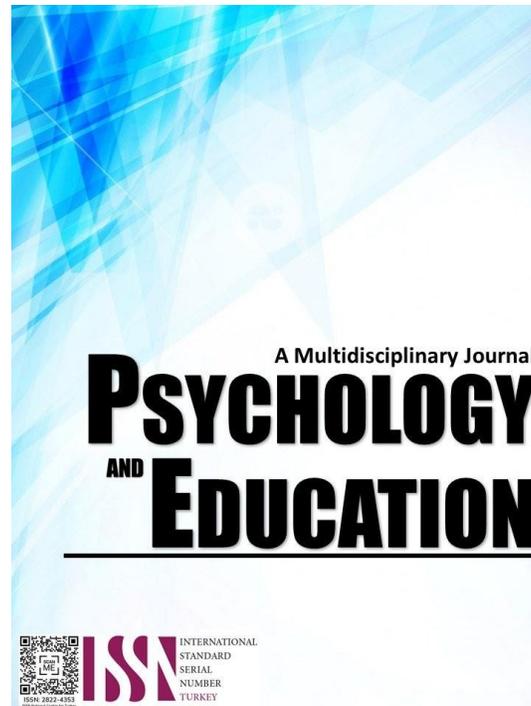


AN INQUIRY INTO THE BOHOLANO POEMS USED IN TEACHING SHS ENGLISH: STRATEGIES AND ISSUES



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An Inquiry into the Boholano Poems Used in Teaching SHS English: Strategies and Issues

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Abstract

Teaching poetry in Senior High School English poses challenges due to its abstract nature. This study explores strategies and issues teachers encounter using Boholano poems through a descriptive qualitative approach. While contextualization in teaching exists, it's limited to two materials, hindering comprehensive engagement. Students, especially those with reading difficulties, face difficulty deciphering poetic language, impacting their learning. Collaborative and reflective strategies are crucial in enhancing student engagement and understanding. Recommendations include diversifying materials and providing support for learners with reading difficulties. A developed pedagogical framework emphasizes the importance of relevant professional development for teachers. This study underscores the need for engaging students in group work and reflection to foster critical thinking and analysis in learning Boholano poems. Future research could focus on expanding contextualization efforts and exploring innovative teaching approaches to further enhance student learning outcomes in poetry instruction.

Keywords: *Boholano poems, collaborative strategy, English language teaching, reflective strategy*

Introduction

In the academic domain, poetry is esteemed for its diverse significance, spanning traditional, historical, educational, cultural, and critical dimensions. Particularly within secondary education, courses like Creative Writing and 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World emphasize the indispensable role of poetry in fulfilling essential learning competencies. Central to this educational endeavor is carefully curating and presenting literary works, focusing on poems that resonate deeply with students' cultural identities. Hence, this study delves into educators' utilization of Boholano poetry, recognizing its pivotal role in nurturing cultural awareness and establishing a profound connection between students and their literary heritage.

Incorporating Boholano poetry into the curriculum is driven by a desire to facilitate a meaningful exploration of cultural identity through poetic expression. By integrating these indigenous literary compositions, educators can craft learning experiences that enhance linguistic proficiency and instill a sense of belonging and pride in one's cultural heritage. Notable figures within Bohol's rich literary tradition, such as Marjorie Evasco, an esteemed poet known for her contributions to both Binisaya and English literature, exemplify the region's depth and breadth of literary talent (Ligalig, 2020).

However, teaching poetry poses inherent challenges, primarily stemming from its abstract nature, which can impede students' comprehension of poetic language. Addressing these challenges requires innovative pedagogical approaches to bridge the comprehension gap and foster relevance and empathy among learners.

Furthermore, effective instruction in Boholano poetry demands appropriate instructional strategies to engender engaging and productive learning experiences. Given the unique blend of imagery, rhythm, and emotion inherent in poetic compositions, the significance of judiciously selecting teaching methodologies cannot be overstated.

Thus, teachers are tasked with cultivating a nuanced understanding of their pedagogical purpose and theories to navigate the complexities of teaching poetry. This qualitative study seeks to elucidate senior high school educators' challenges in teaching Boholano poetry, laying the groundwork for developing a pedagogical framework tailored to this context.

Moreover, existing research underscores the critical role of instructional methodologies in shaping students' engagement with poetry. Studies have shown that the design of lessons significantly influences students' involvement, with simplified canonical poetry often receiving greater favor among learners (Juhlin, 2018). Therefore, meticulous content selection is paramount in designing effective poetry courses, emphasizing the need for pedagogical approaches aligned with sociocultural learning theories.

