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Melodic Learning: Analyzing Songs to Develop Teaching Strategies in Language and Literature

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Abstract

Language and literature education play a crucial role in developing students' linguistic proficiency, literary appreciation, and critical thinking. This study explores the use of songs as pedagogical tools in teaching language and literature, emphasizing their potential to enhance student engagement and comprehension. Employing a qualitative research design, the study utilizes textual analysis of song lyrics, classroom observations, and educator interviews to examine how music-based strategies support language acquisition and literary appreciation.

Findings indicate that integrating songs into instruction fosters deeper student interaction with texts, improving vocabulary retention, thematic interpretation, and contextual analysis. The study presents innovative teaching strategies tailored for senior high school subjects, including Creative Nonfiction, 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World, Creative Writing, and Reading and Writing Skills. These strategies incorporate fantasy theme criticism, semiotic analysis, and multimodal approaches to enhance learning outcomes.

By bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical classroom applications, this research contributes to the development of adaptable, evidence-based instructional methods. The study underscores the importance of varied pedagogical strategies in language and literature education, advocating for the integration of music as an interactive and contextually relevant learning resource. Future research may further explore the impact of digital platforms in implementing these strategies effectively.

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Introduction

Language and literature education constitute a crucial component of the Philippine curriculum, designed to develop students' linguistic proficiency, literary appreciation, and critical thinking skills. The effectiveness of instruction in these subjects is largely contingent upon the pedagogical approaches adopted by educators. Research has consistently demonstrated that no single teaching strategy sufficiently addresses the diverse learning needs of students in a classroom setting (Galang, 2015). Consequently, instructors must implement varied instructional strategies to facilitate meaningful learning experiences and optimize knowledge acquisition.

An expanding body of literature underscores the significance of pedagogical approaches in enhancing student engagement and comprehension. Mustakim, Mustapha, and Lebar (2014) found that educators employ a combination of strategies and activities to improve students' understanding of literary texts. Likewise, Knutson (2014) emphasized that the selection and effective implementation of teaching strategies are critical determinants of student learning outcomes. Furthermore, the integration of literature in language instruction has been shown to reinforce linguistic competence while fostering cultural awareness and analytical skills (Yang & Liu, 2017).

Despite extensive research on teaching strategies in language and literature education, gaps remain in developing specific pedagogical frameworks tailored to the distinct needs of senior high school students in the Philippines. Existing studies predominantly focus on generalized pedagogical models without adequately considering subject-specific requirements, student diversity, and contextual classroom dynamics. Moreover, limited research has examined instructional strategies specifically designed for English subjects such as Creative Nonfiction, Reading and Writing Skills, Creative Writing, and 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World. Additionally, there is a paucity of studies that explore innovative, evidence-based strategies aligned with contemporary educational demands, including digital integration and differentiated instruction.

To address these gaps, this study aims to propose a set of contextually relevant, research-based teaching strategies tailored to the unique challenges of senior high school English instruction in the Philippines. By identifying and evaluating effective pedagogical approaches, this research seeks to enhance student learning experiences, promote inclusivity, and contribute to the ongoing discourse on best practices in language and literature education.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the effectiveness of songs as a pedagogical tool in teaching language and literature. Specifically, textual analysis was utilized to examine song lyrics as instructional materials for language acquisition and literary appreciation. The selection of songs was guided by thematic relevance, linguistic complexity, cultural significance, and alignment with curriculum standards. To ensure the reliability of the selection process, a panel of language and literature educators reviewed and validated the chosen songs based on predefined criteria.

Data collection involved an in-depth textual analysis of song lyrics, examining linguistic features, literary elements, and thematic representations. Classroom observations were conducted using structured rubrics to assess student engagement and comprehension. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with educators provided insights into the pedagogical implications of integrating songs into classroom instruction. Triangulation of data sources—textual analysis, observations, and interviews—was employed to strengthen the credibility of findings.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a combination of Thematic, linguistic, and literary analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring pedagogical patterns and categorize data into key instructional themes such as motivation, contextual learning, and multimodal instruction.

Linguistic analysis examined vocabulary acquisition, syntactic structures, and discourse patterns within song lyrics, while literary analysis explored the use of figurative language, symbolism, and narrative techniques that contribute to literary appreciation.

To ensure analytical rigor, multiple coding strategies were employed. Inter-coder reliability was established through expert review, with discrepancies resolved through consensus-building discussions. The thematic findings were further validated through comparative analysis with existing pedagogical frameworks. The results of this study informed the development of teaching strategies specifically tailored to language and literature instruction, optimizing student learning outcomes through the integration of music as an interactive and contextually rich educational resource.

