

**READABILITY OF PHILIPPINE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH
IN COMMERCIALLY PUBLISHED ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS**

LEAH BLESCILA V. SARMIENTO-LABASTILLA

**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Education (Language and Literacy Education)
of the Faculty of Education
University of the Philippine Open University
Los Baños, Laguna
December 2014**

Permission is given for the following people to have access to this thesis:

Available to the general public	Yes
Available only after consultation with author/thesis adviser	No
Available only to those bound by confidentiality agreement	No

Student's Signature

Signature of Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL SHEET

The graduate thesis attached hereto, entitled "READABILITY OF PHILIPPINE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH IN COMMERCIALLY PUBLISHED ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS," prepared and submitted by LEAH BLESCILA V. SARMIENTO-LABASTILLA, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education (Language and Literacy Education), is hereby accepted.

PORTIA P. PADILLA, MA. Ed.
Adviser

Ma. Lourdes J. Vargas, MA. Ed.
Critic/Reader

Ma. Theresa L. De Villa, Ph.D.
Member

Nemah N. Hermosa, Ph. D.
Member

Accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of ~~Master~~ of Arts in Education (Language and Literacy Education).

PATRICIA B. ARINTO, Ph. D.
Dean

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest thanks to...

FATHER GOD, who has made all things wonderful and fruitful. He made this opportunity possible and its completion is His only;

Prof. Portia Padilla, my thesis adviser, for her constant encouragement to get out of my comfort zone and pursue the higher level; without her patience, guidance, support, and editing powers, this manuscript will not be part of the academic world and will simply remain a figment of my imagination;

Ms. Ma. Lourdes J. Vargas, my reader/critic, for her dedication in education and in making this study better through her constructive criticisms, guidance, and encouragement;

Drs. Nemah N. Hermosa and Ma. Theresa L. De Villa, my panel, for their wisdom and support in helping this study be what it is now;

Christian School International and Los Baños Community High School, their teachers, students and principals, for their invaluable support and participation to this study, and for their desire to improve the quality of education of schools for future generations;

the librarians of **UP College of Education**, especially **Ms. Tess Pareño**, for her assistance in the gathering of resources and for leading me to this topic;

the staff of the **Learning Center-LB** and the **Faculty of Education** and of the **UP Open University**, for their encouragement, guidance, and assistance in all the many years I was enrolled;

Marza Palentino, Maan Quiñones, and my classmates **Bal, Sining, Leo, Betsy, Janette** and my other classmates in Language and Literacy Education, for making this journey fun, educational, and fulfilling;

my family and friends, for their undying support, encouragement, and faith; and

Finally, **Jonaz**, for exhaustively reading and editing this manuscript, our children, **Jaia, Erik, Giles, Joao, Yana**, and my mother, **Mommy The!**[†], for whom this thesis is dedicated.

ABSTRACT

Readability studies in the United States have a long history spanning over 70 years, but here in the Philippines, these studies are rare. Readability studies are important in the evaluation of texts to match the readers and their textbooks so that communicative competencies will be developed.

This study explored the readability of nine (9) Philippine short stories written in English that are featured in commercially published Grade 7 English textbooks. Three (3) readability indices were used to describe the level of text difficulty: Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Cloze Test, and Readability Checklist. The texts were tested for the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level through online readability calculators. The same texts were converted into cloze tests and were given to 75 Grade Six students of one (1) private and one (1) public school in a first class urban municipality outside of the National Capital Region. Three (3) Grade 7 English teachers and 20 Grade 8 students evaluated the difficulty level using the readability checklist.

Results show that the short stories chosen for Grade 7 English textbooks are much too difficult for the students in that level. The short stories have varied levels of text difficulty, from 3.0 to 10.0 Flesch-Kincaid Grade levels, which reveal the absence of any levelling standards in choosing the literary pieces included in Grade 7 English textbooks. Based on the readability checklists done by both teachers and Grade 8 students, the stories were of high quality in terms of literary merit. However, the cloze scores show that these stories are frustrating for the Grade 7 students, which means the students do not yet have the linguistic abilities required to understand the text, and teachers will require more effort in helping students to understand the text.

The threshold level of text difficulty for Grade 7 Filipino students was not established by this study because the results did not meet the criterion set. The study, however, provided a benchmark of 3.0-4.0 in the Flesch-Kincaid Grade level as an acceptable difficulty level for texts to be used for Grade 7. At this level, the teachers will still need to use reading guides and other strategies in order to assist students in comprehending the texts. Further studies are recommended to investigate more possibilities of establishing the threshold level of difficulty for Filipinos.

This study recommended more studies to be conducted for the readability of other Philippine literature in English using other readability tools, the conduct of the same tests to other Grade 7 students in different localities and in different classes of the society, and the further investigation of the threshold level of difficulty for Filipinos. Since many of the Philippine short stories in English were published in 1930-1960, it was also recommended that textbook authors and publishers consider other more modern Philippine literature, or encourage Filipino writers to write more stories for children and young adults, to be included in the English textbooks for high school in order to foster the love of reading to Grade 7 students even through the use of their school books.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	7
Significance of the Study	8
Scope and Delimitations	9
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE& CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	12
Reading Theories	12
Reader Response Theory	15
Readability Match	16
Krashen’s Input Theory	16
History of Readability Studies	18
The Readability Formulas	19
Cloze Procedure	27
Cloze Test Construction	28
Cloze Test Administration	29
Cloze Scores and Interpretation	29
Maze Test	31
C-Test	32
Readability Checklists	33
Irwin & Davis’ Readability Checklist	34
Henry Singer’s Test Evaluation Scale	35
Marshall’s Readability Checklist for Comprehensibility	36
ICL Checklist	36
Qualities of Children’s Literature	37
Other Readability Qualities	41
What Makes Text Difficult	43
Culture and Schema	43
Language	44

Content and Context	45
Interest and Readability	46
Genre	46
Age	47
Evaluation and Selection of Textbooks	49
Readability Studies of School Texts in the Philippines	50
Readability Studies of School Texts in Non-English Speaking Countries	52
Approaches in Readability Studies	55
Summary	57
Conceptual Framework	60
Definition of Terms	61
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	63
Research Design	63
Research Locale	64
Research Materials	64
Instrumentation	68
Readability Formula: Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	68
Cloze Procedure, Tests, and Scores	68
Readability Checklist	69
Research Participants	72
Data Collection Procedure	73
Data Analysis Procedure	77
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	81
The Philippine Short Stories in English	81
The Triangulated Approach for the Research	82
Indices of Readability	82
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL)	82
Cloze Scores (CS)	84
Readability Checklist (RC)	89
Focus Group Discussion	116

The Easiest and Most Difficult Philippine Short Stories in English	121
The Threshold Level of Text Difficulty	123
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	125
Summary	125
Conclusions	127
Recommendations	131
For Further Studies	131
For Curriculum Developers, Authors and Textbook Publishers	134
For Classroom Reading Teachers	135
For Creative Writers	137
For Librarians and Information Management Specialists	138
Final Thoughts	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY	140
APPENDICES	149
Appendix A: Summary of Readability Formulas and their	
Appendix B: Irwin & Davis Readability Checklist	
Appendix C: Marshall's Readability Checklist for Comprehensibility	
Appendix D: ICL Checklist	
Appendix E: Comparison of Information on Readability	
Appendix F: Questions from the ESL Evaluation Questionnaire	
Appendix G: Textbook Evaluation Procedure	
Appendix H: Sample Cloze Test on "My Father Goes to Court"	
Appendix I: Sample Cloze Test on "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers"	
Appendix J: Readability Checklists for Short Stories	
Appendix F: "My Father Goes to Court" by Carlos Bulosan	
Appendix L: Cloze Test Results	
Appendix M: Results from the Readability Checklists	

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Model of Comprehension	14
Figure 2: Krashen's Model of Conversational and Printed Input Level	17
Figure 3: Fry Graph	23
Figure 4: Conceptual Framework	61
Figure 5: Triangulated Research Approach	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1. Summary of readability formulas and their features	21
Table 2.2. Comparative results of various scores indicating comprehensibility of texts	30
Table 2.3. Comparative interpretations of results from cloze test	30
Table 2.4. Four possibilities of quality	38
Table 2.5. Norton's list of qualities of children's literature	40
Table 2.6. Advantages and disadvantages of readability assessment approaches	57
Table 3.1. Comparison between Norton's original questions and the study's readability checklist questions with justifications	71
Table 3.2. Text difficulty levels for cloze scores (CS)	78
Table 3.3. Level of text difficulty based on the readability checklist (RC)	78
Table 4.1. Results from readability calculators for Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	83
Table 4.2. Summary of cloze scores for nine (9) Philippine short stories in English	85
Table 4.3. Summary of teachers' readability checklist points	91
Table 4.4. Summary of students' readability checklist points	92
Table 4.5. Summary of results from three (3) approaches	122

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's background, problem statement, significance, and the scope and delimitations.

Background of the Study

Literacy in the Philippines

The Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) of the National Statistics Authority (NSA) reported that basic literacy in the Philippines increased from 88.6% in 2003 to 95.6% in 2008. These measures indicate that 9 out of 10 Filipinos aged 10 and older can read and write. However, the concept of literacy has already been expanded from reading and writing to include functional and content literacy (Sejnost & Theise, 2007). The main concern of the Philippines is now on functional literacy, the ability to survive in the literate society. But the 2003 FLEMMS reported that only 84.1% of the Filipinos are functionally literate. This figure increased in 2008 showing that 86.4% Filipinos can read, write, and compute, but only 69.9% can read, write, compute, and comprehend. Ericta (2010) asserted that 58 million out of the estimated 67 million Filipinos are functionally literate. Nine (9) million Filipinos are still struggling in the literate society, and three (3) million do not know how to read and write (Sutaria, 2011).

This situation is further supported by the results of the National Achievement Tests (NAT) from Grade 6 and Fourth Year High School from 2006 to 2012. Over the past five years, Grade 6 students were only able to reach a Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of 59.94% in SY 2006-2007 to 68.14% in SY 2010-2011, while Fourth Year students

only reached 44.33% in SY 2005-2006 to 48.90% in SY 2011-2012. In the English test, the Elementary students averaged an MPS of 63.9% in the span of six (6) years from SY 2006-2007 to SY 2011-2012, and the High School students an even lower MPS of 50.3% based on figures from SY 2004-2005, SY 2005-2006, and SY 2011-2012. The national target set by the Department of Education (DepEd) is pegged at 75% (De Dios, 2013).

If the NAT, especially the English tests, is an indicator of the nation's adolescent literacy, then DepEd is trying to remedy the situation through a series of curricular reforms. In 2002, the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) replaced the National Secondary Education Curriculum (NSEC) to address the poor performance of students in schools (Luis-Santos, Sutaria, & Pablo, n.d.). In 2010, another curriculum reform, the Secondary Education Curriculum of 2010 (SEC 2010), was set in place for the same reason, that students' performance did not meet the standards, and a new curriculum should help "ensure that high school students achieve functional literacy" (Plata, 2010, p. 87). Two years later, the K to 12 (also K-12) curriculum was launched under the Republic Act 10533 known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013." The new curriculum employed the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in the primary Grades 1 to 3 because "basic education [should] be delivered in the languages understood by the learners as the language plays a strategic role in shaping the formative years of learners" (Philippine Congress, 2013).

The new K to 12 curriculum also unified the goals between the elementary and high school curricular goals, unlike in the BEC 2002 and SEC 2010. The Language Arts and Multiliteracy Curriculum covers Grades 1 to 10. Its fundamental goal is...

"to produce graduates who apply the language conventions, principles, strategies, and skills in (1) interacting with others, (2) understanding and learning

other content areas, and (3) finding for themselves in whatever field of endeavor they may engage in.” (p. 6)

It further elaborates that the curriculum should “help learners acquire highly-developed literacy skills” to make them understand the value of English in communication, social progress, and value development. Multiliteracies, on the other hand, should make learners sensitive to changes in society, and communicate meaning within context, purpose, and audience. Similar to the two preceding curricula, communicative competency is the focal skill that will enhance the Filipinos’ level of literacy (K to 12 English Curriculum Guide, 2014).

While the ideal curricular goal is to produce elementary graduates who are already fluent in reading, in reality, this is not the case. In a study conducted in the United States, Dagget & Hasselbring (2007) observed that “reading instruction stops after the elementary grades, even though reading development is not complete” (p.1). The situation in the Philippines is not so different from that in the US, given the results of the NAT and the percentage of functionally literate Filipinos. In the 2008 FLEMMS, Ericta (2010) noted that among Filipinos aged 10-15 who are in school, 98.81% are literate, and only 62.11% of this are functionally literate. Meaning, only six (6) out of ten (10) elementary graduates can read, write, compute, and comprehend; four (4) can only read and write; and at least one (1) of them still struggles in reading and writing.

In a society that is aspiring to produce independent, progressive, and literate constituents these figures on literacy rate is alarming. Thus, more remediation efforts in reading instruction need to be put in place.

The Role of Reading

The literacy objectives set by the DepEd in the new K to 12 curriculum may be achieved only if the program will result in graduates who can “apply the language conventions, principles, strategies, and skills,” in the case of the Philippines, the English language (K to 12 English Curriculum Guide, 2014, p.6). Language proficiency is developed through the development of reading skills. The DepEd stated that the Filipino can “show improvement of one’s command of the language as a result of reading” (Department of Education, 2002, p. 18). Reading promotes learning, language acquisition, vocabulary building, and writing proficiency (Krashen, 1991). Reading is also a skill which motivates learning (Pardede, 2006). However, Daggett & Hasselbring (2007) claimed that though human beings are “hard-wired” for oral communication, reading needs to be deliberately taught, not only in the elementary grades, as many believe, but even more so in the higher levels where more demanding reading tasks are expected. Kamil (2003) posited that if elementary education is not able to accomplish the task of turning students into literate individuals, literacy becomes an important part of their education in the succeeding years in school. Thus, the challenge of literacy is also in the middle and high school levels.

The rationale for this reading instruction in high school is supported by Alexander and Jetton’s stages of reading development (in Kamil, 2003). The first stage is the Acclimated Stage where the students focus on “orientation and adaptation” because of the unknown and unfamiliar areas of information. Students in the Acclimated Stage are characterized by their application of inefficient reading strategies because they still lack knowledge on the content and forms of texts. The second stage is the Competent Stage

where students have already acquired sufficient knowledge of the content, apply reading strategies, and are motivated and interested in reading. The third stage is the Proficiency or Expertise Stage where students show a deep interest and a mastery of the subject matter, and a desire to explore or learn more about the area. All students who are learning a new language enter the Acclimated Stage. It is also at this stage when the quality of text affects the learners, especially those who are struggling to read. Following this principle, high school students may be assumed to be in the Acclimated Stage in all subjects, where information that they learn is often very new. Though some of the lessons have already been taken up at the elementary levels, the amount of time spent on them may not have been enough to encourage competency. And since they are in this stage, the quality of reading materials should be evaluated for their excellence in content and suitability to the readers.

The Role of Literature

If reading competency influences functional literacy, then literature is an important factor in language development. Norton (2011) said, “Literature has a profound influence on children’s language” (p. 3). Lynch-Brown (2005) attested that literature of high quality and suitability to the readers can help them develop reading skills, value literature, and develop writing styles. Woolley (2000) posited that literary selections that are very interesting and easy to read will encourage students to be more comfortable with reading. Therefore, the quality of literature in English textbooks must be of high quality, suitable, and interesting to the readers.

In the high school curriculum (from the 2002 BEC to the K to 12), the use of Philippine literature in English is included in the English course. DepEd aims to inculcate

among the Grade 7 students “a better understanding of man and his environment” aside from the “understanding and appreciation of various literary types” (Department of Education, 2002, p. 21; Department of Education, 2010; Sutaria, 2011).

Philippine Literature in English

Ricardo De Ungria (2011) of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts described Philippine literature in English as “written with *depth, sophistication* and *insight* (emphasis mine)” (p.1). Jimbol (2010) described it as having “achieved a stature that is, in a way phenomenal since the inception of English in our culture” and “what [the authors] have written can compare with some of the best works in the world” (p.4).

In an informal inquiry made by the researcher with her peers in the school’s English Department, both English teachers and their students perceive Philippine literature in English as difficult to read and comprehend. The dominant reasons are the difficult words and the lengthy sentences used by the authors. Thus, there seems to be an interesting facet about the readability of Philippine literature that critics may have failed to identify.

Readability Studies

In the United States, the concept of readability studies has been around for more than seventy (70) years (Du Bay, 2004). But in the Philippines, the number of studies done is scarce. At the College of Education in the University of the Philippines, there are only three (3) studies done from the late 1970’s to the early 1980’s (Espartero, 1976; Ferranculo, 1978; Perez, 1982) supported by the former Ministry of Education. These seminal works focused on the readability of science textbooks. Another study was a Master’s thesis in the 1990’s that evaluated the text difficulty of college science

textbooks (Somsamai, 1992). Then, just recently, another study was published in The Reading Association of the Philippines (RAP) Journal that evaluated the text difficulty of narrative and expository texts in Filipino and Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) books (Diaz & Ocampo, 2013). No study has yet been undertaken on the readability of literature in English, or on other materials like newspapers, magazines, brochures, and contracts. Thus, there is need to investigate the quality of Philippine literature in English that is included in the textbooks of students, particularly those in Grade 7.

Statement of the Problem

If “language plays a strategic role in shaping the formative years of learners” (Philippine Congress, 2013), then this goal has to be evident in the textbooks that the publishers print every year. And, if literature is a tool to help students develop their competency in English, then the literary selections available in the textbooks should be appropriate to the learners, have interesting content, and be written with high quality (Norton, 2011; Lynch-Brown, 2005; Woolley, 2000). Thus, there is a need to evaluate the Philippine literature in English that is mandatory to be read by Grade 7 students, who are assumed to still be in the Acclimated Stage of reading development (Alexander & Jetton, in Kamil, 2003)

In effect, this study aimed to answer the question:

How readable is the Philippine literature in English common in commercially published English textbooks for Grade 7?

It also identified

1. the easiest and most difficult Philippine literature in English in the textbooks, and
2. the threshold level of text difficulty for the Filipino Grade 7 students in relation to the texts evaluated.

Significance of the Study

Addition to Readability Studies

Since readability studies are scarce in the Philippines despite the growing number of publications, this study adds to the body of knowledge in educational research, and provides a new perspective on the readability of instructional materials for the nation, particularly of textbooks. The Department of Education, National Book Development Board, and Instructional Materials Council Secretariat may need to consider the difficulty of texts in textbooks to meet the students' needs for literacy development.

Selection of Stories

For educators, textbook authors, as well as parents, this study will help them realize that not all instructional materials, textbooks, and other supplementary materials are suitable to the children they teach and write for. The methods and results in this study will likewise help them evaluate the readability of materials for teaching literacy and promoting enjoyment of reading.

Writing of More Literature for Teens and Young Adults

For creative writers of the Philippines, the study hopes to encourage them to write more literary pieces for today's children and adolescents. Though many of the works found in today's textbooks may be called classics in Philippine literature, writers may be able to see the opportunities to write more literature that will help children and adolescents read for leisure, learning, and for the development of their English competency.

Libraries and Information Management

For school and e-librarians, web masters, publishers, and other information management specialists, this study will help them assess the readability of the materials they publish and/or make accessible to the public. The methods presented in the study will give them ideas on how to evaluate the readability of texts in order to provide information that is easy to read, suitable, and accessible to their various readers.

Scope and Delimitations

This study is limited to the evaluation of the readability, or text difficulty, of nine (9) short stories found in two or more commercially available Grade 7 English textbooks published between 2009 and 2011. These textbooks follow the RBEC Curriculum because the K to 12 Curriculum was only implemented as the research was going on.

Short stories, or narratives, were chosen as representative of Philippine literature since these are found to be more interesting to the target users (Norton, 2011). The readability of these stories is limited to the features of the materials based on word complexity that can be calculated by readability formulas, semantic and syntactic

qualities based on the students' linguistic ability, and the quality of the elements of stories based on the judgments of teachers, who are using these texts for instruction, and students, who were able to read and use the selections in their Grade 7 classes.

The participants in the evaluation process consisted of students and teachers coming from one (1) private school and one (1) public school in a first class urban municipality outside of the National Capital Region. Seventy-five (75) Grade 7 students, twenty (20) Grade 8 students, and three (3) English teachers participated in the study. The testing and evaluation happened in two (2) separate periods of time. The study in the private school was conducted in March 2013 with thirty (30) Grade 6 and ten (10) Grade 7 students. The public school students participated in August 2013 with forty-five (45) Grade 7 and ten (10) Grade 8 students. Results may be applied only to these participants and may not be applicable to other students and teachers coming from different regions of the Philippines and even from different classes, or batches, of students.

The three (3) instruments used for the study, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, cloze tests, and readability checklists, were reviewed by a panel of reading experts from the University of the Philippines at Diliman. Pilot testing of materials was not conducted due to limitations of time and number of instruments. Errors brought about by the failure to pilot test are unknown.

This study is limited to the study of the text difficulty of the nine (9) short stories. Other educational concerns or issues resulting from the methods or approaches applied, such as students' linguistic competencies and cognition, quality of school's instruction and students, reliability or quality of teachers' and students' judgment, are not covered in

this study. These related issues may arise and may be mentioned, but may require further studies for verification and empirical evidence.

The limitations given above do not in any way undermine the validity of results and conclusions of the study. These were all properly and systematically organized and analyzed following acceptable theories and guidelines of education.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter exhaustively reviews the reading theories that support the need to improve reading instruction in the classroom, the readability studies, formulas, and methods that evaluate texts, and the available readability studies on school books of the Philippines and other countries. It also explains the conceptual framework that guides this study and the key terms used.

Review of Related Literature

Reading Theories

Reading is regarded by theorists in different ways. The most widely accepted reading models are Gough's bottom-up model, Goodman's top-down model, and Rumelhart's interactive or transactive model (Hermosa, 2002).

Gough's bottom-up model is the traditional view of reading. Meaning is solely based on the semantics and syntax of the words in the language, either oral or written. The reading process follows a straight path beginning from the smallest to the biggest unit, and no feedback is given (Hermosa, 2002). "Language is seen as a code" which readers have to decode to make meaning, and readers are seen as "passive recipients" of information (Pardede, 2006, p. 3).

In Goodman's top-down model, reading is seen as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" where the reader employs three strategies in making meaning: initiating and sampling, predicting, and confirming (Hermosa, 2002, p. 92). Other strategies involved are sampling of text, formation of hypothesis, confirmation or rejection of the hypothesis,

and creation of new hypothesis. Unlike in the bottom-up model, the reader is an active participant in the reading process. The reader brings his/her background knowledge in the creation of meaning (Pardede, 2006).

The third view of reading merges the bottom-up and the top-down models of reading. Rumelhart (in Hermosa, 2002) called this the interactive or transactive model. This model explains that the reader brings into the reading process his/her prior knowledge, and processes this with the meaning made from the text, which is similar to Goodman's top-down model. The concept of prior knowledge brings forth the Schema Theory in reading and language acquisition wherein the reader's knowledge of the text structure, or formal schema, and the knowledge of the text content, or content schema, are used to make meaning out of the text (Hermosa, 2002; Pardede, 2006). The reader's schema interacts with other information in the text, which Rumelhart identified to come from six sources – semantics, syntax, lexis, letter, letter cluster, and letter features. Out of these, semantics bears the highest importance in meaning-making (Hermosa, 2002).

The bottom line of reading is eventually comprehension (Hermosa, 2002). Comprehension is defined as the “process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002, p. 1). Teachers see comprehension as a process of making meaning through the interaction of the reader's experiences, the text, and the reader's stance towards the text (Pardo, 2004). Following the transactive model of reading, comprehension takes place when there is engagement among the elements of reader, text, and content (See Figure 1).

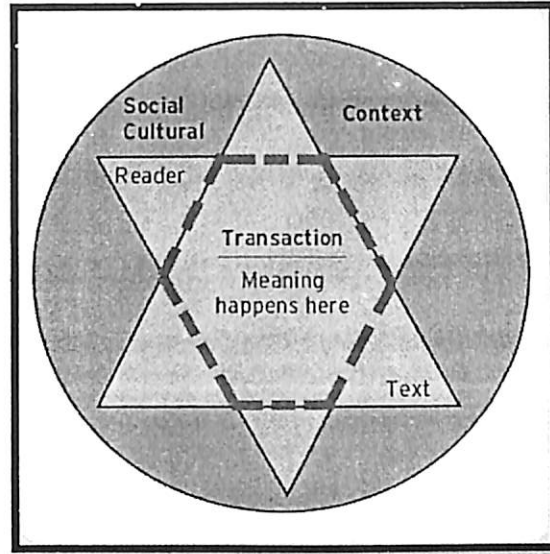


Figure 1. Model of comprehension (Pardo, L.S., 2004)

In order for comprehension to take place, there should be a match among the elements in the Reader-Text-Context model. The reader brings forth any prior knowledge about the world, his/her reading skills, and language competency or fluency, either in the first language or second language. The reader uses these in order to manipulate the information from the text, the semantics and syntax, text genre, and other features. Also, the context of the reading environment – the purpose of the reading activity, and the socio-cultural and physical environment – must help the reader read the text. Teachers can help readers develop their reading skills through deliberate instruction of reading strategies. Reading materials that will match the purpose of the activity and reader's abilities can be selected, and the classroom environment can be manipulated to be print-rich and conducive for reading. Outside the classroom, the students bring out to the world whatever learning they gain from the classroom (Pardo, 2004).

Reader Response Theory

Another theory that stems from the Transactional Theory of reading is Rosenblatt's Reader Response Theory. According to this theory, readers take two stances in meaning-making: efferent and aesthetic stances. When a reader takes a stance, or when s/he knows which stance to take, comprehension should follow. The efferent stance happens when the reader takes out information from the text, such as identifying the characters, setting, plot, or identifying the main and supporting ideas. The aesthetic stance is taken when the reader associates him/herself as part of the story or text and acquires vicarious experiences from reading (Hermosa, 2002).

In the classroom, this theory is taken to mean the use of personal responses and identification of readers with the elements of literature. Critics, like Lewis (2000), said that there seems to be a misunderstanding between what readers perceive of the theory and what Rosenblatt actually meant. Where Rosenblatt's aesthetic stance is placing the reader within the text to derive experiences; personal responses, on the other hand, place the reader in between the text and the world, making emotional responses to the text and linking them to the world. Bleich's (1975, in Resh, 1987) approach to reader response is telling the students to pay attention to what they are feeling during and after reading the text, to make their interpretations about the text. This interactive approach to reading helps make the readers think while reading, instead of simply gathering information and passively participating in the reading process.

From this theory stems the various reading strategies and intervention programs that formulate activities before, during, and after reading. Outputs, like graphic

organizers, journal writing, letter writing, etc., are produced in order to help students understand the text while reading it (Diaz de Rivera, 1997).

Readability Match

Since the goal of language education is linguistic competence, the quality of reading materials should be evaluated for their usefulness to help improve the linguistic competence of students. Reading researchers and experts recommend that the difficulty of the reading materials must match the reading ability of the students. Woolley (2000) said that the concept of the exact match is impossible because of the complexity of the reading process within the student and the characteristics of the written text. Nevertheless, if the reading ability of the student is known, teachers can choose the material that is appropriate for reading (Johnson, 2000). Du Bay (2004) called this The Problem of Optimal Difficulty, which states that to influence linguistic competency, the reading material should be a little bit higher than the reading ability of the student. This concept is similar to Stephen Krashen's Comprehensible Input in his Input Theory (Krashen, 1991; Drucker, 2003; Orillos, 2000).

Krashen's Input Theory

The Input Theory is one of the five theories of language acquisition proposed by Stephen Krashen(1991). Based on this theory, a second language can be acquired when the learner is given Comprehensible Input (CI) in the target language, either through speech or text. CI is language delivered in the level that can be understood by the learner. Though speech, or conversational input, is necessary for the learner to develop a sense of functionality in the target language, this is not enough to develop linguistic competence

and proficiency. Krashen showed a model relating the amount of exposure to input in language acquisition (see Figure 2). At the beginning of language acquisition or second

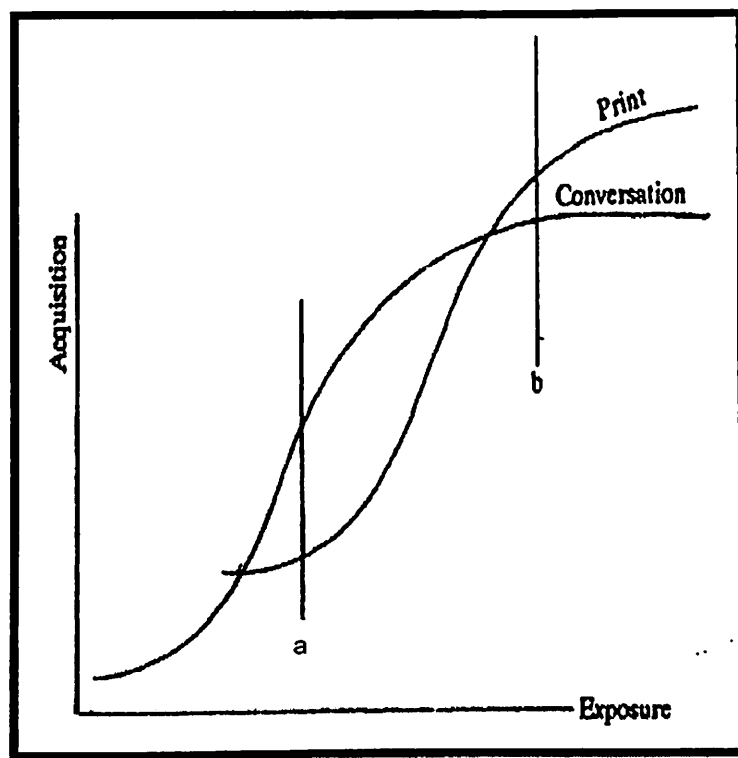


Figure 2. Krashen's model of conversational and printed input level (Krashen, S.D., 1991)

language learning, the learner should have more input through conversation opportunities that is enough for him/her to communicate with the native speakers (point a). However, to reach point b, a level where the learner acquires or has acquired the language, the learner has to have more exposure to print input in order to improve his/her competency and proficiency.

On CI in print, Krashen said that the input has to have a text difficulty that is one level higher than the reader's ability. This is represented by "I+1" where "I" represents the reader's ability. A material that is lower than the reading ability of the reader, "I+0", may influence reading for pleasure and increase comprehension, but there will be no

development. A material that is too difficult for the reader, “I+2”, can develop frustration and will most likely turn off the student from learning to read (in Orillos, 2000; Drucker, 2003). Therefore, the teacher has to make a match between readability or text difficulty, and the student’s reading abilities in terms of quantifiable units to get the “I+1” requirement.

