Vocabulary and Cultural Details in Grade 7 Philippine Literary Texts: Content Analysis

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Abstract:- This study analyzed the Vocabulary and **Cultural Details in Grade 7 Philippine Literary Texts:** Using content analysis. Content Analysis. the relational/semantic vocabulary of eight (8) literary texts from the Grade 7 Philippine Literature Textbook were analyzed. Based on the findings, the vocabulary contents in Philippine literary texts reveals significant cultural details that reflect the attitude, beliefs and experiences of the Filipinos with influences of the Spanish and Chinese cultures. Moreover, the semantic meaning of cultural details of the Philippine literary texts were about the lives of Filipinos including arts, codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, norms of behavior, such as law and morality, and systems of beliefs. The Cultural details of Philippine Literary Texts belongs to a Highcontext culture. This communication uses underlying context, meaning, and tone in the message, and not just the words themselves wherein the information is often implied based on the situation, as in many Asian cultures just like the Philippines. The theoretical implication and output of this study is Vocabulary and Culture: A Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (Vac-MALL) in literature through a DIGITAL SIM: VocLiTure (Vocabulary, Literature and Culture), an eBook for Grade 7 Learners.

Keywords:- *Core; Discourse; Register; Cultural Details; Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL); eBook.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a significant tool for teaching fundamental language skills including speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is an important aspect in studying and learning about a language and culture of a particular place. Learning about languages and cultures brings about the understanding of the abundance of historical events that were put into writing such as literary works.

These literary pieces hold the occurrence on the existence of the real world from a generation in the past to the contemporary world. That is, learning and bringing the experiences of the times gone by and realizing the meaning of each significant events to understand why things happen and how they connect with the relevant aspects of the country's rich language and cultural heritage. These things are not just symbolic representation of how the language has

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evolved in one place and why it has represented a distinct type of cultural details that molds the identity of a certain place in the world.

According to Jiang [1], the interrelation of language and culture has been widely discussed in the field of linguistics across the globe. Language is bound by cultural context and it is widely held that language is an important determinant of culture. As such, language is considered as the mirror of culture since people can see their culture through language.

In English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms, the content of vocabulary and culture is an essential subject to enhance the students' knowledge and linguistic ability. Thus, literature the body of written works produced in a particular language, country, or age that represents culture and traditions of a group of people.

Vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a significant role for learners in acquiring a language Cameron, [2]. Moreover, vocabulary is the foundation of language and the building blocks that help the learner develop their language learning skills. Advanced linguistic skills are an integral part of linguistic success, so students may be at an academic disadvantage if these skills are not well-developed.

In the Philippines, literature is more important than just a historical or cultural artifact. An example of literary appreciation is encoded in textbooks for language learners. An analysis of the vocabulary present in Philippine literary texts show that the words are essential in the culture that reflects the importance to second language learning.

The Department of Education has articulated through the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum Guide (CG) for Grade 7 English its program standard that aims for the learners to demonstrate communicative competence through their understanding of literature and other texts types for a deeper appreciation of Philippine Culture and those of other countries [20]. However, due to the insufficient supply of textbooks, this may not be attained since these references serve as the primary source of information in teaching literature. In the Bicol Region, an analysis of Philippine Literary Texts has not been given adequate attention especially the integration of technology to language learning. With the features that MALL offers, the need for a Strategic Intervention Material through the aid of Technology is one of the main concerns of this study.

Specifically, this study aims to identify and analyze the relational/semantic vocabulary of eight (8) literary texts from the Grade 7 Philippine Literature Textbook. Another concern is the integration of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning that has rarely been conducted in the locale to improve the learning experiences of the students in literature classes. Therefore, it is for these salient reasons the researcher undertook the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vygotsky [4] on Vocabulary Development. believed that students construct new knowledge, concepts, and skills through interacting with other members of their culture. The identification and analysis of the words when reading, allows the students to learn the significant vocabulary that will later form the basis of their thought processes to extract meaning from interpreting the texts. Vygotsky's theory suggests that as students' experiences with words grow, it becomes easier to learn new words.