Findings and Discussion

Effective teaching strategies in language and literature education play a crucial role in fostering student engagement, comprehension, and linguistic development. Given the diverse learning styles present in a classroom, educators must adopt varied instructional methods to accommodate students' needs and maximize their learning potential. Research has demonstrated that employing multiple approaches enhances student understanding of literary texts and language structures (Mustakim, Mustapha, & Lebar, 2014). The selection and implementation of appropriate pedagogical strategies are therefore critical to optimizing learning outcomes (Knutson, 2014).

Classroom strategies facilitate students' appreciation of literary works while simultaneously improving their language skills. Engaging students through interactive activities, critical discussions, and exposure to diverse texts enables them to connect with literature on a deeper level. These strategies also encourage students to develop vocabulary, interpret complex ideas, and explore global perspectives. As Yang and Liu (2017) emphasize, the development of language skills is closely tied to literature, making an integrated approach essential for effective instruction.

The dynamic nature of language and literature instruction necessitates the continuous adaptation of teaching methodologies. Teachers design strategies that promote active student participation, encourage analytical thinking, and cater to varying proficiency levels. Differentiated instruction and innovative teaching approaches help address individual learning needs, ensuring a more inclusive and effective learning environment. Based on this study's findings, a set of proposed strategies has been developed to enhance language and literature instruction, aligning with contemporary educational demands and fostering meaningful learning experiences.

Table 1a: Teaching Strategies for the subject Creative Nonfiction

Content	Introduction to literary genre. Poetry
Content Standard	The learner understands the literary conventions that govern the different genre.
Performance Standard	The learner clearly and coherently uses a chosen element conventionally identified with a genre for a written or oral output.
Learning Competency	Analyze and interpret the theme and techniques used in a particular text.
Strategies	Fantasy theme criticism Literary tour
Description	This strategy allows the learners to engage in the literary text by identifying the themes --- characters, settings, and actions.
Process	Divide the class in group with five members. Allow students to listen to a song. Students retell the song with respect to the sequential events of the song. Identify the characters and describe them by the characteristics they embody in the song. Select significant setting of the song where the characters are doing actions. Determine the actions that the characters are engage with. Allow students to make an impression towards the song based from the swirling of the themes--- characters, settings, and actions.
Skills	Listening Skill Retention skill/ Oral / Speaking skill
Grouping	This activity is best when done by group with at least 5 members for each group.
Output	Oral presentation.

Table 1b: Teaching Strategies for the subject Creative Nonfiction

Content	Principles, Elements, Techniques, and Devices of Creative Nonfiction. Characters Characterization Setting and the atmosphere
Content Standard	The learner understands the delineation between creative and the nonfictional elements of creative nonfictional text.
Performance Standard	The learner clearly and coherently uses multiple elements conventionally identified with a genre for a written output.
Learning Competency	Identify fictional elements in the texts. Analyze and interpret factual/nonfictional aspects in the text.
Strategies	Fantasy theme criticism Raffle Draw
Description	This strategy allows the learners to determine the elements of the song/poem. It makes the learner pay attention to the literary text and identifying the prevailing elements.
Process	There will be a bowl full of strips which has a note either; a. setting b. character. Students will be randomly called through a raffle draw method. Once a student's name is mentioned, the student will pick a strip of paper in the bowl and announce what it is written in the paper. Student is tasked to identify one character and one setting induced in their favourite song. Student shares in the class their answer.
Skills	Listening Skill Speaking skill.
Grouping	This is an individual work,
Output	Oral recitation.

Table 1c: Teaching Strategies for the subject Creative Nonfiction

Content	Symbols and symbolism
Content Standard	The learner understands the delineation between creative and the nonfictional elements of creative nonfictional text.
Performance Standard	The learner clearly and coherently uses multiple elements conventionally identified with a genre for a written output.
Learning Competency	Identify fictional elements in the texts. Analyze and interpret factual/nonfictional aspects in the text.
Strategies	Semiotics Sorting out the terms
Description	This strategy allows the listeners to enrich their vocabulary through looking at the text and its context.
Process	Student shares in the class their answer.

	Allows the learners to listen into a particular song. Learners need to jot down all the words that they hear from the audio. Learners need to associate relevant words or terms to the enlisted words. Learner will sort out important words from the least important and analyze the words based from the context of the songs. By this time learner will have an access to the lyric content, thus giving them a chance to see if words they have enlisted have something to do with the words they associate. Learners will figure out if words they have enlisted represent symbols that the persona employed in the song. Learners will use the listed relevant words they have associated with the terms; abstract or concrete, to extract symbolism from the lyric of the songs.
Skills	Writing skills Vocabulary
Grouping	Individual work
Output	Written output containing symbols that can be extracted from the lyrics of the song.

