

# Reading Experience of Senior High School Students in Utilizing Audio-Aided Materials

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**Abstract:- This qualitative case study aimed to address the problematic decline of reading literacy, envisioning a reading culture where adolescents utilize their reading skills in real-life situations. It generally described the reading experience of 9 senior high school students through audio-aided material as a reading resource for struggling learners, SY 2022-2023. The audio-aided materials designed by the researcher were administered to the students and a teacher-made interview guide was utilized to describe their reading experience. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data. Data revealed that the struggling senior high school learners experienced enjoyment, diverse preferences, assistance with vocabulary exposure, word recognition, and prosody. On the other hand, they had difficulty with fast audio speed and complex vocabulary, and figurative language. The senior high school students had positive and negative experiences which could be attributed to their language deficiency and the complexity of the texts utilized in the subject 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Philippines and the World. Data revealed that when utilizing audio-aided materials, instructional support or direct instruction played a significant role as it motivated the students to cope with their language deficiencies and the complexity of the literary texts.**

**Keywords:-** *Reading Experience, Audio-Aided Materials, Struggling Senior High School, Students, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Philippines and the World.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Out of 79 participating countries, the Philippines received the lowest reading score in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). It also revealed that only one in five Filipino students at the age of 15 had attained the required level of general reading literacy. On the other hand, only 10% of the country's grade 5 pupils met the required proficiency at the end of their primary education in the 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics. As per World Bank's calculation, the percentage of 10-year-old children in the Philippines who will not be able to read or comprehend a simple tale is predicted to be 90.8 percent [1]. Examining these reports, reading literacy in the Philippines is certainly in a continual decline.

The Department of Education (DepEd) acknowledged that some students in elementary and high school still lack literacy abilities in both languages and subject areas, particularly in reading. The organization believed that deficiencies in students' reading comprehension could be the cause of their low achievement levels in English, Math, and Science on the national evaluation. DepEd educators are therefore urged to create novel ideas and approaches to close these concerning reading gaps [2].

In providing interventions, DepEd is influenced by the traditional view that students will improve in reading if they are taught moderately simple texts. If the students are provided with too-difficult texts, they may feel threatened and reading would fail. In this regard, DepEd [3] implement intervention programs where struggling adolescent readers utilize texts that they can understand on their own until their reading capacity improves. Despite efforts, the reading difficulty has remained to be unresolved.

In a secondary school in Southern Luzon, several students are showing indications of reading problems. In its 4<sup>th</sup> quarter School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (SMEA) report [4], a total of 4,033 out of 7,021 or 57% of the junior high school students (grades 7-10) were identified as frustrated readers or those at the level which the readers cannot successfully respond to reading materials because they find them so difficult [5]. This local information strongly echoes the decline of reading literacy rates in global and national settings.

Despite reading deficiencies, Mella [6] revealed that some junior high school students are able to advance to the senior high school level. Some TVL cookery students are identified to be frustrated or instructional readers as they still exhibit word recognition and comprehension difficulties. Since the senior high school curriculum comprises advanced courses in preparation for the students' selected career paths [7], it could be implied that struggling adolescent learners are placed in a challenging situation.

In light of the researcher's advocacy to assist struggling adolescent readers, the researcher was prompted to carry out a case study to describe the reading experience of 9 struggling senior high school students, SY 2022-2023 through audio-aided materials as a reading resource in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Philippines and the World.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Philippines and the World includes literary genres, traditions and forms from different national literature and cultures, namely, Asian, Anglo-American, European, Latin American, and African, and basic textual and contextual reading approaches in the study and appreciation of literature. The students are expected to conduct rigorous research of written works from the 21<sup>st</sup> century, critical papers, and the transformation of texts into various forms of creativity utilizing multimedia [8]. Reading skill is therefore a pre-requisite to succeed in this discipline.

Senior high school students who are enrolled in the foregoing subject are called digital natives who were born into a world that was fully technologically advanced. They have no trouble sending emails, sending texts, using computers, and they are adept at keeping up with technological changes. They excel at working collaboratively, being creative, and multitasking. Unfortunately, they have suffered because of their dependence on technology and devices. Due to their shorter attention spans, they have acquired attention deficit disorder, and because they can't concentrate for very long, they can't analyze complex data and information [8].