According to Moody [5], much is known about the impact of vocabulary instruction on reading skills, word knowledge, and reading comprehension. However, knowledge of the underlying theories that guide vocabulary instruction and their potential impact on teachers' performance and/or students' achievement has not been investigated. In this article, literature regarding the theories on word-learning strategies are analyzed.

Language and culture are two interrelated aspects of language learning. Vocabulary, as the building blocks of language is likewise essential for constructing new knowledge and content. As these aspects of language is being taught to language learners, a need for schema of the language and culture serves as the background knowledge to understand the meaning of a particular word or idea.

With these, the meaning of a specific content can be interpreted and realized. Therefore, learning vocabulary goes hand-in-hand in understanding culture. This is where language and culture play a pivot role in ESL classrooms. The fact that complex meanings are determined by the meanings of their readers, the meaning derived from the vocabulary and cultural details of the Philippine literary texts needs to be taught where Grade 7 learners can fully learn and interpret.

Ghafoori and Saghar [21] stated that language and culture are two inseparable things. These two are viewed as significant factor in learning a second or foreign language. It was further recommended that views among language teachers is to appreciate the different views with regards to the relationship between language and culture, as both are essential in learning the language on EFL classrooms.

Another concern of the present study is the integration of technology inside the classroom in language learning and teaching literature. Pallathadka [6] explored various aspects of English teaching technology by developing groundbreaking abstracts that take advantage of the latest developments in science and technology and provide technology to education providers to deliver subjects efficient and quality.

Another popular method today is Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)." 'Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), is the latest learning way in the language education where applications or websites are used to facilitate students learning activities' (Nuraeni et.al) [7]. This has bridged the gap between traditional way of teaching language and culture to a learning experience in the contemporary world.

Additionally, Darmi and Albion [8] stated that Mobile learning (m-learning) is gradually being introduced in language classrooms. All forms of mobile technology represent portability with smarter features. Studies have proven the significant role of technology is beneficial for language learning.

III. METHOD

A. Research Design

This study analyzed the Vocabulary Content and Cultural Details in the Philippine Literary Texts of the Grade 7 English Textbook. To examine the vocabulary details of these texts, the researcher used qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a widely used method in communication research and is particularly popular in media and popular culture studies. [9]

Particularly, the type of content analysis that has been used in this study is Relational analysis. This design begins with the act of identifying concepts present in a given text or set of texts. Relational analysis also seeks to go beyond presence of the set of texts by exploring the relationships between the concepts identified. Relational analysis has also been termed semantic analysis. [10]

B. Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is the Grade 7 English Learners Manual (First Edition, 2017) that focused on Philippine Literary Texts. The researcher purposively identified eight (8) literary texts from the different lore present in the learner's manual. The Philippine literary texts analyzed in this study are listed in the table below.

C. Data Collection Procedures

The core vocabulary analyzed from the literary texts, were identified as the core words for Grade 7 ESL learners' level. First, the researcher identified the core words from each literary text for the purpose of unlocking difficulties in understanding the meaning of each word. The discourse

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vocabulary through dialogues have also been identified. Then, the register vocabulary (regional or local) were analyzed from the literary texts.

After these vocabularies have been identified, the cultural details are analyzed to see whether the texts are described implicitly and explicitly in the texts. Then, the analysis of vocabulary and cultural details in the literary texts were identified to analyze the theoretical implications of this study to language learning.

D. Data Analysis Procedures

The core words were identified through analyzing the content words of the literary texts. The discourse and register vocabulary were identified through analyzing the content of specific lines from the text (dialogues, and regional & local dialects) to explore the relationship of the content and its meaning to language learning. After these, the cultural details of the texts' content were semantically analyzed to identify present whether explicit and implicit cultural characteristics are described in the content of each literary text.

