interview Questions

The researchers used unstructured interview questions to gather insights from students and the teacher about their experiences with the role-playing strategy in Ibong Adarna. These open-ended questions explored their thoughts, engagement, and challenges in using role-playing as a learning tool. The researchers recorded responses using an audio recorder or took written notes to ensure accurate data collection.

Table 1 Score Ranges, Grade Equivalents, and Performance Interpretation for a 40-Item Test

Score	Grade Equivalent	Interpretation
34-40	90-100	Outstanding
31-33	85-89	Very Satisfactory
28-30	80-84	Satisfactory
24-27	75-79	Fairly Satisfactory
Below 24	Below 75	Did Not Meet Expectation

4.5. Data Collection and Procedure

4.5.1. Pre-Implementation Phase

The researcher sought permission from the Dean, Schools Division Superintendent, school principal, and cooperating teacher before conducting the study. Data collection began only after all necessary approvals had been secured. During this stage, assessments and activities were developed based on the teacher's lesson plans and instructional materials. The pre-test was prepared to assess students' initial comprehension of Ibong Adarna. Lesson plans were also designed to effectively integrate role-playing activities.

4.5.2. Implementation Phase

The researcher presented and discussed the lessons using the role-playing strategy in class. Clear instructions were given regarding the guidelines and purpose of role-playing in enhancing literary comprehension. Students participated in dramatizing scenes from Ibong Adarna, allowing them to engage with the story actively. The strategy was implemented for one month, after which a post-test was conducted to measure improvements in students' comprehension.

Since data triangulation was used, observations and interviews were also conducted alongside assessments for more comprehensive results. To document the data, the researcher took field notes, captured photos and video recordings of class activities, and observed student participation. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with students and the teacher to gather their insights and experiences with role-playing. These interviews were recorded for further analysis.

4.5.3. Post-Implementation Phase

In the post-implementation phase, the researcher analyzed the results from the pre-test, post-test, observations, and interviews. Conclusions were drawn regarding the effectiveness of the role-playing strategy in enhancing students' comprehension of Ibong Adarna. The study underwent proofreading, editing, and finalization before the results were shared with relevant stakeholders, including the school administration and teachers, for potential application in future lessons.

Ethical Issues

Before conducting the research, informed consent was obtained from the students and their parents or guardians. The research adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to protect students' personal and academic information. Participants were fully informed of the study's objectives, potential benefits, and their voluntary participation. The researcher ensured that all data collected remained confidential, and student identities were kept anonymous throughout the study.

4.6. Data Analysis Plan

The researcher computed descriptive statistics to determine the mean and standard deviations of the students' performance before and after the strategy. The following statistical tools were utilized

- *Mean and Standard Deviation* were used to summarize students' pre- and post-test scores on their comprehension of Philippine folk narratives.
- *T-Test* was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the students' pre- and post-intervention scores.

- *Thematic Analysis* was used to identify themes from the observational notes and student feedback. This analysis explored students' engagement, attitudes, and reflections on the role-playing activities. The researcher used Hyper RESEARCH software to facilitate the qualitative analysis of the data.
- *Familiarization with the Data* required repeatedly reviewing the data to develop a thorough understanding of its content. The researcher recorded initial thoughts, patterns, and observations that could inform further analysis.
- *Generating Initial Codes* emphasized recognizing and assigning labels to significant portions of the data. These codes were brief, descriptive tags that highlighted key elements of the information.
- *Searching for Themes* involved grouping the codes into overarching themes. These themes represented patterns or concepts that arose from the data and highlighted important ideas related to the research question.
- *Reviewing Themes* examined whether the identified themes aligned with the overall dataset. This step included refining, combining, or eliminating themes to ensure they accurately represented the data.
- *Defining and Naming Themes* ensured that the finalized themes were clearly defined and appropriately named. Each theme had a distinct meaning, with a label that effectively captured its central idea.
- *Writing the Report* entailed composing a report that described the themes, backed by relevant data excerpts. The researcher analyzed the themes and connected them to the research questions and theoretical framework.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the level of students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives before the implementation of the role-playing activity. The data show that out of 44 Grade 8 students, 42 (95.45%) fell under the Did Not Meet Expectation (DME) category, while only 2 students (4.55%) reached the Fairly Satisfactory (FS) level. The overall mean score was 18.295 with a standard deviation of 3.359, indicating that the majority of the class performed poorly in the pre-test.