Learners need to be motivated to read and be prepared to put in the necessary effort to process the texts used in class. Reading lessons are not only about the accurate decoding of words and messages, but also the provision of opportunities for learners to respond either positively or negatively to the situations, characters, and ideas found in the texts. Giving learners opportunities to engage with material at an affective level, expressing feelings, and emotions, both before and after reading, is likely to support motivation [9].

In view of intervention programs that employ technology, and support motivation, Reading While Listening (RWL) may be used as a reading resource for struggling adolescent learners. According to Askildson [10], RWL, otherwise known as audio-aided reading or audio-assisted reading, was originally designed for listening comprehension, but it is now commonly used in Extensive Reading (ER), also called sustained silent reading, pleasure reading, or free voluntary reading. In this approach, the materials contain written text which facilitates comprehension and simultaneous audio input which helps in the identification of letter-sound relationships.

A solution to the weaknesses of silent reading is to supply simultaneous audio recordings. When features of the spoken text are added to the written text, such as the intonation of the fluent reader, the process facilitates fluent reading. Moreover, RWL is better than listening only because when readers match the printed word to the sound, they consequently understand the content. RWL is also believed to yield emotional benefits [11].

RWL aids in improving second language learners' listening and reading skills and in acquiring a second language. It is designed for second language learners who struggle to understand the whole meaning of the text when they encounter unfamiliar words and for learners who cannot comprehend the text because they cannot fluently identify and recognize words in the second language. RWL is believed to address comprehension difficulty and nurture learners' reading and listening skills [12].

RWL appears to be beneficial because it fosters better linkages between form and meaning and a greater understanding of language rhythm. It may also aid students in improving their ability to recognize words, distinguish between different tones of voice, and divide the text into more substantial, relevant pieces. Students who participate in extensive reading and listening programs may improve their language skills as well as their attitudes about reading more generally [13].

In utilizing RWL for literary reading, both the linguistic and literary components of literature courses present difficulties for students learning a second language (L2). Undoubtedly, reading comprehension is influenced by linguistic proficiency in the L2. Without some familiarity with the second language, it is impossible to read it. A lack of language skills may cause misinterpretation of the text's overall meaning and erroneous decoding of texts in the target language [14].

Moreover, the unique way that language is represented in the literary text frequently further restricts the students' already limited language skills. Although literary language is not entirely distinct from other types of language, literary texts do make use of special or unusual language, such as imaginative use of style and register, complex themes, and higher instances of metaphors, similes, assonance, and alliteration [15].

In view of these language deficiencies, children and adolescents who experience comprehension difficulty despite their adequate word recognition skills and cognitive ability have a specific reading comprehension deficit (S-RCD) and they struggle in both spoken and written comprehension. S-RCD is a language, rather than a "reading-specific impairment." Linguistic skills that are impaired in S-RCD include semantic processing, grammatical processing (syntax and morphology), and higher-level language skills such as a) knowledge of text structure, (b) inference making, and (c) comprehension monitoring [16][17][18].

Reading comprehension depends on higher-order linguistic abilities that have been observed to be compromised in SRCD, such as comprehension monitoring, inference-making, and text structure knowledge. Recognizing the structure of a text pertains to how authors arrange information in a text. By combining the meaning offered across words and taking into account prior knowledge, readers learn important implied information in addition to what is actually stated. Lastly, comprehension monitoring is the capacity of a person to assess his or her own

comprehension while they are comprehending. Therefore, Landi & Ryherd [18] believe that comprehension necessitates having an understanding of how a reader interacts with the material on a meta-level.

Four theories were considered as foundations of this study. These theories, which are synthesized and linked to the current study, aided in understanding the reading experience of struggling senior high school learners when using audio-aided materials.

➤ *Psycholinguistic Theory of Reading.*

This theory suggests that reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game that involves the interaction of mind and words. Effective reading comes from the ability to pick the fewest, most productive clues required to generate guesses that are accurate the first time, not from accurate perception and identification of all parts. Reading requires the ability to predict what has not yet been seen, just as listening requires the ability to anticipate what has not yet been heard [19]. The foregoing theory explains that meaning is derived through the interaction of text and reader. To interpret the information in the text, readers employ their mental models or schema. The learner's prior skills, experiences, and knowledge are all taken advantage of by this theory.