In conclusion, the effective instruction of poetry hinges on consistency, relevance, and reflection. Educators must adapt their teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles and interests, fostering an equitable partnership between teachers and students in pursuing literary enlightenment (Parojenog, 2020). Additionally, the availability and quality of learning resources emerge as crucial determinants of the teaching-learning process, underscoring the need for accessible and culturally relevant instructional materials to facilitate transformative educational experiences.

This introduction lays the groundwork for exploring challenges in teaching Boholano poetry and identifies effective strategies for promoting student engagement and learning in poetry instruction. It draws from insights from various studies, each shedding light on different aspects of teaching and learning poetry to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Research Questions

The main purpose of that study was to describe the strategies and issues in teaching Boholano poems in English courses in public and

private Senior High Schools to propose a pedagogical framework. Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Boholano poems used by the Senior High School teachers?
2. What are the teaching strategies employed by the Senior High School teachers in teaching Boholano poems?
3. What are the issues encountered by the Senior High School teachers in teaching Boholano poems?
4. What pedagogical framework can be proposed to improve the teaching of poetry based on the experiences of the teachers handling English courses in both public and private Senior High Schools?

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method. This design was chosen to provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the phenomenon being investigated. Qualitative research was well-suited for exploring significant topics, such as individuals' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes.

Participants

The actual participants were the eleven (11) SHS teachers who taught English courses in public and private SHS of Ubay 1 Northeast District during the school year 2022-2023 (see Table 1). They were the direct persons, purposefully selected, as they shared a common experience in teaching English in the Senior High School curriculum. The selection of the participants was based on the criteria that they were teaching senior high school English subjects in the District of Ubay 1. They were asked to participate in the study voluntarily.

Table 1. *Profile of Research Participants*

<i>School</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>
Ubay National Science High School	1
Erico B. Aumentado High School	3
Tapal Integrated School	1
Camambugan National High School	1
Pedro O. Bernales National High School	1
Holy Child Academy	1
Bohol Northeastern Education Foundation	1
Montessori Learning Center of Ubay	2
Total	11

The participants were given a written description of the study and an informed consent letter, upon which they affixed their signature for confirmation. They were also assured of confidentiality or anonymity and informed that they could withdraw participation without penalty or consequence. Additionally, they were informed that if they wished not to answer a question during the focus group discussion, the researcher or interviewer could proceed to the next question. The FGD was organized based on the participants' availability and convenience.

Instruments

A Focus Group Discussion was employed in this study, which utilized probing questions. Three (3) major questions elicited the following: a.) Boholano poems used by the Senior High School teachers, b.) the strategies employed by the Senior High School teachers in teaching Boholano poems, and c.) the issues encountered by the Senior High School teachers in teaching Boholano poems. An audio recording device was used to capture and enhance the recorded narrative data, which was later transcribed for analysis.

Procedure

This study adapted the procedures used by Duran (2020) for appropriate data-gathering methods. Before beginning data collection, a letter of request and a copy of the manuscript were sent to the Holy Name University's Ethics Review Board (ERB) to review the ethical standards and procedures thoroughly. After receiving an approval letter from the ERB through electronic mail, the researcher adhered to the important guidelines and protocol provided by the review board before starting the study. The primary data-gathering method was the FGD, which recorded audio. It was a qualitative research technique that involved bringing together a group of participants to engage in a guided discussion on a specific topic. It allowed for interactive and dynamic exchanges of ideas, opinions, and experiences among the participants. FGDs facilitated the exploration of shared perspectives, group dynamics, and the generation of rich and in-depth qualitative data (Creswell, 2013). Data were gathered from a total of eleven (11) direct answers. The researcher manually transcribed the data elicited during the FGD. Participants could review the transcripts to check for accuracy and correct transcription errors. Also, the researcher assigned each participant a code name to maintain anonymity. During the FGD, proper protocol was observed. Lastly, confidentiality of the information was maintained throughout the study by the Ethics of Research and Data Privacy Act

Results and Discussion

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data based on the collated responses of participants through the FGD. It describes the participants' responses to the three (3) major questions that elicited the following: 1.) the Boholano poems used by the Senior High School teachers; 2.) the strategies employed; and 3.) the issues encountered in teaching Boholano poems.