Readability is defined by Dale (1949), a pioneer of readability research and testing, as the extent to which the students or readers are interested in the text, comprehend it, and read it at an optimal speed. Gretchen Harris (1963) and George Klare (1998) said that readability is a factor of writing style (in DuBay, 2004). Keith Johnson (2000) attributed reading ease to reading motivation and interest, print legibility, and word and sentence complexity. Richardson and Morgan (2003, in Sejnost & Theise, 2007) attributed readability to the match of intrinsic characteristics between reader and text. Simply put, readability is the “quality of being easily read” (Diaz de Rivera, 1997, p. 125).

History of Readability Studies

Readability studies started in the United States as early as 1893 with L.A. Sherman’s work *Analytcs of Literature: A Manual for the Objective Study of English Prose and Poetry* where he observed that the average sentence evolved from an average of fifty (50) words per sentence during the Pre-Elizabethan times to 23 words per sentence in his time. Today, there are twenty (20) words per sentence on the average as written language has evolved closer to the spoken language. In addition, Sherman’s work included the involvement of the reader in the readability of text. He said that the best quality of written text is one where the expected readers are taken into consideration, and

that reading materials should not be for scholars alone, but also for other people as well. He added that texts should be simple and easily understood (in Du Bay, 2004).

Other readability studies soon emerged after Sherman's work. In 1921, Thorndike published his *Teacher's Word Book* where he provided the first list of the most common words that an English speaker should know. This emerged from the influx of migrants in the U.S. who were struggling with learning the language. This work eventually provided a method of objectively measuring the difficulty of words and texts, which became the foundation of the readability formulas. In 1923, Lively and Pressly developed the first readability formula for children's literature and textbook evaluation of readability features because they found the science textbooks for junior high school too difficult for the students. Another influential work was the Winnetka formula of Vogel and Washburne in 1928, which was the first formula to be developed using kinds of sentences, prepositional phrases, word difficulty, and sentence length. These seminal works eventually influenced other works on readability formulas and text difficulty. Among those that surpassed the test of time were Rudolf Flesch's formulas developed from the 1940's to the 1970's; Edgar Dale and Jeanne Chall's formula developed in 1948; and Robert Gunning's FOG Index developed in 1952. More readability formulas were designed since then, and they continue to develop and grow in number up to the present (Du Bay, 2004).

The Readability Formulas

Readability formulas were the first to be researched and tested as an objective tool in measuring and grading text difficulty. They predict reading ease in terms of chronological age or academic year that an average reader can handle (Johnson, 2000).

According to Sejnost and Thiese(2007), there were over 100 readability formulas invented in the United States, and research and testing continues to the present. These formulas have been tested for reliability against the McCall-Crabbs' *Standard Test Lessons in Reading*, a multiple-choice test of comprehension aiming for 100 percent correct answers (DuBay, 2004).

The first to popularize the readability formula was Rudolph Flesch, proponent of the Flesch Reading Ease Formula, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Scale Formula, and the Flesch Human Interest Score, which can predict the interest level of a reading material. In his Reading Ease Formula, he considered sentence length and word length based on syllables as difficulty factors in readability. By following the formula (see Table 2.1), the degree of ease can be determined. A score of 100 is easy, while a score of 30 is difficult. Flesch declares that a score of 70 is the threshold level of readability in order for the average American adult to understand the text. To simplify the index, Flesch and Kincaid developed a new formula that gives out indices based on the school grade level, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Scale formula. Both correlated at 0.7 in the McCall-Crabbs reading test, with 75% comprehension (DuBay, 2004).

In 1952, Robert Gunning published *The Technique of Clear Writing* where he publicized his own formula for adults, the Fog Index, which uses sentence length and polysyllabic words. He tested his formula with 90% comprehension results of the McCall-Crabbs reading test giving the formula a higher grade criterion than the Dale-Chall formula. (DuBay, 2004)

Table 2.1. Summary of readability formulas and their features

Readability Formula	Variables Needed	Formula	Difficulty Index (Based on American School Grade Standards)
Flesch Reading Ease	Number of syllables Number of sentences in a 100-word passage	Score = $206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW})$ <i>Where:</i> Score = position from 0 to 100 ASL = average sentence length (number of words divided by the number of sentences) ASW = average number of syllables (number of syllables divided by the number of words)	0-30 = Very Difficult 30-40 = Difficult 50-60 = Fairly Difficult 70-80 = Standard* 80-90 = Easy 90-100 = Very Easy *Standard is estimated at US school grade of 8 and 9. This is threshold level of difficulty for the average American adult.
New Flesch Reading Ease Score	(same)	Score = $1.599 \text{ nosw} - 1.015 \text{ sl} - 31.517$ <i>Where:</i> nosw = number of one-syllable words per 100 words sl = average sentence length in words	(same as Flesch Reading Ease)
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Scale Formula	(same)	Grade Level = $(0.4 \times \text{ASL}) + (12 \times \text{ASW}) - 15$	School Grade Level
Dale-Chall Formula	Percentage of difficult words – words not found on the Dale-Chall of 3,000 words; 80% is known by the average American 4 th grader Average sentence length	Score = $0.1579\text{PDW} + 0.496\text{ASL} + 3.6365$ <i>Where:</i> Score = the reading grade of a reader who can answer 50% of the test questions on a passage PDW = percentage of difficult words ASL = average sentence length	School Grade Level 4.9 and below = Grade 4 and below 5.0-5.9 = Gr. 5-6 6.0-6.9 = Gr. 7-8 7.0-7.9 = Gr. 9-10 8.0-8.9 = Gr. 11-12 9.0-9.9 = College 10 and above = College graduate
Fog Index	Average sentence length Number of words with more than 2 syllables	Grade Level = $0.4 (\text{average sentence length} + \text{hard words})$	Grade Level pertains to the school grades
Fry Readability Graph	Average number of sentences in a 100-word passage Average number of syllables in a 100-word passage	(The grade level is identified by plotting the average sentences in the y-axis and average syllables on the x-axis of the Fry Graph.)	School Grade Level
SMOG	Word length (number of syllables in a word) Sentence length	Grade = $3 + \text{square root of polysyllable count}$	School Grade Level

Readability Formula	Variables Needed	Formula	Difficulty Index (Based on American School Grade Standards)
FORCAST	Number of single-syllable words in a 150-word passage	Grade Level = $20 - (N / 10)$ Where: N = monosyllabic word count	School Grade Level
ARI: Army's Automated Readability Index	Words per sentence Strokes per word	Grade Level = 0.50 (words per sentence) + 4.71 (strokes per word) - 21.43	School Grade Level
Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Based on the Bormuth Mean Cloze Formula	Number of words found in the Dale-Chall 3,000 word list Average sentence length Average word length in letters	$R = 0.886593 - 0.83640(LET/W) + 0.161911(DLL/W)^3 - 0.021401(W/SEN) + 0.000577(W/SEN)^2 - 0.000005(W/SEN)^3$ $DRP = (1-R) \times 100$ Where: R = mean cloze score LET = letters in passage X W = words in passage X DLL = number of words in the original Dale-Chall list in passage X SEN = Sentences in passage X DRP = degrees of reading power	0-100 scale 30 = very easy 100 = very hard
Lexile Framework	Number of difficult words Number of long sentences		¹ Lexile = a numeric representation of difficulty 200L for beginning readers 1700L for advanced readers

Edgar Dale, a strong critic of Thorndike's 1921 work, *A Teacher's Word Book*, which listed 10,000 most frequently used words in American English, had his own list of 3,000 words because he claimed that Thorndike's list, though much more than what Dale had, was not accurate. With Jeanne Chall, he developed a readability formula that incorporated difficult words, or words not part of their list, and sentence length (see Table 2.1). The Dale-Chall formula was found to have the highest and most consistent correlation of 0.70 with the McCall-Crabbs reading comprehension test (DuBay, 2004).

¹from Lennon and Burdick (2004), all other information on this table is extracted from Du Bay (2004).

If the Fog Index was considered easy, Edward Fry was able to come up with a much easier formula in 1977. While working in Uganda under a Fulbright Scholarship, he was able to devise a new readability test without using too many mathematical computations. Instead, he developed the Fry Graph (see Figure 3) which plots the average number of sentences in a passage (y-axis) against the average number of syllables per word (x-axis). The zone where the coordinates meet determines the grade level for which the text is suitable.

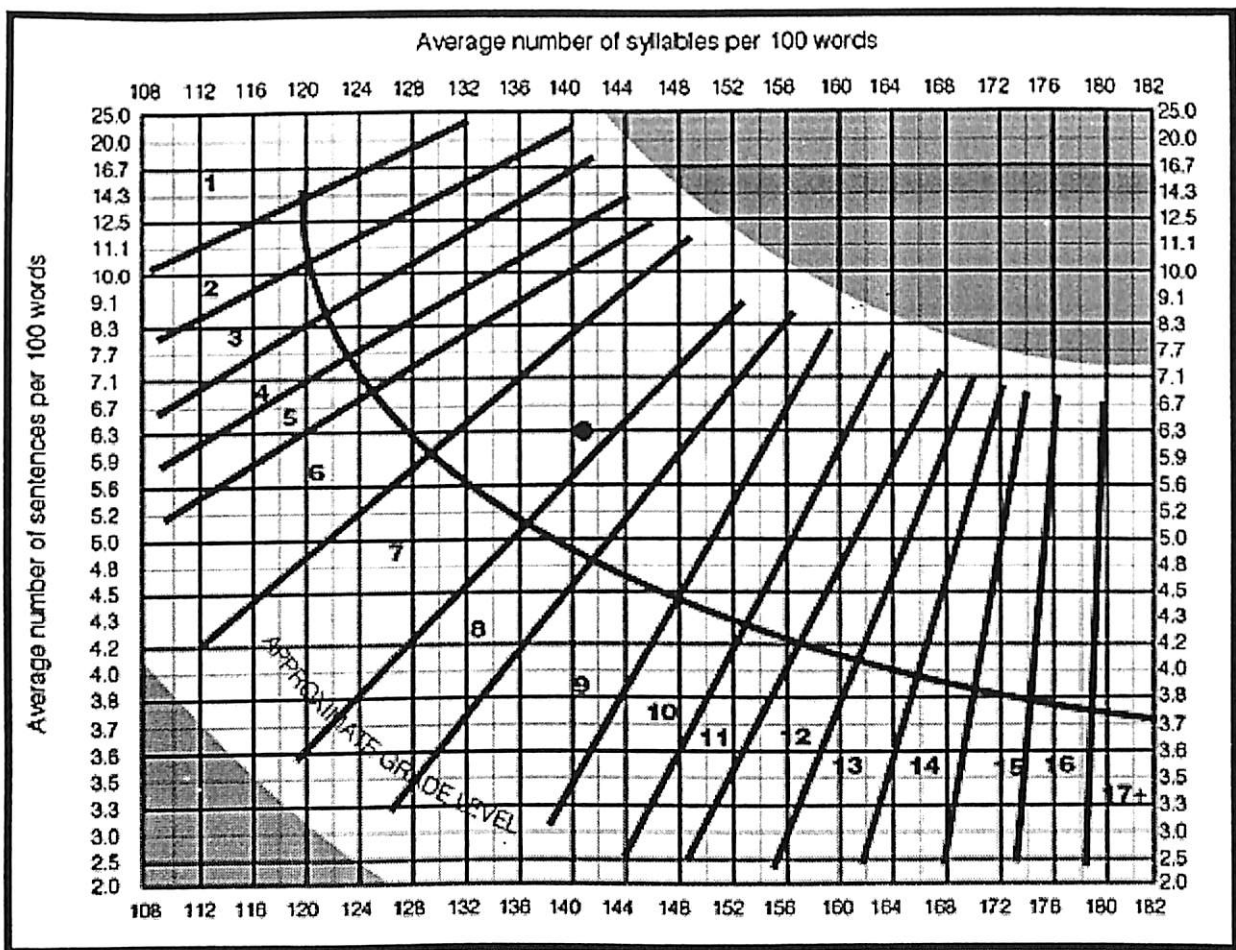


Figure 3. Fry Graph (www.ascd.org/publication/books/105142/chapters/Reading-and-Writing-in-English-Classrooms.aspx)

In 1969, G. Harry McLaughlin launched his SMOG (Simple Measure Of Gobbledygook) formula which used polysyllabic words and sentence length as

measurements of text difficulty. To validate his formula, he used 100% correct-score criterion in the McCall-Crabbs reading comprehension test, which makes it two grades higher than the Dale-Chall formula (DuBay, 2004).

Other readability formulas later emerged through the initiatives of the US Army to improve the quality of the recruitment exam they make. Around the 1970's and together with Thomas Sticht, an expert in cognitive science and experimental psychology and a recipient of the UNESCO's Mahatma Gandhi Medal for adult literacy, they were able to formulate the FORCAST, which considers only the number of monosyllabic words in a 150-word passage. Another was the Automated Readability Index (ARI) developed with Smith and Senter in 1967. It used a modified electric typewriter to determine the strokes per word. Text difficulty was measured by the number of strokes per sentence and the number of words per sentence (DuBay, 2004).

In 1981, the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) was used by the College Entrance Exam Board, replacing the grade-level scores they previously used. Touchstone Applied Science Associates (TASA) developed the formula based on the Bormuth Mean Cloze Score which uses the familiar words in the Dale-Chall list, average sentence length, and average word length. The DRP has a score of 0-100, similar to the Flesch Reading Ease, but measures the difficulty instead – 30 is very easy and 100 is very difficult (DuBay, 2004).

Another formula that is also based on a list of words later emerged. Around the 1980's, the Lexile Framework was developed by MetaMetrics, Inc. This formula uses average sentence length and the frequency of words found in the *American Heritage*

Intermediate Corpus. The score is called a Lexile, which determines the level of difficulty of the text from 0 to 2000 (DuBay, 2004). 200L is for beginners and 1700L is for advanced readers (Lennon & Burdick, 2004).

From the 1920's to the present, the number of readability formulas has kept growing for various purposes. DuBay (2004) has listed and studied many of these formulas in order to promote easier reading materials for the public. Originally developed for textbook evaluation, the application of readability formulas has been extended to adult texts, like court actions and legislation, medical literature, manuals, forms, and other documents.

To make them more useful, computer programs like Microsoft and Corel have already incorporated formulas in their word processors, MS Word and WordPerfect, respectively. However, the Readability Statistics found in the Microsoft Word program was claimed to be faulty since it could not measure difficult text past grade 12 (DuBay, 2004). Online readability calculators are also available from the Internet. Mladen Adamovic developed online-utilities.org which provides instant calculation of readability using FOG, Coleman-Liau, Flesch-Kincaid, ARI, SMOG, and Flesch Reading Ease. This also provides a list of sentences that the user can consider simplifying for increased understandability. Readability-Score.com is powered by Dave Child's Text Statistics project. Using this online tool, readability is calculated using the Flesch Reading Ease, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, FOG, Coleman-Liau, SMOG, and ARI. In Readabilityformulas.org developed by Brian Scott, the user can choose to have the text's readability calculated using their Consensus Calculator, Fry Graph, Raygor Estimate Graph, New Dale-Chall Formula, Spache, and Powers-Sumners-Kearl. The Consensus

calculator option produces results using the Flesch Reading Ease, Flesch-Kincaid Grade, FOG, Coleman-Liau, SMOG, ARI, and Linsear(See Appendix A for the Summary of Readability Formulas and their Features).

Studies on developing readability formulas for foreign languages were also conducted. As early as 1939, readability formulas for other languages began in the United States, in consideration of the students who were studying foreign languages. This began with the study of Tharp on French, which proposed an Index of Difficulty factoring in running words and burden words. From 1957 to 1985 formulas for Spanish, Russian, German, Chinese, Hebrew, and Vietnamese were developed following the same approach in measuring difficult words. In Europe, adaptations of the Flesch Reading Ease formula were made in French, Spanish, German, and Dutch. An original formula similar to the Fry Graph was developed for German in 1955 by Fucks but it was judged unsuitable because of the length of words in German. In Holland, six new formulas were developed from 1972 to 1985 (Rabin, 1988).

Though the readability formulas have shown much objectivity and relative ease when it comes to testing, they still have been highly criticized. Armbruster(1985) and Muther(1985) warned parents and teachers not to be deceived by the results of the formulas. Zakaluk and Samuels (1996) observed that different formulas produce different grade levels for the same text passage, and when authors try to bring down their readability, more difficulty arose due to over simplification to reach a certain grade level. Johnson (2000) observed that formulas do not factor in readers' interest and motivation, attractiveness of illustrations, relevance of material, and reader involvement. Stephen (2000) also commented that formulas do not include composition, sentence structure,

concreteness and abstractness of concepts, and obscurity and incoherence as factors of difficulty. Woolley (2000) commented that formulas may be useful in matching text to students, only when the students' reading ability is known.

There are, indeed, other factors that affect the readability of materials. Since then, other studies have emerged on the study of other factors that influence the readability of texts as well as the validation of results of the formulas through the use of other methods of testing. Many of these works stem from what L.A. Sherman commented way back in 1893 that students or readers should also be involved in the evaluation of readability. One of these is the incorporation of students' linguistic abilities in the Cloze Procedure.

Cloze Procedure

One of the efforts to investigate both reader's ability and text difficulty was the Cloze Procedure developed by William Taylor in 1953. Taylor's argument was that words are not the sole basis for readability or comprehension. Text organization and cohesiveness are also critical factors in assessing readability. His argument was in line with the findings that even when words are jumbled into nonsensical order, the readability formulas will still give the same results (Zakaluk & Samuels, 1996).

Regina Chatel(2001) described the cloze procedure as a multifunctional and multidimensional strategy, which educators can use for varied purposes, including pre-testing and post-testing of students' learning, and materials evaluation. The concept comes from the word "closure" or the human capacity to fill the missing words in a piece of text or a familiar language pattern. By deleting every fifth word in a 300-word passage, a reader's ability to understand the text can be measured. The reader completes the

passage using his/her linguistic competence and prior knowledge. Based on the number of correct and exact words, the text can be classified as Independent, Instructional, or Frustration. A material that is in the Independent category means that the reader can understand the text without any aid or teacher guidance. A material that is in the Instructional category requires the aid of the teacher to make the reader understand the text. And, a material that is in the Frustration category is too difficult for the reader even with reading aids and teacher guidance.

Cloze Test Construction

In constructing a cloze test, Sejnost & Thiese (2007) recommend the following steps (pp. 14-15):

1. Select a passage of approximately 125 words for students in Grades 1-3. Choose a passage of 250-300 words for students in Grades 4-12.
2. Copy the first sentence of the passage in its entirety.
3. Delete every 10th word, until a total of 10 words are deleted for students in Grades 1-3 and every 5th word until a total of 50 words are deleted for students in Grades 4-12.
4. Copy the last sentence in its entirety. (You may, for continuity, copy the remainder of the paragraph.)
5. For students in Grades 1-3, create a word bank containing the exact words that have been deleted. (However, do not list the words in the order in which they appear in the text.)
6. For students in Grades 4-12, instruct students to read the passage and fill in each blank with the exact word they believe was deleted. (Note: Research indicates that the most valid score is reached when the exact word is used.)

Cloze Test Administration

In administering the test to an individual or group of students, Chatel(2001) recommends the following (p. 4):

1. Students should be advised to read the entire passage before they fill in the blanks.
2. The teacher should encourage the students to fill each blank if possible.
3. The teacher should suggest that students reread the completed passage.
4. Although there is no time limit, the student's time of completion should be noted since it may shed some light on student reading behavior that may be significant in the overall analysis of reading skills and abilities.

Cloze Scores and Interpretation

Scoring considers the percentage of correct and exact words. Wrong spelling is considered as long as the word is recognizable (Chatel, 2001). Sejnost & Thiese (2007) simplified the scoring by multiplying the number of correct answers by 10 for Grades 1-3 and by 2 for Grades 4-12.

There have been many other versions of the cloze procedure that emerged since Taylor first presented it. The procedure of eliminating words did not change, but the evaluation of how many correct answers equate to reading ease did. Originally, Taylor pegged 35% of correct and exact answers to be the minimum rate for texts in the Instructional level. Any rating below 35% means that the material is too difficult. Leu and Kinzer (1999, in Chatel, 2001) had pegged it at 44%. Richardson and Morgan (2003, in Sejnost & Thiese, 2007) pegged it at 40%. From Chatel's research (2001), she found another method of evaluating texts, this time considering synonyms, or semantically appropriate words, that make the sentence and passage complete but not exactly like the

original text. When synonyms are considered, the threshold of readability is marked higher at 70% (See Tables 2.2 and 2.3 for the Comparative Results and Interpretations of Cloze Test Results).

Table 1.2. Comparative results of various cloze scores indicating comprehensibility of texts

Level	Taylor's Original Scale (DuBay, 2004)	Leu & Kinzer, 1999 (Chatel, 2001)	Richardson & Morgan, 2003 (Sejnost & Thiese, 2007)	Extrapolation using other words (Chatel, 2001)
Independent	50-60%	58-100%	> 60%	> 90%
Instructional	35-50%	44-57%	40-53%	70-89%
Frustrational	< 35%	0-43%	< 40%	<69%

Table 2.3. Comparative interpretation of results from cloze test

Interpretation	Chatel, 2001	Richardson & Morgan, 2003 (in Sejnost & Thiese, 2007, p.15)
Independent	The material can be comprehended by the student alone. Vacca & Vacca (2000) called it Recreation Reading since there is motivation and interest present.	Text is too easy for the student; it can be read independently without instructional aid from a teacher.
Instructional	The material is challenging but can be comprehended with help from reading aids and teacher guidance.	Text is suitable for the student; it can be comprehended easily with instructional aid from the teacher.
Frustrational	Students are unable to decode and/or comprehend the text. It is too demanding to be useful instructionally.	Text is too difficult for the student; the text may require modification. An alternative text may need to be assigned, or a great deal of instructional guidance may need to be provided by the teacher.

In 1999, Hadley and Naaykens of the Nigata University of International and Informational Studies in Japan did a comparative study between the results of the standard cloze test which used the exact word scoring and the semantically acceptable, or SEMAC, word scoring. Their study showed a high correlation between the two types of scoring. Meaning, there was hardly any difference in scoring the cloze test using exact word or the synonym. Either scoring technique reflected the students' linguistic competency relative to the text. However, the same study showed that there is low reliability on using semantically acceptable word scoring due to the subjectivity of the answers. This type of scoring was also time consuming and harder to check.

Maze Test

Because the cloze test was also found to be a mentally challenging activity even for the adult test taker (Byram, 2000), the maze test was developed to help the student answer the test without undue burden. This version has almost the same procedure where words are deleted from the text at regular intervals and the student will have to complete the passage. The difference lies on three aspects. First, every seventh word, not fifth, is deleted. Second, instead of filling the blank with a word, three options are already present: the exact word, a distracter in the same semantic group, and a distracter that is chosen randomly from the same text. Third, the test is timed for three minutes for a 500-word passage. Some research report that the time element can be omitted depending on the objective of the test. Bean and Brandt (1981) commented that the maze test tends to overrate students' abilities to handle the unfamiliar passage. They further supported the use of the cloze test, against the maze, which they say, provides a more correct assessment. Examples of copyrighted maze tests that help schools conduct reading

comprehension tests, such as AIMSWeb by Edformation, Inc. (Shinn & Shinn, 2002) for General Outcome Measurement, and CORE Maze Test by Academic Therapy Publications (Millone, 2008) designed for Grades 2-10, are found in the United States.

C-Test

Another modification of the cloze procedure was developed in 1981 by Klein and Braley (Farhady & Jamali, n.d.) called the C-test, where instead of the whole word being deleted, half of the word is removed. For example, *protest* becomes *pro-_____*. And, instead of deleting every fifth or seventh word, the interval has been shortened to two. The advantages of the C-test over the cloze test are the predictability, increased sampling, shortness, one discrete solution, and less testing burden (Katona & Dornyei, 2004). Reliability and validity of the C-test still need to be investigated further since, at present, there are conflicting results from two available researches but there are educators who support the C-test for its convenience. Farhady & Jamali (n.d.) tested a variety of C-tests from the same passage. Their results show no correlation and, thus, cannot measure students' language competency. On the other hand, Tuvakoli, Ahmadi, and Bahrani (2011) proved that the C-test and the cloze test have a high correlation in measuring students' language proficiency with the same genre of text.

Cloze, Maze, and C- tests test how students can handle the text based on their linguistic abilities and prior knowledge of the text and of the world. But still, these techniques investigate readability on one aspect alone: the reader. There are still other factors of the text that contribute to reading ease or difficulty.

Readability Checklists

Since reading, readability, and reading abilities are complex, they cannot be evaluated by considering only a few factors (Woolley, 2000). Reading formulas are dependent on wordlength or difficulty and sentence length and complexity. The cloze test may reflect the readers' abilities to manage text, but it still does not show the entire picture on whether or not the material will be useful, enjoyable, and educational. Since there are other factors left, the Readability Checklist was developed as another means of evaluating texts based on criteria that reading specialists see as important in evaluation. Many of the available checklists are related to textbook evaluation.

Zakaluk and Samuels (1996) identified the following factors that educators need to consider when assigning reading materials for the readers.

For beginning readers

- Familiarity of underlying theme
- Complexity of sentence patterns
- Vocabulary
- Complementary nature of illustrations
- Formality of language
- Presence and nature of repetitions
- Format

For older readers

- Narrative or expository text
- Explicit statement of author's purpose
- Stated or inferred causal links
- Readers' meta-cognitive knowledge
- Ability to self-question

They further identified the following factors when evaluating text readability:

Inside-the-Head Factors

- Range of the child's life experiences
- Language competence
- Match between the child's language and the text language

Outside-the-Head Factors

- Physical features: print size, placement on the page
- Clarity and relevance of illustrations
- Repetitive nature of the language

In making meaning, text organization and cohesiveness are critical. The readers' experiences and prior knowledge also contribute to making words meaningful and the text readable. Pictures and language also make the text more appealing and easy to read. These factors are absent and cannot be measured in readability formulas (Zakaluk & Samuels, 1996).

Irwin & Davis' Readability Checklist

One of the most widely used readability checklists for content area textbook evaluation was developed by Judith Westpal Irwin and Carol A. Davis (1980). It presents two important areas that textbooks should have to be useful as an instructional material, namely, Understandability and Learnability. Under Learnability, three other important factors are included: Organization, Reinforcement, and Motivation. Guide questions pertaining to the strengths and weakness of the textbook found at the end of the evaluation sheet direct teachers on definite ideas that can enhance their teaching strategies. (See Appendix B for the sample of Irwin and Davis' Readability Checklist.) A textbook evaluator observes and rates the qualities on a scale of 1-5; where 5 is the highest. The University of Indiana adapted Irwin & Davis' Checklist using a simpler rating: Y for yes with a value of 2 points; N for no, valued at 1 point; and NA for Not Applicable and Ñ for Not Observed, both valued at zero. This was called the General Readability Checklist. It also indicated that it is used for "expository text only" (Conner, 2006, p. 1).

Henry Singer's Text Evaluation Scale

Aside from the Irwin & Davis Readability Checklist, Ulusoy (2006) presented another checklist that had been used in many other readability studies, the Henry Singer's Friendly Text Evaluation Scale. Ulusoy reviewed the elements of Singer's checklist to have the following components: (1) Text organization, including discourse consistency and cohesion, (2) Explication of ideas, composed of prior knowledge and organization basis, (3) Conceptual density, which considers the number of new ideas and vocabulary, (4) Meta-discourse, or the conversation between the reader and the author; and (5) Instructional devices, like table of contents, headings, subheadings, glossary, and index. Each dimension is evaluated using a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It interprets a score of 34 points to be friendly, while a 170 score as unfriendly. The actual checklist is only available through the book, *Reading in the Content Areas: Improving Classroom Instruction* by Dishner, Bean, Readence and Moore published by Kendall/Hunt. Related to this is a simpler adaptation of Singer's scale presented by TextAssessments.doc (2012). It is called FLIP for Friendliness, Language, Interest, and Prior Knowledge. It is simpler because it only presents four questions:

- (1) Friendliness – What features are easy and difficult to read?
- (2) Language – What terms might be new or difficult?
- (3) Interest – How interested will students be in this text?
- (4) Prior Knowledge – What do students already know about this topic or what is being asked of them?

The FLIP is indeed simpler, but it is not that simple to use since there are no guide or standards for measuring the features. All items are highly subjective as they are based solely on the opinion of the evaluator.

Marshall's Readability Checklist for Comprehensibility

Another readability checklist was developed by Marshall which was used by The Northwest Holocaust Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Ethnocide Education (2011) for the readability of the documents they recommend for the study of the Holocaust. The checklist contains six factors of readability: main ideas, vocabulary, concepts, related ideas, referents, and audience. Each item is evaluated with "Well Done", "Average", or "Poor" (See Appendix C for the sample).

ICL Checklist

Another checklist found on the internet is the ICL Checklist (complete name not given) adapted by Baltzell, Haas, and Rolph (2007) in their evaluation of a Social Studies textbook. This tool is composed of five items to evaluate: concept load or abstractness, format and organization, vocabulary, sentence length and structure, and inclusiveness. Concept load or abstractness has four items dealing with clarity of ideas and the literary technique used to deliver them. Format and organization has the most number of items, twelve (12), dealing with physical qualities, like print size and charts/illustrations, organization of main and supporting ideas, and end of the chapter questions. Vocabulary has two(2) items dealing with word choice and glosses or contextual aids. Sentence length and structure also includes referents of pronouns. This section has three (3) items. Inclusiveness, having six (6) items, addresses the diversity of the intended audience. The section contains the items on appropriateness of language and expressions and absence of biases or prejudices. All items are evaluated based on whether the items are evident and of good quality (see Appendix D for complete checklist items).

Most published readability checklists available are focused on content area textbooks and expository texts. There are none available exclusively for the evaluation of literary selections in language, reading or ESL/EFL textbooks. However, there are studies in the field of children's literature that present the qualities of suitable reading materials for children, especially trade books – Chall, Bissex, Conard and Harris-Sharples (1996), Darigan (2002), Norton (2011), and Lynch-Brown (2005).

Qualities of Children's Literature

Jeanne S. Chall and her team of researchers published the *Qualitative Assessment of Text Difficulty* in 1996. In their book, *Qualitative Assessment of Text Difficulty: A Practical Guide for Teachers and Writers*, four (4) scales of quality are presented, each for the fields of literature, popular fiction, life sciences, and physical sciences. Texts are assessed using rubrics and compared to exemplars or levelled texts. Teachers and writers can estimate the level of reading difficulty of a text using the rubrics and comparing linguistic and meta-cognitive features with the exemplars. Generally, texts are evaluated based on their (a) language, (b) sentence length and complexity, (c) conceptual difficulty, and (d) idea density and difficulty. For the literature scale, texts are evaluated using (a) knowledge of vocabulary, (b) familiarity with sentence structures, (c) depth and breath of life experiences, (d) cultural and literary knowledge, and (e) skill in literary analysis. Texts are levelled based on the qualities they possess and how close they come to resemble the exemplars or models for each level. To use this method, teachers must know the students' background and reading skills, and have a clear grasp of what the reading material is for.