➤ *Krashen's Input Hypothesis.*

This hypothesis proposes that learners should be exposed to grammatical features that are a little beyond their level ( $i+1$ ). Learners acquire language by comprehending language that has a structure somewhat beyond their current level of competency. Context or non-linguistic data are used to do this. When there has been effective communication, the input has been comprehended, and there is sufficient input,  $I + 1$  will be given automatically. Production capability starts to show, and it is not directly taught [20]. In this regard, learners may feel threatened by too-difficult texts and bored by too-easy texts, otherwise both of which can lead to failure. The comprehensibility of input is therefore crucial in acquiring language.

➤ *Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis.*

This hypothesis explains how affective elements impact the process of learning a second language. A number of affective factors related to second language acquisition performance fall into these three categories: anxiety, self-confidence, or motivation. Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety. Performers with high motivation typically do better in second language acquisition (usually, but not always integrative). Performers with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition [20]. This hypothesis explains why emotion is significant in reading. Additionally, it describes how affective factors interfere with the delivery of input to the language acquisition device, which is the main causal factor in the acquisition of a second language. Last but not least, this idea suggests that the teaching objectives should not only entail applying understanding input but also creating an environment that supports low filtering [21].

➤ *Aesthetic Theory.*

Based on the psychological interpretation of the aesthetic theory, the idea of experience is viewed holistically, with the structure of the experience consisting of the psychological, physiological, meaning-creational, cultural, and social relations in the individual's ways of experiencing [22].

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

The general purpose of this study was to describe the reading experiences of senior high school students through audio-aided material as reading resource for struggling learners, SY 2021-2022. To achieve this purpose, case study was used as the research design. Its analytic approach involves a detailed description of the case, and the setting of the case within contextual conditions. Multiple information sources are used during the data collection [23].

In this Qualitative Case study, the cases analyzed were 9 senior high school students. Sources of information such as results of the comprehension tests, a detailed description of their reading experiences that occurred over a series of reading sessions, and the student's verbal responses during the focus group discussions were documented. In employing an analytic strategy, the identification of issues within each case, and the common theme that transcend the cases were considered [23]. The case study ends with a broad interpretation of what was learned from studying the cases. In the final interpretive phase, the researcher reports the lessons learned from the case [24].

#### B. Population and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select the 9 participants in this qualitative case study [25]. The criteria utilized in selecting the participants were: a) must be senior high school students taking up Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Cookery students, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, SY 2021-2022 b) must be struggling readers, and c) must be willing to participate in the study. Initially, 10 participants participated in the reading session. Only 9 participants were included since one of them failed to participate in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) because of absenteeism.

#### C. Instrumentation

Varied instruments were utilized to describe the reading experience of the senior high students.

➤ *Audio-aided materials*

Three passages namely Princess Urduja, Cotton Candy, and an excerpt of The Necklace taken from the learning activity sheets in the subject 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Philippines and the World were used in producing the audio-aided materials. Each passage contained 12 questions, of which there were 3 questions focusing on reading and listening comprehension subskills. Out of the ten common comprehension subskills, noting details, inferencing, and summarizing were covered [26]. The researcher used a table of specifications to ensure that all the comprehension

subskills were considered in formulating the questions, while a rubric was formulated by the researcher to help the experts in evaluating the validity of the audio-aided materials.

The researcher personally recorded her voice while reading all three passages, and the comprehension questions. The materials were then converted to video format to facilitate simultaneous reading and listening of the text on the part of the reader. This feature would save the readers from manually pressing the recorded audio, would prevent them from modifying the content of the material, and would avert the reader from losing track of the texts listened to. It would also give the reader an option to pause or replay the audio, giving them longer time to comprehend the story, and as well as the questions. The first audio material was 12:35 seconds long, the second one was 10:03 seconds, the third one was 10:47 long. These materials can be accessed via gadgets such as cellular phones, laptop and TV.

#### ➤ *Structured interview guide*

The researcher utilized a structured interview guide to describe the reading experience of the students while using the audio-aided materials. This was administered during the FGDs wherein the participants were interviewed on two separate sessions. A series of consultations with the research committee was conducted to validate the instruments. Upon their instruction, the researcher conducted a dry run among 10 learners who are identified to be struggling readers in other classes. Feedback was also collected from the students to identify the areas where the materials can be improved and as a basis for revising the materials. The final draft was shown to the research committee prior to its implementation.

#### ➤ *Comprehension tests*

The results of the comprehension tests focusing on noting details, getting the main idea, inferencing, and summarizing, taken by the learners were recorded and analyzed by the researcher. The scores were used to corroborate the verbal data collected from the participants during the FGD.

