



# Project La-Le-Li (Language Learning in Literature) On Learners' Comprehension

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Received: 11.04.2026 | Accepted: 15.05.2026 | Published: 15.05.2026

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.20213052](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20213052)

## Abstract

## Original Research

This study examined the effectiveness of Project La-Le-Li, a literature-centered and language-integrated instructional intervention, in improving the reading comprehension proficiency of Grade 9 learners at St. Paul College, San Rafael, Inc. during School Year 2025–2026. Employing a quasi-experimental design, the study compared the pretest, posttest, and retention test performances of control and experimental groups to determine both immediate and sustained effects of the intervention. Results indicated that the two groups were statistically equivalent at pretest. Following the intervention, the experimental group achieved significantly higher posttest scores than the control group, with a substantial proportion of learners reaching the “Proficient” level, while the control group demonstrated only marginal improvement. Retention test findings further revealed a significant increase in the experimental group’s scores compared to posttest results, indicating sustained and strengthened comprehension gains over time. Inferential analyses confirmed significant differences between the posttest performances of the two groups and between the experimental group’s posttest and retention scores. Qualitative insights from learners corroborated these findings, highlighting increased engagement, strategic reading behavior, and confidence resulting from the intervention. The results provide strong evidence that Project La-Le-Li is an effective and sustainable instructional model for enhancing reading comprehension and long-term learning retention among secondary-level learners.

**Keywords:** Reading Comprehension, Contextualized Learning, Language Learning, Literature Learning Retention.

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## Introduction

Literature occupies a central position in the development of advanced reading comprehension, not only as written text to be decoded but as a cognitive environment in which vocabulary

knowledge, inferential reasoning, and interpretive skills are continuously activated. When used intentionally, literary texts provide sustained engagement with complex language, structure, and ideas which are conditions known to support deep



reading and comprehension development. This study is grounded in the view that literature can function as a deliberate pedagogical tool to enhance learners' linguistic competencies and meaning-making skills, thereby addressing persistent challenges in reading comprehension.

International scholarship continues to emphasize the role of rich, meaningful input in language acquisition, particularly the kind found in authentic literary texts. Krashen's concept of comprehensible and compelling input underscored that exposure to rich, meaningful language facilitates natural language development (Bailey & Fahad, 2021). Global research likewise demonstrated that engaging with complex texts provides learners with opportunities to negotiate vocabulary, syntax, and discourse structures that strengthen reading proficiency. At the same time, widespread declines in adolescents' reading motivation have been documented across international contexts, contributing to reduced reading frequency and weakened comprehension outcomes (Webber et al., 2023). Meta-analytic evidence further indicated that while reading motivation and comprehension are moderately linked, adolescents benefit significantly less from traditional teaching methods unless instruction is highly engaging and sustained (Van der Sande et al., 2023). These findings established a pressing need for pedagogical approaches that build comprehension while reengaging students in reading.

The Philippine context reflected these global patterns. In both the 2018 and 2022 cycles of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Filipino students performed among the lowest in reading literacy worldwide, with a majority failing to reach baseline proficiency (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2020). These results highlighted persistent difficulties in vocabulary processing, inferencing, and comprehension of extended texts. Despite literature's potential to address these gaps, it is frequently underutilized in Filipino classrooms, where instruction often prioritizes recall-based tasks over deeper interpretive engagement. Recent studies have shown that dialogic, meaning-oriented literary discussions yield significantly stronger

comprehension outcomes compared to surface-level approaches (Carter et al., 2024). Additional qualitative findings indicated that many Filipino learners view reading as burdensome, citing comprehension difficulties, technological distractions, and low intrinsic motivation (Simene, 2021). Together, these findings pointed to instructional and motivational gaps that undermine the development of skilled, confident readers.