The Boholano Poems Used by The Senior High School Teachers

Based on the data gathered, the common Boholano poems used by Senior High School teachers were "Is it the Kingfisher" and "Mudfish" by Marjorie Evasco. "Is it the Kingfisher" is a poem by Marjorie Evasco that revolves around the imagery of a kingfisher and its significance in the speaker's life. According to the participants, the poem's importance lies in using the bird's localization to evoke a sense of belonging and connection to nature. The speaker describes the bird's distinctive colors, habitat, and movement, all specific to the kingfisher in Bohol, where Evasco is from. The speaker's identification with the kingfisher as a local species represents a deeper connection to the natural world and a sense of pride in Boholano's cultural heritage. The bird symbolizes the speaker's identity and is a reminder of the importance of preserving local ecosystems. Furthermore, the poem emphasizes the importance of understanding and valuing one's local environment. By drawing attention to the unique qualities of the kingfisher, Evasco encourages readers to appreciate the beauty and diversity of their local surroundings.

Moreover, Marjorie Evasco's poem "Mudfish" is a rich piece of literature that can help Boholano local learners appreciate and learn poetry. The poem highlights the beauty and significance of the mudfish, a common fish species in the rivers and wetlands of the Philippines, including Bohol. By connecting with the local environment and its creatures, the poem encourages readers to appreciate the natural world around them and understand its importance.

In selecting the Boholano poems, the participants revealed that the criteria they used to choose them included the relevance and localization of poetry material. The participants shared almost the same reasons for the selection criteria they considered when selecting the Boholano poem to be used. According to a participant in teaching local poetry, he selected "Mudfish" by Marjorie Evasco; thus, it is rich in imagery. The content relates to the learners' locality as they are familiar with the "Mudfish." Moreover, it helps his learners recall their experiences as young children who always play in muddy fields.

When learning poetry, the localization of the poem is significant as it makes the poem more relatable and understandable to the learners. This is particularly important, especially if the poem was originally written by a Boholano writer who embodies Boholano culture and spirit familiar to the learners. Moreover, during the focus group discussion, the participants shared their experiences with the need for more materials and learners' knowledge regarding the presence of locally produced poetry. Learners and sometimes other teachers are unaware that several local masterpieces originally written by Boholanos need discovery and appreciation. The meaningfulness and significance of the poem to the learners' lives and experiences can motivate learners to engage with the text and deepen their understanding of it.

This is described in Yusef's study, where he found that one of the difficulties in learning poetry is the cultural background of the text. Teachers face a huge challenge in teaching language through poetry. They must consider students' unfamiliarity with the text's cultural background and use localized and contextualized poetry content (Yusef, 2017).

Additionally, it is emphasized that the material should be carefully chosen to reflect the student's needs, interests, linguistic capabilities, and cultural backgrounds (Syed & Ali Wahas, 2020).

Therefore, when the material that reflects the learners' cultural background is carefully chosen, it can enhance their engagement with the subject matter and deepen their understanding of it. This is because learners are more likely to connect with material that speaks to their own experiences and perspectives, and which resonates with their cultural identity. By incorporating culturally relevant materials into the curriculum, educators can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that values and affirms all students' diverse backgrounds and experiences. Overall, both localization and relevance of the content are important factors to consider when teaching poetry. By adapting the poem to the learners' culture and making it relevant to their lives, educators can help learners develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of poetry.

Teaching Strategies Employed by The Senior High School Teachers In Teaching Boholano Poems

The participants revealed they had used collaborative and reflective strategies to teach the Boholano poems.

Collaborative learning involves working together in groups to share ideas, discuss interpretations, and provide feedback on each other's work. Students can learn from each other's perspectives and ideas, which can lead to more creative and diverse interpretations of poems.

The participants indicated that when they teach poems, they let the learners work in groups, as they are hesitant to share their understanding of the given material when they do it alone. Therefore, they group the learners to help them be comfortable with their colleagues and find strength in sharing their ideas. In this way, the learners could share their understanding of the poem, which helped them gain new insights and perspectives they may not have considered before.

An article by Margaret Bishop discusses the benefits of collaborative learning in the classroom. The author argues that by working

together, students can develop their writing competencies and improve their critical thinking skills (Bishop, 2013).

In her article, Kirsten Lentz examines the importance of collaborative learning in teaching poetry. She argued that by working in groups, students can develop their creativity, critical thinking skills, and language proficiency (Lentz, 2016).