#### *D. Ethical Consideration*

Prior to the implementation of the study, the researcher sought approval from the school principal. Similarly, informed consent was signed by the students, as well as their parents, to seek the participants' voluntary participation. The participants were also informed that the purpose of the study was to describe their reading experience in utilizing audio-aided materials. They were also assured that all personal information and responses that will be collected and recorded from them will be treated with utmost privacy and confidentiality. The researcher accurately presented all the data gathered and cautiously determined the conclusions and implications.

#### *E. Data Collection Procedure*

The teacher-researcher facilitated the utilization of audio-aided materials for each learner. All the 3 audio-aided materials were listened to by the learners while reading the text via power-point presentations for the duration of the reading session. The students were also asked to respond to

comprehension questions after each audio-aided reading session. Once all the reading sessions were completed, the students were scheduled to participate in a focus group discussion in two separate batches. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide, recorded the discussions, and took down notes during the FGD. To facilitate the collection of verbal data, the researcher used Filipino and Bicol languages in asking questions. Similarly, the participants were allowed to share their verbal responses in the language that they are most comfortable with.

#### *F. Data Analysis Procedure*

The collected data were transcribed and translated into the English language verbatim. To protect the identity of the participants, they were assigned codes. The responses of the students to the comprehension questions were checked, recorded, and analyzed the results to corroborate the collected verbal data from the participants. The collected verbal responses on the reading experience of the participants were classified and analyzed using thematic analysis. It enabled the researcher to relate an analysis of a theme's frequency to an analysis of the entire text. This also increased the research's overall significance and add accuracy and complexity [27]. Based on the recurring ideas, related themes were presented. Interpretations were then presented in great detail.

## IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the recurrence of the responses during the focus group discussion, the following reading experiences were elicited from the participants: a) enjoyment b) diverse preferences b) assistance with vocabulary exposure, word recognition, and prosody, and c) difficulty with fast audio speed and complex vocabulary and figurative language.

#### *A. Enjoyment*

Results revealed that eight of the ten participants enjoyed utilizing the audio-aided materials because of their audio aspect. From one of the participants' perspective, he enjoyed using the audio-aided materials because he could hear a person talking in the background.

I enjoyed using the audio-aided. Because there is a person talking. [*Nag-enjoy po ako sa audio-aided. Kay may nag-iistorya po na tawo.*] - student G

Based on the response of student G, it may be claimed that the audio aspect has made reading enjoyable because simultaneous audio recording addresses the limitation of silent reading [11]. This finding is also corroborated by Tragant and Vallbona [28] whose participants found reading to be enjoyable because of RWL. Reading may have become fun since it is delivered using technology that the students are acquainted with. This result is noteworthy given that these students are regarded to have a shorter attention span because of their extensive use of technology and gadgets [8]. It was also evident that by using audio-aided materials, their strong reliance on technology was leveraged to their advantage.



In line with Krashen's Affective Filter hypothesis, the audio-aided materials encouraged a low-affective filter which is vital in the process of acquiring a second language. The fact that the participants found the audio aspect enjoyable shows that the resources have provided a pleasurable environment where the students can acquire the English language. This study provides strong evidence that audio assistance has been beneficial in promoting an acquisition-friendly environment. This further confirms that the utilization of technology and gadgets like audio-aided materials appeal to the affective level or to the interests of the learners.

#### B. Diverse preferences

Though most of the participants liked the material's audio aspect, data revealed diversity in their preferences. In this study, five out of the ten participants expressed a preference for audio-aided materials while the others still preferred traditional printed materials. For instance, student B shared that she prefers traditional printed materials so that she can strive how to read better on her own.

Printed, so I will strive to independently understand and read. [*Printed, para magsadiring sikap na maintindihan and pagbasa.*]

The foregoing response of student B showed that she prefers reading or silent reading only. On the other hand, student F disagreed with the preference of other students who prefer printed materials.

If it's printed, it does not have a voice. Is it not that video is also like printed but it has a voice? [*Pag printed, lain masasabayan sa boses. Diba maam sa video, bagan printed pero may boses?*]

Based on the response of student F, he preferred audio-aided material because it is an enhanced version of printed materials. This finding is similar to the study of Chang [29] and Stephens & Aoki [30] who determined that learners preferred audio-aided materials to listening alone. Despite the likeability of the audio-aided materials, this study confirmed that RWL may either be preferred [29] [30] or not preferred by learners [31]. This study established that even if the students enjoyed utilizing the audio-assisted materials, there are still variations in the reading modality that they prefer. This is also consistent with that of Rutherford et.al [32] who found out that Australian adolescents' preferences for e-books have been exaggerated, which implies that preference for traditional text still exists.