With these being carefully analyzed, the researcher was able to conceptualize a theory on *Vocabulary and Culture: A Mobile-Assisted Language Learning* (Vac-MALL) in literature, encompassing the use of technology to teaching vocabulary, literature and culture to Grade 7 Learners through the use of a Digital SIM which is the *VocLiTure* eBooks.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Types of Vocabulary Used

Vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language (Cameron) [2]. Harmon et. al, [22] as well as Linse ([11] state that learners' vocabulary development is an important aspect of their language development.

Also, Vygotsky's Vocabulary Development and Sociocultural Theory [12] explains that students construct new knowledge, concepts, and skills through interacting with other members of their culture may it be spoken or written form. This cultural interaction allows the students to learn the symbols that will later form the basis of their thought processes.

A.) Core Vocabulary (Sight Words)

Even though it was not stated in the Grade 7 learner's manual, Jose Rizal under the pen name of "Laong Laan" popularized the legend of Maria Makiling in his essays published in La Solidaridad in 1980. The legend of Maria Makiling is one of the legends included in Prosa published in 1961. It was stated as:

"En mi pueblo se conserva una leyenda, la leyenda de Mariang Makiling. Era na joven que habitaba el hermoso monte que separa las provincias de La Laguna y Tayabas." (In my country, is enshrined a legend, the legend of Maria Makiling. She was a young girl who lived in a beautiful mountain which separates the provinces of La Laguna and Tayabas, now Quezon.)

> The Legend of Maria Makiling (Text 1)

Deities is a [noun] which means a god or goddess (in a polytheistic religion); and the creator and supreme being (in a monotheistic religion such as Christianity). In this text, the word deities represent the idea of the Gods' role in myths and legends. In the text: Maria asked the gods to give her the soul of Gat Dula and her request was granted through her prayers.

In the culture of Filipinos, gods or deities are considered to have super natural powers which in religion, is believed to have control of people's lives. Moreover, this also means that in the culture of Filipinos, there is a supernatural being that has been looking down on humanity; guiding and watching over the human deeds.

A Tale of Marinduque (Text 2)

The Tale of Marinduque depicts a love story. In this text, men underwent a challenge to win the heart of their beloved in the name of Maring.

In this tale, Maring has innumerable suitors who came to their place to woo her. The word *suitor* is a noun which means a man who pursues an intimate relationship with a particular woman, with prospect to marriage. Maring who is a princess has suitors from neighboring towns who want to marry her.

The word suitor in Philippine culture in terms of courtship means a Filipino male who expresses his interest to a woman in a discreet and friendly manner. Moreover, in order to get the parent's consent and blessing for marriage, the suitor woo the woman to say yes for a marriage.

Another core vocabulary in this tale is *devour*. The word devour is a [verb] which means eat (food or prey) hungrily or quickly; and (of fire or a similar force) destroy completely. In this tale, which tells fictitious story, this is especially one that is imaginatively recounted. The suitors set forth bravely on their ships but they were devoured by the angry sea. However, the word devour is used in this text to represent the suitors of Maring who would do whatever it takes in a battle to marry the princess.

The core words found in this tale helps the learners understand what the tale is about and helps learners to imaginatively think of the events fictitiously written to improve its meaning expressed by the author of the text. This will enable students' imagination that makes learning of literature fun and enjoyable.

As such, core vocabulary words allow communicators to express themselves using a wide variety of concepts with a very small number of words. Research shows that 80% of what is being said is communicated with only the 200 most basic words in our language.

B.) Discourse Vocabulary (Dialogues)

In general, the word discourse defined by Gee (1990) highlights the social function of discourse as the defining characteristic of "a discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and artifacts, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network, or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful role."

➤ The Centipede (Text 3)

In this story, several discourse markers were identified. These are highlighted in dialogues and the semantic analysis of these dialogues are presented below:

"You forgot to spit," my father said. Father had told me that hunters **always** spat for luck before firing. "

The word *always* (indicates time). The word always *spat* indicates an attitude which means that [he has to spit all the time]. As stated in the dialogue, *hunters always spat for luck before firing*. This kind of action, in relation with the Philippine culture, is a superstitious belief among Filipinos.