Moreover, the participants also used the Reflective strategy. As to the participants, by connecting the poem and experiences, learners can understand and appreciate the poem on a more personal and emotional level. The participants also incorporated the reflective strategy by letting their learners construct a creative reaction paper by writing down their thoughts and feelings about the poem. By making connections between the poem and personal experiences, learners are encouraged to think critically. They can analyze how the poem relates to their own life and evaluate the poet's message from a personal perspective.

Furthermore, they also let the learners reflect on the poem by asking prompt questions based on their most recent experiences. In this way, the experiences they share relate to the poem's central idea. Recalling experiences helps learners engage with the poem on a personal level. By connecting with the emotions and themes expressed in the poem, learners can develop a personal connection to the poem and may be more likely to remember and appreciate it in the future.

Therefore, collaborative and reflective strategies are valuable in learning poetry as they allow students to engage in active learning, develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the literary form, and enhance their writing skills. Collaborative and reflective strategies can be combined in learning poetry to enhance the learning experience. For example, students can work in groups to analyze and interpret poems and then reflect individually on their learning experiences and insights gained from the group discussion. This approach can help students develop a deeper understanding of the literary form and develop their writing skills by practicing the craft and receiving feedback from peers.

Alice Young's study also concluded that if teachers are to teach poetry in more collaborative and engaging ways, they must be enthusiastic about its value and have strong beliefs about teaching it creatively, critically, and effectively (Young, 2016).

The result is supported by the Collaborative and Reflective learning theories anchored in this study that highly emphasize the importance of active student participation and engagement in the learning process. These theories suggest that learning is most effective when students are actively involved in discovering their understanding of the material through collaborative interactions with their peers and reflective assessment. By creating opportunities for students to share their perspectives, engage in dialogue with others and reflect on various experiences, especially those present in daily life, educators can foster a deeper and more nuanced understanding of complex concepts and promote the development of creative and critical thinking in understanding the poetry material.

Issues Encountered by The Senior High School Teachers in Teaching Boholano Poems.

Regarding issues, the participants pointed out the students' limited vocabulary resources in understanding poetic literature and their difficulties with reading.

Teaching poetry is a unique and challenging task that requires teachers to engage their students in the emotional and personal aspects of poetry while also helping them understand the technical elements of the form. To be successful in teaching poetry, teachers must find ways to make it accessible and interesting to their students, help them develop an appreciation for the art form, and effectively assess their understanding.

Poetry can seem intimidating to some students, especially if they do not have a strong background in literature. It is often written in a more complex and layered language than prose, with figurative language, metaphors, and symbols that require careful reading and analysis. If learners need help with reading comprehension, they may need help understanding a poem's meaning and nuances fully. The teacher's job is to make poetry accessible and interesting to their students. They must find ways to engage students in the emotional and personal aspects of poetry and help them understand the techniques and devices poets use to convey meaning.

The participants stated that one of the issues in teaching Boholano poems lies in understanding the terms presented in the poem, specifically the use of figurative language and complex vocabulary. When learners lack the necessary vocabulary to understand a poem, they may need help interpreting its meaning and message, miss out on the nuances and subtleties of the language, and appreciate the artistic and literary qualities of the work. In addition, a limited vocabulary can make it difficult for learners to express their thoughts and ideas about a poem in writing or discussions, limiting their ability to engage with the poem and develop their critical thinking and communication skills. Another issue revealed by the participants is the learners' reading difficulties. Some learners in senior high school had low reading abilities.

The participants stated that learners were unable to read fluently. They also pointed out that they still need to read and translate the poem to the vernacular language to let the learners understand its content. Reading difficulties can significantly impact a learner's ability to understand and appreciate poetry. Learners with reading difficulties may need help with unfamiliar words in poetry, which can impede their comprehension of the poem. This can be especially challenging in poetry, which often uses figurative language and metaphors that can be difficult to decipher. Reading poetry aloud can be difficult for learners with reading difficulties, affecting their ability to appreciate the poem's rhythm and meter. This, in turn, can make it harder to understand the poem's meaning since rhythm and meter are often integral to its overall effect.

Additionally, based on the gathered data, the participants described how they dealt with the issues they encountered while teaching Boholano poems. On the issues in terms of learners' vocabulary and reading difficulties, the participants highlighted the relevance of relating the words to daily life, using the words in sentences that pertain to recent situations, working in groups to share ideas, letting the learners explain in their languages and translating the terms in vernacular; and creating visual representations through imaginative activities; therefore, the participants addressed the issues through reflection, collaboration, and contextualization.