According to Hermosa [19], students have a variety of learning styles. Some learners need to read aloud, hear the words, and then take time to replay them in their heads or ears, while others need to read silently and picture what the words are describing. One can conclude that audio-aided materials may or may not be preferred by struggling senior high school students as their utilization is subject to their individual learning styles and preferences.

#### C. Assistance with word recognition

In addition to the enjoyment experienced by the participants, all of them shared that when reading while listening to the audio-aided materials, they experienced assistance with word recognition. One of the participants shared that there are written words that he learned how to pronounce because of the audio assistance.

Because there are written words that I learned how to pronounce. [*Kay may iba da na nakasurat na di aram an tama na pag pronounce sin words.*] – student E

In processing the text, the audio aspect of the materials facilitated in decoding the difficult words that the students encountered while reading. This study confirmed that the simultaneous audio input assisted the learners in the identification of letter-sound relationships or recognizing difficult words in the second language, which is an aspect absent in silent reading [10][11][12].

Based on the previous data, one can conclude that audio-aided material is an effective intervention program for improving word recognition skills for struggling senior high school learners, which apparently agrees with the perspectives of Askildson [10] and Renandya & Jacobs [13]. It could be noted that the audio-aided materials supplied the mechanical aspect of recognizing words [33]. In view of Krashen's input hypothesis, the audio-aided materials supplied word recognition assistance that aided in making the unfamiliar words in the grade 11 text partly comprehensible.

#### D. assistance with vocabulary exposure

Findings also showed that all the participants disclosed that the audio-aided materials provided assistance by exposing the students to new words or vocabulary. During the focus group discussion student J shared that through the help of audio-aided materials, he encountered new words that he never heard of.

We learned new words that we never heard of. [*May mga bagong words kami naaraman na lain namon aram.*]

In this study, the senior high school students identified several words/ phrases from the story -The Necklace that they read and encountered for the first time. This finding is consistent with Tragant and Valbona [28] who disclosed that vocabulary learning has been demonstrated to benefit the most from reading while listening. Since limited vocabulary is a language deficiency among struggling readers when comprehending a text, it could be implied that the utilization of audio-aided materials may potentially aid in enhancing the vocabulary skills of the students.

#### E. Assistance with prosody

Four of the ten participants shared that they received assistance from the audio-aided materials with proper intonation and pauses. Specifically, student H shared that she heard the proper rising and falling of voice when she was reading and listening to the text.

The rising and falling of the voice. [*An pagtaas baba san boses.*]

Data revealed that the students were exposed to the tone, intonation, and expression used by a skilled reader. Consistent with the study of Stephens [10], the intonation of a fluent reader is one of the features of the spoken text which is added to the written text that facilitates fluent reading in RWL.

Moreover, one of the participants disclosed that in silent reading, he has a tendency to continue reading despite the presence of a period or punctuation mark.

Sometimes, when there is a decimal point, period rather, it is being ignored. It helped when to resume reading.

[*Minsan maam may decimal point ay tuldok maam, nalagpasan lang. Nakatabang sya maam kung san o ka ulit mabasa.*] – student F

Compared to silent reading, he shared that the audio-aided materials helped him when to stop or resume reading the text. In other words, the audio has provided verbal punctuation marks by supplying pauses. Similar to the study of Renandya & Jacobs [13], this study has proven that RWL aids to distinguish between different tones of voice and divide the text into more substantial, relevant pieces. This study has therefore established that audio-aided materials have provided prosodic features during the reading and listening process. Utilizing the audio-aided materials could therefore help in improving the fluency of the learners [34].

From the lens of the psycholinguistic model of reading, data showed that the audio-aided materials provided assistance in utilizing the students' phonological and semantic cues. Through the help of the materials, they were assisted by exposing them to new vocabulary, decoding unfamiliar words, and recognizing appropriate tone, pauses, and intonation which are all considered necessary for fluent reading. Consistent with Krashen's input hypothesis, the audio-aided materials made the story more comprehensible by giving assistance on vocabulary exposure, word recognition, and prosodic features which are absent in silent reading.

