



THE BILINGUAL INSTRUCTIONS IN DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN LITERARY APPRECIATION OF CBEASTUDENTS – AN ACTION RESEARCH

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Abstract: *The trend of better teaching and learning is oftentimes the results of bilingual instructions. Though it is encouraged that in the tertiary level the target language which is English should be the medium; it is quite disturbing for an educator to observe that many students could not communicate well by using the prescribed medium only. According to the University of Tennessee, "Children in foreign language programs have tended to demonstrate greater cognitive development, creativity, and divergent thinking than monolingual children. Several studies show that people who are competent in more than one language outscore those who are speakers of only one language on tests of verbal and nonverbal intelligence. (Bruck, Lambert, and Tucker, 1974; Hakuta, 1986; Weatherford, 1986).*

The focus of this classroom research was to observe how successfully students could develop critical thinking through bilingual instructions in their literature class. The result has shown that students could apply the identified characteristics in this study to develop critical thinking skills by using both the languages used for classroom instructions. In the sample outputs, the ones developed solely in English language did not elaborate more substance for better understanding. Both student writers and speakers fall short in terms of widely using the English to express vivid ideas about what was being written or spoken about. On the other hand, when they were given freedom to develop their work making use of Filipino language; their outputs turned out to be better because they were able to explain clearly the points they were trying to drive at.

Key Terms: *Bilingual Instructions – this involves teaching in the native (vernacular) and the target language (English)*

Critical Thinking – this involves the ability of the learner to perform mental abilities like reasoning, problem solving, making decisions and judgments, or simply imagining

Literary Appreciation – this is a clear manifestation of the learners' acknowledgment of the beauty of any piece of literature and being able to gain values from them

Vernacular – the local language (Tagalog or regional tongue)

Code mixing – the attempt of speaker/writer to mix languages in a single complete statement

Code switching – the attempt of speaker/writer to mix languages in many different statements

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INTRODUCTION:

Teaching students to think creatively or critically is a gigantic task an educator would face. Learning is a process which brings about a change in individual's way of responding as a result of practice or other experiences. Since learning is developmental and interactive, educators present classroom works that entail students to have active interchange with fellow students.

Educators focus on developing critical thinking among learners. A skill that when an individual learner possesses, he has the ability to do the following excellently; 1) could decide and stand for the consequences of the decision, 2) can reflect on actions done and react to the consequences of his own actions, 3) can effectively communicate, solve problem, analyze, conceptualize, apply, reason out, and evaluate. Other manifestations that one has developed critical thinking would easily identify fact from opinion, challenge assumptions, and prove analytical insight – a rational talent that one would activate and develop through use.

Literature as part of the business curriculum is not as fascinating subject that students would look forward to enroll because it presents entirely different topic from the business arena. It is not even widely appreciated in terms of its relevance to the learners' lives because most learners are more interested in what technology can offer in relation to the course they are taking. The Commission of Higher Education has prescribed this course in the business curriculum with goals that students will learn to appreciate the various forms of literary genres, to sensitize the aesthetic value of a literary piece, and to embrace the cultural and social aspects brought about by the literary pieces written by famous writers in the Philippines.

Literature is life. It encompasses everything about man and his environment; wherein, the everyday life is pictured by words in the different literary forms. Literary appreciation as an avenue to develop the critical thinking skills is an appropriate spring board to let students analyze, criticize, interpret, and appreciate any literary piece. The different forms of literature from the many regions of the country enable students to develop a humanistic outlook about life. They will be able to gain knowledge and understand the nature of human existence and to develop insights and appreciate their culture and the society they live in through elaborate interaction about literary or creative works which portray a diverse range



of human thought, emotion and experience. Through literary texts whether fiction or non-fiction, learners would develop aesthetic value, emotional maturity, and intellectual acquisition as they will be honed to think critically rather than passively agreeing to what is literally stated in any reading text.