The participants particularly highlighted using "Think-pair-share," where learners work in pairs to discuss the given Boholano poem, share their ideas and perspectives, and then report to the larger group. Collaboration is essential to this activity, as it involves working together to achieve a common goal. Additionally, the teachers did read responses and groupings to have meaningful teaching and learning of the Boholano poems.

Collaborative activities in learning Boholano poems allow learners to share their perspectives and ideas. Interpreting poetry is a subjective activity that requires the integration of personal experiences, emotions, and cultural background. By sharing insights, learners can identify different elements of the poem, such as its themes, motifs, and symbolism, and understand how they relate to the culture and history of their localities.

Contextualization provides learners with relevant background information about a poem, including its cultural and historical context. This can help learners understand the themes, imagery, and symbolism used in the poem, which, in turn, can make the poem more relatable and engaging. Contextualizing words is an important skill in effective communication and can help ensure that messages are accurately conveyed and understood. By understanding the context in which a word is being used, one can more accurately infer its meaning and connotations and avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

The participants mentioned that when learners have difficulties understanding the poem given, they usually provide contextualized sentences incorporating the words learners find difficult. They also let the learners create sentences using difficult words relevant to their current situations. Doing so helps learners better understand the meaning of the words and apply them in context.

The Proposed Pedagogical Framework in the Teaching of English using Boholano Poems in Senior High School

Rationale

Poems play a crucial role in the teaching of English as they serve as powerful tools for language acquisition and literary appreciation. Through the exploration of poems, students enhance their vocabulary, develop reading and listening skills, and gain a deeper understanding of language structures and literary devices. Furthermore, localized and contextualized poetry in the learning of English offers several benefits in language acquisition and comprehension; thus, it provides a familiar and relatable context for students to reflect on their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This familiarity helps to engage students emotionally and intellectually, making the learning experience more meaningful and enjoyable.

Teaching English using Boholano poems in senior high school requires a pedagogical framework that facilitates effective learning, engagement, and appreciation of this literary form. Therefore, a pedagogical framework called "Collaborative Reflections: A Pedagogical Framework for Teaching English using Boholano Poems in Senior High School" is proposed. This pedagogical framework aims to provide a structured approach to guide educators in designing and delivering engaging and meaningful lessons in the teaching of English utilizing Boholano poems. The framework emphasizes integrating collaborative and reflective strategies to enhance students' understanding, connection, and enjoyment of Boholano poems.

This framework is composed of six stages:

Stage 1. Contextualization: This stage involves introducing students to the cultural and linguistic context of Boholano poems. Teachers provide background information about the poet, the historical and cultural influences, and the poem's significance within the Boholano literary tradition. This contextualization sets the foundation for students to understand and appreciate the poem.

Stage 2. Pre-reading Activities: Before diving into the poem, pre-reading activities activate students' prior knowledge and build anticipation. These activities may include discussions, brainstorming, or multimedia resources related to the themes, imagery, or language used in the poem. This prepares students for an engaged and focused reading experience.

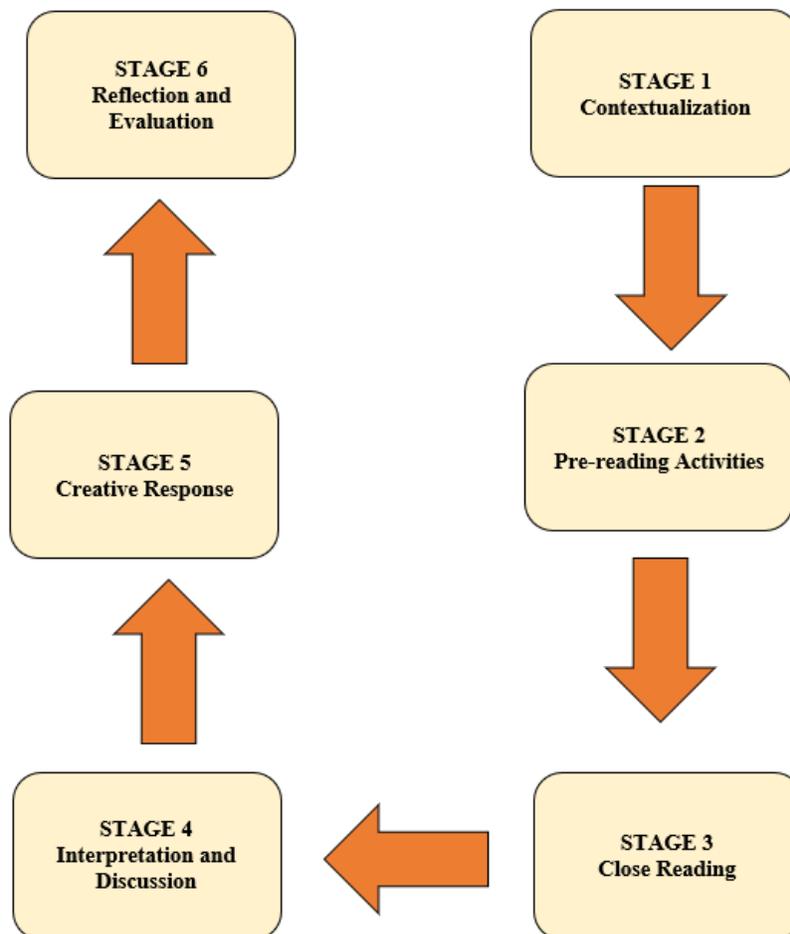
Stage 3. Close Reading: In this stage, students analyze a detailed poem. They examine the language, poetic devices, structure, and overall meaning. Close reading strategies such as annotation, identifying literary devices, and exploring figurative language deepen students' understanding and interpretation of the poem.