The local context of St. Paul College San Rafael (SPCSR) mirrored these national concerns. Post-pandemic observations from English teachers indicated increasing difficulties among students in distinguishing literal from figurative language, identifying essential vocabulary, and interpreting both explicit and implicit meanings within texts. Teachers have also noted a decline in voluntary library use, limiting students' exposure to the rich print materials essential for linguistic development. Compounding these challenges was the absence of a unified, school-wide literacy framework that systematically supports vocabulary and comprehension growth across grade levels. This fragmented instructional landscape restricted opportunities for sustained literacy development. Literature, when employed strategically and consistently, can offer a promising avenue to address these gaps within SPCSR.

Project Language (La) Learning (Le) in Literature (Li), or La-Le-Li, was conceptualized in response to these challenges. The project integrated Language, Learning, and Literature to position literary texts not merely as content but as structured tools for reading development. This model aligned with contemporary research emphasizing the interplay of cognitive, linguistic, and motivational processes in skilled reading.

The project's design drew upon several well-established theoretical and empirical foundations. Scarborough's Reading Rope conceptualized comprehension as the integration of vocabulary, background knowledge, language structures, verbal reasoning, and text processing, components activated through engagement with complex literary texts (Scarborough, 2001). Perfetti's Lexical Quality Hypothesis explained that

repeated encounters with meaningful vocabulary refine lexical representations, improving efficiency in word recognition and comprehension; this mechanism has been further supported by recent empirical work (Andrews et al., 2020). Vocabulary knowledge itself has been shown to significantly predict reading comprehension across grade levels and linguistic contexts, underscoring literature's value as a rich linguistic resource (Dong et al., 2020). Complementary strategy-based instructional models, such as reciprocal teaching, improved comprehension by teaching learners to construct meaning through predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing texts (Dew et al., 2021). Collaborative approaches such as literature circles have also demonstrated strong gains in second-language reading comprehension by encouraging discussion, engagement, and authentic interpretive processing (Ma, 2025).

Guided by these principles, Project La-Le-Li advances three primary objectives: (1) to strengthen reading comprehension through explicit, strategy-based instruction embedded in literary study; (2) to enhance linguistic competence through systematic exposure to authentic vocabulary, syntax, and discourse; and (3) to improve reading motivation through interactive and collaborative literary experiences. Together, these aims support the development of readers who are linguistically skilled, cognitively strategic, and affectively engaged.

In summary, integrating literature into reading instruction emerges as a necessary response to global, national, and local concerns regarding declining comprehension. With international research signaling a need for meaningful reading experiences, national assessments revealing systemic weaknesses, and local observations indicating widening post-pandemic gaps, Project La-Le-Li offers a research-aligned framework for strengthening comprehension and cultivating a school culture that values deep engagement with texts. This thesis examined the implementation and impact of Project La-Le-Li as a model for enhancing language development and reading comprehension within the SPCSR community.

## Research Questions

This research study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Project La-Le-Li in improving Grade 9 learners' comprehension at St. Paul College, San Rafael, Inc., San Rafael, Bulacan, for the 4th quarter of the school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the pre-test results of the control and experimental group be described?
2. How may the post-test results of the control and experimental group be described?
3. How may the retention test results of the experimental group be described?
4. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the control and experimental group?
5. Is there a significant difference between the post-test and retention test results of the experimental group?
6. What are the perceptions/insights of the learners about Project La-Le-Li?

## Research Design

This study primarily employed a quasi-experimental non-equivalent groups design to determine the effectiveness of Project La-Le-Li in improving the reading comprehension skills of Grade 9 learners. A quasi-experimental approach was appropriate because the participants were drawn from intact class sections, making random assignment neither feasible nor ethical within the school context.

Two Grade 9 sections of St. Paul College, San Rafael, Inc., served as the respondents. One section was designated as the experimental group and received instruction using the Project La-Le-Li instructional model, while the other section functioned as the comparison group and continued with conventional English instruction. Both groups were administered a pre-test before the intervention to establish baseline reading comprehension levels

and a post-test after the intervention to measure immediate learning gains.