Daniel Darigan's book (2001), "*Children's Literature: Engaging Teachers and Children in Good Books*," proposed a quadrant of evaluation of books, or stories, based on literary merit and readers' response (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4. Four possibilities of quality

Literary Merit	Readers' Response	Literary Merit	Readers' Response
+	+	+	-
-	+	-	-

Source: Darigan, Daniel (2001), *Evaluating Books: The Four Possibilities* [table], p.24 .In D. L. Darigan (2001) *Children's Literature: Engaging Teachers and Children in Good Books*. New Jersey, USA: Pearson Education.

Stories with positive literary merit and readers' response (upper left) are the ones that teachers and parents are supposed to provide their children. Stories with negative literary merit and readers' response (lower right) are poor quality and should be taken off the shelves of children's libraries. Stories that fall on quadrants 3 (lower left) and 2 (upper right) are problematic, and may require further considerations as they create frustrations on either teacher or students as they try to convince each other on the merits of the book. Teachers evaluate merit based on style, theme and values. Meanwhile, students base their evaluation on shared experience. Stories that should be read by children contain a subjective appeal that reaches their sense of pleasure, and have the "power to stir up interest" (Darigan, 2002, p. 24).

However, many teachers do not have that opportunity to choose stories that appeal to and interest the students. Most of the time, they are dependent on the selections in the textbooks since these are the most available.

Carol Lynch-Brown (2005) said that quality of literature is indefinable because quality is a factor of original and important ideas, imaginative language, artistic style and timelessness. Her criteria for evaluation of quality literature for children are based on individual literary genres that are discussed in detail in her book, *Essentials of Children's Literature*. She outlines four steps in helping teachers and parents in choosing the stories and other literature for children (p. 10-12):

1. **Know the Child.** The goal of reading is comprehension. Knowing the child's level of reading abilities and comprehension is important in selecting literature for their reading activities.
2. **Know the Book.** This item pertains to the readability of the book. Lynch-Brown recommends the use of the Fry test in evaluating children's literature. She also added that symbolism, abstraction, descriptions, flashbacks and shifting points of view add to the complexity of the reading material, and have to be considered in the evaluation.
3. **Know the Reading Process.** This item pertains to the reading modes that are done in the classroom. Lynch-Brown recommends silent independent reading, direct reading instruction and read-alouds daily in order to improve the reading abilities of the students in the primary and intermediate levels.
4. **Mode of Delivery –** This pertains to the entire teaching-learning process occurring in the classroom.

Both Darigan's and Lynch-Brown's criteria set the principles in working with literature evaluation that match the abilities of the readers. But Donna Norton (2011) gave the fourteen (14) guide questions for evaluating stories for children (p.99). Table 2.5 shows the questions and the features of readability to be assessed.

Table 2.5. Norton's list of qualities of children's literature

Questions	Features Assessed
1. Is this a good story?	First impression of the reader or evaluator on the story as a whole
2. Is the story about something I think could really happen? Is the plot believable?	Realism of the story based on the plot
3. Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	Realism of the plot relative to the nature of the character and social background of the readers
4. Did the climax seem natural?	
5. Did the character seem real? Did I understand the characters' personalities and the reasons for their actions?	Realism of the character based on human qualities and environment as set in the story
6. Did the characters in the story grow?	Realism of a dynamic character that is capable of changing into maturity and having strengths and weaknesses
7. Did I find out about more than one side of the characters? Did the characters have both strength and weakness?	
8. Did the setting present what is actually known about the time or place?	Realism of the setting in relation to the allegorical time and place, characters, and readers.
9. Did the characters fit into the setting?	
10. Did I feel that I was really in that time and place?	
11. What did the author want to tell me in the story?	Relevance of message
12. Was the theme worthwhile?	
13. When I read the book aloud, did the character sound like real people talking?	Realism of the language relative to the author's and readers' language
14. Did the rest of the language sound natural?	

Source: Norton, Donna. 2011. *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, p.99.

Norton's list of qualities for literature leans towards realistic fiction. None of the criteria makes room for fantasy and imaginary features of literature.

Readability of the text may be focused on the surface and deep structures of the sentences and stories, but other reading experts also include the physical qualities of the printed page that make a material readable. Some of these are already included in the readability checklists proposed for textbook evaluation.

Other Readability Qualities

Keith Johnson (2000) presented the physical qualities of the instructional material that contributes to the ease in reading. Below are the qualities of legibility he proposed:

1. The Type

- Lower case letters are better than capital letters.
- For labels using single letters, the capital letter is more advisable.
- Sans-serif letters, like Arial, for subheads and serif letters, like Times New Roman, for the body of texts are more legible.
- The upper coastline gives more information than the right hand side.
- Boldfaced letters are preferred for emphasis.

2. The Layout

- The 10-12 point type is better used for materials for fluent readers, and 14-16 point type for struggling readers.
- A 6-9cm length per line helps in speed reading.

- Seven (7) to twelve (12) words per line are ideal to achieve optimum comprehension.
- Unjustified lines are better to help readers scan the lines.
- Subheads help in providing the ideas in the sections.

3. The Reading Conditions

- Brightness between a book and the surrounding table surface should be 1:1, but a value of 3:1 is acceptable.
- Size of margin does not affect the speed of reading, but margins that are too narrow increase eye fatigue.
- Matte paper is friendlier to the eye than glossy paper.
- Block type on white paper is more legible.

From Zealley & Loftus (2003) Skills for Life Network, a similar criterion for readability is posted in the “Comparison of Information on Readability” from the Basic Skills Agency, Plain Language Campaign, Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), and British Dyslexia Association. Appendix E provides the information regarding the physical qualities of the printed page that are considered readable. These qualities include layout and text types, quality of paper, and style of writing.

What Makes Text Difficult

Readability studies were undertaken in order to help identify the qualities that make text easy to read. On the other hand, reading specialists have also made studies on what makes text difficult for students, whether first language (L1) or second language (L2) learners. Based on these studies, difficulty is caused by culture, language, and content.

1. Culture and Schema

The Schema Theory of reading says that comprehension happens when the reader's background knowledge, or schema, matches and interacts with the content of the text (Hermosa, 2002; Pardede, 2006). For Hetherington(1985), "background knowledge is first and foremost cultural" (p. 43). The concept of cultural schema covers cultural heritage, life experiences, interests, education, and personal relationships, which influences the readers' comprehension of the text. Reader Response Theory also supports the Schema Theory since readers' responses to literature are also based on their background knowledge (Hermosa, 2002).

Learners of another language find text difficult because of linguistic complexities and cultural content (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). L2 learners find reading in the target language difficult when there is conflict between their original cultural themes and the ones they read in textbooks. For example, Muslims in Pakistan will find it hard to read English texts with Christmas themes because of the difference in religion. To help the L2 students read, texts should provide themes that are similar to the students' cultural themes

so that they will be able to make predictions and inferences when comprehending texts (Anderson & Pearson, 1984, in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

2. *Language*

The language used in a text and the readers' first language (L1) are also a major contributor in text difficulty. Generally, the wider the difference between L1 and L2, the more the reader finds the text difficult to read. Studies have broken down this difficulty by identifying them into the following aspects:

a. *Vocabulary*

Hameed (2008) and Walter (2003) identified vocabulary load as perhaps the major contributor to difficulty. Hameed (2008) observed that an L2 reader should be able to recognize 10,000 words in order to comprehend text in the L2. Walter (2003) said that in order for an L2 reader to understand a text, s/he should be familiar to 95% of the words in the text. Furthermore, content familiarity cannot compensate for vocabulary. Difficult words for L2 learners consist of technical words and sentence connectors.

b. *Language patterns and syntax*

The difference between the language patterns, such as placement of subjects and verbs in a sentence, between the L1 and the L2 also contribute to text difficulty. The more similar the language patterns are in the L1 and the L2, the more comprehension there is for the readers. The differences between the L1 and the L2 disrupt the readers' comprehension. Syntactic features of both languages also contribute to disruption (Singhal, 1998).

c. Discourse and rhetorical structures

Texts with different discourse and rhetorical structures from the readers' also make texts difficult to understand. L2 readers often find difficulty coping with the structure of English academic writing. Their original language's discourse and rhetorical structure conflict with the target language (Singhal, 1998; Walter, 2003).

With these difficulties in language, students will encounter difficulty in inferring the meaning of the text. When students require more effort in making meaning out of text, then there is too much inference load. This load tends to tire learners, unnecessarily turning them off with the reading task (Hetherington, 1985).

3. Content and Context

According to Hetherington (1985), even L1 readers find it difficult to read materials which they are not familiar with. Content of texts must match the readers' ability. Beginning readers will comprehend more when they are given texts with more concrete content, facts, or events that are tangible or accessible to the senses. As the reading skills advance, more abstract content can be infused with the concrete, like love, jealousy, and liberty. If L1 readers already find abstract content difficult, L2 learners will find them even more difficult because they do not have the same level of schema as their L1 counterparts do (Hameed, 2008).

The author or editor also influences text difficulty. Fulcher (1997) noted that if the assumed audience for the text is clear, the text becomes coherent and is more likely be easier to read. Once the audience is clear, the purpose of writing the text will be clearer and less confusing for the intended readers. If there is a clear purpose, readers will be

making good predictions about the text, making the text more likely to be understood. Texts become difficult for readers because they are the wrong audience and/or purpose for reading is not clear.

Interest and Readability

Another way of looking at readability is knowing what the readers want to read. The National Book Development Board (NBDB) conducted the 2012 Readership Survey which aimed at knowing the reading behavior and habits of the Filipino. From this survey, authors and publishers should know what kinds of books to write and publish in order to make their businesses grow and help in the literacy of the nation. The top three most popular books in the Philippines are the Bible, romance books, and cookbooks. But this survey does not necessarily answer what makes a book, or story or text, readable to the public, or to children in particular (Morales, 2012). Literary critics of texts and children's books have identified the following as factors influencing interest among children:

1. Genre

Francis & Hallam (2000) recognize that one (1) feature of text that makes it difficult or easy for the readers is its genre. The genre of text with informational or narratives as the major categories, influences the language and structure of texts. Readers have to first identify the genre of text in order to assess the reader stance to take in order to comprehend the text content.

Donna Norton (2011) instructed reading teachers to consider the interests of the children when selecting stories. Intermediate school children, Grades 4 to 6, regardless of gender are already found to be interested in history, science, mystery, and adventure.

Middle school children, Grades 7 to 8, prefer mysteries, animals, and biographies. Girls lean towards romance, animals, religion, careers, and comedies. Boys prefer science fiction, mystery, history, and sports. Children, regardless of age and gender, enjoy comedy and adventure stories.

Barbara Kiefer (2010) also has the same categories for children's literature. She said that humor, suspense, action, and surprise are what make stories interesting to children. Teenagers aged 12-17 favor mysteries, science fiction, fantasy, biographies of celebrities and athletes, and how-to books. Unlike Norton, Kiefer sees gender as an unclear determiner for interest. There are differences but they are not set in stone. For example, girls begin to read romance stories earlier in life than boys. Boys will never read "girly" books, but girls will read "boys' books" anyway. In her report from the 2005 British survey of school-aged children, comedy and horror top students' preferences for stories. Boys' least favorite is romance or relationship stories, while girls will hardly read sports, war, or spy stories.

2. *Age*

The developmental stage, as predetermined by age, also affects the preferences of stories and texts in children. As children progress in their school life, their linguistic social and personal competencies are enriched. These factors contribute to what students want to read, when to read, and how often. Their experiences also form their content schema, which affect their preferences for what is an interesting read (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

Meel, Warlon, and Barton (1977, in Stoodt, 1996) said that progress and preferences of children to literature are developmental and changes with age. Their preferences change for literature changes in terms of form, (from nursery rhymes and hard books to stories and pocketbooks), genre (fairy tales and animal stories to reality fiction and fantasy), and themes (family to independence).

Stoodt (1996) identified three (3) aspects of literature that influence readers' response: sound, event, and world. Children of all ages prefer to have stories read to them. This strategy helps children develop their linguistic abilities through listening, exposes them to various literary forms, and improves their imagination as they transform the printed words into events in their minds. Children associate themselves with characters, setting, and plot that are close to their experiences. As these elements and events in text become distant to what they are familiar with, the lower their comprehension is to the text. Children also look at the world in different ways. As children grow they move from authority-based morals into those that are collectively defined by their influential groups. Teenagers particularly prefer stories where the characters are of their own age and struggling with the realities of adolescents or create for themselves heroic roles that they can associate with.

From the preceding discussions on readability, it can be concluded that readability of texts, whether they are informational, educational or literary, constitutes semantic, syntactic, physical, content, and cultural attributes. What began as a study of easy words in 1893 in the United States had evolved and expanded itself to include so much more aspects of readability and reading ability. The objective of readability studies, though expanded into many fields – like journalism, medical literature, and law – still has the

original intention, which is to evaluate educational materials. This is still employed in many other parts of the world.

Evaluation and Selection of Textbooks

In developing countries, like the Philippines and Pakistan, the textbook is an integral part of the educational system because it contains practically the curriculum of the nation. The country sees it as an embodiment of educational content and performance standards which can be transferred to the schools. Teachers see it as the learning package where instructional materials, strategies, and, in Teacher Manuals, even assessments. Students and parents look at the textbook as the content of the educational goals. (Mahmood, Iqbal, & Saeed, 2009).

In the Philippines, 70% of published books consist of textbooks and references. To maintain the quality of these materials consistent to the educational goals set by the DepEd, the National Book Development Board (NBDB) was established under RA 8047 to ensure quality textbooks through the privatization of public school textbook publications. In their textbook evaluation guidelines (see Appendix G) posted by Pilor, readability seems to be absent in their criteria. Content evaluation is present in Item 2 of their procedures, but readability is not stipulated. It does mention that only books that are written based on research, written by professionals, and consistent with the DepEd standards will be considered to pass (Buhain, 2005).

If the DepEd, through the NBDB and the Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS), can evaluate books for the public school system, they do not provide any procedure for the private schools, which is encouraged to promulgate rules and

regulations or systems for their choice of instructional materials (Gonzales, 2009). However, the number of publications in this area of study is still limited and small.

Readability Studies of School Texts in the Philippines

If readability studies have a history of eighty (80) years in the United States, the Philippines has a sporadic and scarce history of readability studies. From the University of the Philippines, only six (6) studies were produced from the late 1980's to the present.

Espartero (1976) evaluated six (6) high school textbooks that the UP Science Education Center (UPSEC) wrote and compared these with six (6) other science textbooks published locally by other authors. She used the Flesch reading formulas, Flesch Reading Ease and Human Interest Score. She manually computed the length of sentences, number of syllables per one hundred (100) words, personal words and personal sentences, then subjected them to the Flesch formulas. She presented the results of the study but not the results of the formulas. Her conclusions were vague since she reported that the UPSEC books were "generally superior" to the non-UPSEC books. Superior may mean two things: the books match the target grade level, or they may be too difficult or they have higher grade level than the non-UPSEC books. She, however, declared that the non-UPSEC books were more appropriately levelled but did not clarify the basis for the appropriateness. The results do not imply any appropriateness to the intended readers and could only imply that the authors have varied writing styles; some may have been written in a simplistic style using common layman's words while others may be too technical using jargon and complex sentences. Espartero recognized the inadequacy of formulas in the study because she recommended that a study on the reading abilities of

the intended students is needed in order to make a judgment on the match between the reader and the text.

In 1982, Carolina V. Perez conducted another readability study of the elementary science textbooks, Elementary School Science (ESS) series, developed as well by the UPSEC. This time she investigated the compatibility of the texts to the students. She used the Fry test to evaluate text difficulty and the cloze procedure to test the students' ability to handle the text. She correlated the results using the Spearman Rho test. She found that the texts were much too difficult for their target readers.

Both Espartero's and Perez's works were projects funded by the Ministry of Education (formerly DepEd). No other government funded studies on readability came after these.

In 1992, Tuangporn Somsamai conducted another readability study for his Master in Education degree from UP Diliman. He investigated the match between college engineering textbooks and the reading abilities of Thai freshman college students. He used three (3) textbooks published in English in Computer, Chemistry, and Engineering Drawing. His participants came from the Rangsit University, Thailand. He used the Maze Test on the students to test how well they can manage the text. He also subjected the text to the T-unit test to give an estimate of the readability of the texts. He also performed the Gates-McGinitie Test for testing the comprehension of the students on the textbooks. The results showed that the college textbooks do not conform to the reading abilities of the Thai students. This means that the students need to take more time and effort in understanding their textbooks, than in the application of the concepts for their profession.

Teaching aids were then recommended to help the students cope in understanding their textbooks.

Recently, another addition to readability of school texts was published. Diaz & Ocampo (2013) studied and estimated the readability of twelve (12) Filipino narratives and six (6) Filipino expositions used in teaching Filipino and Araling Panlipunan subjects in schools. Their study is a pioneering study on the readability of Filipino texts. The study utilized comprehension test, cloze test, and perception of students to measure text difficulty. These were given to Grade 1 to Grade 6 students in the public schools. These measures are compared to the UP-Adarna House Filipino Text Readability Index (UPAH-FiTRI) and the researchers' perceived text difficulties. The UPAH-FiTRI is based on the method used by the Lexile Measure which bases readability on the semantic and syntactic qualities of the text. The results of the study show that the texts, both narrative and expository, assigned to the grade levels were one (1) to two (2) levels more difficult.

Readability Studies of School Texts in Non-English Speaking Countries

In 1996, Charles Browne of the Aoyama Gakuin University analyzed the readability of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) reading texts in Japanese schools. He studied twenty-six (26) university level EFL textbooks published by seven (7) Japanese publishers, twenty-one (21) ESL (English as a Second Language) textbooks published by American and British publishers, and four (4) government-approved third year high school reading textbooks. He also used four (4) American university textbooks as means of comparison for the Japanese textbooks. He subjected one (1) chapter from each textbook into a readability text available from Microsoft Word 1995: Flesch Reading

Ease, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Coleman-Liau Grade Level, and Bormuth Grade Level. He also noted the textbooks' simplification strategies, particularly glosses and reading activities, to investigate which textbooks contain aids for the students to read English. He found out that the EFL textbooks for the high school had readabilities one (1) grade higher than the students' grade level. They were even 3.5 grades higher than the Japanese college EFL texts and almost equivalent to American university level textbooks. The Japanese published EFL texts did not contain simplification strategies, while the American and British books were filled with glosses, pre- and post-reading strategies. Browne concluded that text difficulty and the lack of reading aids were the cause of the Japanese's overreliance on dictionaries, and the lack of competency in English in spite of the students spending six (6) years learning English.

Robert Burns and Rosalind Charleston (1997) conducted a study on textbooks for Brunei Darussalam. In their article, *The Readability of English Medium Curriculum Texts in Brunei Primary Schools*, three (3) textbooks were evaluated, for the subjects Geography and History, Science and Math. For English, instead of a textbook, the government had a compilation of reading materials. This, too, was evaluated. The study used the Flesch, FOG, SMOG and Fry tests to evaluate text difficulty. From the four (4) formulas, the textbooks were found hard to read and uninteresting for their target readers. No tests were conducted that involved students' reading abilities to handle the text or teachers' judgment.

Another study from Brunei Darussalam is a government-funded one conducted by Bob Chui Seng Yong (2010) on the national textbooks for Grade 7 Science, *Secondary Science for Brunei Darussalam Book One*. The study used two (2) methods to evaluate

the texts: readability tests and the cloze test. Three (3) readability tests were used – Gunning Fox, Fry, and Flesch-Kincaid – to determine the age level appropriateness of the texts. He concluded that the textbook was two (2) levels higher than the average age of the readers. The cloze test was given to 48 Grade 7 students. He found that only 35% read at the independent level and the rest, 68%, were at the frustration level. He attributed the difficulty of the text to the low percentage of students passing the monthly tests in Science.

From Malaysia, Yee, Chong, and Ng (2012) conducted an evaluation of the ESL Reading textbook, *Active Skills for Reading: Book 3*, used for their reading proficiency class. Fifty-three (53) students, aged 20 to 40, of the Intensive English Programme of the University Tenaga Nasional, used a questionnaire (Appendix E) to evaluate the reading texts based on content, exploitability, readability, and authenticity. The results showed a positive acceptability of the reading texts. Only students' perception was used and no readability formula or teachers' involvement was used to evaluate text difficulty. The uniqueness of this study was on the reliance on the students, or users, for the evaluation of the readability of the textbook. The students who participated were mature learners who were expected to objectively perform the evaluation, unlike young students who may still have to struggle with understanding the questionnaire.

However, one setback in using a one sided approach relying on people's perception is social desirability. Social desirability is the tendency of respondents to give an answer that will result in a positive social image of themselves (Holtgraves, 2004). This is mostly observed among younger children, but adults also reflected some level of

this behavior (Crandall, Crandall, & and Katkovsky, 1965). Thus, other more objective methods should be paired with evaluation based on users' perception.

The studies made by Espartero, Browne, and Burns & Charleston, relied on the results of the formulas which are based on the American standards of readability. This means that relying on the formulas assumes that the readability of the textbooks for the non-native English speakers is based on the standards of American native English speakers. However, the studies made by Perez, Diaz & Ocampo, Somsamai, Yong, and Yee, Chong & Ng involved the readers' interaction with the texts. The advantage of the latter set of research is on the involvement of the readers. Readability formulas are limited to the semantic and syntactic features of the text, but involving the readers through the use of the cloze test incorporates the readers' linguistic abilities, and in a way suggests the match between the reader and the text. Involving the teacher in the evaluation of the readability of the text further strengthens the investigation for the match between the students and the text in the classroom setting by incorporating the teachers' perception of what is readable and instructive.

Approaches in Readability Studies

In the past, research studies on the readability of materials focused primarily on evaluating only one aspect of readability at a time, and many of them were on the syntactic and semantic features of the text. Reading abilities of students were in the other realm of reading research. All claim that the readability evaluation is lacking if focused only on one aspect of reading (Burns & Charleston, 1997; Browne, 1996; Espartero, 1976).

For research involving multiple perspectives, Devlin (in Byram, 2000; Olsen, 2004; Holzhausen, 2001) found that triangulation of methods can address the insufficiencies of single-approach studies. Triangulation involves the use of multiple approaches in answering a research problem (Byram, 2000). Often, these approaches involve both qualitative and quantitative methods (Hozhausen, 2001). Through triangulation, the various research methods applied can give the research design more strength than using a singular method (Holzhausen, 2001), reveal the various angles of the problem (Olsen, 2004), and increase the confidence level from the results (Byram, 2000). The Northwest Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Ethnocide (NCHGE) of the Western Washington University, USA, (2011) posted the advantages and disadvantages of singularly using one of the three well-known approaches: Formulaic Assessment, Checklist Assessment, and Student's Input (see Table 2.6). Results from triangulated processes are recommended to be placed in matrices for a comparative analysis, and discussion is essential to make sense of the results and come up with a conclusion (Holzhausen, 2001).

In readability evaluation, the NCHGE (2011) recommended the triangulation of approaches in readability testing: Formulaic Assessment, Checklist Assessment and Student Input. The Center evaluated ten (10) pieces of literature on the Holocaust, but only used the Fry Test and Marshall's Checklist. They were not able to involve students in their evaluation of literature but strongly advised it for future research.

Baltzell, Haas & Rolph (2007) were able to apply triangulation in their assessment of the readability of Boyer's *American Nation for Grade 10*. Three (3) methods were used to cover the subjective, objective, and student input components of

the triangulated procedure. The ICL Checklist provided the subjective component (See Appendix D). The Fry formula was the objective component. And, the Content Informal Reading Inventory (CIRI) was used as a tool for student input. The research did not provide any statistical or descriptive procedures in analyzing the results of the readability assessment.

Table 2.6. Advantages and disadvantages of readability assessment approaches

APPROACH	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Formulaic Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbiased • Very objective • Measures vocabulary and sentence difficulty • Easy to perform • Easy to repeat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglects subjective evaluation • No student involvement • Does not consider content and ideas • Examine samples, not entire texts
Checklist Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reveals ease or difficulty of texts • Can compare results with other evaluators • Very subjective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to bias of evaluators • Cannot be used by itself • Not objective • No grade-level readability
Student Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves students' prior knowledge, skills, interest, and comfort level • Uses text in context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to repeat • Individuality of results dependent on student

Source: The Northwest Center for Holocaust, Genocide and Ethnocide Education, 2011, Readability Analysis Tools [Figure]. www.wce.wvu.edu/nwche/readability/Readability.pdf.

Summary

The end goal of reading is comprehension. In order to comprehend a text, there should be interaction between the text, the reader, and the context. The productive interaction among these elements is based on the match between the reader's ability and text difficulty, the reader and the context of reading, and the text and the content or purpose of reading. Reader's response to literature also provides a perspective on the

interesting themes of literature for children and adolescents. In knowing the themes contained in texts, selection of reading materials may prove to provide learners with texts that are easily understood and at the same time develop literacy.

Spanning more than a hundred years in American history, text difficulty has been concerned with two things. The first approach is the preoccupation with the complexity of the written word. The second is the reader's ability to comprehend. From the argument that text difficulty is caused by the features of the written word come the various readability formulas that, up to today, the number of research on them keeps growing. Among the popular readability formulas that are used today are the Fry Graph, Dale-Chall's Formula, Flesch's formulas, ATOS, and Lexile (Du Bay, 2004). Because reading is complex and involves the readers, the participation of readers and their ability to read arose in the arguments of text difficulty (Zakaluk & Samuels, 1996). Thus, the cloze, maze, and C-tests, plus other comprehension tests, came out to balance the limited features of the formulas (Katona & Dornyei, 2004; Chatel, 2001; Bean & Brant, 1981).

Other factors, aside from word complexity and reader's linguistic abilities, are laid out on readability checklists, the subjective evaluation of text difficulty (Woolley, 2000; Irwin & Davis, 1980). Here, other qualitative features of text, like cohesion, organization, content, and even physical features, can be listed and checked by evaluators, especially teachers who know the students best.

Studies on reading difficulties show that even when the materials were written well, students would still find texts difficult to read when their cultural schema is far from the cultural load that is in the text. Beginning readers also need to read more concrete

rather than abstract content in order to help them comprehend (Hetherington, 1985). Language is also seen as a major contributor to text difficulty, especially when the readers' known vocabulary, language patterns and syntax, and discourse and rhetorical structures are very different from the texts' (Hameed, 2008; Walter, 2003; Singhal, 1998).

To evaluate the level of text difficulty, readability studies were done using a single-method approach, but better results came from a triangulated method where formulas, students, and teachers are involved (NCHGEE, 2011; Olsen, 2004; Holzhausen, 2001; Byram, 2000). Some of the studies that used more than one approach were those of Perez (1982), Somsamai (1992), Baltzell, et al. (2007), Yong (2010), NCHGEE (2011) and Diaz & Ocampo (2013). Except for the NCHGEE's and Diaz & Ocampo's investigations which were focused on literature, these studies were focused on the evaluation of content area texts: Science in Perez, Somsamai and Yong, and Social Studies in Baltzell et al. More studies still need to be done in English texts which include literary works not originally intended for students and language instruction.

To help students read independently, books selected for children should match their reading level; otherwise, the children become frustrated with words that they do not know (Norton, 2011). To motivate reading, prose that are simpler than what the readers can actually read should be provided. To influence language development, materials with a reading level that is slightly above the reader's reading level, "I+1" comprehensible input, should be given to students coupled with direct instruction on reading (Krashen, 1991). For the United States' standards, comprehensible input for the average American adults, with twelve (12) years of schooling, is 65-75% on the Flesch Reading Ease (Stephen, 2000), or a grade level of nine (9) (DuBay, 2004). But for students who are

highly motivated in a subject, their reading skill may handle difficulties past their school level abilities (DuBay, 2004). These benchmarks are the results of years of research in the United States, which are still lacking in the Philippines, and perhaps, in other developing countries as well.

Conceptual Framework

Readability studies all aim to describe in measurable terms the reading ease of a text. If texts are readable, then students of a language, in this case English, are expected to love reading and become fluent speakers and competent readers and writers.

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 4 shows the interrelationships of the three approaches done in previous readability studies. In the past, most researches focused only on one approach; most of these are on the quantitative measures which gave the readability formulas. Countering the studies on readability formulas, other unifacted studies focused on the qualitative features of text. However, recent studies recommend that readability studies will benefit with a multi-faceted approach involving the use of qualitative assessment done by teachers, who are the main people involved in literacy education; quantitative measures or readability formulas to measure the syntactic and semantic features of the text; and the abilities of students who are the primary users of text for language development.

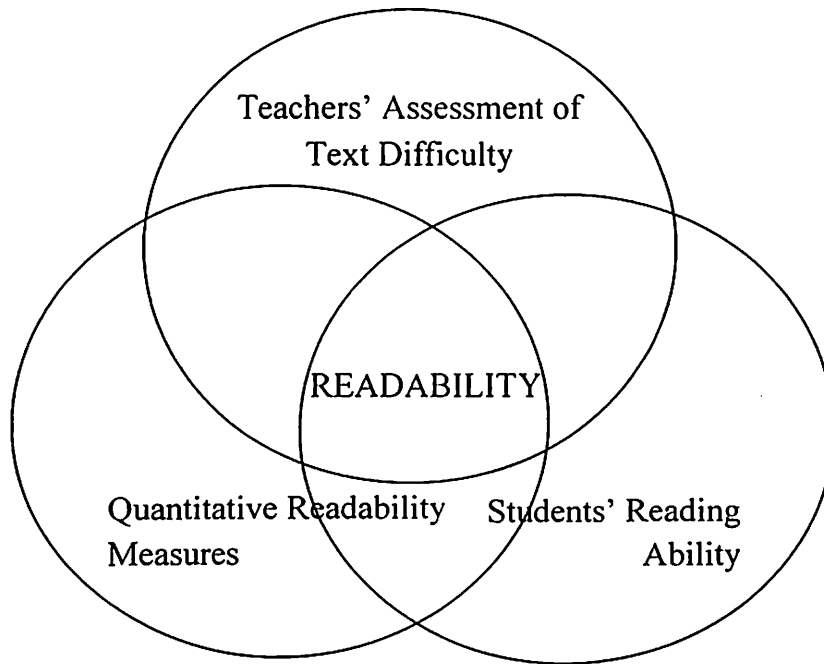


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework

This study follows this conceptual framework in evaluating Philippine literature in English, the prescribed reading for the Grade 7 English program. By using three approaches in evaluating the readability, texts can be evaluated if they indeed meet Krashen's comprehensible input in order to develop Filipinos' English competencies.