A superstitious belief is referred to as practices which has irrational or supernatural happenings connected to human life. The Filipino culture is rich in beliefs which explains that fate will bring good luck and bad luck. Nowadays, this might still the way of living of the elders. And for the record, it is now a part of the meaningful culture of the Philippine history and culture.

The centipede had fallen to the floor. "You did it," she gasped. "You tried to kill me. You've health... life... you tried..." Her voice dragged off into a pain-stricken moan. I was engulfed by a sudden feeling of pity and guilt.

"But it's dead!" I cried kneeling **before** her. "It's dead! Look! Look!" I snatched up the centipede **and** crushed its head between my fingers. "It's dead!" My sister did not move. I held the centipede **before** her like a hunter displaying the tail of a deer, save that the centipede felt thorny in my hand.

In these dialogues, *and* functions *as* (adding information), that is [pity and quit] whereas *before* indicates (during the period of time preceding a particular event or time) [where pity and guilt and snatched and crashed and kneeling before here and held before her].

The dialogues presented above has shown the attitude of the narrator unto his sister. The narrator was also able to bring into his actions the deeds and practices in hunting. Thus, the line from the texts reads: I held the centipede before her like a hunter displaying the tail of a deer, save that the centipede felt thorny in my hand.

This means that the speaker is no longer heard by his sister. Thus, this attitude represents *soliloquy* which is an utterance or discourse spoken to oneself, without regard for whether any other hearers are present. It is often used as a device in drama to disclose a character's innermost thoughts.

The above-mentioned dialogues emphasize discourse that involve concepts far deeper than mere word definitions and sentence structure. It also focusses on the meaningfulness of spoken or written language as being implied in the exchange of information in the conversation. The use of discourse markers in these dialogues therefore provides coherence among the ideas to create these meaningful utterances.

In relation with discourse and cultural details, human discourse is a resource for language users to work out who they are, what they are up against, and what is worth pursuing in life. Discourse, in other words, is what makes human cultures possible and unique.

The fact that 'discourse' and 'culture' is used in writing, does not mean that the person is not aware that each term is ambiguous and potentially contentious, as shown by their respective histories' (Keating & Durani, 2011).

> The Stranger (Text 4)

"My grandmother sent it to me," David replied. "She made it herself. Here, take some. It's very good." And he thrust a handful into my hands. I put a piece of puto seco into my mouth. It was very good. I took another bite, and another, and another. "Hey, fellows," I said, looking around, "Good, isn't it?' My classmates could only nod their heads in approval. Their mouths were too full.

The word *around* illustrates (place or location which means located or situated on every side) that is [looking around]; *and another* used to (refer to an additional person or thing of the same type as one already mentioned or known about; one more; a further) stated in the text as [I took another bite, and another, and another].

The use of the word and another indicates an attitude of greediness. Greed means an excessive desire for something. In this context, food is what makes the narrator greedy.

In the culture of Filipinos greed is believed to be a selfish act and defined by the characteristics of insatiability. This nature, in terms of religion in culture, is responsible for more sorrows in life. Thus, greediness is a serious sin for Filipinos.

C.) Register Vocabulary (Regional and Local)

Register vocabulary is the variation of language according to its use for certain purposes. It means that where the language is used, as a means of communication, depends entirely on the domain of language in particular place [15]. In this study it refers to the regional and local dialects from the content of Philippine Literary texts. Register vocabulary vary because the language is used for different purposes, in different contexts and for different audiences. Registers have its particular uses of grammar called specialized vocabulary, and it also pertains to whether language is being used formally or informally.

Pliant Like A Bamboo (Text 5)

Bahala Na, is a Tagalog expression that perfectly describes the typical Filipino attitude towards life. The oftused phrase Bahala Na can be translated into English as: Come what may, what happens will happen. Scholars tend to label it as a form of fatalism.