#### F. Difficulty with fast audio speed

Though most of the participants did not experience difficulties with the speed of the audio, three of them expressed issues with the speed. One of the participants conveyed that there are words that he had to understand first, but since the audio was too fast, he was sometimes late in following both the audio and the text to catch up in the reading and listening process.

No. There are words that I had to understand first, however, the audio is too fast. So sometimes I am late in tracing the audio so I can catch up reading the text. [*Hindi po, may mga words na dapat ko muna intindihin kaso masigkatun magdalagan kay minsan na lelate ako, kun hain na audio, didto man masingit.*] – student I

It could be said that the audio speed of the audio-aided materials confused the reader while interacting with the audio and text. Student F added -

Maybe ma'am, more time is needed to understand the story. [*Siguro ma'am mas kaipuhan mas damo na time para mas maintindihan.*]

Evidently, some participants communicated that they needed more processing time in order to comprehend the unfamiliar words in the text. This implies that the audio speed could disrupt the readers as they try to comprehend the meaning of the text. This finding could be attributed to the mismatch between the speed of the audio and the lack of reading fluency of the readers. Similar to the study of Stephens & Aoki [30], RWL participants had issues with the audio's speed not matching their reading speed. In this study, the researcher had to re-explain to them that they had the option of replaying the material whenever it is deemed necessary. Additional instruction was essential to remind the participants of the replay features of the audio-aided materials.

#### G. Difficulty with complex vocabulary and figurative language

As the participants proceeded in processing the audio and text, they expressed frustration that despite the assistance in vocabulary exposure, word recognition, and prosody, they still did not understand these difficult words. Student J said –

The way the words are pronounced is clear. However, the words that I do not understand, is the problem. [*An pagka pronounce san mga words malinaw. kaso an mga words talaga na lain masabutan, amo talaga problem.*]

Data showed that though the participant appreciated the clarity of pronunciation of the words in the text, he admitted that the problem lay in his inability to understand several words found in the text. Moreover, though the students were happy using the audio-aided materials, their inadequate prior knowledge of the English language slowed down their ability to make sense of the audio and written text. Student G said - Happy. But I kept on thinking about the words that we could not understand. We kept on thinking what they really meant. [*Masaya. Pero napapaisip lang sa mga words na lain namon nasabutan. In iisip namon kung nano ibig sabihun.*]

In this study, both the language deficiency of the students and the complexity of the literary texts presented difficulties in reading an English text. Davis [14] shared that reading cannot take place if there is an insufficiency of prior knowledge of the English language which may cause confusion of the text's overall meaning. On the other hand, Lazar [15] added that literary texts do make use of special or unusual language, such as imaginative use of style and register, complex themes, and higher instances of metaphors, similes, assonance, and alliteration, which further limits the students' language deficiency.

Since the students could not understand the text, it was consequently difficult for them to share whether they were absorbed with the story or not. This is consistent with the notion of Balling [22] that language ability, context, genres, and linguistic symbols make the reading experience challenging to describe, which in turn made it difficult for them to share their overall feelings and understanding of the text.

In accordance with the Psycholinguistic theory of reading, this foregoing finding further established that the participants did not have adequate semantic cues or prior knowledge of the English language which is highly essential in comprehending the grade 11 text. In view of Krashen's input hypothesis, findings revealed that though the audio-aided materials assisted in making the input more comprehensible by providing assistance on vocabulary exposure, word recognition, and prosody, this assistance was not enough to aid the learners to comprehend the several unknown words in the 21st-century literary text. Since the students failed to understand the audio-aided materials, this hypothesis conveys that language acquisition was not completely possible through the audio-aided materials.

Though happy with the audio-aided materials, Student J could not help to express the need of asking for help.

Maybe. It's nice if there's audio. But for me, it's preferable if there is someone who can help me understand the meaning of those difficult words. [*Maybe. Magayon ma'am pag may sounds. Pero para sa akun mas prefer ko may nagbabasa tapos inapapasabot kun nano an ibig sabihun sada na word.*]

The preceding response showed that though the student appreciated the audio assistance, he expressed the need for a knowledgeable person to help him understand the text. To address this need, the researcher employed direct instruction to help them construct the meaning of the text. Specifically, the researcher explained to the participants that they need to consider the context clues or the surrounding words in the sentence to understand the difficult words or phrases. They also need to consider that literary texts are filled with figurative language that requires their inferencing skills.