Definition of Terms

The following are the terms that are used in the study, the Readability of Philippine Literature in English in Commercially Published Textbooks:

1. Readability - defined as the ease of reading a text contributed by the word complexity, reader's abilities, and perceived difficulty by teachers and students. This is described through the use of indices resulting from the use of

formulaic assessment, cloze test, and readability checklists from teachers and students.

2. Philippine Literature in English - the collective term given to all written literary works of Filipinos in English. For this study, these are the nine (9) most common short stories that appeared in selected commercially published English 7 (or First Year) English textbooks.
3. Commercially Published Textbooks - textbooks made available for the private school system. As opposed to public school textbooks, these are less regulated by the Department of Education through the NBDB and IMCS. For this study, eight (8) textbooks were chosen from available Evaluation Copies from various publishers.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, locale, and materials for the study. It also describes the instruments that were used and their justifications. Participants in the study are also described, as well as the procedure for data collection and analysis.

Research Design

This study investigated and profiled the readability of the selections of Philippine stories written in English. Browne (1996) did a similar study on Japanese ESL texts, but it only used reading formulas. He attested that formulas are limited, and that other measures should be applied for future studies. Therefore, a triangulated approach (Holzhausen, 2001) was employed in this research to incorporate three approaches in readability research: objective, subjective, and student input (Baltzell, Haas, & Rolph, 2007) as featured in Figure 5.

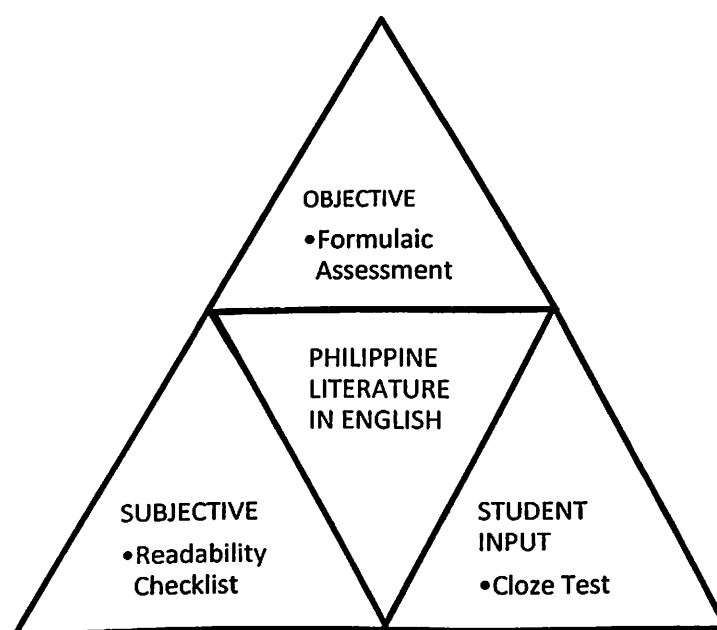


Figure 5. Triangulated Research Approach

It is the design similar to and recommended by the NCHGEE (2011). The objective and quantitative component used a reading formula. The subjective and qualitative assessment used a readability checklist. The third component involved students' linguistic abilities through the use of a cloze test, another quantitative measure, but considered as the student input in this study.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in a first class urban municipality outside of the National Capital Region. Considered as an academic and scientific community, the municipality has fourteen (14) public elementary schools and fourteen (14) secondary schools, and around twenty (20) private elementary and secondary schools. Many of these are located near a prestigious state university.

Research Materials

The Philippine literature in English in this study is a set of short stories featured in commercially published textbooks. Eight (8) textbooks, evaluation copies from the Philippines' major textbook publishers that were available to the researcher, were inventoried to survey the stories contained in each. The following is the list of the books:

1. Pathways to Communication I

Book Authors: Romarico Barrientos, Covina Bobadilla-Belen, and

FlorisanDaniel; Corazon Esclabanan (author-consultant)

Publisher: Abiva Publishing House, Inc.

Copyright: 2009, first edition

2. English of the New Generation First Year (Philippine Literature)

Authors: Mina Catacutan, Wilma Del Mundo, Esther Macajelos, and Ma.
Corazon Valdez

Publisher: Sunshine Interlinks Publishing House, Inc.

Copyright: 2010, first edition

3. Skyways to Effective Communication in English First Year – Philippine Literature

Authors: Leonarda Cruz, Lolita Arboza, and Josefa Herrera

Publisher: JO-ES Publishing House, Inc.

Copyright: 2011, first edition

4. Quest I: Adventure in Philippine Literature, Communication, and Personal Leadership

Authors: Maria Teresa Wright, Ma. Nieves Wright, Paz Verdades Santos, and
Marily Madrunio

Publisher: Trailblazers Publication

Copyright: 2010, first edition

5. Rainbows in Communication

Authors: Remedios Nery and Josephine Cruz

Publisher: Vibal Publishing House, Inc.

Copyright: 2007, first edition

6. Journeying through Literature and Language with Philippine Literary Texts

Authors: Lourna Tagay and Ma. Luisa Brutas

Publisher: Salesiana Books by Don Bosco Press, Inc.

Copyright: 2009, first edition

7. Literature through the Ages

Authors: Nerissa Gabelo and Erlinda Cayao

Publishers: Innovative Education Materials (IEM), Inc.

Copyright: 2006, first edition

8. Language in Literature: Philippine Literature

Authors: Lourdes Ribo, Honeylein De Peralta, and Remedios Nery

Publisher: Vibal Publishing House, Inc.

Copyright: 2010, third edition

After surveying the stories that appeared in the eight (8) textbooks, the most frequently used stories were selected for this study. The following are the stories that appeared in two or more of the listed textbooks. Along with the titles and authors are the textbooks where they are found.

1. How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife by Manuel Arguilla

- a. Pathways to Communication (Abiva)
- b. Literature through the Ages (IEMI)
- c. Skyways to Effective Communication in English (JO-ES)
- d. English in the New Generation (Sunshine)

2. **My Father Goes to Court** by Carlos Bulosan
 - a. Skyways to Effective Communication in English (JO-ES)
 - b. Literature through the Ages (IEMI)
 - c. Journeying through Literature and Language (Salesiana)
 - d. English in the New Generation (Sunshine)

3. **Footnote to Youth** by Jose Garcia Villa
 - a. Skyways to Effective Communication in English (JO-ES)
 - b. Literature through the Ages (IEMI)
 - c. Pathways to Communication (Abiva)

4. **The Small Key** by Paz Latorena
 - a. Journeying through Literature and Language (Salesiana)
 - b. Skyways to Effective Communication in English (JO-ES)

5. **The Wedding Dance** by Amador Daguio
 - a. English in the New Generation (Sunshine)
 - b. Skyways to Effective Communication in English (JO-ES)

6. **We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers** by Alejandro Roces
 - a. Skyways to Effective Communication in English (JO-ES)
 - b. Language in Literature (Vibal)

7. **Distance to Andromeda** by Gregorio Brillantes
 - a. Adventures in Philippine Literature (Trailblazers)
 - b. Rainbows in Communication (Vibal)

8. **Life is a Three-Ring Circus** by Jose Quirino
 - a. Literature through the Ages (IEMI)
 - b. Language in Literature (Vibal)
9. **May Day Eve** by Nick Joaquin
 - a. Literature through the Ages (IEMI)
 - b. Language in Literature (Vibal)

Instrumentation

This research employed three instruments previously mentioned in other related research – Readability Formulas, Cloze Procedure, and Readability Checklist. These were reviewed by three reading experts from the University of the Philippines at Diliman.

Readability Formula: Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level

For the objective approach, the readability formula proposed by Robert Flesch, the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grades, was used based on the number of researches that used them (Espartero, 1976; Browne, 1996; Burns & Charleston, 1997; Yong, 2010), and its availability on the Microsoft Word 2007. To validate the results produced from Microsoft Word 2007, other online readability calculators from ReadabilityFormulas.com, OnlineUtilities.com and Reading-Score.com were also used. The average score from these three softwares was used as the index of readability of the texts.

Cloze Procedure, Tests, and Scores

To test if the texts were readable to the target readers, the cloze procedure was used following the construction guidelines given by Sejnost and Thiese (2007), and the

comments given by Chatel (2001). However, since the intended participants of the study are non-native English speakers, the deletion was every 10th word, instead of the recommended 5th or 7th word deletion for Grades 4 to 12 (Sejnost & Theise, 2007). Also, instead of leaving the first and last sentences intact, the test left the first paragraph intact. Deletions started from the second paragraph until fifty (50) words were removed. The last paragraph was also left intact after the deleted paragraphs. A cover page was also designed to provide the practice test and the directions (See Appendices H and I for samples).

Readability Checklist

The available readability checklists in extant literature were reviewed by a seasoned English teacher for their usefulness in the field. She surveyed the questions from the different checklists and determined the one that is more applicable for literature and its friendliness to the teachers who might use the tool for evaluation. From these the list of Donna Norton (2011) was selected because it was designed specifically for literature, particularly stories. However, Norton did not specify any numerical means of evaluating literature based on her questions.

To make the checklist a more practical tool for evaluation, the options Yes, Somewhat, and No were added for the evaluator to choose from. However, not all the questions in the original list can be answerable by Yes or No. Therefore, some modifications on the questions were made to fit the tool's specification. Table 3.1 shows the original fourteen (14) questions given by Norton (2011) and their modifications where needed. Twelve (12) questions from Norton's list were retained in question form.

Question 11, *What did the author want to tell me in the story?*, was discarded since the author's perspective is not answerable by Yes or No. Item 1, *"Is this a good story?"* was changed to *"Will the story be interesting to your students?"* Because the word "good" is vague. To make it more specific, the question targeted the interest factor of readability (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011; Kiefer, 2010; Stoodt, 1996). Items 2 and 7 have follow-up questions.

#2. Is the story about something I think could really happen? Is the plot believable?

#7. Did I find out about more than one side of the characters? Did the characters have both strengths and weaknesses?

These were simplified to give discrete answers. Item 5 had two questions.

#5. Did the character seem real? Did I understand the characters' personalities and reasons for their actions?

These were rephrased and assigned to two numbers. Item number 10 was also rephrased to take the perspective of the teacher.

#10. Did I really feel that I was in the time and place?

This readability checklist was entitled Readability Checklist for Short Stories (Appendix J). Each item could be answered with Yes, Somewhat, or No. These responses were weighted with 3, 2, and 1 points, respectively. The total number of points were used as the readability index of the story for this approach.

Table 3.1. Comparison between Norton's original questions and the study's readability checklist questions with justifications

Norton's original list of questions	This study's readability checklist questions	Justification
1. Is this a good story?	1. Will the story be interesting to your students?	The word "good" is vague. The new question specified the target audience.
2. Is the story about something I think could really happen? Is the plot believable?	2. Is the story something that could really happen?	The new question offers a more discrete answer.
3. Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	3. Does the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	
4. Did the climax seem natural?	4. Does the climax seem natural?	
5. Did the character seem real? Did I understand the characters' personality and the reasons for their actions?	5. Are the characters' personality realistic?	The new question is simpler and easier to observe.
	6. Are the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	
6. Did the characters in the story grow?	7. Do the characters grow in the story?	
7. Did I find out about more than one side of the characters? Did the characters have both strength and weakness?	8. Do the characters have both strengths and weaknesses?	
8. Did the setting present what is actually known about the time or place?	9. Does the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or place?	
9. Did the characters fit into the setting?	10. Do the characters fit the setting?	
10. Did I feel that I was really in that time and space?	11. While reading, do you feel that you are really in that time and space?	This was rephrased to take the perspective of the teacher.
11. What did the author want to tell me in the story?		This was discarded since it cannot be answerable by Yes or No.
12. Was the theme worthwhile?	12. Is the theme worthwhile?	
13. When I read the book aloud, did the character sound like real people talking?	13. When you read the story aloud, do the characters sound like real people talking?	
14. Did the rest of the language sound naturally?	14. Does the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	

The readability checklist was also used in a focus group discussion with students who read some of the selections in their Grade 7 English subject. The same questions in the teachers' version were kept but rephrased to take the students' perspective.

Research Participants

The research required the participation of both students and teachers who are the primary users of Philippine literature in English. A simple random sampling of public and private high schools was done to determine which schools would be used as participants in the study. The names of the schools were obtained from the DepEd District Office. The names of the public and private schools were written on pieces of papers and drawn. The school principals were written letters of request. Another lot was drawn when the principal rejected the invitation. The first private high school consented immediately. The first public high school drawn declined the invitation; the second consented.

Since the participants for this study are minors, aged 12 or 13, the principal was requested to provide consent for the students to participate in the same study. The study was conducted inside the school under the supervision of the classes' English teachers. One (1) heterogeneous class from each of the schools was selected to participate in the study.

The study used two groups of students: (1) those who had not read the stories yet were given the Cloze Test, and (2) those who had read the stories attended a focus group discussion with the use of the Readability Checklist. From the private school, thirty (30) Grade 6 students participated in the Cloze Test and ten (10) Grade 7 students in the focus group discussion held on March 18-20, 2013. From the public school, forty-five (45)

Grade 7 students participated in the Cloze Test and ten (10) Grade 8 students in the focus group discussion held on August 7-9, 2013. In effect, these students belonged to the same class, or batch. The summer vacation from April to May 2013 and the refusal of some school principals were the limitations in the selection of participating schools, consequently leading to the difference in time of data gathering.

Three (3) teachers agreed to participate in the study. One (1) from the public school and two (2) were from the private school. The public school teacher, Teacher A, is the youngest of the three having four and a half (4 ½) years of teaching experience in the local public school. She graduated with a degree in Secondary Education in a local state college and has been teaching English 7 since she was accepted in the local high school. She had no post-graduate units at the time of the study. The private school teachers are both taking their Master of Education units from a state university, and have teaching experiences of more than five (5) years. Teacher B has been teaching English 7 for eight (8) years. She had a business degree from a state university but shifted to take post-graduate education after teaching for three (3) years. Teacher C has been teaching English 5 & 6 for fifteen (15) years. She had a communications degree but took post-graduate units in education later in her career.

Data Collection Procedure

The data in this study were collected from four (4) sources: readability formulas, cloze procedure, readability checklist for teachers, and focus group discussion with students using the readability checklist.

Readability Formulas

The selected stories were first encoded using Microsoft Word 2007. These stories were saved to be used for the construction of the cloze tests. A sample of text, "*Father Goes to Court*" is in Appendix K.

Similar to Browne's study(1996), the selections were tested for the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level using, first, the Readability Statistics of MS Word 2007. The text was highlighted, and then the Spelling and Grammar Check function was clicked. After the program scanned the text, a dialogue box appeared on the screen. The Print Screen button was then clicked for the image to be pasted on the same MS Word file for posterity.

Three (3) readability calculator sites from the internet were prompted. The entire text of the story was selected then pasted on the sites. Once the results were shown, the Print Screen button was again pressed and the image was pasted on the same Word file of the story.

When all the short stories were scanned, the results were then recorded in an MS Excel File to get the averages and correlation of the four (4) readability calculators. The averages were then taken as the readability index. This was also used as the primary data for the triangulation of results as prescribed by Olsen (2004).

Cloze Procedure

When the Principals of the target schools agreed to participate in the research and the schedule for the cloze procedure was set, the researcher visited the classes to administer the cloze test.

With the assistance of the English 7 teachers of the schools, the cloze tests were given to the students during their English class. The students were oriented on the procedure. The researcher emphasized that the tests were not an aptitude test, or that they were graded, or the activity part of their grades, so the students would not feel pressured in getting the right answers or be too anxious in completing the tests. In both private and public school classes, the students were able to complete each test in 15-20 minutes. Three (3) cloze tests were given in the first one-hour session. In both private and public schools, the English teachers offered to administer the tests themselves in the remaining two (2) days of the research visit. The test papers were collected at the end of the week.

The papers were manually checked by the researcher. Following the guidelines set by Chatel (2001) and the original procedure set by Taylor (in DuBay, 2004), only the exact words were accepted as correct answers.

The raw scores of these tests were then multiplied by two (2) to get the percentage of correct answers. Taylor's original scale was used to describe the level of text difficulty based on the cloze scores. These scores were then recorded in MS Excel to get the statistics: percentages for each level of difficulty, mean or average, highest and lowest scores, range of scores, and standard deviation. Statistics from each school and for the entire sample were also taken into consideration. The average cloze score was used as the

index of readability for this approach. This was used as the secondary data as suggested by Olsen (2004).

Readability Checklists for Teachers

Each of the three (3) teachers was given the complete set of nine (9) short stories with the Readability Checklists. They were given one (1) week to accomplish the tests; however, not all the tests were answered by the teachers from the private school. Those from the public school were answered completely. Upon receipt of the data, the teachers verbally shared their impressions of the study and the short stories. All three (3) said that they found the stories difficult for their students. They often retold the stories in order for the students to understand the elements. The public school teacher and the Principal even said that they would like to replicate this study as an action research for their own textbooks.

Focus Group Discussion with Grade 8 Students

The same readability checklists used by the English teachers were given to their Grade Eight students in the focus group discussion. The researcher went through the stories and checklist items one by one with the students.

The results from the readability checklists were then recorded in MS Excel. The total scores were taken and considered as the readability index for this approach. Separate figures were given for teachers' and students' evaluations.

Summary of the Procedure

The study employed three approaches in collecting data. After stories from textbooks were encoded in Microsoft Word, the texts were tested using online readability calculators using the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. The same texts were also used for the construction of cloze tests. The cloze tests were given in three (3) one-hour sessions to the Grade 7 students from the two (2) participating schools. The readability checklists and copies of the stories were given to three teachers for their evaluation. With the help of the same English teachers who evaluated the stories, Focus Group Discussions with Grade 8 students were also organized so these students can evaluate the same stories using the same readability checklist.

Data Analysis Procedure

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study. The results were compared and contrasted following the triangulated approach in analyzing data.

The Easiest and Most Difficult Philippine Short Story in English

To find out this first query in the research, the stories were first ranked using their mean Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL) as the primary index of difficulty. The mean cloze scores (CS) and readability checklist scores (RC), together with their descriptions, were then set side by side with the primary index.

To determine the level of text difficulty from the cloze procedure, Taylor's original scale (DuBay, 2004) was used, but the values were adjusted so there would be no overlapping of boundaries. Table 3.2 shows the new boundaries set: 50-60% for the

Independent level, 36-49% for the Instructional level, and 35% as the highest boundary for the Frustration level.

Table 3.2. Text difficulty levels from cloze scores (CS)

Cloze Score	Level of Text Difficulty
50-60%	Independent
36-49%	Instructional
<35%	Frustration

To determine the level of text difficulty based on the readability checklist, the total scores from the teachers' and students' ratings were assessed separately. Since no references offered any ranges and scales to determine the levels of difficulty from this method, one was developed following the assigned values of the responses. To get the range of scores, the highest possible score for each category of responses was multiplied with fourteen (14), the number of questions. The highest "Yes" answer is 42, "Somewhat," 28, and "No," 14. Using the highest possible score of the previous level, the lower boundary of the next level was assigned. Thus, 29 is the lower boundary for the "Yes" answers, and 15 for the "Somewhat" answers. The scale for interpreting the checklist scores is presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Level of text difficulty based on the readability checklist (RC)

Score Range	Level of Text Difficulty
29-42	Readable
15-28	Somewhat Readable
0-14	Not readable

Du Bay (2004) mentioned that in order to verify if the formulas would indicate the level of difficulty corresponding to the intended readers' comprehension abilities, the reading formulas were correlated with comprehension tests, particularly the McCall-Crabbs Comprehension Test. In Diaz & Ocampo (2013), readers' comprehension test scores were correlated with the Lexile-based readability index, FiTRI. In the Bormuth study (1971, in Diaz & Ocampo, 2013) the cloze test was also correlated with other tests to determine if texts are readable in the independent, instructional, or frustration level.

For this study, a correlation between the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Levels and cloze scores was made to find out if there would be any indicators that the two indices were related. To determine the relationships between two (2) approaches, the correlation (ρ^2 , rho) was computed using the MS Excel correlation function (=CORREL(Array1, Array2)), with Array 1 being the formula results, and Array 2, the cloze scores.

The easiest Philippine short story in English was identified to be the story with the lowest Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, the highest mean cloze score, and the highest readability checklist score. The most difficult story was the one with the highest Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, the lowest mean cloze score, and the lowest readability checklist score. The percentage of students in each cloze score level was also considered in describing the level of difficulty.

² The correlation rho (ρ^2) was used because the students who participated in the study are only a sample from the entire population of Grade 7 students in the nation. They do not represent the whole Grade 7 population of the Philippines.

The Threshold Level of Text Difficulty for Filipino Grade 7 Students

To determine the threshold reading level of text difficulty for Filipino Grade 7 students relative to the nine (9) short stories evaluated, the study compared the results from the three (3) methods and their ranking based on the primary data, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL). The threshold level would be the highest FKGL score where the students can read at the Independent or Instructional level, and with the highest readability checklist scores.

Comments recorded from the cloze tests and focus group discussions were also noted to reveal some interesting perspectives from the students. These were compared with the comments shared by the teachers as they evaluated the stories using the readability checklist questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the study's data from the four sources: readability formulas, cloze test, teachers' readability checklists, and students' readability checklists. The results were analyzed to answer the problem this study aimed to answer: *How readable is the Philippine literature in English common among commercially published English textbooks for Grade 7?*

The Philippine Short Stories in English

This study investigated the text difficulty of nine (9) Philippine short stories as representatives of Philippine Literature in English that can be found in commercially published English textbooks. These are:

1. "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" by Manuel Arguilla
2. "My Father Goes to Court" by Carlos Bulosan
3. "Footnote to Youth" by Jose Garcia Villa
4. "The Small Key" by Paz Latorena
5. "The Wedding Dance" by Amador Daguio
6. "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers" by Alejandro Roces
7. "Distance to Andromeda" by Gregorio Brillantes
8. "Life is a Three-Ring Circus" by Jose Quirino
9. "May Day's Eve" by Nick Joaquin

It was aimed that by this research, the selected Philippine literature in English be described for its text difficulty and readability match with its intended Grade 7 readers who are non-native English speakers.

The Triangulated Approach for the Research

Three (3) approaches were used and triangulated to establish three (3) different perspectives on text difficulty:

1. Readability formulas using the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL),
2. Cloze procedure with cloze scores analyzed based on the original scale developed by William Taylor, and
3. Readability checklist developed based on Donna Norton's criteria for quality children's literature.

A focus group discussion was also held to provide feedback from the students who had read the materials in their Grade 7 English classes.

Indices of Readability

To answer the main question, "*How readable is the common Philippine literature in English in commercially published English textbooks for Grade 7?*" the three (3) indices resulting from the three (3) approaches were used. These were the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL), the cloze scores (CS), and the readability checklist scores (RC).

1. Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL)

The nine (9) Philippine short stories in English were encoded in MSWord to make them available for readability calculators. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL)

readability scores from MS Word's Spelling & Grammar Check function and from three (3) online readability calculators were used. Table 4.1 presents the values obtained from these methods.

Table 4.1. Results from readability calculators for Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level

Stories	MS Word	Online Utilities	Readability-Score	Readability Formulas	Mean Readability Grade Level	Rank	
Distance to Andromeda	6.8	10.8	10.2	12.4	10.0	1	Most difficult
The Small Key	5.8	6.9	5.8	5.7	6.0	2	
Life is a Three-Ring Circus	5.5	6.3	5.9	6.0	5.9	3	
How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife	4.9	5.7	4.9	5.1	5.2	4	
Footnote to Youth	3.3	6.1	5.1	5.2	4.9	5	
Father Goes to Court	4.1	5.4	4.7	4.6	4.7	6	
May Day's Eve	3.8	4.6	3.6	3.5	3.9	7	
The Wedding Dance	3.5	4.7	3.4	3.3	3.7	8	
We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers	2.3	3.7	2.7	3.0	3.0	9	Easiest

Correlations:	
MS Word vs. Online Utilities.com	0.83
MS Word vs. Readability-Score.com	0.85
MS Word vs. ReadabilityFormulas.com	0.82
Online Utilities.com vs. Readability-Score.com	0.99
Online Utilities.com vs. Readability-Formulas.com	0.99
Readability Score.com vs. ReadabilityFormulas.com	0.99

Results from the four (4) readability calculators show a high correlation ($\rho = 0.82-0.99$), reflecting the closeness of the scores among the four (4) readability calculations.

This means that the mean score taken from the four (4) readability calculators is a reliable index of difficulty for this method.

From the mean scores of readability based on their FKGLs, the selected Philippine short stories featured in Grade 7 textbooks have readabilities ranging from 3.0 to 10.0 (range = 7.0). "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers" is the easiest with FKGL of 3.0, while "Distance to Andromeda" is the most difficult with FKGL at 10.0.

Interestingly, the FKGL's of the eight (8) easier stories only rise by increments of less than one (1) point from the easiest to the second most difficult, having an average of 4.9 and a range of scores of only 3.0. With the inclusion of the most difficult text, "Distance to Andromeda," there is a marked difference of four (4) points from the second most difficult text, "The Small Key" with FKGL of 6.0, effectively raising the average of all nine (9) stories to 5.5.

If there are stories that are easy to read, they should appear more than twice in the selected textbooks. However, the first three easiest stories, "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers," "The Wedding Dance," and "May Day Eve" appeared only in two (2) textbooks. The harder ones, "Father Goes to Court" and "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" appeared in four (4) textbooks while the most difficult text, "Distance to Andromeda," appeared in two (2) textbooks.

2. Cloze Scores (CS)

Cloze tests of nine (9) short stories were given to seventy-five (75) Grade 7 students from two (2) schools, one (1) private and one (1) public school. None of the

students had read the stories prior to the testing, but were advised that these are the stories they may read in their Grade 7 English course.

Table 4.2 shows the summary of results of the cloze test for the stories. It also presents the distribution of scores from Taylor's original scale indicating text difficulty: Independent, 50% or better, Instructional, 36%-49%, and Frustration, 35% and below. Appendix L shows the results for each of the nine (9) stories complete with descriptive statistics: highest and lowest scores, range, standard deviation, and average.

Table 4.2. Summary of cloze scores for nine (9) Philippine short stories in English

Story	Distribution			Mean Score	Level
	Independent	Instructional	Frustration		
We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers	19%	13%	68%	34	Frustration
The Wedding Dance	4%	23%	73%	30	Frustration
May Day's Eve	10%	33%	55%	34	Frustration
Father Goes to Court	9%	27%	64%	34	Frustration
Footnote to Youth	3%	13%	84%	28	Frustration
How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife	3%	10%	87%	26	Frustration
Life is a Three-Ring Circus	0%	0%	100%	24	Frustration
The Small Key	2%	10%	88%	26	Frustration
Distance to Andromeda	0%	0%	100%	14	Frustration
<i>Mean</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>28</i>	

The mean cloze scores (CS) of four (4) stories are differently levelled between the private school and public school students. The following stories are levelled at the Instructional level for the private school students and Frustration level for the public school students:

1. "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers," (CS = 42 vs. 28)
2. "The Wedding Dance," (CS = 38 vs. 26)
3. "May Day Eve," (CS = 40 vs. 24) and
4. "Father Goes to Court" (CS = 36 vs. 32).

The other five (5) stories in the list are both levelled at Frustration for both the private and public school Grade 7 students:

1. "Footnote to Youth," (CS = 26, 26)
2. "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife," (CS = 32, 20)
3. "Life is a Three-Ring Circus," (CS = 24, 18)
4. "The Small Key," (CS = 26, 20) and
5. "Distance to Andromeda" (CS = 22, 20).

Taking the mean averages of seventy-five (75) students in the cloze test with an average of 28, all nine (9) short stories are at the Frustration level. The highest cloze score is 34, from three (3) stories: "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers," "May Day Eve," and "My Father Goes to Court." The lowest cloze score is 14, from "Distance to Andromeda."

These cloze scores have a strong negative correlation with the FKGL ($\rho = -.72$), meaning, as the FKGL scores become higher, the lower the cloze scores become. The results from the readability formula and cloze procedure are strongly correlated.

From the distribution of scores, 6% of the 75 students found the stories at the Independent level, 14% at the Instructional level, and 80% found the stories at the Frustration level.

Chatel (2001) said that at the Frustration level, students would find the texts difficult to “decode and/or comprehend.” The text will be too demanding to be used for instruction. Richardson & Morgan (2003, in Sejnost & Theise, 2007) recommended an alternative text be given to students when the original or intended texts fall in the Frustration level. They also mentioned that “a great deal of instructional guidance may need to be provided by the teacher” in order for students to comprehend (p.15).

The results of the cloze test also reveal the students’ linguistic competency relative to the selections, as Hadley & Naaykens(1999) attest. Since the results shows that 80% of the 75 students were at the frustration level, they would not be able to comprehend the texts on their own because the linguistic competency they have acquired through their education, Grades 1-6, is limited. Those from the public school have a greater disadvantage because less than 10% of them would be able to comprehend even at the Instructional level. Those from the private school have a greater advantage of reading the stories at the Instructional level, with a distribution of students at 13-47% for seven (7) stories. For “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” and “Distance to Andromeda,” both public and private school students were rated at 100% frustration level (see detailed results in Appendix L). Reflected by these results and following Hadley & Naaykens(1999)statement, the Grade 7 students who took the cloze tests have not yet acquired the linguistic competency required to comprehend the nine (9) Philippine short stories in English.

Furthermore, according to Pardo (2004), reading comprehension or meaning-making happens when there is an “interaction of the reader’s experiences, the text, and the reader’s stance towards the text” (p.272). Since the reading level of the text does not match the reading abilities of the target readers, comprehension is deterred. This will pose a great challenge for the classroom teachers and curriculum developers aiming to cultivate love for reading among Grade 7 students.

Other Observations

During the conduct of the cloze test, there were distinct differences in the atmospheres in the private school and public school groups. Private school students were more disciplined and focused on the test despite the researcher’s effort to lighten up the mood in the classroom. The public school students were more relaxed. In fact, the class almost instantaneously resorted to comparing answers and outright discussion with their seatmates upon receiving the test papers. One student even commented, “*Huwag n’yo na nga masyadong pag-isipan pa. Sabi ni Ma’am, kung anong unang pumasok sa isip ninyo, ‘yun ang isulat n’yo.*” (Don’t overthink it. Ma’am said that we should write the word that first comes into mind.)

During the checking of the cloze test, common errors or responses were observed among the Grade 7 test takers. These were as follows:

Correct Answer	Situation in Text	Common Response
are	Subject is plural	is
danced	An event happened in the past	dance
black	Color of the girl’s eyes	blue
Oh, Hell!	Expression of the American GI	Oh, God! (private school) Oh, gosh! (public school)

3. Readability Checklists (RC)

The Readability Checklist for Short Stories was adapted from Donna Norton's book *Through the Eyes of a Child: Introduction to Children's Literature* (2011, p. 9). The questions were modified to elicit a Yes, Somewhat, or No answer. These were then quantified, though nominally, into 3, 2, and 1 point, respectively. By getting the total highest scores for each response, a scale was developed to determine a readability index and levelling: scores from 29 to 42 points were identified as Readable, 15 to 28 points, Somewhat Readable, and 0 to 14, Not Readable (refer to Table 3.3).