These results highlight the students' limited comprehension skills when it comes to analyzing Philippine folk narratives. The low mean score reflects their difficulty in understanding essential story elements such as characters, themes, values, and events. Furthermore, their struggles may stem from a lack of engagement and ineffective teaching strategies used prior to the intervention. The traditional method of reading and answering comprehension questions may not have allowed students to interact meaningfully with the texts. Better comprehension of texts resulted from the application of cognitive and metacognitive techniques made easier by role play. Reading proficiency can be efficiently increased by combining strategy training with role play (Ilustre, 2021).

One useful strategy for raising children's reading comprehension is role-playing. Comparing students who engaged in role-playing exercises to those who did not, the former demonstrated a greater comprehension of the reading materials (Cahyani, 2021).

The results show a clear need for a teaching method that allows students to interact with the story beyond just reading. This highlights the importance of strategies like role-playing, which can offer a more engaging experience and help students better understand and enjoy literature. Without improving comprehension strategies, students may continue to face challenges in literary appreciation, affecting their academic performance and connection to Filipino culture.

Table 2 Level of Students' Literary Comprehension of Philippine Folk Narratives Before the Implementation of the Role-Playing Activity

Comprehension	Frequency	Percentage	M	SD
Did Not Meet Expectation (DME)	42	95.45	18.000	3.139
Fairly Satisfactory (FS)	2	4.55	24.500	0.707
Overall	44	100	18.295	3.359

Note: Scale: 34-40 (Outstanding); 31-33 (Very Satisfactory); 28-30 (Satisfactory); 24-27 (Fairly Satisfactory); 1-23 (Did Not Meet Expectation)

Table 2 shows a significant improvement in the students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives after the implementation of the role-playing activity. All 44 Grade 8 students (100%) achieved scores within the Outstanding category, with a mean score of 36.818 and a standard deviation of 1.632. Compared to the pre-test results, this marks a substantial increase in performance, clearly demonstrating the positive impact of the intervention.

The role-playing activity allowed students to engage with the narratives in a more interactive and meaningful way. By acting out the stories, students were able to better express emotions, analyze character motivations, and understand key themes and values presented in the texts. This hands-on experience helped them move beyond passive reading, encouraging deeper comprehension and appreciation of Philippine folk literature.

Higher levels of student involvement and improved comprehension of challenging materials were the results of role-playing. Use role-playing techniques to improve how students engage with course information. In classes with a lot of literature, role-playing is a useful technique for improving student participation and understanding (Pugh and Grillitsch, 2023).

The students' better scores also show they were more engaged and interested in the lesson. This made it easier for them to remember details and reflect on the story's meaning. By being active participants, they learned how to analyze characters' actions and relate them to the values and culture in the story.

These results suggest that role-playing is a powerful strategy to enhance comprehension and learning in literature. It makes lessons more exciting and meaningful, especially when teaching culturally rich content like Philippine folk narratives. Teachers can use this approach to help students enjoy reading and develop stronger thinking and communication skills.

Table 3 Level of Students' Literary Copenhension of Philippine Folk Narratives After the Implementation of the Role-Playing Activity

Comprehension	Frequency	Percentage	M	SD
Outstanding (O)	44	100	36.818	1.632
Overall	44	100	36.818	1.632

Note: Scale: 34-40 (Outstanding); 31-33 (Very Satisfactory); 28-30 (Satisfactory); 24-27 (Fairly Satisfactory); 1-23 (Did Not Meet Expectation)

The results of the t-test revealed a highly significant difference in students' comprehension scores. The pre-test mean score was 18.295, while the post-test score increased to 36.818, with a t-value of 29.56 and a p-value of 0.000. This means the change in performance is not by chance it is a result of the role-playing activity. The data clearly shows that students understood the stories much better after the intervention.

Drama, according to both teachers and students, improved comprehension and memory of the subject matter by making reading classes more entertaining and engaging (Al Rabeii et al., 2023). Dramatic exercises greatly increased students' confidence, interest, and speaking fluency. Drama's expressive and participatory elements offered a nurturing setting for language development, which can be extended to improved literary analysis abilities (Allder, 2023).

The role-playing method allowed students to become more active in learning. Instead of just reading, they were able to act, think, and feel what the characters experienced. This improved their focus, memory, and ability to analyze the story. It also made learning fun and meaningful, which led to better results and deeper understanding.

This significant improvement shows that role-playing is not only effective for comprehension as it also builds confidence, creativity, and collaboration. Teachers should consider using role-playing in their regular lessons, especially in subjects like Filipino, where culture and values are part of the learning. This approach helps bridge the gap between the students' academic needs and their personal engagement with literature.