In the college level, literature is taken as separate subject from English grammar class to give ample time to the learners to focus on the brilliant contributions of Filipino writers not only locally but internationally. In the meantime, the traditional method of explaining what has been read and analyzing through story elements shall be performed by the learners. This will open an opportunity for students to develop aesthetic sense and creativity, to hone their critical and analytical skills, and improve their critical thinking skills. As the course content progresses to the different regions, the students become aware of the cultural differences and learn to understand, adjust and appreciate cultural diversity in the society they live.

Literature taught both in English and at times in Filipino or the vernacular aims to bring forth wholesome individuals who are intellectually developed with good aesthetic sense and matured emotional qualities. The moment the learners are well-motivated and developed critical thinking, they will further enjoy their ability to do researches or other related studies and write creatively for prints and the media. An individual who exhibits refined personality and highly developed intellectual faculties while learning and appreciating their culture and society through literature contributes to a rich and more appealing community.

The Philippine educational system considers English as a second language. Educators devote so much time in teaching learners to develop critical thinking skills. Though the Philippine Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) mandates that the policy on Bilingual Education aims at the achievement of competence in both English and Filipino at the national level, both shall be used as media of instructions in all levels of learning to maximize learning results. The regional languages shall be used as auxiliary languages in the lower grades. However, the regional languages are often used even in the tertiary level for purposes of comprehension. The aspiration of the Filipino nation is to have its citizens possess skills in Filipino to enable them to perform their functions and duties in order to meet the needs of the country in the community of nations (Clemencia Espiritu). The intervention of other languages spoken in the different provinces would greatly help in the fast progress of students' critical thinking



and learning the target language because this is a remediation approach to further understanding. Through this classroom study, learning the different forms of literary genres as an approach to enhance the skills in critical thinking is regarded with utmost importance. The duration of the study takes the full term of second semester. All the literary pieces in the different genres shall be utilized as students' spring board in developing critical thinking skills.

Language is the most important tool that man uses to communicate and reach out to other people. As Noam Chomsky asserts, the language competence enables people to generate all possible grammatical sentences in which the transformation of competence is used in everyday speech. In his linguistic theory, it explains the mental processes that underlie the use of language. Since language is the most important and useful tool we have for communicating with others and interpreting our world, we must think and act critically to transform our world. Whether the learners pursue an emphasis in literature or writing, it is important to stress the power of language for them to explore the entire range of human experience. Emphasizing on the key skills enables students to develop analytical and interpretive argument. They become careful and critical readers and they process intellectual inquiry and creative expression of what is being read. As an output, the learners become more effective thinkers and communicators who are logical and practical as well.

What are the skills to be developed under critical thinking?

1. Disciplined intellectual criticism;
2. Balanced judgment

METHODOLOGY:

This study had focused on the degree of students' use of the Filipino language to express their ideas about discussed literary pieces. This was undertaken during the second semester (Philippines: October-March) while the students are enrolled in the subject/course. From the day-to-day discussions with students, the observations on their progress shall be noted down and the outputs shall be collected for analysis and interpretation.

Observational Research is applied to establish the descriptive method of finding results. It is for this reason that as an educator, a topic of great interest like teaching literature to help develop the students' thinking skills is identified as an avenue for greater learning. It is very important to educators to identify those factors that contribute to effective



teaching/learning. Researches on effective teaching have been undertaken through the years to determine techniques and styles suitable for different types of learners. Though it was believed in the early days that the most effective teachers had special personality characteristics, today it is suggested that the key to effective teaching might lie in the medium of instructions and methods used.

This classroom research involved the teacher's observations of students' responses towards literary analysis. Apparently, learning has occurred in the literature class where both Filipino and English language are used as the media. The rank of how the students expressed themselves in both English and Filipino was identified. A table was designed as a tool to show the results of the various strategies used and the skills tested to measure the students' level of achievement.