This readability checklist was given to two sets of users – the teachers and the students. Both contained the same questions with minor revisions to consider the perspectives of each group (Appendix J). Only four (4) stories, namely “Life is a Three Ring Circus,” “Father Goes to Court,” “The Wedding Dance,” and “The Small Key,” were evaluated by students from the private school because these were the ones they read in their Grade 7 English class. Meanwhile, only two (2) of the stories, namely “The Wedding Dance” and “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife,” were taken up in the previous school year by those from the public school. Appendix M shows the results from the evaluation of short stories using the readability checklist, while Tables 4.3 and 4.4 present the summary of results for the stories evaluated by teachers and students, respectively.

Results show that eight (8) short stories are Readable, while only one (1), “The Small Key,” is Somewhat Readable. From the five (5) stories evaluated by the students, their evaluation is higher than their teachers'. This may be attributed to the students' social desirability bias, which is the tendency of respondents to provide answers that will

reflect a positive social image of themselves (Holtgraves, 2004). This behavior was more frequently observed among younger children than older children (Crandall, Crandall and Katkovsky, 1965).

Table 4.3. Summary of teachers' readability checklist points

Descriptor	Life is a Three-Ring Circus	My Father Goes to Court	The Small Key	The Wedding Dance	Footnote to Youth	How My Brother Leon Brought Home A Wife	May Day's Eve	Distance to Andromeda	We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers
1. Interest	3	3	1	2	1	1	3	1	2
2. Believability	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3
3. Conflict	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1
4. Climax	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	3
5. Personality	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3
6. Actions	3	1	1	3	3	2	2	3	3
7. Growth	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	3
8. Character	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	3
9. Setting	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3
10. Character-Setting Fit	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
11. Empathy	3	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	3
12. Theme	3	3	2	2	3	2	1	2	2
13. Voice	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3
14. Naturalness	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3
Total Points	42	33	23	36	35	30	31	30	38
Readability Evaluation	R ³	R	SR ⁴	R	R	R	R	R	R
Ranking	1	5	9	3	4	7.5	6	7.5	2

³ R stands for Readable⁴ SR stands for Somewhat Readable

Table 4.4. Summary of students' readability checklist points

Descriptor	Life is a Three-Ring Circus	My Father Goes to Court	The Small Key	The Wedding Dance	How My Brother Leon Brought Home A Wife
1. Interest	3	3	3	2	3
2. Believability	3	2	3	3	3
3. Conflict	2	3	2	2	2
4. Climax	3	2	3	3	3
5. Personality	3	3	3	3	3
6. Actions	3	3	3	3	3
7. Growth	3	2	3	3	3
8. Character	3	3	3	3	3
9. Setting	3	3	3	3	3
10. Character-Setting Fit	3	3	3	3	3
11. Empathy	2	2	2	2	2
12. Theme	3	3	3	3	3
13. Voice	3	3	3	3	3
14. Naturalness	3	3	3	3	3
Total Points	40	38	40	39	40
Readability Evaluation	R ⁵	R	R	R	R

⁵ R stands for Readable

Based on the Teachers' Checklists, the easiest story among the nine (9) short stories evaluated is "Life is a Three-Ring Circus" (FKGL=5.9; CS=24). This was rated with 42 points. All 14 questions were given "Yes." The second most readable stories were rated with 38 points, "We Filipinos Are Mild Drinkers" (FKGL=3.0; CS=34) and "Footnote to Youth" (FKGL=4.9; CS=28). The third most readable story, with 38 points, is "The Wedding Dance" (FKGL=3.7; CS=30). The most difficult story is one which only rated 23 points, "The Small Key" (FKGL=6.0; CS=26). "Distance to Andromeda" (FKGL=10; CS=14) and "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" (FKGL=5.2; CS=26) are both ranked second most difficult with 30 points in the Checklist.

Of the five (5) stories rated by Grade 8 students, three (3) were given the highest score, 40 points, "Life is a Three-Ring Circus" (FKGL=5.9; CS=24), "The Small Key" (FKGL=6.0; CS=26), and "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" (FKGL=5.2; CS=26). "The Wedding Dance" (FKGL=3.7; CS=30) earned a total of 39 points, and "Father Goes to Court" (FKGL=4.7; CS=34) had 38 points.

Using the average responses of teachers and students in the readability checklist (RC), the following are the observations and comments made on the nine (9) short stories:

1. Interest – "Will the story be interesting to your students?"

Teachers answered "Yes" to three stories: "Life is a Three-Ring Circus," "Father Goes to Court," and "May Day's Eve." Students also gave a "Yes" to the first two stories, and also to "The Small Key" and "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife".

Teacher C says "My Father Goes to Court" is interesting because of the humor. Teacher B says, "Students in general like funny and light stories."

All three (3) teachers gave a “No” to “The Small Key,” “Footnote to Youth,” “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife,” and “Distance to Andromeda.”

Teacher A says “May Day Eve” can be interesting to students if “the story will be discussed by the teacher.” If the students will be assigned to read the story on their own, they will not be interested because it is long. Length is also the same reason for “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife” and “Distance to Andromeda” are found uninteresting.

Teacher A perceives that the marriage theme in “Footnote to Youth” is not yet interesting for her Grade 7 students. She says, “raising their own family is not their interest.”

2. *Believability – “Is the story about something that could really happen?”*

Teachers found six (6) stories believable: “Life is a Three-Ring Circus,” “The Wedding Dance,” “Footnote to Youth,” “May Day Eve,” “Distance to Andromeda,” and “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers.” The other three (3) stories were only given a “Somewhat Believable” rating.

Students found all five (5) stories believable.

These stories are indeed realistic. The Waig, featured in “How My Brother Brought Home a Wife,” is a real place in Ilocos, where Arguilla grew up. The road taken by Ben in “Distance to Andromeda” is Brillantes’ description of Manila in the 1960’s. Aside from places, the social problem featured in “The Wedding Dance” about not being able to have children, which was experienced by Lumnay and Awiyao, is a fact among the northern Luzon tribes.

Teacher C said that “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers” is believable because the Philippines is “more open to the world so there will be more chances for encounters with foreigners.”

3. *Conflict* – “Does the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?”

“Life is a Three-Ring Circus” and “Footnote to Youth” received a “Yes” from the teachers. The rest received only a “Somewhat,” except for “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers” which was given a “No.” The conflict was not very clearly established in this story.

“My Father Goes to Court” got a “Yes” from students while the other four (4), “Somewhat.” Three (3) stories, “The Small Key,” “The Wedding Dance,” and “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife,” had received the same response from the teachers. These three (3) stories do not give a clear resolution. In fact, the readers are left to ponder how the stories would end. This, however, actually creates an opportunity to make students write an ending.

4. *Climax* – “Does the climax seem natural?”

Teachers considered “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” and “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers” as the stories with the most natural climax. On the other hand, “The Small Key,” “May Day Eve,” and “Distance to Andromeda” do not have a natural climax.

Of the five (5) stories evaluated, students equally marked four (4) stories as having a natural climax, except for “My Father Goes to Court.” The students find the tossing of the coins inside the hat unexpected.

Both teachers and students groupshad the same reponses to two stories. A “Yes” to “Life is a Three-Ring Circus,” and a “Somewhat” to “My Father Goes to Court.” Perhaps both perceive the twist in the climax of “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” and both groups know that nobody can readily bring to a real court the cases presented in “My Father Goes to Court.”

5. *Personality – “Are the characters’ personalities realistic?”*

Teacherssaid “Yes” to “Life is a Three-ring Circus,” “The Wedding Dance,” “Footnote to Youth,” “May Day Eve,” “Distance to Andromeda,” and “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers,” and “Somewhat” to the other stories.

Students evaluated all five (5) stories as having realistic personas among the characters. Two of these, “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” and “The Wedding Dance,” had the same evaluation with the teachers. Both groups may have understood or appreciated the personalities of the characters based on their experiences with people.

Despite having said that marriage was not yet in the minds of the students, the Grade 8 participants said they related well with the characters from “The Wedding Dance” but only after the teacher discussed the social demands of the tribe. They also came to appreciate and sympathize with the clown Gorgio from “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” only after the teacher explained the turn of events. Teacher B said that many of her students in Grade 7 need to have most stories explained to them so they can understand.

6. *Actions – “Are the reasons for the characters’ actions believable?”*

Teachers saidthat “Life is a Three-Ring Circus,” “The Wedding Dance,” “Footnote to Youth,” “Distance to Andromeda,” and “We Filipinos are Mild

Drinkers” had believable actions. “Father Goes to Court” and “The Small Key,” marked with “No,” had the least believable action.

In “Father Goes to Court,” one teacher said that suing someone for smelling food was outrageous. Another teacher said that she could not believe that the character in “The Small Key” will have long-standing feelings of jealousy over the deceased first wife.

On the other hand, students found their five (5) stories as having believable actions. This may be because all the stories dealt with real events, such as poverty, marital problems, social pressure, and marriage.

7. *Growth – “Do the characters in the story grow?”*

All three (3) teachers said “Yes” to “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” and “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers,” and “No” to “The Small Key” and “Distance to Andromeda.” This is because the characters hardly showed any changes in personality throughout the stories. The character in “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” had clearly changed since Gorgio used to be very successful in the beginning then became a pathetic loser in the end. Even the speaker changed his perspective on judging people because of what happened to Gorgio.

Students gave four (4) stories a “Yes” and “My Father Goes to Court,” a “Somewhat.” Students may have failed to see that “My Father Goes to Court” is not about the characters changing, but it was more about showing the differences between the rich and the poor.

8. *Characters – “Do the characters have both strengths and weaknesses?”*

Teachers marked “Life is a Three-Ring Circus,” “The Wedding Dance,” “Footnote to Youth,” and “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers” with “Yes.” They gave the others “Somewhat.” Students gave a “Yes” to all five stories.

These stories feature realistic people. Dodong, from “Footnote to Youth,” had felt passion for his girlfriend and the hesitation of telling his father of his intentions to marry her. Later, Dodong also felt the fears of becoming a father and the burdens of being the head of a family in an impoverished rural country. Awiyao, from “The Wedding Dance,” was depicted as a strong man, an ideal quality of a tribal leader, but he did not have a child. Awiyao also felt the love of a wife, but was torn between keeping a childless marriage and marrying another woman who could guarantee a child. The clown Gorgio, from “Life is a Three-Ring Circus,” was portrayed as a successful man with houses, a loving wife and children, and a lucrative career, until he lost all these treasures because of a fatal injury.

9. *Setting – “Does the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or place?”*

Teachers answered “Yes” to seven (7) stories, and “Somewhat” to “The Small Key” and “May Day Eve.” Students gave all five (5) stories a “Yes.” Except for “The Small Key,” both teachers and students had the same response.

Most of the stories are set in the provinces. There are enough descriptions of the places to accurately depict the location. For example, the Waig in “How My Brother Brought Home a Wife” had a very vivid description of the sunset as experienced in the

province. On the other hand, Joaquin's "May Day Eve" successfully depicted the setting in the Spanish era using local color with words like *serrana* and *arroba*.

10. Character-Setting Fit – "Do the characters fit the setting?"

Teachers gave eight (8) stories a "Yes," and "The Small Key" a "Somewhat." Students gave five (5) stories a "Yes."

It is not very clear how "The Small Key" had a vague character-setting fit. The characters were farmers and their home is located in the middle of a field. An aunt was supposed to come and accompany the sick wife, but it took a while before she arrived. This situation should be common in most rural settings considering how far apart the homes are in the barrios. However, given that the students come from an urban municipality, they may not have the cultural schema required to appreciate the setting. The teachers did not specify their reasons for assigning a "Somewhat" for this item.

11. Empathy – "While reading, do you feel that you are really in the time and place?"

Teachers said "Life is a Three-Ring Circus," "Father Goes to Court," "Footnote to Youth," "May Day Eve," and "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers" were easy to empathize with. However, they gave "The Small Key" a "No." Perhaps the teachers perceive that their students would not be able to understand and empathize with the marital issues that the characters dealt with in the story. Students answered "Somewhat" to all five stories that they assessed. Both teachers and students had the same response, "Somewhat," to "The Wedding Dance" and "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife." Perhaps both teachers and students are not familiar with the traditions and unwritten laws of the indigenous groups of North Luzon which was featured in "The Wedding Dance," or on

riding a caretela through the rough road of the Waig from “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife.”

12. Theme – “Is the theme worthwhile?”

For the teachers, the themes of “Life is a Three-Ring Circus,” “My Father Goes to Court,” and “Footnote to Youth” were found worthwhile. The other five (5), “Somewhat.” There was no justification given for their evaluation. “May Day Eve” was given a “No.” The students marked five (5) stories’ themes to be worthwhile.

“Life is a Three-Ring Circus” was about dealing with life challenges which the readers may have found uniquely told. Usually stories about life are told from the first-person point of view about his/her own experiences. In this case, although it was also from the first-person point of view, the focus was on an interviewee. The life of the interviewee made an impact on the speaker, and in turn, the readers.

“My Father Goes to Court” is about inequality between the rich and poor. The story did not address the issue directly, but it focused on the humorous side of the poor family. This eventually became the crux of how the inequality was handled in the court.

“Footnote to Youth” is about the setbacks of early marriages. Teachers may have found the story a good example for cautioning children not to marry early. Dodong became helpless later on in his marriage and somehow fell out of love. This was a story that the students evaluated.

Teachers may not have appreciated the theme of “May Day Eve” for their students because the children might not see the relationship developing between Badoy and Agueda through the years. The story’s timeline is not linear, and the students may

find it difficult to keep track of the development of the storyline due to the frequent flashbacks. Teachers had to clarify who the Devil and the Witch were to the students.

13. Voice – “When you read the story aloud, do the characters sound like real people talking?”

The teachers found seven (7) of the nine (9) stories to have realistic dialogue. Only “The Small Key” and “Distance to Andromeda” were given a “Somewhat” rating. Students gave a “Yes” to all five (5) of the stories they evaluated.

Perhaps “The Small Key” may have sounded awkward having characters speak in English considering the rural setting. Although it may have been possible that farmers did speak in English in that day, it is certainly hard to believe in the present. The dialogue is actually simple enough to be understood. It is the narration that is actually more unnaturally Filipino: *“The sun, up above the sky that was all blue and tremendous and beckoning to birds ever on the wing, shone bright as if determined to scorch everything under heaven...”* The use of colorful language in these lines may not seem to be like “real people talking” for the teachers but the students did not seem to find the style of writing unnatural. Students gave the story’s voice a “Yes.”

14. Naturalness – “Does the rest of the language in the story sound natural?”

Teachers’ ratings showed only “Life is a Three-Ring Circus,” “The Wedding Dance,” and “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers” as having natural language. The others were given a “Somewhat” answer. Students’ ratings, on the other hand, indicated that all five (5) stories had a natural language.

The language used by some of the authors is not normal among the common Filipinos of the present day, who speak less English than those living in the period when

these stories were written. An example is Brillantes who is known for a writing style (Locsin, 1967) which uses a lot of long words and sentences, such as:

"Enclosed in time within the rocket, the ship itself surrounded by timelessness which is in turn, framed by the boundaries of the cinema screen, the last men and women and children of Earth watch the asteroids, the streams of cosmic dust, and the barren planets drift past the potholes like luminous flowers at once beautiful and monstrous, floating in the ocean of space."

Meanwhile, the other writers use plain language to present the conversations among their characters. An example is the conversation between the American GI and the Filipino farmer in "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers," which Teacher C says "comes close to the real thing as possible":

"Hello, my little brown brother," he said patting me on the head.

"Hello, Joe," I answered. All Americans are called Joe in the Philippines. "Any bars in this town?" he asked.

That was usually the first question American soldiers asked when they visited our barrio.

"I am sorry, Joe," I replied. "There are no bars in this barrio."

"Oh, hell! You know where I could buy more whiskey?"

"No, Joe. I am sorry. We do not drink whiskey."

"Here, have a swig. You have been working too hard," he said, offering me his half-filled bottle.

"No thank you, Joe," I said. "We Filipinos are mild drinkers."

The following were the other observations made by the teachers in their evaluation of the stories:

1. "May Day Eve"

- "The story may somewhat (be) interesting for my students. Interesting, only if this story will be discussed by the teacher, but if the teacher will ask the students to read they will not be interested anymore because it is a long story. In addition to that, the

author used words which are not familiar to Grade 7 students. Another thing is that the flow of events will be very confusing for the students.” (Teacher A)

Teacher A referred to the transition of scenes with the use of flashback which students fail to follow. The first part was between an older Agueda and her daughter:

“Yes... Yes, he spoke to me,” said Doña Agueda. And bowing her graying head, she wept.

“Charms like yours have no need for a candle, fair one,” he had said, smiling at her in the mirror and stepping back to give her a low mocking bow. She had whirled around and glared at him and he had burst into laughter. “But I remember you!” he cried. “You are Agueda, whom I left a mere infant and came home to find a tremendous beauty, and I danced a waltz with you but you would not give me the polka.”

Then the scene suddenly shifted to the past with the younger Agueda and Badoy, and finally going back to another time frame with Badoy and his grandson Voltaire.

“But he did not forgive her – no! He would still have his revenge, he thought viciously, and kissed his wounded fingers. But what a night it had been! “I will never forget this night!” he thought aloud in awed voice, standing by the window in the dark room, the tears in his eyes and the wind in his hair and his bleeding knuckles pressed to his mouth.

But, alas, the heart forgets; the heart is distracted; and Maytime passes, summer ends; ... and there came a time when Don Badoy Montiya walked home through a May Day midnight without remembering, without even caring to remember; being merely concerned in feeling his way across the street with his cane; his eyes having grown quite dim; and his legs uncertain for he was old; he was over sixty; he was a very stooped and shrivelled old man with white hair and moustaches, coming home from a secret meeting of conspirators...”

There are around 25 difficult or unknown words contained in the selection. Some of them are Spanish in origin, like *serrana* and *arroba*. This is essential in establishing consistency with the setting in the 1890's but students who are not familiar with literary devices, like local color, will find this difficult. There are also words that are not

commonly used at present, like *pompous*, *livid*, *piteously*, *brute*, and *feebly*, and expressions, like “*Son of a Turk!*” There are also sensual lines that may be a sensitive item for conservative teachers and innocent children of 12 or 13 years old to discuss.

“– what eyes she had! And what a pretty color she turned when angry! He remembered her bare shoulders: gold in the candlelight and delicately furred. He saw the mobile insolence of her neck, and her taut breasts steady in the fluid gown. Son of a Turk, she was quite enchanting!”

2. “*How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife*”

- “The story is too long for them (Grade 7 students) to read. It is a boring story though the writer used local color and imagery. [The] language used [does] not fit the level of the students. Most words are confusing/figurative which will lead to students’ comprehension difficulty.” (Teacher A)

Teacher A may be referring to the long sentences describing the characters and the landscape which are different from the more direct and less artistic style done by the students. For example, Badong described Labang, the carabao by...

“Labang’s white coat, which I had washed and brushed this morning with coconut husk, glistened like beaten cotton under the lamplight and his horns appeared tipped with fire.”

Another is the description of the sunset...

“The sun had sunk down from the wooden sides of the Katayaghan hills, shadows were stealing into the fields. High up overhead the sky burned with many slow fires.”

The simile, “*glistened like beaten cotton*,” metaphor, “*horns appeared tipped with fire*,” and personification, “*the sun had sunk down*,” “*shadows were stealing into the fields*,” “*the sky burned with many slow fires*,” may already be challenging for the students and

their imagination because of the lack of exposure to these literary devices in their previous reading classes.

- “The relationship between a grown-up man and his father is hard for the students to understand.” (Teacher B)

Teacher B may have been referring to the absence of a statement establishing the kind of relationship between Leon and his father. The story was told from the perspective of Badong, the younger brother, and the narration is limited to what Badong thinks and sees. The narration did not show if Leon and their father were estranged or very intimate, which leaves the readers to try and infer the kind of relationship they had.

- “Not for Grade 7 (on the characters).“A bit too good to be true. Imagery is strong.” (Teacher C)

Teacher C may be referring to how the characters’ qualities have to be inferred through their dialogue. Badong, the narrator, presented a limited description of the characters’ internal qualities and only reported what he saw. Teacher C commended the imagery of the narration. The literary devices featured earlier did create a vivid description of the landscape in Waig, and the selection is a good example to teach the device.

3. “Footnote to Youth”

- “My students cannot relate with the story. Getting married is not yet in their minds now at their age. [The] topic about raising their own family is not their interest. This

story is too heavy for them, for their young minds. Words used are too deep. Another “long” short story.” (Teacher A)

Apparently, Teacher A is hesitant to discuss marriage with her Grade 7 students. The story does center on the character Dodong’s preoccupation with love and his realizations on married life. The internal struggle experienced by Dodong is different from the external conflicts that students in Grade 7 encounter with popular fiction, computer games, and television series, usually a hero versus a villain.

The students will also find the story intimidating due to the archaic style of writing in the first paragraph, as demonstrated by this line:

“What he had to say was of serious import as it would make a climacteric in his life.”

This was the idea of the seventeen-year-old Dodong, a boy from the farm. The concept of a farm boy thinking or talking like this, using words like “*import*” and “*climacteric*” is very surprising to the students whose preoccupation is mostly computer games, Facebook-ing, texting, and selfies.

- “The generation when this story was written cannot be grasped by the students.” (Teacher B)
- “Not for Grade 7 to appreciate” (Teacher C)

Garcia Villa wrote this story in 1933, and the setting was on a farm where people live a simple lifestyle. The characters’ preoccupations were farm and their family. Dodong, at his age of 17, felt like he was already a man, which is so different from the mindset of today’s 17-year-old youth who are still mostly in school and working on their

degrees. Teachers B and C may be referring to the stark differences in lifestyles of the characters and the readers.

The issue of marriage as a topic of discussion for Grade 7 students is a sensitive matter for the three (3) teachers. They perceive that this topic is not yet suitable for Grade 7 but can be appropriate for older students, like Grade 9 or 10. For these teachers, Grade 7 students would be more interested in family matters and ambitions in life.

4. “*The Wedding Dance*”

- “The story is too long. Love triangle will be interesting to my students. The theme about making the right decision will lead the class to have a debate. This story will only be understood and appreciated if the teacher will discuss it to the class. The students will not understand the story if they are just the ones to read it. Reading long stories are boring for the students nowadays.” (Teacher A)
- “They don’t understand the emotions embedded in the story.” (Teacher B)
- “A bit interesting because of the drama in it. Some words are hard to understand.” (Teacher C)

The teachers may have been referring to the different lifestyle and social demands between the characters and the students. Teachers resort to retelling the story because they have to elaborate on the traditions of a Northern Luzon tribe and the social conflict that underlies the plot, unless their Social Studies class had already shown such matters in relation to the story.

There were only eleven (11) words that students might find new but the meaning can be derived from context, like *supple* and *threshold* in “*his wide and supple torso*”

and “*the edge of the head-high threshold,*” respectively. The word *gangsas* and the expression *seven harvests* may need a little more elaboration to be understood.

The theme and drama may prove to be interesting because these have similarities to the modern day stories found in television series. Teacher B said that the emotions may be too difficult to grasp by the students. Perhaps some students cannot empathize with the characters if they are not fond of dramas. Or, perhaps students are just more visual and prefer to see the characters acting out the drama than reading the lines in order to feel the emotions.

5. “*Distance to Andromeda*”

- “This story is very long and will be confusing for the students.” (Teacher A)
- “The story will bore the students.” (Teacher B)

The story is long because these are the thoughts of the boy Ben as he walked home from the movie theater. It’s also long because of Brillantes’ signature writing style of using long sentences and extraordinary words. An example is the following introspection of the 13-year-old Ben, the main character:

“But it is no longer an abstract ache straining for the relief of words; it speaks within him, in a language full of silence, becoming one with his breathing, his being and the night, and the turning of Earth; incomprehensible, a wordless thought, an unthought of Word: like the unseen presence of One who loves him infinitely and tenderly. The fear has gone, the lonely, helpless shrinking he felt on the bridge, walking home; love surrounds him, and no evil can touch him here, in his father’s house.”

Teacher B said that this “will bore the students” because there is no clear conflict and no action. The story implies Ben was scared for his family’s safety if ever the Earth would be destroyed, an after-effect of watching the science fiction film. As he walked

home he thought of things, about men on the moon, the busy streets and skating rink, and the facades of his neighbors' houses, but his fear of losing his family was not made clear. Much of the action and dialogue was focused on the events surrounding dinner preparations and the post-dinner rest on the terrace. Teachers perceive that no Grade 7 student will care for such mundane activities of an ideal family. In the end, Ben found his security but it was only implied through this paragraph.

“His father is home, all of them are safe and home in the night, in the long summer of the year. Tomorrow, Sunday, they will go to Mass, all of them together. Then he will go swimming with Tito and Pepe in San Miguel, in the clear wide morning; and in the afternoon he will see the film again, perhaps with his father: the ruined, poisoned countries of man, and the new world, the hills green in the light of another sun.”

Students will also find it unbelievable that a boy of 13 like Ben can think of profound words, like *utterance*, *culvert*, and *palpable*, and in thought structures as presented by Brillantes, like in the paragraph:

“He catches the streak of a shooting star from the corner of his eye. Instantly his waiting becomes a sharp alertness; he holds his breath, and the strangeness comes into him once more, the echo of an endless vibration. But it is no longer an abstract ache straining for the relief of words; it speaks within him, in a language full of silence, becoming one with his breathing, his being and the night, and the turning of Earth; incomprehensible, a wordless thought, an unthought of Word: like the unseen presence of One who loves him infinitely and tenderly. The fear has gone, the lonely, helpless shrinking he felt on the bridge, walking home; love surrounds him, and no evil can touch him here, in his father's house.”

6. *“We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers”*

- “Many of my students have not seen a military base, or even a carabao.” (Teacher B)

The story opens in an open farmland where the American soldier and the Filipino farmer met. At the end of the story, the farmer brought his new friend back to his

barracks in an air base. Though the story does not stipulate it, the setting may perhaps be in Pampanga where the Clark Air Base was located. Surrounding the base are rice fields. Teacher Calso thought that the setting needed more description. However, the setting is secondary to the dialogue between the characters, which carries the entire idea.

- On Interest: “There is a touch of humor in the story plus the Filipino is the main character.”

On Believability: “Our country is more open to the world so there will be more chances for encounters with foreigners.”

On Character: “The American’s character vividly portrays the weakness and strength but the Filipino only shows strength.”

On Setting: “I feel there should be more description of the place.”

On Theme: “The problem will lie on the pupils’ ability to comprehend the figure of speech/idea in the theme.” (Teacher C)

Teacher C has commented on this story in detail. She believes that students will find the Filipino in the dominant role interesting. Americans are seen as the stronger character in a colonized country like the Philippines, but in the story it was the American who first collapsed after drinking some *lambanog*. The irony is that the Filipino said that they were mild drinkers but there was nothing mild in the *lambanog* that made the American pass out. This irony may be the reason why Teacher C said that the theme would not be easily comprehended by the students.

7. *“Life is a Three-Ring Circus”*

- “The theme of this story is worthwhile yet it can only be understood by students if the teacher will be the one to discuss. It is a long story that the students will find it boring to read.” (Teacher A)

Teacher A may have felt that the introduction of the speaker about his work is dragging for young readers who prefer more action. However, it was vital that the speaker introduce the nature of his job first to establish the great responsibility he has as a journalist who writes promotional materials for people he has not met.

- “They like the life story of the protagonist.” (Teacher B)

Teacher B recalls the feedback she received from the students after the discussion of the story. The students, in a way, related to the story of Gorgio and his transformation. In a way, the students sympathized with Gorgio because of the first-person point of view. The speaker/journalist made a clear description of what he saw in Gorgio, and in a way made the students feel the same way.

8. *“My Father Goes to Court”*

- “Students in general like funny and light stories.” (Teacher B)
- (On the interest, given a Yes) “because of humor” (Teacher C)

Kiefer (2010) said humor, suspense, action, and surprise make stories interesting to young readers. Aside from humor, the story also has suspense because the readers will be holding their breath to find out how the poor family will overcome the case. There is

also surprise because the father wittily paid back the rich man the same way he was charged with a court case.

9. "The Small Key"

- "Somehow, the story is too deep for them to understand." (Teacher B)

The story does possess a problem that 12- to 13-year-olds may still not be aware of. The story's conflict is internal to the wife, Choleng, who was still jealous over her husband's attachment to the things of his departed first wife. The writer did not specifically say she was jealous, so students are left to identify this emotion through close analysis of the actions done by the character in the following excerpts.

"With deliberate care he untied the knot, and, detaching the big key, dropped the small one back into his pocket. She watched him fixedly as he did this. The smile left her face and a strange look came into her eyes as she took the big key from him without a word."

...

"As she was doing so, a small object fell to the floor with a dull, metallic sound. Soledad stooped down and picked it up. It was the small key! She stared at it in her palm as if she had never seen it before. Her mouth was tightly drawn and for a while she looked almost old. She passed into the small bedroom and tossed the coat carelessly on the back of a chair."

...

"It was a small, old trunk, without anything on the outside that might arouse one's curiosity. But it held the things she had come to hate with unreasoning violence, the things that were causing her so much unnecessary anguish and pain and threatened to destroy all that was most beautiful between her and her husband!"

Based on the observations of the teachers, four (4) elements contribute to the difficulty of the selected short stories in English.

1. Interest

The teachers perceive that the major contribution to a readable story is interest. Norton (2011) and Keifer (2010) agree that stories will be readable if the readers are first interested in the topic. Students generally become interested in the stories from their textbooks if they are a love story or a comedy (Keifer, 2010). Thus, "The Wedding Dance" and "My Father Goes to Court" were perceived as interesting because of the said genres. However, this is contrary to their rating of "The Wedding Dance" which was rated as "Somewhat" interesting in their readability checklist. Stories like "Footnote to Youth," "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife," and "Distance to Andromeda" were said not to be very interesting because the abstract concepts in the themes -- marriage, bringing home a wife, or security -- are not interesting for young readers (Hetherington, 1985). This answer related to their ratings in the readability checklist. They answered "No" to "Footnote to Youth" and "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife." "Distance to Andromeda" was given a "Somewhat" answer. According to the teachers, marriage is something still not part of the students' consciousness, so teachers perceive that stories with this theme will be less interesting to the students. However, they find the love story in "The Wedding Dance" interesting because of the love triangle that came with the conflict.