Gripaldo (2005) [23] Fatalism means the belief that all events are predetermined and therefore inevitable. However, it is seen through the attitude of the Filipinos that events that are about to be experienced in life are a part of living, and that Filipinos accept these indifferences and continues to live despite and whatever come their way.

The next word is *Moro-moro*. This term is from the Spanish language. *Móro-móro* is a type of comedy popular during the Spanish colonial period. It involves fights between Muslims and Christians.

This type of event is a festival activity celebrated in Spain. The adaptation of this activity in the Philippine culture is due to the long term of Spanish colonization. However, in the Philippine version, unlike the Spanish, this was performed mainly by indigenous people that involves, music, costumes and dance of the play.

➤ Where' the Patis? (Text 6)

The word *Bagoóng* is an encompassing term for Philippine condiments made from fish or tiny shrimps that are salted and fermented for several weeks. The color varies from light pink to dark brown, the texture from firm to watery.

This condiment for Filipinos is an indispensable traditional food item particularly in coastal places. For some point of comparison, this is more like the Kimchi of Koreans as a side dish. Bagoong may be regarded as a simple seafood paste but its taste is one of the country's most beloved seafood paste, naturally made by Filipinos.

Another word in this text is *Kababayan*. This word refers to a person of the same country, compatriot, as seen in the phrase: Magkakabayan sila. This word is used in this text to show that the narrator meets many compatriots in other countries which are being nostalgic for the cravings of Filipino food.

The next word is *Patis*. It is a brown, watery sauce made from fermented fish to flavor soups and broths, as well as a *sawsawan* (dipping sauce) for meat in place of salt. This sauce for Filipinos is very much flavorful with fish as the main ingredient. It is very salty.

It is adapted and produced in the Philippines from the Vietnamese' *Patis* version (*Nuoc Mam*). Therefore, *Patis*, does not uniquely originate from Filipinos, it is mainly

Asian. However, it is widely used nowadays, not only in Asian countries but in different countries around the world.

Halliday's [15] view on the aspect of language learning across culture has been useful particularly in his notion on functional variation in language as register variation. The analysis of register vocabulary as explained in this theory is to bring both the dialect and register on the same general theory with regards to the form of languages in a particular context.

2. The Cultural Details implicitly and explicitly described

Culture plays an important role in one's life. Not just by the fact that it drives and lead the people to their way of life but it is also the key to one's identity. As Filipinos, the culture of the Philippines comprises a blend of traditional Filipino and Spanish Catholic traditions, with influences from America and other parts of Asia.

The Philippine Literary texts from the textbook of Grade 7 consists of lore that contains a mixture of myths and legends, tales, Filipino-made short stories, parables, and tales. Similarly, the Filipino culture is very evident form these literary texts and has largely been appreciated and recognized in many parts of the world. Filipinos have a tradition rich in local and regional lore.

A Shawl for Anita (Text 7)

The core and register vocabulary used in this story is based from the cultural details that is *implicitly* described. On the other hand, the semantic meaning is about the mother of Anita who loves to knit. She felt a sense of uselessness in life and felt as if she was living for nothing anymore when her mother grew older. Anita then decided to ask her mother to knit a shawl for her.

The narrator of the story, who is Anita's older sister thought it was a silly thing to do because their mother is very old to knit anymore. But Anita's purpose in doing so is for their mother to regain her purpose in life by doing the things she loves to do. Anita thought that by so doing, their mother can reminisce the joys she had before and once again discover new joys in her continuing life.

This means that Filipinos work all day and do all they can to feed and provide for their family. In other countries, when a person turned 18, he/she can live away from his/her family. In the Philippines, Filipinos value family so much and become intact through the years.

Goyala [16] described Filipinos for having strong and close family ties or *Pagpapahalaga sa Pamilya* (Family-oriented). They place high regard and put importance on their family before anything else.