Table 4 Difference in the Students' Literary Copenhension of Philippine Folk Narratives Before and After the Implementation of the Role-Playing Activity

Variables	M	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Before Role-Playing Activity	18.295	3.359	29.56	0.000	Reject Ho
After Role-Playing Activity	36.818	1.632			

Ho: There is no significant difference in the students' literary comprehension of Philippine folk narratives before and after the implementation of the role-playing activity

Note: Probability Value Scale: **p<0.01 (Highly Significant); *p<0.05 (Significant); p>0.05 (Not Significant)

5.1. Increased Enjoyment and Active Participation

Students enjoyed the role-playing activity because it gave them an opportunity to act, express emotions, and be part of a performance. Several students mentioned that they liked playing roles, which made them feel confident and excited. They appreciated being active in class rather than sitting and reading quietly. The chance to work in groups also made the experience more fun and collaborative. Overall, role-playing turned ordinary lessons into enjoyable and lively classroom moments.

- *"I enjoyed acting like a prince. It was fun and helped me be more confident." (P1)*
- *"I liked pretending to be a king. It felt cool and exciting." (P8)*
- *"I liked that we were all active and not bored in class." (P10)*

Students worked together and developed a deeper comprehension of the course through role-playing, which enhanced their capacity for self-learning. Self-learning is positively impacted by the use of virtual and augmented reality in higher education, which encourages active student participation and worthwhile educational experiences. Furthermore, students believe that these immersive teaching techniques help close the gap between online and traditional classroom settings, which will ultimately improve student learning outcomes (Valladares Rios et al., 2023).

The findings suggest that role-playing can be a powerful tool to make learning more enjoyable and engaging for students. When learners are active and involved, they are more likely to understand and remember the lesson. Teachers can use role-playing as a fun way to boost students' confidence and participation in class. It also encourages teamwork and helps students express their ideas better. By including role-playing activities, lessons can become more exciting and meaningful for everyone.

5.2. Deeper Understanding of Characters and Story Meaning

Through role-playing, students were able to think more deeply about the characters and their actions. They reflected on the characters' feelings and understood their motivations better. This activity encouraged them to analyze situations and connect personally with the roles they played. They discovered that characters are not just names on a page but individuals with emotions and reasons for their behavior. As a result, their comprehension of the story became more thoughtful and meaningful.

- *"Yes, I thought more about their feelings when I acted." (P3)*
- *"Yes, acting helped me know what the character wanted and needed." (P9)*
- *"Yes, it made me realize that characters are like real people with feelings." (P10)*

By utilizing the existence of narratives in data-related challenges including visualizations, gamification can be explored as a way to enhance learning and find a way to apply role-playing game-based designs (Huynh et al., 2020).

Students expressed high levels of satisfaction with reading questions about literary works, indicating proficiency in knowledge, understanding, emotional connection, and the articulation of personal opinions. Students found inspiration in using literature for language learning and actively engaged in putting role-playing principles into practice. This suggests that using dramatic role-playing to study literature might help students understand literary works, increase their self-confidence, and collaborate with one another (Waewchimplee and Arjpru, 2023).

These results show that role-playing helps students better understand the characters in a story. When students act out roles, they can feel what the characters feel and think more deeply about their actions. This makes reading more personal and meaningful for them. Teachers can use role-playing to help students connect with stories in a more thoughtful way. It also supports stronger emotional and critical thinking skills in the classroom.

5.3. Stronger Connection to Filipino Culture and Values

Students expressed that they gained a better understanding of Filipino culture after acting out the stories. They learned about important values such as respect for elders, bravery, and kindness. The stories gave them insights into traditional beliefs and customs that are part of Filipino heritage. By performing the scenes, they connected more closely with the cultural themes embedded in the narratives. These realizations helped develop not just comprehension but also cultural appreciation and pride.

- *"I realized that old stories teach us good lessons." (P2)*
- *"I learned that respect and love for family are common in our stories." (P7)*

- *“I realized our culture is rich and full of values.” (P10)*

Students reported that they remembered and understood the story's lessons more clearly because of the role-play. They said acting helped them feel the values, such as honesty, courage, and kindness, in a deeper way. Performing scenes where characters made good or bad choices helped them realize the importance of those lessons. Instead of just reading the values, they experienced them and reflected on their meaning. This led to better moral understanding and stronger personal connections to the story.