2. Length

Since the stories are generally long, the teachers said that students do not like to read long stories. Students may find them less interesting to read. Teachers instead retold or interpreted the meanings of the stories to the students in order for them to understand the plot and reasons for the characters' actions. This retelling and interpreting strategies

may have been effective for the teachers because they say that the students gain a greater understanding of the story's elements after their lecture than if they were assigned to read the stories on their own.

The stories featured in the textbooks are long because they are complete texts, not excerpts. The writers also used long words and sentence structures, which the students are not familiar with. Singhal (1996) said that text becomes difficult for L2 readers when the language patterns and conventions of discourse and rhetorical structures are different from what the readers expect. The featured stories contained linguistic devices, such as local color, colorful language, and figures of speech, that the Grade 7 students are not familiar with, either because these were not encountered in the Elementary or they were not oriented to such structures.

3. *Rural Setting*

The settings of the stories, such as that of "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife," "The Wedding Dance," "The Small Key," "Footnote to Youth," and "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers," were mostly in rural areas. The teachers said that many of their students could not relate to the experiences in rural areas. The students come from an urban municipality.

Many of their students also do not understand the tribal community featured in "The Wedding Dance." This gap between the characters' situations and the students' interests and backgrounds lends the teachers to explain the stories' background, community, and situations so that the students can understand the characters' responses and other elements in the stories.

Hetherington (1985) said that cultural content influences the learner's background knowledge. When the student's cultural background does not match the stories' setting, the stories become difficult for the students. Though the setting is Filipino and the Philippines is an agricultural country, the students who participated in the study are from an urban community. Thus, they do not have the cultural background to mentally picture the setting, causing some breakdown in the reading comprehension process.

4. *Language*

Another limitation to readability that the teachers found is the language used in the short stories. Literary devices, like figures of speech, local color, and imagery, are still unappreciated by many 7th graders. Based on their experiences, students prefer to read stories with language similar to what they use. They respond well if the language is more direct. The teachers often need to explain the meanings behind the literary devices found in the stories.

The Filipinos are still considered as second language English learners despite having this target language present in the environment. From the results of the study, the Grade 7 students still do not have the linguistic competencies needed to understand the selections. Zakaluk & Samuels (1996) identified the language between the child and text should match in order to gain comprehension. Teachers in this study knew, even without the tools used in this study, that there is a mismatch between the two languages.

Focus Group Discussion

Based on the focus group discussion with the Grade 8 students, there were four (4) factors that contributed to text difficulty.

1. Length

“Ang haba at boring yung simula nung “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife.” Kailangan ba talaga ikwento yung byahe nila?” (“How My Brother Brought Home a Wife” has a long and boring beginning. Is it really necessary to tell the journey in detail?)

“Mahaba. Mahirap magbasa dahil mahaba.” (They’re too long. It’s difficult to read because they’re long.)

Grade 7 and 8 students still prefer to read shorter stories. For them it is ironic to be calling these stories short stories because they are very long.

The stories were long because they use long words and long sentence structures. “Distance to Andromeda,” for example, has an FKGL of 10.0 because of the long words and sentences. “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers” has an FKGL of 3.0 because the conversation between the Filipino farmer and the American GI was made of short sentences. Teacher C said that this dialogue came close to the real thing; meaning, the conversation was deemed natural or spoken in plain language.

The stories were also presented as complete stories, not excerpts, so the students could read the complete, unsimplified, and award-winning literature made by Filipinos. Perhaps the students, coming from Elementary, were not used to reading “long” short stories in class.

2. Language

“In general, *may kahirapan dahil sa* words” (It’s difficult because of the words.) was one of the comments of the students.

The language in these short stories is very difficult for them. They call it “nosebleed⁶,” because it is not part of their everyday language. Hameed (2008) and Walter (2003) agreed that vocabulary is a significant factor in text difficulty. Walter (2003) posits that a 95% word familiarity in the text is needed in order to guarantee comprehension. The Grade 8 students who participated in the study prefer to read stories with a language that is simpler to understand. However, what is simple for the students was not clearly defined in the discussion.

This comment made by the student and the results from the cloze scores may prove that the language in the stories that students read does not match with the students’ linguistic abilities. Singhal (1996), Walter (2003), and Hameed (2008) said that differences between the students’ expected language structure and the structure that the text carries pose as an important factor in text and reading difficulty.

3. Theme

“*Masaya yung ‘Father Goes to Court’ kasi, saan ka pa, naisip nilang kasuhan yung kapitbahay dahil nakiki-amoy lang siya.*” (“Father Goes to Court” was funny, because the neighbor thought of suing because he smelled the food.)

“*Hindi naman makatotohanan ang ‘Father Goes to Court.’*” (“Father Goes to Court” isn’t realistic.)

⁶ Nosebleed is slang used by students of this period to mean anything that is beyond their capacities. It can be too intellectual, too abstract, or too advanced. Simply speaking in fluent English without halting can be considered as “nosebleed.”

The Grade 8 students knew that suing people in court for smelling food would not hold in any real court, and this made them interested in the story. They found comedy and love story more interesting, but they do not want to go deeper into the characters' minds. The male participants preferred to have more realism and action than talk in the stories that they read. The female participants were more into love stories with a little talk and some action.

“Maganda din po yung “The Wedding Dance” dahil mapapa-isip ka kung anong gagawin nung babae sa dulo.” (“The Wedding Dance” is a nice story because it makes you think of what the girl will do in the end.)

“The Wedding Dance” is a love story that many of the Grade 8 female students found interesting. However, this left the boys a little behind until the story was retold to them. “May Day Eve” also had a love story in the middle, but the students found difficulty understanding the transitions and flashbacks.

Stoodt (1996) said that teenagers prefer to read about characters their own age struggling with the realities of adolescents, or create for themselves heroic roles that they can associate with. None of the stories have characters that are close to their age. Dodong of “Footnote to Youth” is close to their age at 17, but he was already thinking of marriage, which the Grade 7 students are not yet interested in. Ben, in “Distance to Andromeda,” is closer to their age but Brillantes' style of writing does not match the Grade 7 students' linguistic abilities.

4. *Setting*

“I cannot relate with the place.”

“*Hindi ko maintindihan noong una yung buhay sa tribo. Pero, nung in-explain na ni Ma’am, naintindihan ko na.*” (I couldn’t understand the life in the tribe at first. But after Ma’am explained it, I understood it.)

“I have not gone to a circus, or *perya*, yet.”

The students were generally uninterested in the rural setting in most of the stories they read. Most of them did not realize the setting until their teacher told them that it was in the rice field or in the mountain, and they will go, “Ahhh!” indicating their realization. They did not mind the rural setting but they preferred to read stories set in an urban setting. “Distance to Andromeda” may have been set in the present but, again, Brillantes’ writing style may prove to be the source of difficulty for students who were used to more direct and simple writing styles. In addition, the time element or period needed to be explained first to them because they were unable to determine immediately that many of the stories were set in the past, especially “May Day Eve” which was set in 1890. Students also said that if the stories were set in the present, with cell phones and internet, they might have found the stories more interesting than those they read in textbooks.

The Schema Theory explains that comprehension takes place when the reader’s background knowledge matches and interacts with the content, including the culture, of the text (Hermosa, 2002; Pardede, 2006; and Hetherington, 1985). In this case, the setting creates the backdrop of the events and characters’ mindsets which the students are clearly unfamiliar with. To bridge the gap, the teachers had to explain or provide

visualization, like videos of the life in tribes or a circus performance, in order for the students to picture themselves in the setting.

From the other comments shared by the students, observations can be made on the level of understanding that they had on the stories.

1. *“Mas madali kung idi-discuss ng teacher.”* (It is easier if the teacher discusses it.)

Simplification strategies, or interpretation and explanation, made by the teacher allowed students better understanding of the texts that they read. This may prove that the texts were in the Instructional Level of the students’ reading abilities. If the texts were assigned to be read independently, it is more likely that students will not understand or appreciate the materials.

2. *“Sino ba si Labang?”*(Who’s Labang?) (A comment made on *“How My Brother Brought Home a Wife”*; it took the researcher to inform the student that Labang was the carabao.)

The student may not have been able to follow the train of thought of the speaker in *“How My Brother Brought Home a Wife.”* The story’s first person point of view and Arguilla’s style of writing may be the factors contributing to the difficulty. The story did not point out directly that Labang was the carabao. It simply said...

“She held the wrist of one hand with the other and looked at Labang, and Labang never stopped chewing his cud.”

The student may need to define the word “cud” and who or what chews cud. The text did leave some inference load that the teacher needs to bridge in order for comprehension to happen.

3. *“Nagustuhan ko po yung “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” dahil hindi po akalain nung character na iisa lang pala yung clown na kakausapin niya doon sa dulo. Doon niya lang na-realize na mali pala ang mga inaakala niya sa mga tao in general.”* (I liked “Life is a Three-Ring Circus” because the character did not realize that he was going to talk to the same clown in the last part. It was only then that he realized that his perception of people is generally wrong.)

Not all students found the stories obscure. One way or another, higher order thinking skills were tapped by the stories and reader response was generated.

According to Darigan (2002), literature with good quality have positive feedback given by teachers for literary merit and positive reader’s response. Since checklists coming from teachers and students reveal these qualities, the stories can be said to be of high quality.

The Easiest and Most Difficult Philippine Short Story in English

To determine the easiest and most difficult short story from the nine (9) selections for the study, the readability indices produced from the three approaches were summarized in Table 4.5.

The easiest short story was characterized as the story meeting three (3) criteria: the lowest Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL), the highest mean cloze score in the Independent level, and the highest mean readability checklist score in the Readable level. Not one short story met all three criteria. The lowest FKGL was from “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers.” The highest mean cloze score, 34%, was from three stories, “We

Table 4.5. Summary of results from three (3) approaches

Story	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level ⁷	Cloze Score Average & Evaluation ⁸	Readability Checklist Evaluation ⁹	
			Students ¹⁰	Teachers ¹¹
We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers	3.0	34 (Frustration)	n/a	38 (Readable)
The Wedding Dance	3.7	30 (Frustration)	39 (Readable)	36 (Readable)
May Day Eve	3.9	34 (Frustration)	n/a	31 (Readable)
Father Goes to Court	4.7	34 (Frustration)	38 (Readable)	33 (Readable)
Footnote to Youth	4.9	28 (Frustration)	n/a	35 (Readable)
How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife	5.2	26 (Frustration)	40 (Readable)	30 (Readable)
Life is a Three-Ring Circus	5.9	24 (Frustration)	40 (Readable)	42 (Readable)
The Small Key	6.0	26 (Frustration)	40 (Readable)	23 (Readable)
Distance to Andromeda	10.0	14 (Frustration)	n/a	30 (Readable)

Filipinos are Mild Drinkers,” “May Day Eve,” and “Father Goes to Court.” The highest mean readability score, both from teachers (42 points) and students (40 points), was from “Life is a Three-Ring Circus,” which was ranked third most challenging in FKGL (5.9) and second in the cloze procedure (24).

However, because there is a strong correlation between the FKGL and cloze scores, and since the readability checklist score has no correlation with the first two methods, it can be concluded with caution that “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers” is

⁷ Average of Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level scores from the MS Word and three online readability calculators

⁸ Average of cloze scores from 75 Grade Seven students, 30 from private schools and 45 from public schools

⁹ Questions in this Readability Checklist were adapted from Donna Norton’s *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children’s Literature* (2011, p.99).

¹⁰ Average of scores from students evaluation from a focus group discussion (n=20)

¹¹ Average of scores from Grade Seven teachers from the private and public schools (n=3)

the easiest short story among the nine (9) short stories evaluated for this study. It is with caution because based on its cloze score, this short story, along with the other eight (8), falls at the Frustration level (< 35%). The students may or may not be able to read and understand the story with or without teacher's guidance. There is no guarantee that this will be understood by Grade 7 students. In fact, if Taylor's assumption, Frustration level <35%, does apply to the Philippine setting, there is still a high possibility that students and teachers will both be frustrated in reading the text, as interpreted by Chatel (2001) and Richardson & Morgan (in Sejnost & Theise, 2007).

The most difficult short story was characterized to have the following indices: the highest FKGL, the lowest mean cloze score, and the lowest mean readability checklist score. No one story met all three (3) criteria. However, **“Distance to Andromeda”** may be considered as the most difficult short story in this study because it has the highest FKGL, 10.0, and the lowest cloze score, 14. Based on the readability checklist for teachers, “Distance to Andromeda” is only second lowest to “The Small Key” and has the same readability scores as “How My Brother Leon brought Home a Wife,” with an FKGL of 5.2 and a cloze score of 26.

The Threshold Level of Text Difficulty

The threshold level of text difficulty is supposed to be the highest FKGL with the cloze score at the Instructional level. However, none of the selected short stories' cloze score came close to the Instructional Level of 35% correct answers. The readability checklist seems weak because most of the answers given by teachers and students were positive; none gave a No answer to a story. However, if the cloze score of 34% is taken

into account since it is a point closer to Taylor's criterion of 35%, **it can be considered that texts with FKGL of 3.0-4.0 is the threshold level of text difficulty for the 75 Grade Seven students who participated in this study.** This result coincides with the American benchmark of readability. DuBay (2004) posited that in order for a text to be understood by the target reader, text should be three (3) levels below the last school level completed by the target reader.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the summary, conclusion, recommendations, and some final thoughts on the study.

Summary

This study was designed to investigate the readability of Philippine literature in English, particularly of short stories, that appears in commercially published textbooks. These textbooks are published for the private school system where the choice of instructional materials is dependent on the teachers or school head. Public school textbooks are regulated by the Department of Education and are only available in their system.

The goals of this study were to determine the easiest and most difficult short stories, and the threshold level of text difficulty for Grade 7 Filipino students relative to the short stories evaluated. The nine (9) Philippine short stories in English selected for this study were:

1. "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" by Manuel Arguilla,
2. "My Father Goes to Court" by Carlos Bulosan,
3. "Footnote to Youth" by Jose Garcia Villa,
4. "The Small Key" by Paz Latorena,
5. "The Wedding Dance" by Amador Daguio,
6. "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers" by Alejandro Roces,
7. "Distance to Andromeda" by Gregorio Brillantes,
8. "Life is a Three-Ring Circus" by Jose Quirino, and
9. "May Day Eve" by Nick Joaquin.

Three approaches were applied to investigate and profile the readability of the short stories as recommended by research studies (Burns & Charleston, 1997; Holzhausen, 2001) – readability formulas, cloze procedure, and readability checklist. A focus group discussion with Grade 8 students was also added into the approaches guided by the readability checklist, in order to acquire feedback that is not contained in the checklist.

Three (3) stories were identified as the easiest among the nine (9) selections of the study. These were “We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers,” “Wedding Dance,” and “May Day Eve.” Their Flesch-Kincaid Grade Levels range from 3.0-3.9 and their cloze scores are the lowest among the stories, 34, 30, and 34, respectively. Meanwhile, the most difficult story is “Distance to Andromeda” which had the highest Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level at 10.0 and cloze scores at 100% frustration level.

The threshold level criteria set for the study was not met by the results. However, for purposes of benchmarking for future studies, the threshold level can be estimated at 3.0-4.0 of the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Levels, based on the readability indices given by the three (3) easiest stories.

Based on the focus group discussion, the three (3) teachers who participated in the study say that the selections of Philippine literature in English are deemed difficult because of the following factors: interest, language, length, and setting. The themes were not that interesting to their students, who are in their pre- and early teen years, and the language used is too complex. The length of the stories are too long for students just beginning to venture beyond storybooks, and the settings are unfamiliar. The 20 Grade 8 students who also participated in the study concurred on the points about language,

length, setting, and themes. In addition, there were language nuances that were unfamiliar to them.

Conclusions

Based on the results, the nine (9) Philippine short stories in English are generally difficult for Grade 7 students since all fell in the frustration level in the cloze test. Though generally of high quality, the intended readers, who are still developing their reading skills and linguistic competencies, will find the stories difficult to comprehend. Richardson & Morgan (in Sejnost & Theise, 2007) said that at the point of frustration, teachers will need to put in more effort to assist the students in their reading. Based on the teachers' experiences, assistance means retelling, interpreting, or even translating the stories after the students read the stories, which may develop dependency instead of reading skills.

Based on the comparison between cloze scores and readability formula grade levels, the three (3) stories identified as the easiest were "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers," "Wedding Dance," and "May Day Eve." These had Flesch-Kincaid Grade Levels ranging from 3.0-3.9 and the lowest cloze scores among the stories, 34, 30, and 34, respectfully. Although these mean scores place these texts within the Frustration level, 10% of the Grade 7 students in the study would be able to read them independently and a little over 30% would be able to read them with assistance from their teachers. However, this number is still not enough to qualify the stories as instructional materials. In Krashen's (1991) Input Theory, these nine (9) stories would fall in the "I+2" category of comprehensible input, or input too difficult for the intended readers. These kind of stories, or texts in general, will turn off students from learning to read and, if forced,

creates a frustration in reading, and no language development will take place (Drucker, 2003; Orillos, 2000). What Krashen proposed as instructional materials for second language development are comprehensible input that is a little harder than the reader's ability, "I+1." Cloze scores showed that the Grade 7 students' linguistic abilities are still insufficient to help them comprehend the stories (Chatel, 2001).

From the results of the readability checklists, discussion with teachers, and focus group discussions with 20 Grade 8 students, the short stories can still be called quality stories worthy to be read. However, the length, setting, themes, and language of the stories do not match with the readers' backgrounds. The students' were mostly concerned with the length as their consideration for text difficulty. They were not used to reading these long short stories probably because they did not have stories this long when they were reading in the elementary level. Even the teachers attest that the stories were too long for their students.

Setting in general was also a concern of the teachers, since students said they were unfamiliar with the setting, either place or time. The themes were generally uninteresting for the Grade 7 students because these are not the issues that they face in their everyday lives. The Grade 8 students, who had already read and discussed the stories in their Grade 7 classes, said they appreciated the themes only after the teachers had explained them.

The Schema Theory looks at reader's background as an important factor in comprehension (Hermosa, 2002; Pardo, 2004). The intended readers for these short stories do not have the schema in interacting with the texts, particularly in terms of the

length, setting, theme. In Stoodt (1996), comprehension takes place when the readers can associate with the elements of the story. In this case, the students did not have the background to relate with the setting and themes in the story to be able to read them independently.

The abstractness or concreteness of the stories' content also contributed to the complexities in the stories' readability. The stories contained some level of abstractness in their content, like jealousy, intimacy, and regret, which the students had to infer with much difficulty. Grade 7 students at this age and with their linguistic abilities need content that is more concrete and the transition had to be gradual (Hetherington, 1985). Perhaps the students were not used to the abstract content because they did not have them in their elementary reading classes. Even the content had to be addressed by the teachers through their lectures on the stories.

Language was also a contributing factor to the stories' readability. It does not match the readers' abilities and schema. Based on the cloze scores and the feedback from the discussions with the readability checklists, English as a language is still a challenge for Grade 7 Filipinos despite having had the English subject for six (6) years in the elementary. The language complexities of the texts, compounded by the writing styles of the authors and the use of literary devices, were still beyond the linguistic abilities of the students. Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011), Klare (in Du Bay, 2004), Johnson (2000), and Zakaluk & Samuels (1996) attest that comprehension can only happen in the minds of the reader when there is a match between their linguistic abilities and the texts. The cloze scores revealed that there is no match. Looking at the cloze scores alone, the selections can already be judged as unsuitable for reading instruction in the Grade 7.

The teachers's efforts to aid student comprehension were often in the form of retelling, interpreting, and translating. When reading texts that are frustrating, these methods of assistance may eventually create dependency on the teacher's lecture instead of developing reading skills. In effect, the goals of the curriculum for communicative competency will not be met.

As for the selection of stories, judging by the wide range in the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Levels of 3.0 to 10.0, the stories for Grade 7 English do not seem to have a standard levelling scheme. At this point, it is understandable that there is no levelling of text difficulty happening in the country since readability studies are scarce, especially in literature. Levelling of texts is needed to aid teachers in reading instruction. If the optimal difficulty level, the threshold difficulty of text, can be determined, then texts can be selected based on Krashen's "I+1" of comprehensible input. The threshold level criteria for this study was not met; however, based on the grade levels of the three (3) easiest stories, the nearly acceptable cloze scores, and the second-language-learner nature of the students, the estimated threshold for Grade 7 Filipino students can be at 3.0-4.0 of the Flesch-Kincaid Grade level. Whenever stories in English textbooks fall within this range or even lower, say 2.0, they may become more readable for the students, and teachers can focus more time on teaching reading skills than on explaining the stories' elements. Textbooks could become more of an interesting reading material for students, an effective tool to motivate love for reading.

Recommendations

For Further Studies

The results of this study were not able to concretely answer certain questions regarding readability of Philippine literature in English. Thus, there is a need to:

1. test other stories of Philippine literature in English especially those found in the K to 12 textbooks.

This study used only nine (9) short stories that are common in the eight (8) commercial textbooks published from 2006 to 2011. These books followed the Revised Basic Education Curriculum of the Department of Education. With the new K to 12 curriculum, there are other stories that have been selected by the same publishers of the textbooks used in this study. These too should be tested for readability and their match with the target readers' reading abilities.

2. test the same short stories with other participants from other schools, economic levels, or regions of the Philippines.

One of the limitations of this study was the participants. Only 75 students and three (3) teachers from a private school and a public school participated. Different results could be derived if the same cloze tests for the nine (9) short stories will be performed in more schools and in various economic levels and regions; thus painting a more accurate picture or description of the stories' difficulty.

3. use other methods to test the readability of the same texts in this study.

The methods used in this study – Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Cloze Test, and Readability Checklist – are three of the ways that readability of texts may be determined. There are other readability tests that are available and more convenient to replace the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. The Fry Test is also still widely used because of its convenience (Perez, 1982; Burns & Charleston, 1997; Yong, 2010; The Northwest Center for Holocaust, Genocide and Ethnocide Education, 2011), but the Lexile and Automated Readability Index (ARI), being the more recently developed, may also be used to evaluate texts (Diaz & Ocampo, 2013). Aside from the Cloze Test, the Maze Test can also be used without compromising validity. More readability checklists should be explored to provide more qualitative measures of evaluating text difficulty.

4. conduct other methods in determining the threshold level of difficulty for Philippine literature in English.

Since this study's threshold criteria were not fully met and only an estimated level was determined based on the cloze scores, other methods, like the maze test, and the use of other texts, like expository texts from newspapers, magazines, blogs, and other reading materials, should be applied in order to determine the threshold level of difficulty for Filipino Grade 7 students.

5. conduct content analysis for themes that make Philippine literature in English easy or difficult for Grade 7 students.

This study was limited to the use of readability calculators, cloze test, and readability checklist in order to determine text difficulty. However, there were other

factors, like content and genre that influence readability that are not covered in this study. In addition, interest was one of the issues that arose from the study, and can be looked into. Robert Flesch's Human Interest Scale can be used to determine the level of interest a story has.

The selected stories were first published between 1930 and 1960. The time and themes when these stories were written are very different from the interests and background of the students who read them today. If this classical literature is required to be read, there may be other stories out there that may be more relevant to today's children.

6. conduct more periodic studies on the profiles of today's children and their interests.

According to Pardo (2004), research on the Filipino children's preferences for themes and motifs of reading materials may actually show the textbook authors what children like to read. Having difficult texts forced on the students will hinder their love for reading. But if the textbooks in schools carry stories that are interesting to them, they will be more motivated to read them and answer the questions that teachers will ask.

Making a profile of the students' personalities, learning styles, study habits, and other characteristics, may help teachers, textbook authors, and curriculum developers in designing more reading materials that will help students develop interest in reading and English proficiency.

For Curriculum Developers, Authors and Textbook Publishers

Since the textbook is said to be the carrier of the Philippine educational curriculum (Mahmood, Iqbal, & Saeed, 2009), curriculum developers, authors, and publishers should look into the level of difficulty of the short stories they select for their textbooks. They are as equally responsible as the teachers in developing the reading skills and literacy of the Filipino learners. Having stories with a wide range of difficulty may not bridge the gap between the reading ability that the students have and should have at the end of Grade 7. As Krashen (1991) proposed, the readability of texts should be “I+1” of the students’ reading ability at the start of the school year. However, since this study only provided a proposed benchmark of readability threshold, more studies should be developed to concretize “I+1” for the Grade Seven.

Aside from using readability levels as basis for selection, authors and publishers should also consider the content of the stories and the opinion of the target readers or students on the stories they select. As opined by the teachers in the study, courtship rather than marriage is of greater interest to students in Grade 7. Stories that are closer to the interest of the children are more likely to be read even if the level of difficulty is much higher than their reading ability (Kiefer, 2010). Teenagers also prefer to read stories with characters who are their age undergoing the same struggles that they have or about people they can emulate (Stoodt, 1996). The selected short stories in this study are considered high quality, but the authors may not have meant for them to be read by Grade 7 students or teenagers.

For Classroom Reading Teachers

This study was also made to help classroom teachers assess the readability match between students and texts. Readability of texts should be considered before selecting the reading selection in order to provide the best strategies to teach students how to read effectively. The methods presented in this study may be replicated in their classrooms in order to assess if the featured literature in the textbook will be useful for their classes. Readability formulas will help determine the grade level of difficulty since not all the textbooks feature this. The cloze test can be given to students before the lesson to determine if the text can be read independently or instructionally, or if it will be frustrating. The checklists can help teachers assess the quality of selections presented in the textbook. These, though tedious at first, can be the basis for evaluating textbooks or selecting instructional strategies.

Since the readability of the nine (9) short stories is found to be higher than the reading abilities of the 75 participants in this study, English teachers should reconsider using the short stories in their classes. If they can help it, they should choose other texts to read in their reading classes. However, since many of the schools in the Philippines rely on the textbook for their curriculum, teachers should use them wisely. Their wisdom in assessing the usefulness of these stories is still as effective as the methods presented. Norton (2011) particularly stated that the final judgment of texts for their usefulness in instruction lies with the reading teacher.

However, since Philippine literature in English is still the prescribed reading text for Grade 7 and other stories in textbooks may be more difficult, teachers should be

equipped in handling difficult texts. Teachers can employ the following activities to help the students bridge the gap.

1. Dramatizations prepared with students ahead of time can help students picture the rural or tribal settings.
2. Comic books and movie adaptations, if available, can also be used before reading the text to provide students with the necessary prior knowledge in handling the themes of the text.
3. Graphic organizers can help the students handle long narratives and keep track of the essential elements and themes of the stories.
4. Vocabulary building is also essential in helping students unlock the meaning of figurative language and other difficult words, phrases, or sentences.
5. Direct reading instruction is vital since the students might not have the needed reading skills required in handling texts, especially difficult ones.
6. Reading aloud may also be employed in order for the struggling readers to hear the language used by the author.
7. The teacher can also interrupt the reading of the text to employ Direct Reading-Thinking Activities to strengthen the students' comprehension of essential parts of the stories.
8. Comprehension questions at the end of the reading should also be modified or changed to follow the Gradual Psychological Unfolding (GPU) sequence in order to adapt to the students' different backgrounds and levels of thinking.

Teachers should also take the effort in using interest surveys and journal writing to study the profiles of their students. Though they may not have a say in the level of

text difficulty, they may find an avenue to match the stories with the present interests and situations of the students. Textbooks are designed for the general population, but teachers can always modify their teaching strategies to match their students' situations.

More teacher trainings can also be conducted to help teachers use the prescribed short stories in the K to 12 curriculum. Many teachers, both young and seasoned, need to be updated with the latest trends and techniques in teaching literature. Kamil (2003) did say that what the elementary education failed to do in reading instruction must be continued in the high school level. Thus, Grade 7 and 8 teachers need to bridge the lessons, reading instruction, and reading materials from what the students left off from elementary. Pre- and in-service trainings will help teachers customize their instruction to the students that they teach everyday. Based on this study, there is a need for students to improve their vocabulary and understanding of literary devices, discourse and rhetorical forms, and various sentences structures.

For Creative Writers

The stories evaluated in this study were said to have themes that are not interesting to the Grade 7 students. This creates the opportunity for creative writers of children and young adults to write stories for textbooks, ones which will be more interesting for the target students and will foster the goals of the curriculum, which are to have “a better understanding of man and his environment” and for the students to gain “understanding and appreciation of various literary types” (Department of Education, 2002; Department of Education, 2010; Sutaria, 2011).

For Librarians and Information Management Specialists

The results of this study showed that not all texts are suitable for everybody. School librarians can use the methods used here in order to procure materials for their libraries that would be suitable for the students. Internet sources, which are the most accessible sources of information, should also be screened by librarians in order for them to assist the students in finding information they need.

Just like in the United States where readability tools are applied to more public documents (Du Bay, 2004), the Philippines can also adapt these readability studies in making reading materials more suitable for the public. Publications for mass media, like newspapers, magazines, brochures, websites, manuals, legal documents, and medical literature, need to be readable by the public more than textbooks or school reference books. These publications cater to more people and provide more vital information that the public finds more useful in their lives.

Final Thoughts

Readability studies are not new in other countries but here in the Philippines, they are scarce. The value of readability and the evaluation of texts, especially those used in the classrooms, should be fostered in order to promote more programs for literacy and the production of more valuable and useful literature for the younger generations.

The younger generations do love to read and would want to read. However, this love and desire to read will only be hindered if the materials, particularly textbooks,

available to the children and teens contain stories and other forms of literature that are difficult to read. Thus, readability tools can come into good use in schools and classrooms to help teachers evaluate the texts that they give to students, select those that are appropriate, and, eventually, encourage the passion to read and learn.

To encourage English among the Filipino youth is not to turn them away from the Philippines' culture and heritage as some adults used to think. English is the official language in many sectors of the nation and an undeniable advantage for success and national progress. The Filipino writers who first endeavored to write short stories in English and have successfully done so are the ones featured in textbooks, but they did not have the Grade 7 students in mind when they wrote them. Now is the time to foster the new Philippine literature in English through the writing of more children's and young adult literature and promote them in the textbooks, if textbooks are the only reading materials that most Filipino youth can get.