> The Parable of the Rainbow Colors (Text 8)

The core vocabulary used in this parable are (Rainbow) which is based from the cultural details from this story is *implicitly* described. The semantic meaning of the parable as stated above written by Juan M. Flavier, is about the colors Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet each

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having humane characteristics on who should be the best. It was the rain that asked God that the colors shall not be seen separate but as one, as the rainbow.

Thus, parables were a way to convey moral, transcendent principles in an allegoric story that people could understand and relate to. A parable is a teaching method using the familiar to illustrate unfamiliar concepts. Filipinos are known to be religious individuals. Nearly 9 in 10 Filipinos (87 percent) consider religion very important in their lives, according to the report done in 2015 by the Global Attitudes survey of the United States-based Pew Research Center. Of the 40 countries surveyed, the Philippines ranked 10th in religiosity.

Filipinos are among world's most religious. Filipinos, having high sense of faith has deep historical roots, said sociologist Bro. Clifford Sorita. In particular, it can be traced to the three centuries Spain occupied the Philippines--what some have called 300 years in the convent.

Hall [19] was the first to discuss and define a lowcontext culture. This is in contrast to a high-context culture, which relies heavily on implicit messages and contextual cues (i.e., the situation and the speaker's tone of voice) to relay information being communicated.

3. The Theoretical Implications of the Vocabulary and Cultural Details to Language Learning

Language and culture are inextricable and interdependent, and understanding the target language and culture improves understanding of vocabulary and literature.

Many linguists explore the relationship between language and culture. Nida [17] (as cited in Khatib, Tabari, and Mohammadi, holds the view that language and culture are two symbolic systems.

Furthermore, Brown [24] explains that "a language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture."

Another important aspect of this study is the use of technology. It has always been an important part of teaching and learning environment. Integrating technology into teaching and learning literature will help expand the horizons of students and teachers, help students address target language, develop better writing skills, appreciate other beliefs and cultures, and build critical thinking skills.

eBook is a book in electronic form that can be read on a computer or handheld device (smartphones) rather than in print. With eBooks introduced to the world of reading, could possibly make better reading experiences than traditional paperback books. This is especially helpful when reading long books that would take hours to flip through looking for a specific page. The aim of eBooks is to simplify and enhance the overall learning experience. Digital Books make the learning process more interactive and engaging. Gone were the days when students had to carry a bag full of books every day to classrooms and back home. With eBooks entering the educational domain, an effective learning system must ensure that students are actively involved in the learning process. eBooks have brought about an educational reform which helps students to learn better and faster. [18]

Based from the results of this study, the researcher proposes a theory which encompasses the three essential aspects of this study which are the Vocabulary, Literature and Culture in the Philippine Context.

The theoretical implications of vocabulary and culture presented provides the researcher with a justification and basis for conceptualizing a theory for instructional purposes through the use of technology-based approach to language teaching and learning process. **Vocabulary and Culture: A Mobile-Assisted Language Learning** (VaC-MALL) in Literature through a **DIGITAL SIM: VocLiTure** (*Vocabulary, Literature & Culture*) An eBook for Grade 7 Learners.

V. CONCLUSION

The vocabulary content in the Philippine Literary texts shows that words contain cultural details that makes the text meaningful in teaching literature. The content significantly bears essential cultural details that reflects the attitude, beliefs and experiences of the Filipino authors through the story's character. The regional and local dialects from different regions of the Philippines are influenced by Spanish and Chinese Cultures. The Philippine literary text has underlying context and meaning, wherein the information is often implicitly described based on the situation, as in many Asian cultures just like the Philippines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A Mobile-Assisted Language Learning-Strategic Intervention Material entitled: The DIGITAL SIM: VocLiTure (Vocabulary, Literature and Culture), an eBook for Grade 7 Learners, may be implemented to enhance the vocabulary knowledge and cultural awareness as well as to promote and integrate a modern, comprehensive and effective way of language learning for Grade 7 ESL learners.

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