In this classroom research, observations had been done by plotting the students' achievements in recitation. It was further observed how the learners have cited their views about the message, theme, and issues presented in the literary piece taken. The speaking skill was assessed during class discussions when students shared their analysis about the plot events or the characters' roles. As a researcher, I treated the matter by working privately and critically analyzing the results. Instead of approaching the question of effective teaching by asking questions if the students learned a thing or not, as the researcher I identified how to address the difficulty encountered by students to give better room for learning. As noted by many educators, it is quite frustrating to notice that there are instances wherein learners seem to detest what they are doing in the class. The instruments gathered for closer analysis were validated against the rules we use in the target language.

The following questions will be the guide for classroom observation:

1. Do the students speak convincingly about the issues presented in the literary piece?
2. Did they develop their ideas in English language only? Filipino? Code mixed or code switched?

THE RESEARCH PROCESS:

1. Listening and Speaking Activities

Tasks: In our daily classroom encounter with learners, we cannot do away with taking listening activity without speaking because it would paralyze the purpose of having good conversation.



The following classroom techniques are adapted from Heather Forest's collection of storytelling activities (<http://www.storyarts.org/lessonplans/lessonideas/>). These had been used as our bases in actual classroom interactions.

1. A Picture is Worth 1000 Words

A class/group selects a classical painting or any picture big enough to be used in the class. Looking at the painting/picture for inspiration, the class constructs the first few sentences of a tale through group discussion and suggestion. The paragraph is then sent on to another class/group which reads the first paragraph and adds on another. The process is repeated including as many classes as possible until the tale seems finished. All the classes then gather to hear the result of their group effort read out loud and to see the painting that inspired the story.

Note: The students have taken sample pictures of the characters and setting of the stories like "The Wedding Dance" by Amador Daguio.

2. A Story Treasure Hunt

A class selects a well-known fable or folktale. The plot is simplified into a sequence of events that can be transcribed onto cards with short sections of the tale on each. Students hide the cards out of sequence throughout the school or classroom. A treasure map showing the exact location where all the cards are hidden, is given to another class (Or, with clues, one card can lead to the next). Groups of students must find the cards and assemble them in correct order. The treasure is finding the WHOLE story. Two classes can trade treasure hunts by putting the stories on two different-colored cards. The treasure hunts can go on simultaneously and, when each class has found the other's story, they confirm it by assembling it, learning the plot and sending representatives to retell it, or to act it out as a skit to the other class.

Note: This technique has been used in the story "Why There Is High Tide During Full Moon"

3. Finding Stories in Songs or Poems

Find and learn songs which tell a story. Folk ballads to contemporary songs often suggest a larger tale. Listen to records and then have students retell the story in the song in their own words. Or have a "storysong" concert.

Note: This technique was used for "*Nalpay a Namnama*" (Blasted Hope) by Leona Florentino



4. Story Circle

One person begins a tale and stops after a few sentences. The next person picks up the story thread and continues it, then stops. Next person adds to it and so on until the tale comes to a resolution. The story could begin with a pre-selected title or subject to guide the improvisation. Try recording the story circle on a tape recorder for later listening.

Note: This technique was used with Danton Remoto's, "Translating Desire"

5. Creating Personal Fables

Ask students to assign animal characters to represent people they know. This is a private process and no one but the student needs to know which animal represents the student's mother, teacher, brother, or, themselves, etc. Have students create a story starring those animal characters.

In the activities taken, the students were asked comprehension questions to test their ability to criticize whether the cultural practices are acceptable or not. As the teacher/facilitator, I had noted instances of students speaking strictly in English or Filipino as they explain their views closely noting whether student presenters speak in both languages with code switching/mixing instances.

Table 1 showing the students' oral presentation utilizing both English and Filipino languages.