Accordingly, when the participants were asked if they understood the story through the aid of the audio-aided materials, one of the participants responded-

No ma'am. We understood the story because of the sharing of our ideas. [*Hindi ma'am. Naintindihan namon kay nag share kita.*] – student G

The participant's response implied that the assistance provided by the materials was not adequate to help them comprehend the complex vocabulary and figurative language in the text. This finding is similar to the quantitative studies of McGill [35] who established that RWL did not help struggling readers to comprehend more, and to that of Ping and Syamdianita [31] who determined that text only aids better in reading comprehension.

Data further revealed that the sharing of ideas facilitated by the researcher during the FGD helped them to understand the text. In this study, the involvement of the teacher played a significant role in helping the students construct the meaning of the grade 11 text; hence they were able to appreciate the story, and as a result, they were able to effectively connect the text to their own life experiences.

Due to the teacher's assistance, the students expressed confidence in their reading abilities despite their language deficiencies. Student I disclosed -

Yes. I am confident because, even if I do not know the meaning, you help us understand. [*Opo. confident po ako, kasi an lain ko aram an meaning, inapapasabot nyo po sa amon.*]

Data showed that the participant highly appreciated the assistance provided by the teacher who helped him to understand the text. Evidently, this assistance helped in bridging the gap between the language deficiency of the students and the complexity of the text. Shanahan [36] confirms that "Reading is the ability to make sense of a text, and that means being able to negotiate any barriers to understanding that texts may include" (p.21). It could be said that the struggling students could cope with the obstacle of understanding the text, provided that there is support or scaffolding provided by the teacher.

Generally, scaffolding refers to a temporary support framework that teachers establish to help a student or a group of students achieve a task that they are unable to perform on their own [37]. In this study, scaffolding refers to the assistance provided by the teacher to the struggling readers in order to understand the difficult text in the audio-aided materials. In other words, the effectiveness of utilizing audio-aided materials relies on the support of a physical teacher who can help the students in processing the difficult words in the text.

Data implied that struggling readers have the ability to comprehend an advanced text provided that instructional support is provided by a teacher. This finding is consistent with Morgan, Wilcox, & Eldredge [38] who determined that the level of difficulty of the reading materials used in pairs may have an effect on students' progress, and Brown, Mohr, Wilcox & Barrett [39] who discovered that weaker readers, using texts at 2-4 grade levels above their instructional levels with the aid of lead readers outperformed both skilled and less skilled students in the control group across multiple measures of reading achievement.

Considering the ability of struggling readers to comprehend the text with the help of a knowledgeable teacher, this finding opposes the principle of Krashen's input hypothesis which suggests that too difficult texts threaten struggling students and may cause them to fail. This study established that since the audio-aided materials lack the capacity to make the text more comprehensible, this is where the role of a knowledgeable teacher comes in. Wharton-McDonald [40] confirms that the teacher and classroom

instruction count more than the programs, materials, and assessment tools in producing effective readers. This study has therefore established that the support of a teacher is indispensable in the reading growth of a struggling learner. Indeed, no innovation or instructional tool could replace the function of a reading teacher.

## V. CONCLUSION

Though the struggling senior high school learners experienced enjoyment and linguistic assistance from the audio-aided materials, data showed that the students struggled to construct meaning on their own when using the reading resource. This could be attributed to the language deficiency of the students since they have not yet developed the syntactic, and semantic cues necessary to simultaneously interpret the written and spoken text. Similarly, the complexity of the grade 11 texts made the meaning-making extra challenging for the learners. In other words, the senior high school learners did not understand the audio-aided materials as they were focused on the form but not on the meaning of the language. As a result, the learners had positive and negative reading experiences when they utilized the audio-aided materials, which were not sufficient to yield language acquisition. Data however revealed that when utilizing audio-aided materials, instructional support or direct instruction played a significant role as it motivated the students to cope with their language deficiencies and the complexity of the literary texts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Audio-aided materials may be utilized as reading resources for struggling learners in the subject 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature from the Philippines and the World. Considering that struggling learners are not prepared at the cognitive level or they cannot independently comprehend the materials on their own, instructional support or explicit instruction on meaning-making strategies may be provided to ensure that meaningful reading while listening experience could take place. Meaningful activities may be provided to help the students develop their cueing systems, particularly in the area of lexical-semantic processing and inference-making.

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