Stage 4. Interpretation and Discussion: After close reading, students are encouraged to share their poem interpretations and engage in collaborative discussions. They analyze different perspectives, explore symbolism, and discuss the emotions and themes conveyed in the poem. This stage promotes critical thinking, communication skills, and cultural understanding.

Stage 5. Creative Response: This stage encourages students' creative expression in response to the poem. Students are given opportunities to write their poems inspired by the themes or style of the Boholano poem. They may also engage in dramatic performances, artwork, or multimedia presentations that showcase their understanding and connection with the poem.

Stage 6. Reflection and Evaluation: The final stage involves reflecting on and evaluating the learning process. Students reflect on their journey, their learning, and how their understanding of English and Boholano poetry has evolved. Teachers provide feedback, assess student work, and identify areas for further improvement.

By following this pedagogical framework, teachers can create a dynamic and immersive learning experience for students, fostering their language skills, cultural appreciation, critical thinking abilities, and creative expression through exploring Boholano poems in teaching English in Senior High School.



Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on contextualizing teaching English in senior high school using Boholano poems. While the commitment of teachers to facilitating student learning is evident, the study reveals limitations in the extent of material contextualization, with reliance on only two main poems. Additionally, the challenges faced by learners with reading difficulties underscore the need for more comprehensive support in deciphering the language and structure of poetic literature.

Moreover, the findings emphasize the pivotal role of collaborative and reflective strategies in teaching Boholano poems in English classes. By harnessing these approaches, educators can foster deeper engagement, enhance understanding, and instill a greater appreciation for this unique literary form among students. Through collaborative learning activities and reflective exercises, students can actively participate in interpreting and analyzing poems, drawing connections to their own experiences and perspectives.

Future studies could explore the effectiveness of incorporating a wider range of Boholano poems into the curriculum and implementing tailored interventions to support learners with reading difficulties. Furthermore, investigating the impact of innovative teaching methodologies, such as multimedia integration or experiential learning, could provide valuable insights into optimizing student engagement and learning outcomes in poetry instruction. By addressing these areas, educators can continue to refine their pedagogical approaches and ensure an enriching learning experience for students in exploring Boholano poetry and its cultural significance within the English curriculum.

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are hereby given: Teachers should start researching local poets and their work. They can visit libraries or archives, search online, or talk to local poets and writers. By doing so, teachers can

identify poets whose work reflects the local culture and history. They should carefully select poems relevant to students' interests, age, and reading level. The poems should be of high quality, with a clear message or theme that resonates with the students.

The teachers should continue and encourage collaborative and reflective teaching and learning strategies through small group discussions, peer review, in-pairs and group presentations that can help students engage with the poems and each other. Teachers can assign students to small groups and provide them with prompts or questions to guide their discussions, allowing them to reflect on their experiences and share their thoughts and insights with their peers.

School leaders should provide relevant training and learning opportunities to teachers so that they are fully equipped to address the significant concerns regarding teaching English in the senior high school curriculum.

The proposed pedagogical framework is recommended to improve the teaching of English further using Boholano poems in Senior High School.

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