Language used to develop ideas	BSAcc-2A (10)	BSAcc-2B (10)	MA-2D (11)	FM-2B (10)	MM-2C (10)	Percentage
English	2	3	3	2	2	23.53%
Filipino	3	5	7	5	4	52.94%
Code switching	4	7	7	8	7	70.59%
Code mixing	5	6	6	7	6	58.82%
Both (switching and mixing)	5	6	5	5	6	52.94%

As shown in the table, code switching garnered the highest percentage (70.59%) in the language used by students to develop their ideas. It implies that they compose their thoughts easily and they are more comfortable in using both languages trying to shift from one language to the other every time they fall short of ideas in the English language.

As the semester progressed and students were directed to strictly utilize the English language as medium, they were guided how to use other techniques to better understand their lessons and process higher thinking level. The story grammar is another avenue the learners would work successfully with groups. Though in some instances they could not veer away from formulating ideas together by sharing their thoughts in the vernacular or may



code switch or code mix, they were instructed to practice putting their thoughts in writing. Finally, when they worked for the final paper the group members helped each other to put every single word in English term. During the processing activities, students were asked various follow-up questions about the topic being taken and rewards were given to groups with correct responses.

In this stage scaffolding is important. With scaffolding it is possible for a gradual transfer of strategy performance from teacher to student. This is possibly the most critical part of the process; students need to be given adequate time and support to master the strategy. With teacher direction students will, as a class, read a story and answer the questions using the story grammar strategy. The teacher will continue to model the use of the strategy, sticky tabs, and graphic organizer. During this time the teacher can encourage student participation by asking for input at appropriate times so that they begin to use the strategy on their own. Students will initially be put into pairs assigned by the teacher. This will allow them to consult with others while reading and using the strategy. Students will be paired according to their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their ability to work together.

The Illinois' Department of Education suggested the following techniques to be used in classroom activities for higher learning;

Event Schemas, Story Schemas, and Story Grammars Abstract. The present paper investigates aspects of the individual's story schema. A theory is proposed relating structural characteristics of narratives to the reader's affective response and to the reader's intuitions about what constitutes a story. Two levels of narrative structure are distinguished: the event structure (the chronological sequence of events) and the discourse structure (the order in which events are presented in the narrative). An experiment was carried out to examine the story theory. Subjects read differently organized versions of the same event structures (i.e., different discourse structures), rated them for suspense and surprise at four points in the passages, and made judgments about the extent to which the narratives were stories. As predicted by the theory: (a) Different discourse arrangements of the same event structures produced different patterns of affective response. (b) Discourse structures which produced suspense and resolution, or surprise and resolution, were judged to be stories, whereas narratives which did not show these affective patterns were not judged to be



stories. The results were interpreted as suggesting a reinterpretation of the story grammar literature.

Event Schemas, Story Schemas, and Story Grammars in the present study is directed at the investigation of narrative discourse, where narrative is used in the broad sense, to include any discourse which embodies a coherent series of temporal events. In particular, we have attempted to provide an account of the psychological processes that allow individuals to distinguish between narratives which are stories and those which are not. That is, we examined some fundamental aspects of an individual's schema for stories. Story Grammars most of the recent work on narratives has involved a class of theoretical structures known as story grammars (Mandler & Johnson, 1977; Rumelhart, 1975; Stein & Glenn, 1979; Thorndyke, 1977), These grammars attempt to provide a theoretical account of the structure that causes one sample of discourse to be a coherent story while another arrangement of the same sentences is not a coherent story. While particular story grammars differ in detail, they all postulate a set of categories that must be included in a story and provide rules that specify the relations between the categories. A fundamental category that is included in all the story grammars is one that accounts for the character's actions in terms of the character's goals and the sub-goals necessary to satisfy these goals. There have been a large number of experiments directed at studying the use of story grammars in the memory and comprehension of text. The story grammars have been able to account for a variety of empirical findings:

Event Schemas, Story Schemas, and Story Grammars text which can be derived from a story grammar is more comprehensible than reorganizations of the text that cannot be derived from a story grammar (Thorndyke, 1977). Information higher in the hierarchical structure is better recalled than information lower in the hierarchy (Thorndyke, 1977) and is more likely to be included in a summary of the story (Rumelhart, 1977). The temporal order of information in text that is consistent with the structure of a story grammar is often better retained than is the order information for text that is not arranged in this fashion (Mandler, 1978; Thorndyke, 1977; Stein & Nezworski, 1978). Overall, these results have been taken to support the position that the structural relations represented in story grammars are used to understand and remember stories. However, the results of a recent series of experiments by Lichtenstein and Brewer (1980) suggest a re-interpretation of the story grammar work. In



that paper we examined subjects' memory for videotaped goal-directed events, and for narrative descriptions of these same events. The results supported the hypothesis that, in both cases, the information was interpreted and encoded in terms of a Plan schema, the subjects' non-linguistic knowledge of the structure of goal-directed events. Since our results for both observed events and for narratives were similar to the results found in the story grammar experiments, we suggested that most of the findings in the story grammar experiments may not have been due to the structural knowledge that readers have about stories, but to the fact that the subjects were using their nonlinguistic knowledge of events to organize and recall the event information contained in the narratives.

The above empirical findings of the researchers in utilizing story grammar as part of the students' scholarly outputs had been used to identify as to whether the CBEA literature students could apply schema to what they have analyzed as a group. Using the same bases of the researchers in analyzing the literary pieces of known writers in the Philippines, the same techniques have shown greater responses and brilliant reactions and ideas from students. In guiding the learners to critically develop reasoning and analysis the above-stated techniques are of great help.

The following are samples of the students' outputs that would show how they have evolved from being naïve readers to critically thinking readers. The suggested activities on using story grammar as part of students developing critical thinking has been utilized in coming up with the final outputs in literary analysis. It has been noted however, that in their power point presentation the student presenters were observed to have explained their points code mixing and/or code switching. They have shared brilliant ideas as to how they have analyzed two different stories making use of the elements in the story grammar. But the moment they were asked to explain their point, the members of the group would be hesitant to speak to other groups because they were reminded to strictly use the English language during the final presentation. To justify their points, the members of the groups would insist to explain in both Filipino and English language. In between sentences or within sentences, instances of code switching and code mixing are noted.

In one of the post-conferences I had with my students, they have admitted that their group output had been originally developed in Filipino language. They then worked closely on translating the ideas in English language. There were instances that their original sentences



in Filipino were translated literary and the thoughts would not be the same. In one of their reflective essays, I have analyzed the message of one student who had developed her essay in both English and Filipino language. I compared to another she wrote when I strictly directed them to write in English language only. The result: The student expressed her ideas excellently when there were no restrictions as to how the essay was developed. The substance of her claims about issues was well explained and supported by details and examples.

In the tertiary level of learning where educators are encouraged to use English as medium of instructions, we could not help using both Filipino and English for purposes of better understanding between students and teachers. It is also for this purpose that students will be guided well in terms of thinking critically because they will easily get the gist of what is being discussed.

The following graphic organizer is one of the outputs presented by my literature students. It was presented in power point. Though it contains very few details about the two stories taken, the students were able to convince the other groups about questions raised during the presentation. As the teacher/researcher, I have noted instances of code switching and code mixing as the students reported.

The graphic organizer was designed by a group. They used the pattern of story grammar to analyze and compare two stories. At first glance, all the important elements are found. A comprehensive illustration would serve as the students' prompter in explaining the points they want to emphasize. Though many of the students could not master using English as medium to defend their work, they contend themselves having penalized for code mixing and code switching as long they were able to express the points they were driving at. At this point, I noted that students are capable of thinking critically by processing information in their own language and finally translating to the target language.

Another way of evaluating learners' outputs is in their reflective essays. They are challenged according to the relevance of the literary pieces taken in class. They were asked to take a stand as to whether they conform to their values as individual or not. And they are further instructed to discuss in writing what are the relevance of the lessons they have learned from their readings. Critical thinking reflects the intelligence of students when they are logical and rational to their claims about an issue.

