



**EXPERIENCES OF ENGLISH TEACHERS IN ISLAND SCHOOLS IN
USING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE TO TEACH CREATIVE
WRITING: BASES FOR TRAINING WORKSHOP**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative-phenomenological study was conducted to find out the experiences of eight (8) English teachers in island schools in using figurative language to teach creative writing as bases for training workshop. The instrument used to gather data was a researcher-made interview guide which was validated by experts in the fields of English and research. To analyze the data gathered from the participants, the researcher used thematic analyses. The results revealed that the teachers' experiences were: peer collaboration among teachers and learners; increased vocabulary; and developed comprehension skills. The challenges encountered were: limited vocabulary among learners; lack of instructional resources; and limited technological access. The coping strategies employed were: use of contextualization; collaboration among learners and teachers; and using varied strategies. A training workshop was proposed as a result of the study.

Keywords: *Experiences, Figurative Language, Creative Writing, Island School Teachers, Training Workshop*

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INTRODUCTION

Creative writing is an essential domain of English language instruction as it enables learners to articulate ideas, emotions, and experiences through imaginative and meaningful language use. Integral to effective creative writing is the mastery of figurative language, which enriches students' texts by adding depth, imagery, nuance, and emotional resonance. Through the use of figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, personification and imagery, learners develop linguistic sophistication beyond literal meanings and significantly to learner's communicative competence. Hence, teaching figurative language is vital in enhancing learners' creativity, language proficiency, and overall writing competence.

In the Philippine basic education context, data from the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) reveal that a considerable proportion of learners remain at the instructional and frustration reading levels, thus indicating persistent challenges in comprehension, vocabulary development, and interpretation of meanings that transcend the literal text. These difficulties are particularly pronounced in texts that requires inferential, figurative understanding and contextual processing skills. Research conducted at Samar State University found that learners employ varied cognitive strategies to interpret figurative expressions, thus underscoring that comprehension of figurative language is a distinct and complex aspect of language learning (Montallana & Palencia, 2022). Furthermore, studies on figurative language competence have shown that students' ability to understand and use figurative expression is closely associated with the quality of their written outputs; learners with limited figurative language proficiency tend to produce texts that are more literal, less

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expressive, and lower in creative content (Tamesis et al., 2022). These findings affirm the strong interrelationship between reading comprehension and writing performance which emphasize the need for systematic explicit instruction in figurative language to address comprehension deficiencies.

English teachers play a pivotal role in mediating learners' understanding and application of figurative language in creative writing. Their instructional practices (choice of teaching strategies, learning tasks, instructional materials, and assessment methods) determine the actual engagement and mastery of the figures of speech by the learners. Some teachers use recent and potentially more contextually and learner-centered oriented approaches to modeling, guided writing, and creative exercises, whereas others opt for traditional instructional approaches. These are influenced by teachers' professional experiences, access to resources, classroom contexts, and opportunities for professional development. In addition, limits in instructional time, differences in learner ability, and lack of training specifically for figurative language instruction in creative writing contexts further constrain teachers. This insight can be a good basis for developing a training workshop aimed specifically at enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence and instructional effectiveness.

Furthermore, strengthening teacher's capacity to teach figurative language may contribute to improved reading comprehension, enriched creative writing performance, and overall language proficiency among learners.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants in the study, sampling design, data-gathering procedures, research instruments, and data analysis to be used in the study.

Research Method

In this study, descriptive research method using in-depth interview was utilized to identify and interpret the experiences, challenges, and strategies of English teachers in island schools in using figurative language in teaching creative writing.

According to Creswell and Poth, (2023), in-depth interviews are widely recognized as an effective qualitative method for exploring teachers' instructional practices and lived teaching experiences, as they allow participants to articulate beliefs, strategies, and contextual challenges in their own words.

Research Design

This study utilized the qualitative design using phenomenological approach. Furthermore, phenomenology aims to describe experiences from the participants' frame of reference. It emphasizes subjective reality and personal perception.

The phenomenological approach is a qualitative research design that focuses on exploring and understanding individuals' lived experiences. Its central aim is to capture the essence, meaning, and structure of a particular phenomenon as experienced by people, rather than explaining it through numbers of pre-existing theories (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

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Moreover, this study provides in-depth information by determining the experiences of English teachers in island schools in using figurative language to teach creative writing as bases for a training workshop. To get the necessary data, the researcher requested the respondents to freely and meaningfully respond to the questions.

Participants in the Study

The participants were the total of eight (8) Senior High School English teachers teaching Creative Writing at the schools' District of Carles during the schoolyear 2025-2026.

The selection of the participants of the study was based on a strategy called "purposeful sampling". This is a sampling technique used by qualitative researchers to find participants who can offer comprehensive and in-depth information about the study. To maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, they were identified as Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was utilized in selecting the participants based on a set criterion which was: Senior High School English teachers teaching Creative Writing in the Schools District of Carles.