To examine the durability of learning, the experimental group was further administered a parallel-form retention test two weeks after the post-test. The inclusion of the retention test allowed the study to assess whether improvements in reading comprehension were sustained beyond the immediate instructional period. Comparisons of pre-test, post-test, and retention test results enabled the analysis of changes in comprehension skills over time and differences between instructional approaches.

In addition to the quantitative measures, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected learners from the experimental group after the administration of the retention test. These interviews were used to gather descriptive feedback on learners' experiences with Project La-Le-Li, particularly regarding engagement, perceived usefulness of the instructional activities, and challenges encountered during the intervention. The interview data were not intended for hypothesis testing but served to provide contextual support and deeper understanding of the quantitative findings.

## Materials and Methods

The study employed both instructional and assessment-based research instruments to examine the effectiveness of Project La-Le-Li in improving the reading comprehension skills of Grade 9 learners. The primary instructional instrument was Project La-Le-Li, a structured literature-based instructional model implemented exclusively in the experimental group. Instructionally, the model unfolds through five recursive stages: Text Activation, Guided Literary Input, Collaborative Meaning Making, Language Focus, and Output and Transfer. These stages were applied flexibly but systematically across lessons to operationalize the comprehension processes targeted in the study. Text Activation prepared learners for reading by activating background knowledge, setting clear reading purposes, and introducing high-leverage vocabulary (Reading League, 2023) through context,

morphology, and collocation. Guided Literary Input treated literary texts as authentic linguistic data, with the teacher modeling how proficient readers navigate syntax, cohesion, inferencing, and implied meaning (Peng et al., 2024). Collaborative Meaning Making occurred through structured literature circles (Ma, 2025), where assigned roles distributed responsibility for lexical, syntactic, discursive, and thematic analysis of the text. Language Focus involved short, explicit examination of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and discourse features drawn directly from the reading selection, supporting the development of form-meaning connections essential to comprehension (Zhang, 2025). Output and Transfer tasks required learners to consolidate and demonstrate understanding through analytical writing or multimodal responses (Stokes, 2024), reinforcing comprehension, inferencing, cohesion control, and precise vocabulary use. Collectively, these stages functioned as a standardized instructional treatment aligned with the comprehension skills measured in the study.

For the quantitative phase, three researcher-developed assessment instruments were employed: a pre-test, a post-test, and a parallel-form retention test. Each assessment consisted of 50 multiple-choice items designed to measure four Grade 9 reading comprehension skills, namely identifying the main idea or theme, making inferences, analyzing character motivation, and demonstrating vocabulary knowledge. All items were constructed using a Table of Specifications (TOS) to ensure appropriate distribution across skills, competencies, and difficulty levels and to guarantee alignment with the Grade 9 literary texts used in the intervention—Because I Could Not Stop for Death, The Cask of Amontillado, and Romeo and Juliet. To minimize test familiarity and memorization effects, item order was rearranged for each testing phase while still assessing the same competencies. The retention test employed parallel items of equivalent complexity but with different wording and passages to measure comprehension retention rather than recall of previously encountered questions. All assessment instruments underwent content and language validation by English subject matter experts, and revisions were made based on

expert feedback to strengthen clarity, accuracy, and alignment with Grade 9 curriculum standards.

To complement the quantitative data, a semi-structured interview guide was developed for selected learners from the experimental group. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit learners' perceptions of engagement, motivation, perceived learning gains, and challenges encountered during their experience with Project La-Le-Li. The qualitative data served to provide descriptive and contextual support for the quantitative findings rather than to test hypotheses.

Prior to the conduct of the study, formal approval was secured from the school administration of Saint Paul College San Rafael, Inc. Written informed consent was obtained from parents and guardians of the participating learners, and assent was secured from the student-participants. These procedures ensured ethical compliance and upheld the rights and welfare of all respondents throughout the duration of the research.

The quantitative phase of the study commenced with the administration of a researcher-developed pre-test to both the experimental and comparison groups. The pre-test consisted of 50 multiple-choice items designed to measure four targeted reading comprehension skills: identifying the main idea or theme, making inferences, understanding character motivation, and demonstrating vocabulary knowledge. The pre-test was administered under uniform testing conditions to establish baseline comprehension levels and ensure comparability between groups.