Students' low levels of cultural awareness are caused by the following factors: the disappearance of cultural heritage; the poor integration and maintenance of Filipino culture in the classroom; and the challenge facing Filipino cultural heritage (Villa, 2023). However, studies emphasized how crucial indigenous cultural values and knowledge systems are to schooling. Incorporating Filipino cultural viewpoints can improve educational opportunities and promote cultural awareness (Oropilla and Guadana, 2021).

The results show that role-playing can help students understand and appreciate Filipino culture better. When students act out stories with traditional values, they feel more connected to their roots and learn important lessons. This kind of activity can help keep Filipino culture alive in the classroom. Teachers can use role-playing to teach values like respect, courage, and kindness in a fun and meaningful way. It also helps students become more aware of their identity and heritage.

5.4. Clearer Story Comprehension Through Performance

Acting out the scenes made certain parts of the story easier for students to understand. They said that performing helped them make sense of character choices, emotional moments, and story endings. Students mentioned that they saw the story more clearly when they experienced it as actors, not just readers. The dialogue and actions in the role-play deepened their understanding of key events. As a result, their ability to interpret and explain the story improved significantly.

- *“Yes, when I acted the sad part, I understood why the character cried.” (P1)*
- *“Yes, the part where the prince had to choose helped me understand his feelings.” (P4)*
- *“Yes, the ending made more sense after we performed it.” (P2)*

Students who took part in drama-based learning showed enhanced cognitive abilities, especially when it came to deciphering plot developments and character motives. In order to improve reading instruction and encourage deeper engagement with literary content, the study suggests implementing theater tactics (Udalla, 2020).

The findings suggest that role-playing can help students understand stories more clearly. When students act out scenes, they experience the emotions and decisions of the characters, which helps them make better sense of the plot. This method can make reading more enjoyable and easier to follow. Teachers can use role-playing to support students who struggle with reading comprehension. It also builds confidence as students learn to express their ideas and explain the story in their own words.

Summary

This study addressed the observed difficulty among Grade 7 students in comprehending Philippine folk narratives, particularly Ibong Adarna, as part of their literature curriculum. Students often struggled with understanding the sequence of events, character motivations, and moral lessons embedded in the story. To address this gap, the study explored the effectiveness of role-playing activities as a strategy to enhance literary comprehension.

The research was conducted during the school year 2024–2025 in a Grade 7 class selected through purposive sampling due to observed low reading comprehension scores and teacher recommendations. The study followed an action research design and included pre- and post-assessments to measure changes in students' literary comprehension after the intervention.

Findings

The following were the study's key findings

- Before the implementation of role-playing, students exhibited low levels of comprehension of the folk narrative Ibong Adarna. This was evident through poor performance in identifying plot elements, character roles, and moral values.
- After using role-playing as an instructional strategy, students' comprehension significantly improved. They demonstrated better understanding of the narrative structure, character development, and cultural significance of the story.
- Statistical analysis showed a significant increase in post-test scores, confirming the effectiveness of role-playing in enhancing literary comprehension.
- Role-playing also increased student engagement and motivation. Students were more participative during discussions and exhibited improved confidence in interpreting literary texts.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn

- Students struggle to comprehend the folk narrative Ibong Adarna, with many unable to identify critical elements of the story. This highlighted a need for a more interactive and student-centered teaching approach.
- Role-playing is an effective strategy in enhancing students' comprehension. It allowed students to internalize and better understand the content through active participation.
- Role-playing is not only enjoyable but also an academically effective teaching strategy.
- Role-playing contributes to students' increased confidence, creativity, and appreciation of Philippine literature.

Recommendations

- Teachers may integrate role-playing activities in teaching literary texts to enhance students' engagement and comprehension.
- Schools may provide training workshops to equip teachers with techniques for implementing drama-based instructional strategies effectively.
- Teachers may develop localized role-playing scripts and activities tailored to Philippine literature to promote cultural appreciation while improving comprehension.
- Teachers may include performance-based assessments in literature classes to provide students with opportunities to express their understanding creatively.
- Schools may encourage collaborative learning through group role-plays to develop students' communication, empathy, and teamwork skills.
- Future researchers may explore the use of other drama-based or multimodal strategies (e.g., readers' theater, storytelling, puppetry) to further enhance literary appreciation and understanding across grade levels and literary genres.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests in the conduct or publication of this research.

Statement of Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study followed the ethical rules and guidelines set by Misamis University.

Statement of Informed Consent

Participants were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and their voluntary consent was obtained prior to data collection.

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