The study focused on teachers who met the following criteria: those who teach specialized subject, Creative Writing at the Senior High School level (Grade 12) in the Schools District of Carles. Participants must have one year of teaching experience to ensure they have solid foundation of teaching experiences.

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Research Instrument

A researcher-made In-depth interview guide was the research instrument used.

The questionnaire allowed the participants to share freely their experiences, challenges, and strategies that they encountered in using figurative language to teach creative writing.

The interview guide was given to the eight Senior High School English teachers during their school meeting and conference. Right after answering the questionnaire, they notified the researcher and gave back the answer forms.

Validity of the Research Instrument

The researcher-made interview guide underwent validity to eliminate the possibilities of ambiguity among the questions and to maximize possible responses from the participants.

The researcher-made interview guide was submitted to the adviser for review and revision. The prepared interview guide was then submitted to a panel of experts for content-and-face validation. Revisions were carefully noted. Suggestions and corrections were thoroughly incorporated.

Validity ensures that research findings accurately reflect the phenomena under investigation, while trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry emphasizes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Tutar, I., 2023).

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Data Gathering Procedures

When the interview guide was found valid and finalized, a letter of permission to conduct the actual study was signed by the Dean of the Graduate School, Phinma UI, the thesis adviser, and the researcher.

The researcher set a convenient schedule with the participants and asked each of them to answer the interview-guide questions. The researcher reassured the participants that their answers would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Once the data were complete, the researcher carefully examined the answers to find recurring themes, experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by the participants. thereafter, the results were interpreted, after analyzing all the comprehensive in-depth information that were collected.

Data Analyses

The data were analyzed and interpreted using the thematic approach. Emergent themes were identified and discussed comprehensively.

The researcher followed the six-step thematic analysis. These steps include: becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing for the themes, defining themes, and reviewing the report.

Thematic analysis is an approach in analyzing qualitative data to answer broad or narrow research questions that people’s experiences, views and perceptions, and representations of a given phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the experiences of English teachers in island schools in using figurative language to teach creative writing as bases for training workshop in the Municipality of Carles, Iloilo.

The participants in the study were eight (8) island schools' Senior High School teachers teaching Creative Writing subject in secondary schools in the Municipality of Carles, Iloilo, who were chosen through purposive sampling.

The study used an In-depth Interview guide under the qualitative research method.

A researcher-made interview guide was used to obtain information. The instrument was subjected to content-and-face validation by a panel of expert jurors and was found by the validators to be valid and appropriate to use. Thematic analyses were used to analyze and interpret the responses of the participants.

The following are the findings of the study:

The experiences encountered by Senior High School English teachers in island secondary schools were the following: (1) Peer collaboration among teachers and learners, (2) Increased vocabulary, and (3) Developed comprehension skills.

The following were generated challenges: learners' limited vocabulary, lack of instructional resources, and limited technological access.

The strategies of English teachers in island secondary schools' using figurative language to teach creative writing were the following: (1) Use of contextualization, (2) Collaboration among learners and teachers, and (3) Using varied strategies.

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Based on the result of the study, a proposed training workshop for teachers was formulated. This training workshop for teachers is envisioned to support and guide teachers who encounter challenges based on their experiences while using figurative language to teach creative writing subject. The focus is on providing teachers with knowledge on how to apply classroom scenario techniques and strategies for learners to fully benefit from the topic on teaching figurative language.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following insights were gathered:

Fostering peer collaboration among teachers and learners creates a supportive learning environment where ideas are freely exchanged, thus leading to more meaningful engagement in creative writing tasks. Through consistent interaction and shared learning experiences, learners demonstrate increased vocabulary skill as they are exposed to diverse expression, feedback, and language use from both peers and teachers. These collaborative practices contribute to the development of comprehension skills, as students are more capable of interpreting texts, understanding context, and expressing their thoughts with clarity. Integrating collaborative strategies not only enhances language proficiency but also promotes deeper understanding and creativity among learners.

Limited vocabulary among learners significantly hinders their ability to express ideas clearly and engage deeply in learning tasks. This hindrance is further compounded by the lack of adequate instructional resources, which restricts teachers' capacity to provide varied and meaningful learning experiences. Moreover, limited technological access creates a gap in

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opportunities for learners to explore digital tools that could enhance vocabulary development and comprehension skills.

The use of contextualization, collaboration among learners and teachers, and using varied strategies significantly enhances learners' engagement and academic performance. By connecting lessons to real-life experiences, contextualization makes learning more meaningful and relatable, allowing learners to better grasp complex concepts. The integration of collaborative learning fosters active participation, peer support, and the exchange of ideas, which collectively strengthen communication and critical thinking skills. The use of varied strategies accommodates diverse learning styles, thereby ensuring inclusivity and maximizing learner potential. These approaches create a dynamic and learner-centered environment that promotes deeper understanding, sustained interest, and improved educational outcomes.

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