The literacy rate of the Philippines may still improve in the future if the educators will simply consider other factors that will improve the quality of reading materials for the students. Edgar Dale (1949) said, "A book must fit the man if any education is to take place."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Armbruster, B. (1985). *"Readability Formulas may be Dangerous to your Textbook," Educational Journal 42(7), 18-20.* Retrieved July 2011, from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development:
www.ascd.org/ACD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198504_armbruster.pdf.
- Baltzell, T., Haas, K., & Rolph, A. (2007). *Content Informal Reading Inventory.* Retrieved June 23, 2012, from www.msrolph.com/files/CIRI.pdf.
- Bean, T., & Brant, P. (1981). *"Evaluating a history text: a comparison of cloze and maze procedure" Reading World 21(2).* Retrieved June 7, 2012, from Taylor & Francis Online:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19388078109557632#preview>.
- Browne, C. M. (1996). *"Japanese EFL Reading Texts: How readable are they?" Working Papers in Applied Linguistics 8 (28).* Retrieved June 2011, from Wordengine.JP:
www.wordengine.jp/research/pdf/Japanese_EFL_reading_texts.pdf.
- Buhain, D. D. (2005). *"Publishing Today." Bangkok International Bookfair, Bangkok, Thailand.* Retrieved April 12, 2012, from www.accu.or.jp/appreb/02/02-02/02-02country/pdf/pt_phi.pdf.
- Burns, R., & Charleston, R. (1997). *"The Readability of English Medium curriculum texts in Brunei primary school".* Retrieved August 2011, from Australian Journal of Language and Literacy:
www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst?docId=500533087.
- Byram, M. (2000). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Reading: London, Routledge.* Retrieved July 18, 2012, from Taylor & Francis Books at Google Books: <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415593762/>.
- Chall, J. S., Bissex, G. L., Conard, S. S., & Harris-Sharples, S. H. (1996). *Qualitative Assessment of Text Difficulty: A Practical Guide for Teachers and Writers.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Brookline Books.
- Chatel, R. G. (2001). *Diagnostic and Instructional Uses of the Cloze Procedure.* Retrieved September 2011, from The NERA Journal:
ww2.sjc.edu/faculty_pages/rchatel/vita/articles/chatelcloze.pdf.
- Conner, J. (2006). *General Readability Checklist.* Retrieved May 02, 2012, from Indiana State University: <http://www.indiana.edu/~1517/readability.htm>.

- Crandall, V., Crandall, V., & Katkovsky, W. (1965). *"A children's social desirability questionnaire"*, *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 28(1), Feb 1965, 27-36. Retrieved July 2, 2014, from PschINFO:
<http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/ccp/29/1/27/>.
- Daggett, W., & Hasselbring, T. (2007). *"What we Know About Adolescent Reading"*. Retrieved October 1, 2012, from International Center for Leadership in Education:
<http://www.leadered.com/pdf/adolescent%20reading20%whitepaper.pdf>.
- Dale, E. (1949). *"Readability"*. *National Conference on Research in English, National Council of Teachers of English*. Retrieved April 23, 2012, from ERIC:
<http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED089361.pdf>.
- Darigan, D. L. (2002). *Children's Literature: engaging teachers and children in good books*. New Jersey, USA: Pearson Education.
- De Dios, A. C. (2013). *Philippine Basic Education*. Retrieved October 24, 2014, from blogspot: <http://philbasiceducation.blogspot.com/2013/07/the-national-achievement-test-in.html>.
- De Ungria, R. (2011). *"Philippine Literature in English"*. Retrieved July 4, 2012, from National Commission for Culture and the Arts: www.ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/articles-on-c-n-a/article.php?igm=1&1+135.
- Department of Education. (2002). *DepEd Order 43 s.2002: "The 2002 Basic Education Curriculum"*. Retrieved August 25, 2012, from Department of Education:
http://www.deped.gov.ph/cpanel/uploads/issuanceImg/DO%2043_08-29-02_00001.pdf.
- Department of Education. (2010). *DepEd Order 76 s.2010: "Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the 2010 Secondary Education Curriculum"*. Retrieved August 25, 2012, from Department of Education:
<http://www.deped.gov.ph/cpanel/uploads/issuanceImg/DO%20No.%2076,%20s.%202010.pdf>.
- Diaz de Rivera, L. (1997). *Literature-Based Reading Programs*. Quezon City, Philippines: UP Open University.
- Diaz, L. E., & Ocampo, D. S. (2013). *Antas ng readability ng mga piling tekstong naratibo at expositibo sa Filipino. Reading Association of the Philippines (RAP) Journal*, 10-21.

- Drucker, M. J. (2003). *"What Reading Teachers Should Know about ESL Learners"* *The Reading Teacher* 57 (1), 22-29. Retrieved September 21, 2012, from JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20205312>.
- Du Bay, W. H. (2004). *"The Principles of Readability"*. Retrieved April 23, 2012, from Impact Information, Costa Mesa, CA: <http://almacenplantillasweb.es/wp-content/uploads/2009/22/The-Principles-of-Readability.pdf>.
- Ericta, C. (2010). *Almost Nine out of Ten Filipinos are Functionally Literate (Final Results from the 2008 FLEMMS); Press Releases #20:10-142*. Retrieved October 24, 2014, from National Statistics Authority, National Statistics Office: web0.psa.gov.ph/old/data/pressrelease/2010/pr10142tx.html.
- Espartero, A. C. (1976). *"A Comparative Study of the Readability of Secondary Science Textbooks" (MAEd Thesis)*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Diliman.
- Farhady, H., & Jamali, F. (n.d.). *"Varieties of C-test as Measures of General Language Proficiency"*. Retrieved July 21, 2012, from American University of Armenia: aua.am/academics/dep/hf_publications/5%20Farhady_Jamali.pdf.
- Ferranculo, N. (1978). *"A Comparison of Student Involvement and Readability Indices of Two Textbooks" (MAEd Thesis)*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Diliman.
- Francis, H., & Hallam, S. (2000). *"Genre effects on higher education students' text reading for understanding"*. Retrieved September 29, 2013, from Higher Education 39(3), 279-296: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3447912>.
- Fulcher, G. (1997). *"Text Difficulty and Accessibility: Reading formulae adn expert judgment," Sytem, v.25 n.4, pp.497-513, Elsevier Science, Ltd*. Retrieved October 14, 2014, from Language Testing: <http://languagetesting.info/articles/store/text%20difficulty.pdf>.
- Gilakjani, A. P., & Ahmadi, S. M. (2011). *The Relationship between L2 Reading Comprehension and Schema Theory: A Matter of Text Familiarity"*. Retrieved April 2012, from International Journal of Information and Education Technology 1(2), 142-49.
- Gonzales, D. T. (2009). *"Should Private Schools Allow DepEd to regulate their Textbooks Procurement?"*. Retrieved September 5, 2011, from Discover The Gift Blog Archive: <http://discoverthegift.blogspot.com/2009/01/should-private-schools-allow-deped-to.html>.

- Hadley, G., & Naaykens, J. (1999). *"Testing the Test: Comparing SEMAC and Exact Word Scoring and Selective Deletion Cloze"* *The Korea TESOL Journal* 2 (1). Retrieved July 18, 2012, from Nigota University of International and Information Studies: www.nuis.ac.jp/~hadley.publication/kortesol/Hadley-Naaykens-KOTESOL.pdf.
- Hameed, T. (2008). *"A Comparison of L1 and L2 Reading: Cultural Differences and Schema"* *Diala Journal*, v.28. Retrieved October 8, 2014, from <http://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&ald=18085>.
- Hermosa, N. (2002). *Psychology of Reading*. Quezon City: UP Open University.
- Hetherington, A. (1985). *"Assessing the suitability of reading materials for ESL student,"* *TESL Canada Journal*, 3(1), 37-52. Retrieved October 10, 2014, from TESL Canada Journal: <http://www.teslcanadajournal.ca/index.php/tesl/article/viewfile/475/304>.
- Holtgraves, T. (2004, February). *"Social Desirability and Self-Reports: Testing Models of Socially Desirable Responding"* *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 30 (2). Retrieved July 2, 2014, from http://www.researchgate.net/publication/8669989_Social_desirability_and_self-reports_testing_models_of_socially_desirable_responding/file/79e41500965144c7c6.pdf.
- Holzhausen, S. (2001). *"Triangulation as a powerful tool to strengthen the qualitative research design: The Resource-based Learning Career Preparation Program as a case study"* *Higher Education Close-Up Conference 2, Lancaster University*. Retrieved July 1, 2012, from Education-line Database: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/document/0000159.html>.
- Irwin, J. W., & Davis, C. A. (1980, November). *"Assessing Readability: The Checklist Approach"*, *Journal of Reading* 24 (2): 124-130. Retrieved 10 2012, October, from JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40009291>.
- Jimbol. (2010). *Philippine Literature (a PowerPoint Presentation)*. Retrieved May 21, 2012, from Authorstream.com: <http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/jimbol2010-1269924-philippine-literature-full-version/>.
- Johnson, K. (2000). *"Readability"*. Retrieved April 23, 2012, from Timetabler.com: <http://www.timetabler.com/Readability&Books.pdf>.

- Kamil, M. L. (2003). *"Adolescent and Literacy: Reading in the 21st Century"*. Retrieved October 1, 2012, from Alliance for Excellent Education: <http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/AdolescentsAndLiteracy.pdf>.
- Katona, L., & Dornyei, Z. (2004). *"What the C-test is"* *Forum English Teaching*. Retrieved July 21, 2012, from Effortless English Archives: effortlessacquisition.blogspot.com/2004/10/what-c-test-is.html.
- Kiefer, B. (2010). *Understanding Children's Responses to Literature*. Retrieved February 24, 2014, from Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature: highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/al/free/0073378569/669929/kie78569_ch02.pdf.
- Krashen, S. D. (1991). *"The Input Hypothesis: An Update"* *Alatis, J.E. (ed) Linguistics and Language Pedagogy: The State of the Art*. Retrieved October 21, 2012, from Google Books: <http://books.google.com.ph/books?id=GzgWsZDlVo0C&pg=PA271&dq=Stephen+Krashen,+Input+Theory:+An+Update+in+Alatis&hl=en&sa=X&ei=t3feUPTJC37rAf7nYHICw&ved=0CDsQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=Stephen%20Krashen%20C%20Input%20Theory%3A%20An%20Update%20in%20Alatis&f=false>.
- Lennon, C., & Burdick, H. (2004, April). *Lexile Framework for Reading*. Retrieved October 21, 2012, from "The Lexile Framework as an Approach for Reading Measurement and Success" White Paper for The Lexile Framework for Reading: https://d1jt5u2s0h3gkt.cloudfront.net/m/uploads/whitepapers/Lexile-Reading-Measurement-and-Success-0504_MetaMetricsWhitepaper.pdf.
- Lewis, C. (2000). *Critical Issues: Limits of Identification: The Personal, Pleasurable and Critical in Reader Response*. Retrieved February 18, 2013, from Journal of Language and Reading, vol. 32, no. 2: jlr.sagepub.com.
- Locsin, M. C. (1967). *"The Exiles: A Reading of Gregorio Brillantes' The Distance to Andromeda"* *Philippine Studies* 15(3): 407-424. Retrieved November 2, 2014, from <http://www.philippinestudies.net/ojs/index.php/ps/article/view/2324/4367>.
- Luis-Santos, L. M., Sutaria, M. C., & Pablo, B. S. (n.d.). *"The Philippine Basic Education Curriculum" Module 2 of Teacher Induction Program, Teacher Education Council, Department of Education*. Retrieved August 25, 2012, <https://2013rotary7930vtt.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/the-philippine-basic-education-curriculum.pdf>.
- Lynch-Brown, C. (2005). *Essentials of Children's Literature*. Boston, USA: Pearson Education.

- Mahmood, K., Iqbal, Z., & Saeed, M. (2009). *"Textbook Evaluation through Quality Indicators: The Case of Pakistan"* *Bulletin of Education and Research*. Retrieved April 22, 2012, from <http://www.ue.edu.pk/jrre/articles/52006.pdf>.
- Millone, M. (2008). *CORE Reading Maze Comprehension Test*. Retrieved July 5, 2012, from Academic Therapy Publications: literacy.lausd.net/sites/literacy.lausd.net/files/CORE%20Maze20%Test.pdf.
- Morales, I. (2012, October 31). *Do Pinoys wear the old coat and buy the new book?* Retrieved February 24, 2014, from Rappler: <http://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/15176-do-pinoys-wear-the-old-coat-and-buy-the-new-book>.
- Muther, C. (1985). *"What Every Textbook Evaluation Should Know"* *Education Journal*. Retrieved July 2011, from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198504_muther.pdf.
- National Statistics Authority. (2003, 2008). *2003 and 2008 FLEMMS*. Retrieved October 24, 2014, from National Statistics Authority, National Statistics Office: web0.psa.gov.ph/content/literacy-status-filipinos-results-2003-functional-literacy-education-and-mass-media-survey.
- Norton, D. (2011). *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Olsen, W. (2004). *"Triangulation in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods Can Really be Mixed."* M. Holborn (ed) *Development of Sociology*. Ormskirk: Causeway Press.
- Orillos. (2000). *Second Language Acquisition*. Quezon City: UP Open University.
- Pardede, P. (2006, December). *"A Review on Reading Theories and its Implication to the Teaching of Reading."* *Bimonthly Forum of the English Department of FKIP-Universitas Kristen Indonesia*. Retrieved August 23, 2012, from WordPress: <http://parlindunganpardede.wordpress.com/articles/language-teaching/a-review-on-reading-theories-and-its-implications-to-the-teaching-of-reading/>.
- Pardo, L. S. (2004, November). *"What every teacher needs to know about comprehension"*, *International Reading Association* 58 (3):272-280. Retrieved December 17, 2012, from [ftp.learner.org](http://ftp.learner.org/workshops/teachreading35/pdf/teachers_know_comprehension.pdf): http://ftp.learner.org/workshops/teachreading35/pdf/teachers_know_comprehension.pdf.
- Perez, C. V. (1982). *Readability Level Determination for the Elementary School Science Textbook*. Quezon City: Science Education Center, UP Diliman.

- Philippine Congress. (2013, May 15). *RA 10533: Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013*. Retrieved February 2014, from <http://www.gov.ph/downloads/2013/20130515-RA-10533-BSA.pdf>.
- Plata, S. (2010, July). "Standards and Assessment in the 2010 English Curriculum for High School: A Philippine Case Study" *Philippine ESL Journal* 5, 83-101. Retrieved August 25, 2012, from Philippine ESL Journal: http://www.philippine-esl-journal.com/V5_A5.pdf.
- Rabin, A. (1988). "Determining the Difficulty Levels of Texts Written in Languages other than English" *Readability: Its Past, Present and Future; IRA*, 46-76. Retrieved April 2012, from ERIC: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ed292058.pdf23>.
- RAND Reading Study Group. (2002). *Reading for Understanding: Toward a research and development program in reading comprehension*. Retrieved December 17, 2012, from RAND: www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR.
- Resh, C. (1987). *Experimenting with Response to Literature*. Retrieved from Language Arts Journal of Michigan, vol. 3, no. 1, art. 3: <http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/2168-149x.1727>.
- Sejnost, R., & Theise, S. (2007). "Creating the Framework for Reading" *Reading and Writing Across Content Areas*. Retrieved April 23, 2012, from Corwin Press through Sage Pub: http://www.sagepub.com/upmdata/1174_Sejnost_Chapter_1.pdf.
- Shinn, M. R., & Shinn, M. M. (2002). *AIMSWeb Training Workbook: Administration and Scoring of Reading Maze for Use in General Outcome Measurement*. Retrieved July 5, 2012, from AIMSWeb: aimsweb_qa.ratchet.com/uploads/pdfs/Manuals/Maze20%Manual.pdf.
- Singhal, M. (1998, October). "A Comparison of L1 and L2 Reading: Cultural Differences and Schema," *The Internet TESL Journal*, v. 4, n.10. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from The Internet TESL Journal: http://iteslj.org/Articles/Singhal_ReadingL1L2.html.
- Somsamai, T. (1992). "Readability of College Textbooks as Basis for the Threshold Level of Thai Engineering Freshman" (MAEd Thesi). Quezon City : University of the Philippines.
- Stephen, C. (2000). "All About Readability". Retrieved April 23, 2012, from Plain Language: <http://plainlanguage.com/newreadability.html>.

- Stoodt, B. (1996). *Encouraging Children's Response to Literature*. Retrieved February 24, 2014, from Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature Ch 2; Macmillian Education AU: hihgered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/al/free/0073378569/669929/kei78569_ch02.pdf.
- Sutaria, M. C. (2011). "Developing the Filipino Child for 2020 and Beyond: Education and Literacy," *The Future of Filipino Children: Development Issues and Trends*. Retrieved October 1, 2012, from Asian Institute for Journalism and Communication: <http://www.aijc.com.ph/Megatrend%20final%20complete.pdf>.
- TextAssessments. (2012). Retrieved July 22, 2012, from [textassessments.doc-306-1f08](http://textassessments.doc-306-1f08.com).
- The Northwest Center for Holocaust, Genocide and Ethnocide Education. (2011). "Readability Analysis Tools". Retrieved June 2012, from Woodring College of Education, Western Washington University: <http://www.wwce.wvu.edu/nwche/readability/Readability.pdf>.
- Tuvakoli, M., Ahmadi, A., & Bahrani, M. (2011). "Cloze Test and C-Test Revisited: The Effect of Genre Familiarity on Second Language Reading Test Performance" *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 14 (2), 173-204. Retrieved July 18, 2012, from Specific Information Database: www.sid.ir/en/viewSSID/J_pdf/87620110207.pdf.
- Ulusoy, M. (2006). "Readability Approaches: Implications for Turkey". *International Reading Journal* 7(3), 323-332. Retrieved April 30, 2012, from Shannon Research: <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v7n3/Ulusoy/paper.pdf>.
- Walter, H. C. (2003). *Reading in a Second Language*. Retrieved October 10, 2014, from <http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/qpq/1420>.
- Woolley, G. (2000). "Readability and the Comprehension of the Narrative Program". Retrieved May 1, 2012, from Griffith University: <http://www4.gu.edu.au:8080/adt-root/uploads/approved/adt-QGU20070326.104637/public/04Appendices.pdf>.
- Yee, C. L., Chong, S. T., & Ng, Y. J. (2012). "Evaluating the ESL Reading Texts for Intermediate Learners of English from the Perspective of Students", *Global Journal of Human Social Science* 12 (7). Retrieved June 23, 2012, from Global Journal of Human Social Science: <http://socialscienceresearch.org/index.php/GJHSS/article/view/338>.
- Yong, B. C. (2010). "Can students read secondary science textbooks comfortably?". Retrieved August 2011, from Brunei International Journal of Science and Math Education: shbeejournal.files.wordpress.com.

Zakaluk, B. L., & Samuels, S. J. (1996). *"Issues Related to Text Comprehensibility: The Future of Readability"* *Revue quebecoise de linguistique* 25 (1), 41-59. Retrieved April 22, 2012, from Erudit: <http://www.erudit.org/apropos/utilisation.html>.

Zealley, B., & Loftus, C. (2003). *"Comparison of Information on Readability"*. Retrieved April 30, 2012, from Skills for Life Network: www.skillsforlifenet.com/?mod=1&doc=403.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Summary of Readability Formulas and their Features

Readability Formula	Proponent	Year Developed	Variables Needed	Formula	Difficulty Index (Based on American School Grade Standards)
Flesch Reading Ease	Rudolph Flesch	1948	Number of syllables Number of sentences in a 100-word passage	$\text{Score} = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW})$ <p><i>Where:</i> Score = position from 0 to 100 ASL = average sentence length (number of words divided by the number of sentences) ASW = average number of syllables (number of syllables divided by the number of words)</p>	0-30 = Very Difficult 30-40 = Difficult 50-60 = Fairly Difficult 70-80 = Standard* 80-90 = Easy 90-100 = Very Easy
New Flesch Reading Ease Score	Farr, Jenkins, and Paterson	1951	(same)	$\text{Score} = 1.599 \text{ nosw} - 1.015 \text{ sl} - 31.517$ <p><i>Where:</i> nosw = number of one-syllable words per 100 words sl = average sentence length in words</p>	(same)

Readability Formula	Proponent	Year Developed	Variables Needed	Formula	Difficulty Index (Based on American School Grade Standards)
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Scale Formula	Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, and Chissom	1975	(same)	Grade Level = $(0.4 \times \text{ASL}) + (12 \times \text{ASW}) - 15$	School Grade Level
Dale-Chall Formula	Edgar Dale and Jeanne Chall	1948	Percentage of difficult words – words not found on the Dale-Chall of 3,000 words; 80% is known by the average American 4 th grader Average sentence length	Score = $0.1579\text{PDW} + 0.496\text{ASL} + 3.6365$ <i>Where:</i> Score = the reading grade of a reader who can answer 50% of the test questions on a passage PDW = percentage of difficult words ASL = average sentence length	School Grade Level 4.9 and below = Grade 4 and below 5.0-5.9 = Gr. 5-6 6.0-6.9 = Gr. 7-8 7.0-7.9 = Gr. 9-10 8.0-8.9 = Gr. 11-12 9.0-9.9 = College 10 and above = College graduate
Fog Index	Robert Gunning	1952	Average sentence length Number of words with more than 2 syllables	Grade Level = 0.4 (average sentence length + hard words)	Grade Level pertains to the school grades
Fry Readability Graph	Edward Fry	1977	Average number of sentences in a 100-word passage Average number of syllables in a 100-word passage	(The grade level is identified by plotting the average sentences in the y-axis and average syllables on the x-axis of the Fry Graph.)	School Grade Level

Readability Formula	Proponent	Year Developed	Variables Needed	Formula	Difficulty Index (Based on American School Grade Standards)
SMOG	G. Harry McLaughlin	1969	Word length (number of syllables in a word) Sentence length	Grade = 3 + square root of polysyllable count	School Grade Level
FORCAST	Thomas Sticht and the Human Resources Research Organization for the US Army	c. 1970	Number of single-syllable words in a 150-word passage	Grade Level = $20 - (N / 10)$ Where: N = monosyllabic word count	School Grade Level
ARI: Army's Automated Readability Index	Smith and Senter for the US Army	1967	Words per sentence Strokes per word	Grade Level = 0.50 (words per sentence) + 4.71 (strokes per word) - 21.43	School Grade Level

Readability Formula	Proponent	Year Developed	Variables Needed	Formula	Difficulty Index (Based on American School Grade Standards)
Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Based on the Bormuth Mean Cloze Formula	Touchstone Applied Science Associates	1981	Number of words found in the Dale-Chall 3,000 word list Average sentence length Average word length in letters	$R = 0.886593 - 0.83640(LET/W) + 0.161911(DLL/W)^3 - 0.021401(W/SEN) + 0.000577(W/SEN)^2 - 0.000005(W/SEN)^3$ $DRP = (1-R) \times 100$ Where: R = mean cloze score LET = letters in passage X W = words in passage X DLL = number of words in the original Dale-Chall list in passage X SEN = Sentences in passage X DRP = degrees of reading power	0-100 scale 30 = very easy 100 = very hard

Readability Formula	Proponent	Year Developed	Variables Needed	Formula	Difficulty Index (Based on American School Grade Standards)
Lexile Framework	MetaMetrics, Inc.	c. 1980-1990	Number of difficult words Number of long sentences		12Lexile = a numeric representation of difficulty 200L for beginning readers 1700L for advanced readers

12from Lennon and Burdick (2004), all other information on this table is extracted from Du Bay (2004).

Appendix B

Irwin & Davis' Readability Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you evaluate the readability of your classroom texts. It can be used if you rate your text while you are thinking of a specific class. Be sure to compare the textbook to a fictional ideal rather than to another text. Your goal is to find out what aspects of the text are or are not less than ideal. Finally, consider supplementary workbooks as part of the textbook and rate them together. Have fun!

Rate the questions below using the following rating system:

- 5 – Excellent
- 4 – Good
- 3 – Adequate
- 2 – Poor
- 1 – Unacceptable
- NA – Not applicable

Further comments may be written in the space provided.

Textbook title: _____
 Publisher: _____
 Copyright Date: _____

Understandability

- _____ A. Are the assumptions about students' vocabulary knowledge appropriate?
- _____ B. Are the assumptions about students' prior knowledge of this content area appropriate?
- _____ C. Are the assumptions about students' general experiential backgrounds appropriate?
- _____ D. Does the teacher's manual provide the teacher with ways to develop and review the students' conceptual and experiential background?
- _____ E. Are new concepts explicitly linked to the students' prior knowledge or to their experiential background?
- _____ F. Does the text introduce abstract concepts by accompanying them with many concrete examples?
- _____ G. Does the text introduce new concepts one at a time with a sufficient number of examples for each one?

- _____ H. Are the definitions understandable and at a lower level of abstraction than the concept being defined?
- _____ I. Is the level of sentence complexity appropriate for the students?
- _____ J. Are the main ideas of paragraphs, chapters, and subsections clearly stated?
- _____ K. Does the text avoid irrelevant details?
- _____ L. Does the text explicitly state important complex relationships (e.g. causality, conditionality, etc.) rather than always expecting the reader to infer them to the context?
- _____ M. Does the teacher's manual provide lists of accessible resources containing alternative readings for the very poor or very advanced readers?
- _____ N. Is the readability level appropriate (according to a reading formula)?

Learnability

Organization

- _____ A. Is an introduction provided for in each chapter?
- _____ B. Is there a clear and simple organizational pattern relating the chapters to each other?
- _____ C. Does each chapter have a clear, explicit, and simple organizational structure?
- _____ D. Does the text include resources such as index, glossary, and table of contents?
- _____ E. Do questions and activities draw attention to the organizational patterns of the material (e.g. chronological, cause and effect, spatial, topical, etc.)?
- _____ F. Do consumable materials interrelate well with the textbook?

Reinforcement

- _____ A. Does the text provide opportunities for students to practice using new concepts?
- _____ B. Are there summaries at appropriate intervals in the text?
- _____ C. Does the text provide adequate iconic aids such as maps, graphs, illustration, etc. to reinforce concepts?
- _____ D. Are there adequate suggestions for usable supplementary activities?
- _____ E. Do these activities provide for a broad range of ability levels?

- _____ F. Are there literal recall questions provided for the students' self review?
- _____ G. Do some of the questions encourage the students to draw inferences?
- _____ H. Are there discussion questions which encourage creative thinking?
- _____ I. Are questions clearly worded?

Motivation

- _____ A. Does the teacher's manual provide introductory activities that will capture students' interest?
- _____ B. Are chapter titles and subheadings concrete, meaningful, or interesting?
- _____ C. Is the writing style of the text appealing to the students?
- _____ D. Are the activities motivating? Will they make the student want to pursue the topic further?
- _____ E. Does the book clearly show how the knowledge being learned might be used by the learner in the future?
- _____ F. Are the cover, format, print size, and pictures appealing to the students?
- _____ G. Does the text provide positive and motivating models for both sexes as well as for other racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups?

Readability Analysis

Weaknesses

- 1) On which items was the book rated the lowest?
- 2) Did these items tend to fall in certain categories?
- 3) Summarize the weaknesses of this text.
- 4) What can you do in class to compensate for the weaknesses of this text?

Strengths

- 1) On which items was the book rated the highest?
- 2) Did these items fall in certain categories?
- 3) Summarize the assets of this text.
- 4) What can you do in class to take advantage of the assets of this text?

Appendix C

Marshall's Readability Checklist for Comprehensibility

Criteria	Document Number				
	1	2	3	4	5
Main Ideas					
Are major points stated clearly?					
Are chapter titles and headings meaningful?					
Do titles outline major points clearly?					
Vocabulary					
Are key vocabulary terms defined clearly when the subject is new?					
Are there terms used in a variety of contexts meaningful to the reader?					
Concepts					
Are new concepts introduced in the context of familiar concepts?					
Are they well-defined with the text?					
Related Ideas					
Are ideas clearly related to each other?					
Will the reader be able to understand relationships among ideas?					
Could the reader illustrate these graphically?					
Referents					
Are pronouns used unambiguously?					
Do they usually refer to referents no more than one sentence away?					
Audience					
Has the author addressed the audience intended?					

Appendix D

ICL Checklist

Readability Buffet Items	N/A	Evident throughout	Somewhat Evident	Poorly Done
Concept Load/Abstractness				
Conceptual level appropriate for audience				
The author introduces new ideas with sufficient explanation, illustration, repetition, and/or examples				
Author limits the number of concepts introduced in each paragraph. (Says a lot about a few ideas rather than a little about many ideas)				
Literary techniques employed by the author are appropriate to the reader.				
Format and Organization				
The overall layout helps readers understand the text.				
Titles, heading, and subheading guide the reader through the text.				
Captions tie the visual aids to the text.				
Table of contents, index, and glossary present content clearly.				
Well-written introductory and summary paragraphs provide overview and summary.				
Topic sentences of paragraphs can be easily inferred or identified.				
Print size and type easy to read.				
Purpose of graphic information is clear.				
Pictures/Illustrations/Charts are appealing.				
Pictures/Illustrations/Charts clarify or extend the textual information.				
Questions provided at the end of each chapter/unit emphasize important aspects of the chapter. In fact, they could be used as a reading guide.				
Questions span levels of reasoning from literal to evaluative.				
Is the length of the text and/or chapters within the text, appropriate for the attention span of the reader?				
Vocabulary				
Longer words are used judiciously.				
Words with multiple meanings are not used within the same sections of the text.				
Word choice is appealing and appropriate.				
Newly introduced words are highlighted.				

New vocabulary words are defined in context.				
Definitions are provided in footnotes, at the end of the chapter, or in a glossary and are consistent with how the word is used in the text.				
Sentence Length and Structure				
Longer sentences are used judiciously.				
Sentence structure varies providing fluency.				
Pronouns are used unambiguously and refer to referents no more than a sentence away.				
Inclusiveness				
The text is inclusive and balanced.				
There is no evidence of sexual, racial, economic, cultural, religious, or political bias.				
The linguistic pattern is suitable to most populations.				
The text portrays cultures of students with respect and realism.				
Individuals featured in the text have human qualities that are believable and real.				
Tone and manner of expression are appealing to intended readers.				

APPENDIX E

Comparison of Information on Readability

	Basic Skills Agency	Plain English Campaign	RNIB	British Dyslexia Association
Layout and text types				
Font	Choose clear and distinct fonts, e.g. Century Schoolbook, Plantin or Helvetica		Arial, Universe, New Century Schoolbook	Arial, Comic Sans, Verdana, Helvetia, Tahoma, Trebuchet and Sassoon
Type size	Depends on purpose of text. A large font size can often look like children's material.		Minimum of 12 point, although recommend 14 point. As point sizes vary between fonts the letter 'x' should have a height between 2mm and 4mm.	Minimum of 12pt or 14pt
Use of upper and lower case	Upper and lower case is easier to read than all upper case as you can then see the shape of the word.	Use lower case bold for emphasis, not block capitals.	Capitals and italicised text are both harder to read.	Where possible use lower case letters rather than capitals. Use bold to highlight, rather than italics and underlining.

	Basic Skills Agency	Plain English Campaign	RNIB	British Dyslexia Association
Numbers			Choose a typeface with clear numbers. Easy to misread 3, 5, 8 and 0	
Line length			60-70 letters per line	Limit lines to 60 or 70 characters. Use line spacing between paragraphs, wide margins and headings.
Word spacing and alignment			Align by left margin only as it is easy to find start and finish of each line and this keep the space between words the same.	Keep lines left justified.