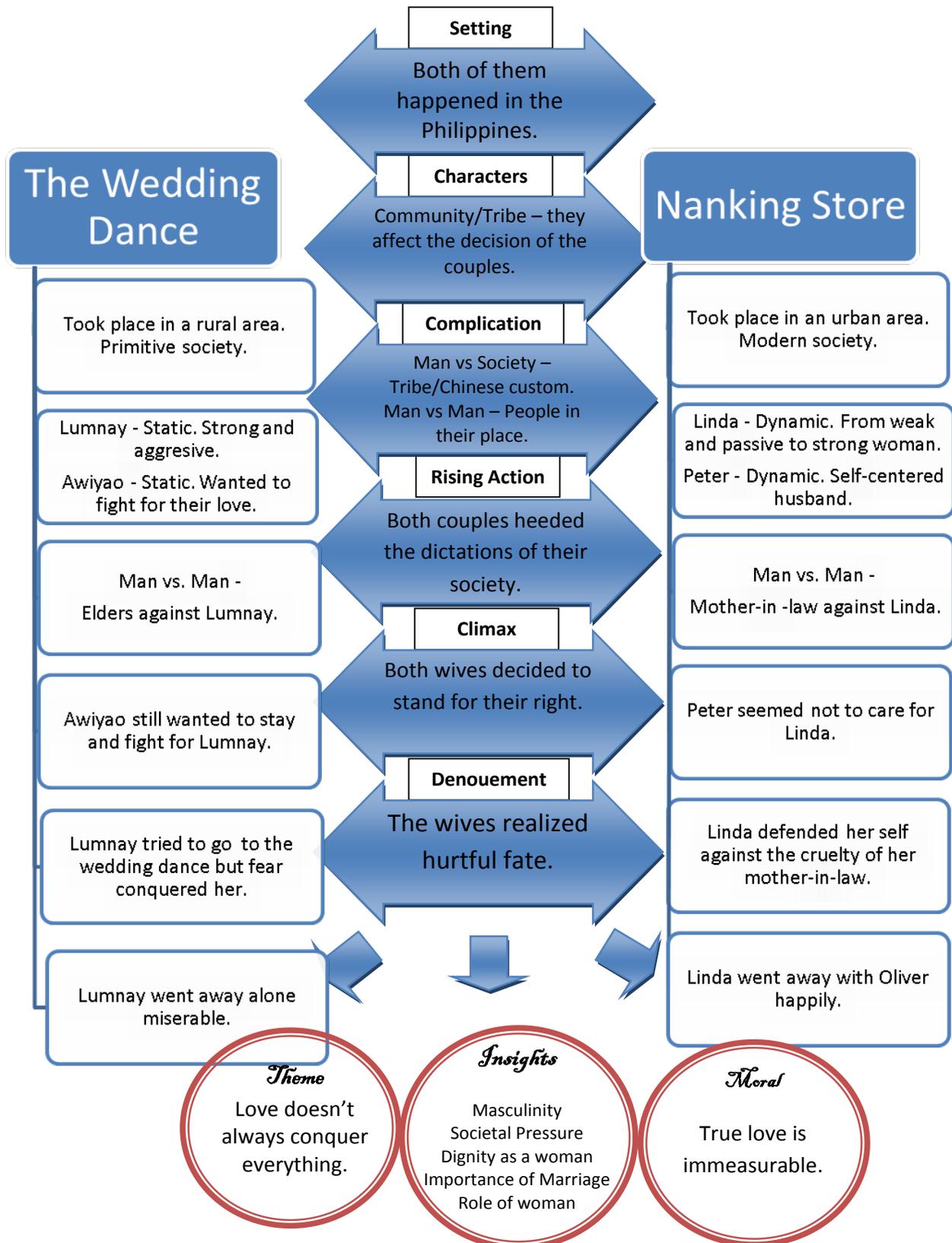


Fig. Comparative Analysis

Fig. 2 shows written sample of student's literary analysis using both the graphic organizer containing all the elements of a story and reflective essay to elucidate what were written in



the graphic presentation of the story. The students were instructed to explain (in English) what they have written in the graphic organizer.