Table 2: Teaching Strategies for the subject 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World

Content	Study and appreciation of literary texts from the different regions written in different genres covering: Regions in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Major genres (poetry, fiction, drama, creative, nonfiction, as well as hyperpoetry, blogs, mobile phone Texttula, chick lit, speculative fiction, flash)
Content Standard	The learner will be able to understand and appreciate the elements and contexts of 21 st century Philippine literature from the regions.
Performance Standard	Differentiate/compare and contrast the various the learner will be able to demonstrate understanding and appreciation of the 21 st century Philippine literature from the regions.
Learning Competency	Differentiate/compare and contrast the various 21st literary genres and the ones from the earlier genres/periods citing their elements, structures, traditions Infer literary meaning from literal language based on usage. Explain the relationship of context with the text's meaning.
Strategies	Fantasy theme criticism Literary tour
Description	This strategy allows the learners to participate in a classroom activity that enhances their speaking ability through sharing of perceptions, ideas, and comments or insights toward a particular literary text. This strategy also stimulates the learner's perception towards the songs. It allows them to reflect and be able to generate their own understanding in these literary text.
Process	Divide the class in five with at least 6-7 members. Learners assign a group leader in the group who will act as the expert while the other learners will serve as the audiences and others will serve as interviewers. The topic will be about songs from the various regions. There should be at least 5 songs that will be presented and discussed by the learners. The five leaders will sit in front of the class and will act as the experts. They should have a prior knowledge on the songs assigned to them. The remaining learners will formulate queries with the guide questions; - To whom does the song intended? - what message does the singer would want to instil into audience's mind? - why is the reason has been composed? Does it reflect values and tradition of a certain community where the composer resides? - Does the song embody the singer's attitudes and values in life? - What is the mood of the singer in the song?
Skills	Speaking ability Formulating assumptions and conclusions
Grouping	This strategy is best when done collaboratively by the learners. A group consisting of 6-7 members will do.
Output	Interactive class sharing or discussion on various literary works from the various regions/places.

Table 3: Teaching Strategies for the subject Creative Writing

Content	Creative writing Language
Content Standard	The learners have an understanding of variations of language, classifying kinds of sentences, and grammar
Performance Standard	The learners shall be able to construct sentences and be able to identify kinds of sentences.
Learning Competency	Utilize language to evoke emotional and intellectual responses from the readers.
Strategies	Systemic Functional Linguistics Hear me out
Description	This strategy allows readers to engage into the literary text through paying attention to the sentence construction of the texts. It allows the learners to determine reason why the use of declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives are employed in the literary work and how it contributes to the context of the texts.

Process	Learners listen to a particular song. While listening to the song, students are tasked to jot down lines of the songs and classify them according to its kinds --- declarative, interrogative, or imperative. Students will provide explanation why declarative is dominantly used or interrogative or imperative and relate it to the context of the song.
Skills	Listening skill Writing skill
Grouping	This activity should be done individually.
Output	Learners produce a written output that shows the mood types used in the song and provide explanation.

Table 4: Teaching Strategies for Reading and Writing Skills

Content	Text and Context Connections (Reading Comprehension
Content Standard	Understand the relationship of a written text and the context in which it was developed.
Performance Standard	Writes a sensible paragraph or express strong thought that relates to the text of the literary work and its context.
Learning Competency	Explains critical reading ad reasoning. Determines textual evidence to validate assertions and counterclaims made about a text read.
Strategies	Read and Tell/Write
Description	strategy allows the learners to demonstrate skills in reading while providing responses to literary text.
Process	Learners are tasked to read a particular song/poem. Teacher reads a line from the song and the learner will either write or tell perceptions towards the line with the guide questions: a. What is the meaning of the line? b. What does the persona would want to tell through the line? c. What motive did the persona create by the line of the poem/song? d. Why do you think the line is part of the song? What is its significance? Allow the learner to respond with the guide questions and let the learner reflect and answer the ultimate question: What message does the persona would want to resonate with the people?
Skills	Reading comprehension. Writing skills. Fluency in speaking
Grouping	This task is best done individually.
Output	Written output Oral recitation.

Conclusion

Effective language and literature instruction require adaptable teaching strategies that address students' diverse learning needs (Tomlinson, 2017) ^[5]. This study emphasizes the significance of employing varied approaches to enhance engagement, comprehension, and skill development (Richards & Renandya, 2020) ^[4]. Integrating literature into language learning fosters meaningful connections, reinforcing linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness (Krashen, 2004) ^[2]. The proposed strategies offer a structured framework for creating inclusive and dynamic learning environments (Ghosn, 2019) ^[1]. Future research should examine the long-term impact of these approaches and their effectiveness across different educational contexts (Paran, 2021) ^[3].

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