	Basic Skills Agency	Plain English Campaign	RNIB	British Dyslexia Association
Reversing type			If using white type make sure background colour is dark enough to give sufficient contrast.	
Forms			Ensure that there is plenty of space for completing details on forms.	
Format			Avoid folds which obscure text. Use a binding method so that document can be flattened to be used with a magnifier.	

	Basic Skills Agency	Plain English Campaign	RNIB	British Dyslexia Association
Type weight			Use bold or semi-bold weights. Avoid light type weights.	
White space	Short, clearly separated chunks of text.			Use short paragraphs.
Layout	Ideally headings and new sections should come at the top of the page, and sentences and paragraphs should not run over columns or pages.	Use lists where appropriate-guidance on punctuation of lists.	Useful to always have headings and page numbers in the same place.	Use bullet points and numbered lists where possible. Include variety of styles for presenting information, e.g. flow charts, tables.
Use of images	Illustration should come at the end of paragraphs or sentences rather than in the middle and should relate to the text. If illustrations are used as background to text, it can make the text more difficult to read.		Avoid setting text around or over images. Avoid using vertical text.	Background graphics can make text difficult to read.

	Basic Skills Agency	Plain English Campaign	RNIB	British Dyslexia Association
Type and colour of paper	<p>Paper should be thick enough so that you cannot see the print showing through from the other side.</p> <p>Darker colour papers, particularly blue and purple should be avoided.</p>		<p>Avoid glossy paper.</p> <p>Choose uncoated paper over 90 grams.</p>	<p>Avoid light text on a dark background.</p> <p>Use coloured paper instead of white. Cream or off-white provides a good alternative.</p> <p>Matte is preferable to glossy.</p> <p>Avoid text glaring through from back so go for 80 or 90 grams.</p>
Style of writing				
Passive voice	In general the active voice is easier to understand.	<p>Make about 80-90% of verbs active.</p> <p>Use 'we' and 'you'.</p> <p>Good examples available.</p>		<p>Try to call the readers 'you'.</p>
Sentence length	Try to include only one main point in a sentence and use full stops rather than semi-colons.	Average sentence length of 15 to 20 words.		Write in short simple sentences.

Word length	Repetition of unfamiliar words can be helpful. Choose words that are easier to read if possible, but do not paraphrase if it will sound patronising.	Use words appropriate to the reader. A-Z of medical terms available.		Don't hyphenate words that are not usually split.
-------------	--	--	--	---

Appendix F

Questions from the ESL Evaluation Questionnaire

Developed by Yee, Chong & Ng

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

U = Undecided or Neutral

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	U	D	SD
A. Content					
1. I enjoy reading the passages in the textbook.					
2. The passages make me want to read to find out more about the topic.					
B. Exploitability					
1. The passages introduce me to new ideas that make me think about things I haven't thought of before.					
2. The passages help me understand the way others feel or think (e.g. people with different background, problems attitudes from my own).					
3. I was taught how to identify meaning of new words from context.					
4. I can find out the meaning of some of the new words without the help of a dictionary.					
5. Some of the new words can be replaced by simpler words.					
6. I can find the new words in the subsequent chapters.					
C. Readability					
1. <i>The passages in the textbook</i> are very difficult.					
2. The new words are worth learning at this stage.					
3. The new words are not too many.					
4. The new words are introduced from simple to complex words.					

5. The sentence length is reasonable for me.					
6. The sentence structures gradually increase in complexity.					
D. Authenticity					
1. The passages use language that is used in real world.					
2. The passages contain real-life issues that challenge me to think seriously about my worldview.					
3. The passages are accurate and up-to-date.					

APPENDIX G

Textbook Evaluation Procedure

By Socorro Pilor

**Content Evaluation Process
of TXs and TMs**

DepEd issues a Textbook Call.

Publishers submit textbooks and
teacher's manuals (TXs/TMs) and
pay DepEd evaluation fees.

DepED-IMCS processes TXs/TMs
and identifies/contracts
evaluators/reviewers.



DepEd-IMCS conducts and manages content
evaluation which focuses on three main areas:

1. Coverage of Learning Competencies (LCs)
2. Subject Matter Content
3. Presentation and Language

Area 1 Content Evaluation
Teams of evaluators perform individual
and team evaluation of TXs/TMs. They
*focus on the coverage and sufficiency
of the development of LCs.*



Area 2 Content Evaluation

Teams of content experts from reputable colleges, universities, and professional associations review content of TXs/TMs for conceptual, factual, pedagogical, grammatical, and other types of errors.



Area 3 Content Evaluation

Master teachers coming from different regions determine whether the presentation, language, and visuals of TXs/TMs are appropriate to the target users, to society, and to culture.



Area 4 Content Evaluation

Language experts ensure that the content of the TXs/TMs are grammatically correct and can be easily understood by target users.



An independent committee validates the aggregate of the weighted ratings for Areas 1 to 4 to determine the ranking of the TXs/TMs.



DepEd requires publishers with TX/TM submissions to submit sealed proposals for the copyright authorization fee.



Publishers whose TXs/TMs have aggregate weighted ratings greater than or equal to the cut-off score will be ranked and the sealed offers for the copyright authorization fee will also be ranked.

DepEd determines the TXs/TMs to be printed and delivered based on weighted ranks for quality (60%) and copyright authorization fee (40%).



Publishers make the necessary revisions on the TXs/TMs in preparation for the DepEd bidding for printing and delivery.

An Editorial Board will ensure that the TXs / TMs are error-free prior to mass printing.

Appendix H

Sample Cloze Test on "Father Goes to Court"

This is a cloze test to see how well you can handle the story's difficulty. Using a pencil, write the missing word in the blank to complete the story. There is no time limit, but your teacher will note the time you spent on the test.

But before you start, perform the following:

1. Practice answering the cloze test with the short passage below.
2. Read the passage completely first before answering to get the idea of the passage.
3. Begin the passage again, this time try to complete the missing words.
4. Go over the passage again with your answers. See to it that the passage makes sense to you.

Ready. Begin.

When Sinag-Tala was only two and a half years _____ her
withered grandmother came. And she placed in the _____ hand a fresh lily
and in the other, a _____ pallid pearl.

Finished? Tell your teacher.

You are now ready to do the real test.

The real test is a story. The first and last paragraphs are intact, but the middle sentences have blanks in them. Try to complete the story by filling in the blanks. The general rules are:

1. Read the story completely from beginning to end. Try to get the idea of the story.
2. Begin the passage again. This time, try to complete the missing words.
3. Go over the story again with your answers. See to it that the passage makes sense to you.
4. Tell your teacher when you finish.

When I was four, I lived with my mother and brothers and sisters in a small town on the island of Luzon. Father's farm had been destroyed in 1918 by one of our sudden Philippine floods, so for several years afterwards we all lived in the town, though he preferred living in the country. We had as a next door neighbour a very rich man, whose sons and daughters seldom come out of the house. While we boys and girls played and sang in the sun, his children stayed inside and kept the windows closed. His house was so tall that his children could look in the windows of our house and watch as we played, or slept, or ate, when there was any food in the house to eat.

Now, this rich man's servants were always frying and _____ something good, and the aroma of the food was _____ down to us from the windows of the big _____. We hung about and took all the wonderful smell _____ the food into our beings. Sometimes, in the morning, _____ whole family stood outside the windows of the rich _____ house and listened to the musical sizzling of the _____ strips of bacon or ham. I can remember one afternoon when, our neighbor's servants _____ three chickens. The chickens were young and tender *and* _____ fat that dripped into the burning coals gave off _____ enchanting *odor. We watched the servants turn the beautiful* _____ *and inhaled the heavenly* spirit that drifted out to _____.

Some days the rich man appeared at the window _____ glowered down at us. We were all healthy because _____ went out in the sun every day and bathed _____ the cool water of the river that flowed from _____ mountains into the sea. Sometimes we wrestled with one _____ in the house before we went out to play. _____ were always in the best of spirits and our _____ was contagious. Other neighbours who passed by our house _____ in the yard and joined us in laughter.

Laughter _____ our only health. Father was a laughing man. He _____ go into the living room and stand in front _____ the tall mirror,

stretching his mouth into grotesque shapes _____ his fingers and making faces at himself then he _____ rush into the kitchen, roaring with laughter.

There was _____ plenty to make us laugh. There was, for instance, _____ day one of my brothers came home with a _____ bundle under his arm, pretending that he bought something _____ to eat, maybe a leg of lamb or something _____ extravagant as that, to make our mouths water. He _____ to Mother and threw the bundle into her lap. _____ all stood around, watching Mother undo the complicated strings. _____ a black cat leaped out of the bundle and _____ wildly around the house. Mother chased my brother and _____ him with her little fists, while the rest of _____ bent double, choking with laughter.

Another time one of _____ sisters suddenly started screaming in the middle of the _____. Mother reached her first and tries to calm her. _____ sister cried and groaned. When Father lighted the lamp, _____ sister stared at us with shame in her eyes.

“_____ is it?” Mother asked.

“I’m pregnant!” she cried.

“Don’t _____ a fool!” Father shouted.

“You are only a child,” _____ said.

“I’m pregnant, I tell you!” she cried.

Father _____ by my sister. He put his hand on her _____ and rubbed it gently. “How do you know you _____ pregnant?” he asked.

“Feel it!” my sister cried.

We _____ our hands on her belly. There was something moving _____ Father was frightened. Mother was shocked. “Who’s the man?”

_____ said.

“There’s no man,” my sister said.

“What is _____, then?” Father asked.

Suddenly my sister opened her blouse and a bullfrog jumped out. Mother fainted, Father dropped the lamp, the oil spilled on the floor, and my sister's blanket caught fire. One of my brothers laughed so hard he rolled on the floor.

When the fire was extinguished and Mother was revived, we returned to bed and tried to sleep, but Father kept on laughing so loud we could not sleep anymore. Mother got up again and lighted the lamp; we rolled up the mats on the floor and began dancing about and laughing with all our might. We made so much noise that all our neighbours except the rich family came into the yard and joined us in loud, genuine laughter. It was like that for years.

END OF TEST

Appendix I

Sample Cloze Test on "We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers"

This is a cloze test to see how well you can handle the story's difficulty. Using a pencil, write the missing word in the blank to complete the story. There is no time limit, but your teacher will note the time you spent on the test.

But before you start, perform the following:

1. Practice answering the cloze test with the short passage below.
2. Read the passage completely first before answering to get the idea of the passage.
3. Begin the passage again, this time try to complete the missing words.
4. Go over the passage again with your answers. See to it that the passage makes sense to you.

Ready. Begin.

When Sinag-Tala was only two and a half years _____ her
withered grandmother came. And she placed in the _____ hand a fresh lily
and in the other, a _____ pallid pearl.

Finished? Tell your teacher.

You are now ready to do the real test.

The real test is a story. The first and last paragraphs are intact, but the middle *sentences have* blanks in them. Try to complete the story by filling in the blanks. The *general rules are:*

1. Read the story completely from beginning to end. Try to get the idea of the story.
2. Begin the passage again. This time, try to complete the missing words.
3. Go over the story again with your answers. See to it that the passage makes sense to you.
4. Tell your teacher when you finish.

We Filipinos are mild drinkers. We drink for only three good reasons. We drink when we are happy. We drink when we are very sad. And we drink for any other reason.

When the American recaptured the Philippines, they built an _____ base a few miles from our barrio. Yankee soldiers _____ a common sight. I met a lot of GIs _____ made many friends. I could not pronounce their names. _____ could not tell them apart. All Americans looked alike _____ me. They all looked white.

One afternoon, I was plowing _____ rice field with our carabao named Datu. I was _____ and striped to the waist. My pants, that were _____ from abaca fibers and woven on homemade looms, were _____ up my knees. My bolo was at my side.

_____ American soldier was walking on the highway. When he _____ me, he headed towards me. I stopped plowing and _____ for him. I noticed he was carrying a half-pint _____ of whiskey. Whiskey bottles seemed part of the American _____.

“Hello, my little brown brother,” he said patting me _____ the head.

“Hello, Joe,” I answered. All Americans are _____ Joe in the Philippines.

“Any bars in this town?” _____ asked.

That was usually the first question American soldiers _____ when they visited our barrio.

“I am sorry, Joe,” _____ replied. “There are no bars in this barrio.”

“Oh, _____! You know where I could buy more whiskey?”

“No, _____.” I am sorry. We do not drink whiskey.”

“Here, _____ a swig. You have been working too hard,” he said,

_____ me his half-filled bottle.

“No thank you, Joe,” I _____. “We Filipinos are mild drinkers.”

“Well, don’t you drink _____ all?”

“Yes, Joe, I drink, but not whiskey.”

“What _____ hell do you drink?”

“I drink *lambanog*.”

“Jungle juice, _____?”

“I guess that is what the GIs call it.”

“_____ know where I could buy some?”

“I have some _____ can have, but I do not think you will _____ it.”

“I’ll like it all right. Don’t worry about _____. I have drunk everything – whiskey, rum, brandy, tequila, gin, _____, sake, vodka...” He mentioned many more that I cannot spell.

“Say, _____ sure drink a lot, don’t you?”

“I not only _____ a lot, but I drink anything. I drank Chanel Number 5 _____ I was in France. In New Guinea I got soused _____ Williams’ Shaving Lotion. When I was laid up in _____ hospital I got pie-eyed with medical alcohol. On my way _____ in a transport I got stoned on torpedo juice. You _____ kidding when you say I drink a lot. So _____ have some of that jungle juice, eh?”

“All right,” _____ said. “I will just take this carabao to the _____, then we can go home and drink.”

“You sure _____ that animal, don’t you?”

“I should,” I replied. “It _____ half of my work.”

“Why don’t you get two _____ them?” I did not answer.

I unhitched Datu from _____ plow and led him to the mudhole. Joe was _____ me. Datu lay in the mud and was going:

Whoooooosh! Whoooooosh!

_____ and other insects flew from his back and hovered _____ the air. A strange warm odor rose out of _____ muddle. A carabao does not have any sweat glands except on its nose. It has to wallow in the mud or bathe in a river about every three hours. Otherwise, it runs amok.

Datu shook his head and his wide-spread horns scooped the muddy water on his back. He rolled over and was soon covered with mud. An expression of perfect contentment came into his eyes. Then, he swished his tail and Joe and I had to move back from the mudhole to keep from getting splashed. I left Datu in the mudhole. Then, turning to Joe, I said:

“Let us go.”

END OF TEST

Appendix J
Readability Checklists for Short Stories

READABILITY CHECKLIST FOR SHORT STORIES

Title of the Story: _____ Name of Evaluator: _____
 Author of the Story: _____

This checklist is designed to evaluate the readability of a short story that you intend to have your students read. When evaluating, think of the students who will read it. Evaluate the story for what it is, not compared to others. The objective is to find out if the students will be able to understand and appreciate the story on their own.

Read the story. Then answer each of the following questions below by checking the appropriate column.	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments
1. Will the story be interesting to your students?				
2. Is the story about something that could really happen?				
3. Does the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?				
4. Does the climax seem natural?				
5. Are the characters' personalities realistic?				
6. Are the reasons for the characters' actions believable?				
7. Do the characters in the story grow?				
8. Do the characters have both strengths and weaknesses?				
9. Does the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or place?				
10. Do the characters fit the setting?				
11. While reading, do you feel that you are really in the time and place of the events unfolding?				
12. Is the theme worthwhile?				
13. When you read the story aloud, do the characters sound like real people talking?				
14. Does the rest of the language in the story sound natural?				
SCORE PER COLUMN				
TOTAL SCORE				

READABILITY CHECKLIST FOR SHORT STORIES

Title of the Story: _____ Name of Student (optional) _____
 Author of the Story: _____

This checklist is designed to evaluate the **readability** of a short story that you read in Grade 7 English. Evaluate the story for what it is, not compared to others. The objective is to find out if the next Grade 7 students **will** be able to understand and appreciate the stories like you did.

Read the story. Then answer each of the following questions below by checking the appropriate column.

	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments
1. Was the story interesting to me?				
2. Was the story about something that could really happen?				
3. Did the main character overcome the problem , but not too easily?				
4. Did the climax seem natural?				
5. Were the characters' personalities realistic ?				
6. Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?				
7. Did the characters in the story grow?				
8. Did the characters have both strengths and weaknesses?				
9. Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or place?				
10. Did the characters fit the setting?				
11. While reading, did you feel that you were really in the time and place of the events unfolding?				
12. Was the theme worthwhile?				
13. If you read the story aloud, did the characters sound like real people talking?				
14. Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?				

Appendix K

MY FATHER FOES TO COURT

by Carlos P. Bulosan

When I was four, I lived with my mother and brothers and sisters in a small town on the island of Luzon. Father's farm had been destroyed in 1918 by one of our sudden Philippine floods, so for several years afterwards we all lived in the town, though he preferred living in the country. We had as a next door neighbor a very rich man, whose sons and daughters seldom come out of the house. While we boys and girls played and sang in the sun, his children stayed inside and kept the windows closed. His house was so tall that his children could look in the windows of our house and watch as we played, or slept, or ate, when there was any food in the house to eat.

Now, this rich man's servants were always frying and cooking something good, and the aroma of the food was wafted down to us from the windows of the big house. We hung about and took all the wonderful smell of the food into our beings. Sometimes, in the morning, one whole family stood outside the windows of the rich man's house and listened to the musical sizzling of the thick strips of bacon or ham. I can remember one afternoon when, our neighbor's servants roasted three chickens. The chickens were young and tender and the fat that dripped into the burning coals gave off an enchanting odor. We watched the servants turn the beautiful birds and inhaled the heavenly spirit that drifted out to us.

Some days the rich man appeared at the window and glowered down at us. We *were all healthy* because we went out in the sun every day and bathed in the cool water of *the river that flowed from the mountains* into the sea. Sometimes we wrestled with one another in the house before we went out to play. *We were always in the best of spirits* and our laughter was contagious. Other neighbours who passed by our house stopped in the yard and joined us in laughter.

Laughter was our only health. Father was a laughing man. He would go into the living room and stand in front of the tall mirror, stretching his mouth into grotesque shapes with his fingers and making faces at himself then he would rush into the kitchen, roaring with laughter.

There was always plenty to make us laugh. There was, for instance, the day one of my brothers came home with a small bundle under his arm, pretending that he bought something good to eat, maybe a leg of lamb or something as extravagant as that, to make our mouths water. He rushed to Mother and threw the bundle into her lap. We all stood around, watching Mother undo the complicated strings. Suddenly a black cat leaped out of the bundle and run wildly around the house. Mother chased my brother and beat him with her little fists, while the rest of use bent double, choking with laughter.

Another time one of my sisters suddenly started screaming in the middle of the night. Mother reached her first and tries to calm her. My sister cried and groaned. When Father lighted the lamp, my sister stared at us with shame in her eyes.

“What is it?” Mother asked.

“I’m pregnant!” she cried.

“Don’t be a fool!” Father shouted.

“You are only a child,” Mother said.

“I’m pregnant, I tell you!” she cried.

Father knelt by my sister. He put his hand on her belly and rubbed it gently. “How do you know you are pregnant?” he asked.

“Feel it!” my sister cried.

We put our hands on her belly. There was something moving inside. Father was frightened. Mother was shocked. “Who’s the man?” she said.

“There’s no man,” my sister said.

“What is it, then?” Father asked.

Suddenly my sister opened her blouse and a bullfrog jumped out. *Mother fainted,* Father dropped the lamp, the oil spilled on the floor, and my sister’s blanket caught fire. One of my brothers laughed so hard he rolled on the floor.

When the fire was extinguished and Mother was revived, we returned to bed and tried to sleep, but Father kept on laughing so loud we could not sleep anymore. Mother

got up again and lighted the lamp; we rolled up the mats on the floor and began dancing about and laughing with all our might. We made so much noise that all our neighbours except the rich family came into the yard and joined us in loud, genuine laughter. It was like that for years.

As time went on, the rich man's children became thin and anaemic, while we grew even more robust and full of life. Our faces were bright and rosy, but theirs were pale and sad. The rich man started to cough at night; then he coughed day and night. His wife began coughing, too. Then the children started to cough, one after the other. At night their coughing sounded like a barking of a herd of seals. We hung outside their windows and listened to them. We wondered what had happened. We knew that they were not sick from lack of nourishing food, because they were still always frying something delicious to eat.

One day, the rich man appeared at a window and stood there a long time. He looked at my sisters, who had grown fat with laughing, then at my brothers, whose arms and legs were like the molave, which is the sturdiest tree in the Philippines. He banged down the window and ran through his house, shutting all the windows.

From that day on, the windows of our neighbor's house were always closed. The children did not come outdoors anymore. We could still hear the servants cooking in the kitchen, and no matter how tight the windows were shut, the aroma of the food came to us in the wind and drifted gratuitously into our house.

One morning a policeman from the presidencia came to our house with a sealed paper. The rich man had filed a complaint against us. Father took me with him when he went to the town clerk and asked him what it is about. He told Father the man claimed that for years we had been stealing the spirit of his wealth and food.

When the day came for us to appear in court, Father brushed his old Army uniform and borrowed a pair of shoes from one of my brothers. We were the first to arrive. Father sat on a chair in the center of the courtroom. Mother occupied a chair by the door. We children sat on a long bench by the wall. Father kept jumping up from his chair and stabbing the air with his arms, as though he were defending himself before an imaginary jury.

The rich old man arrived. He had grown old and feeble; his face was scarred with deep lines. With him was his young lawyer. Spectators came in and almost filled the chairs. The judge entered the room and sat on a high chair. We stood up in a hurry, and then sat down again.

After the courtroom preliminaries, the judge looked at Father, "Do you have a lawyer?" he said.

"I don't need any lawyer, Judge," he said.

"Proceed," said the judge.

The rich man's lawyer jumped up, and pointed his finger at Father. "Do you or do you not agree that you have been stealing the spirit of the complainant's wealth and food?"

"I do not," Father said.

"Do you or do you not agree that while the complainant's servants cooked and fried fat legs of lamb or young chicken breasts you and your family hung outside his windows and inhaled the heavenly spirit of food?"

"I agree," Father said.

"Do you or do you not agree that while the complainant and his children grew sickly and tubercular you and your family became strong of limb and fair of complexion!"

"I agree," Father said.

"How do you account for that?"

Father got up and paced around, scratching his head thoughtfully. Then he said, "I would like to see the children of the complainant, Judge."

"Bring the children of the complainant."

They came in shyly. The spectators covered their mouths with their hands. They were so amazed to see the children so thin and pale. The children walked silently to a bench and sat down without looking up. They stared at the floor and moved their hands uneasily.

Father could not say anything at first. He just stood by his chair and looked at them.

Finally he said, "I should like to cross-examine the complainant."

“Proceed.”

“Do you claim that we stole the spirit of your wealth and became a laughing family while yours became morose and sad?” Father asked.

“Yes.”

“Do you claim that we stole the spirit of your food by hanging outside your windows when your servant cooked it?” Father asked.

“Then we are going to pay you right now,” Father said. He walked over to where we children were sitting on the bench and took my straw hat off my lap and began filling it up with centavo pieces that he took out of his pockets. He went to Mother, who added a fistful of silver coins. My brothers threw in their small change.

“May I walk to the room across the hall and stay there for a few minutes, Judge?” Father asked.

“As you wish.”

“Thank you,” Father said. He strode in the other room with the hat on his hands. It was almost full of coins. The doors of both rooms were wide open.

“Are you ready?” Father called.

“Proceed,” the Judge said.

The sweet tinkle of coins carried beautifully into the courtroom. The spectators turned their faces toward the sound with wonder; Father came back and stood before the complainant.

“Did you hear it?” he asked.

“Hear what?” the man asked.

“The spirit of the money when I shook this hat?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Then you are paid,” Father said.

The rich man opened his mouth to speak and fell to the floor without a sound. The lawyer rushed to his aid. The judge pounded his gavel.

“Case dismissed,” he said.

Father strutted around the courtroom. The judge even came down from his high chair to shake hands with him. “By the way,” he whispered, “I had an uncle who died laughing.”

“You like to hear my family, Judge?” Father asked.

“Why not?”

“Did you hear that, children?” Father said.

My sisters started it. The rest of us followed them and soon spectators were laughing at us, holding their bellies and bending over their chairs. And the laughter of the judge was the loudest of them all.

APPENDIX L

Cloze Test Results

"We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers"

	Distribution		Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Frustrational						
Private School	39%	18%	64	16	42	6	42	Instructional
Public School	3%	9%	56	12	44	4	28	Frustrational
All	19%	13%	62	12	52	6	34	Frustrational

"The Wedding Dance"

	Distribution			Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Instructional	Frustrational						
Private School	11%	43%	46%	58	22	36	4	38	Instructional
Public School	0%	5%	95%	42	8	34	5	26	Frustrational
All	4%	23%	73%	58	8	50	5	30	Frustrational

"May Day's Eve"

	Distribution		Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Frustrational						
Private School	11%	47%	58	20	38	5	40	Instructional
Public School	0%	6%	46	4	41	5	24	Frustrational
All	20%	33%	58	4	34	6	34	Frustrational

"Father Goes to Court"

	Distribution			Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Instructional	Frustrational						
Private School	18%	18%	64%	58	14	44	6	36	Instructional
Public School	4%	33%	63%	54	10	44	5	32	Frustrational
All	9%	27%	64%	58	10	28	6	34	Frustrational

"Footnote to Youth"

	Distribution			Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Instructional	Frustrational						
Private School	3%	30%	67%	50	10	40	5	26	Frustrational
Public School	2%	2%	96%	50	10	40	4	26	Frustrational
All	3%	13%	84%	50	10	40	5	28	Frustrational

"How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife"

	Distribution			Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Instructional	Frustrational						
Private School	7%	23%	70%	50	10	40	5	32	Frustrational
Public School	0%	0%	100%	34	8	26	3	20	Frustrational
All	3%	10%	87%	50	8	42	5	26	Frustrational

"Life is a Three-Ring Circus"

	Distribution		Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Frustrational						
Private School	0%	100%	34	8	26	4	24	Frustrational
Public School	0%	100%	24	2	22	3	18	Frustrational
All	0%	100%	34	2	32	4	20	Frustrational

"The Small Key"

	Distribution		Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Frustrational						
Private School	4%	83%	50	10	20	5	26	Frustrational
Public School	0%	100%	34	8	26	3	20	Frustrational
All	4%	88%	50	8	42	5	22	Frustrational

"Distance to Andromeda"

	Distribution			Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Instructional	Frustrational						
Private School	0%	0%	100%	34	8	26	4	22	Frustrational
Public School	0%	0%	100%	34	8	26	3	20	Frustrational
All	0%	0%	100%	34	8	26	4	22	Frustrational

Summary of Nine Philippine Short Stories in English

Story	Distribution			Highest Score	Lowest Score	Range	Standard Deviation	Average	Level
	Independent	Instructional	Frustrational						
We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers	19%	13%	68%	64	12	52	6	34	Frustrational
The Wedding Dance	4%	23%	73%	58	8	50	5	30	Frustrational
May Day's Eve	10%	33%	55%	58	4	54	6	34	Frustrational
Father Goes to Court	9%	27%	64%	58	10	48	6	34	Frustrational
Footnote to Youth	3%	13%	84%	50	10	40	5	28	Frustrational
How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife	3%	10%	87%	50	8	42	5	26	Frustrational
Life is a Three-Ring Circus	0%	0%	100%	34	8	26	4	24	Frustrational
The Small Key	2%	10%	88%	50	10	40	5	26	Frustrational
Distance to Andromeda	0%	0%	100%	24	8	16	2	14	Frustrational
<i>Mean</i>	6%	14%	80%					28	

APPENDIX M

*Results from the Readability Checklists***"Life is a Three-Ring Circus"**

No.	Descriptor	Question	Students	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	3	3
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	3	3
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	2	3
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	3	3
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3	3
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	3	3
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	3	3
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	3	3
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	3	3
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3	3
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	2	3
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	3	3
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	3	3
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	3	3
		Total Score	40	40
		Evaluation	Readable	Readable

"Father Goes to Court"

No.	Descriptor	Question	Students	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	3	3
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	2	2
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	3	2
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	2	2
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3	2
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	3	1
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	2	2
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	3	2
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	3	3
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3	3
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	2	3
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	3	3
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	3	3
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	3	2
		Total Score	38	33
		Evaluation	Readable	Readable

"The Small Key"

No.	Descriptor	Question	Students	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	3	1
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	3	2
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	2	2
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	3	1
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3	2
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	3	1
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	3	1
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	3	2
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	3	2
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3	2
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	2	1
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	3	2
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	3	2
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	3	2
		Total Score	39	23
		Evaluation	Readable	Somewhat Readable

"The Wedding Dance"

No.	Descriptor	Question	Students	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	2	2
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	3	3
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	2	2
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	3	2
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3	3
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	3	3
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	3	2
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	3	3
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	3	3
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3	3
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	2	2
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	3	2
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	3	3
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	3	3
		Total Score	37	36
		Evaluation	Readable	Readable

"How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife"

No.	Descriptor	Question	Students	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	3	1
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	3	2
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	2	2
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	3	2
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3	2
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	3	2
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	3	2
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	3	2
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	3	3
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3	3
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	2	2
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	3	2
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	3	3
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story <i>sound natural</i> ?	3	2
		Total Score	40	30
		Evaluation	Readable	Readable

"We Filipinos are Mild Drinkers"

No.	Descriptor	Question	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	2
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	3
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	1
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	3
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	3
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	3
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	3
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	3
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	3
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	2
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	3
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	3
		Total Score	38
		Evaluation	Readable

"Footnote to Youth"

No.	Descriptor	Question	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	1
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	3
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	3
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	2
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	3
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	2
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	3
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	3
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	3
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	3
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	3
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	2
		Total Score	35
		Evaluation	Readable

"May Day Eve"

No.	Descriptor	Question	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	3
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	3
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	2
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	1
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	2
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	2
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	1
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	2
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	3
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	1
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	3
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	2
		Total Score	31
		Evaluation	Readable

"Distance to Andromeda"

No.	Descriptor	Question	Teachers
1	Interest	Was the story interesting to me (or to my students)?	1
2	Believability	Was the story something that could really happen?	3
3	Conflict	Did the main character overcome the problem, but not too easily?	2
4	Climax	Did the climax seem natural?	1
5	Personality	Were the characters' personalities realistic?	3
6	Actions	Were the reasons for the characters' actions believable?	3
7	Growth	Did the characters in the story grow?	1
8	Character	Did the characters have both strength and weaknesses?	2
9	Setting	Did the setting present what is actually known about the time and/or the place?	3
10	Character-Setting Fit	Did the characters fit the setting?	3
11	Empathy	While reading, did you feel that you (or, will my students feel that they are) in the time and place of the story?	2
12	Theme	Was the theme worthwhile?	2
13	Voice	Did the characters sound like real people talking?	2
14	Naturalness	Did the rest of the language in the story sound natural?	2
		Total Score	30
		Evaluation	Readable