The sample output shows how the student had shifted using English to Filipino language. Note also that the student was able to develop her composition clearly explaining her stand about the given insight of the story. This implies that learners easily process ideas in their mother tongue. While the students are guided how to analyze and appreciate literary pieces; they are also developing critical thinking skills.

By Marichito Tol

Characters: Linda, Peter, Olivia, The boy

Setting: Banking store

Plot (Summary): Linda and Peter were happy but because of the Linda can't bear a child all changed. Those changes led the two to separate. Or shall I say led the two to feel another person to love.

Conflict: Man vs. Man, Man vs. Society

Theme: Having a child is a challenge in the family and society.

Conclusion: Don't tie yourself with a person who will leave you because of your imperfections.

Insight:

- Ang pagmamahal ay pagmamahal, (hindi pag-awala) ng ay walang humihugang kondisyon.
- Mula sa isang Nanking Store, ang pagmamahal ni Peter kay Linda ay hindi pagmamahal dahil ito ay nagkondisyon - ang pagmamahal ng anak. Kadalawa ng ang dalawa ngunit kala ay hindi magkakaibang ay takadepende sa pul sa kanyang ina na ang magmamahal ng anak pero hindi ito dapat na daluan para hindi na makalala ni Linda dahil hindi kanya magkakaibang ng anak. Walang isang palita sa Peter, nangako bilang dalawa sa harap ng Diyos na kamatayan lang ang makakapaghiwalay sa kanila ngunit ang nangyari, unan nya sa Linda sa ore. Ang mga ganitong lalaki ay hindi magmamahal hindi pinapanggap, pinangarap sa ng naray na para makalala ng tao, hindi pakitan at alalan.

Develop your paragraph in English



DISCUSSIONS:

Learning to think critically is a skill developed along the years of formal learning. Human's learning is pervasive because the individual learner communicates and interacts not only with the people he lives in the society but to what is happening in his environment. The knowledge and skills accumulated are continuously acquired. It is developmental and interactive.

Since English is not the first language of our learners, it is always helpful to use their mother tongue at an instance when we feel the need for better understanding. It is one of the practical ways by which we can assist our students to develop critical thinking skills. The following are the benchmarks to affirm that learners have developed critical thinking:

1. begins with an individual's assessment of decision-making;
2. it involves effective communication and problem-solving, requires constant analyzing, reasoning, and evaluating;
3. asking logical and relevant questions;
4. ability to conceptualize and apply;
5. use experiences in both practical and cognitive development;
6. identify fact from opinion and challenges assumptions;
7. practicing rational insight, a rational talent that learners activate and develop through use

The basic principle of bilingual education is to use the student's native language to teach academic content while simultaneously providing additional English language instruction. In this way, limited English proficiency (LEP) students can learn English at the same time while higher order thinking skills.

Educators play a vital role in the development of the learners' intellect. In their teaching, they bank on the learning tools and what the students already possess in their native language as their basis for building new skills and acquiring new knowledge. Most learners enter school with basic language skills both in their mother tongue or other languages like English. The task of the teacher is to help develop the academic competence of the learners using their existing skills because they learn more effectively and think critically through the use of English and their native language which gives opportunity as contextual basis for learning that will allow them to interact effectively in today's society.



Aside from developing critical thinking ability in using bilingual instructions, learners would also preserve important link to their cultural and linguistic heritage. Today, there are also economic advantages in bilingual fluency and literacy; many jobs pay higher salaries to their bilingual employees. In an increasingly global society, the ability to speak and write in several languages is becoming necessary to effectively compete in the job market.

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