Following the pre-test, the Project La-Le-Li intervention was implemented with the experimental group over a six-week period, with two sessions per week, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. The intervention was delivered by the researcher, who also served as the English teacher of the participating class. Instruction followed a standardized lesson-plan format across all sessions to maintain consistency and instructional fidelity.

The intervention utilized all three literary texts prescribed for the Grade 9 Fourth Quarter English curriculum: *Because I Could Not Stop for*

*Death* by Emily Dickinson, *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe, and *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. These texts served as the core instructional materials through which language learning and reading comprehension skills were explicitly developed.

Each lesson was structured according to the five stages of the La-Le-Li model. The Text Activation stage involved activating learners' background knowledge, establishing reading purposes, and introducing high-leverage vocabulary through context clues, morphology, and collocations. This was followed by the Guided Literary Input stage, where the teacher modeled strategic reading behaviors such as parsing complex sentence structures, tracking cohesive devices, and interpreting implied meanings through think-alouds and guided annotation.

The Collaborative Meaning-Making stage required learners to engage in structured literature circle discussions. Students assumed rotating roles that guided attention toward summarization, vocabulary analysis, inference generation, syntactic observations, and thematic interpretation. These discussions were designed to promote evidence-based dialogue and shared construction of meaning. The Language Focus stage involved short, explicit mini-lessons drawn from the text, highlighting vocabulary depth, grammatical patterns, sentence relationships, and discourse features that emerged as areas of difficulty. Finally, the Output and Transfer stage required learners to demonstrate comprehension through analytical and interpretive written outputs, which emphasized the use of textual evidence, lexical precision, cohesion, and coherent reasoning.

During the same period, the comparison group continued to receive instruction using conventional Grade 9 English reading approaches aligned with standard curriculum practices. No elements of the La-Le-Li instructional framework were introduced to this group.

At the end of the six-week intervention, both the experimental and comparison groups were administered the post-test, which was parallel in

structure, content coverage, and difficulty to the pre-test. The post-test was used to measure immediate learning gains in the four targeted comprehension skills and to compare performance changes between the two groups.

To assess the durability of learning, a parallel-form retention test was administered to the experimental group two weeks after the post-test. The retention test also consisted of 50 multiple-choice items aligned with the same four reading comprehension skills and literary texts. This measure allowed the researcher to determine whether gains achieved through the La-Le-Li intervention were sustained over time beyond the immediate post-instruction period.

After the completion of the quantitative phase, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with randomly selected students from the experimental group. The interviews were carried out after the retention test to ensure that learners' reflections accounted for both immediate and sustained learning experiences. The interview questions focused on learners' engagement with the lessons, perceived usefulness of the La-Le-Li instructional activities, experiences with vocabulary learning and reading strategies, and difficulties encountered during the intervention. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission, transcribed verbatim, and stored securely for analysis. The interview data served as descriptive support to

contextualize and enrich the interpretation of the quantitative findings.

All data collected during the study were treated with strict confidentiality. Identifying information was anonymized, and all records were used exclusively for research purposes. In compliance with Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, all digital and physical data were securely stored and protected from unauthorized access. Furthermore, in accordance with DepEd Memorandum No. 9, s. 2021 on the institutionalization of quality management systems, all paper-based research records were scheduled for proper disposal through shredding after the completion of the study to prevent any misuse beyond the scope of the research.

**Results and Discussions**

**Learner's Comprehension Proficiency**

This section presents the learners' comprehension proficiency as described in this study. Learners' comprehension refers to their ability to understand and process texts at varying degrees of difficulty, as measured through Project La-Le-Li.

The assessment of learners' comprehension is outlined and discussed based on the gathered results, which are presented in Tables 1 to 3. These tables provide a detailed description of the learners' performance.

**Table 1.** *Level of Comprehension Proficiency in the Pretest of the Control and Experimental Groups*

Scores	Control		Experimental Posttest	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
41-50	0	0.00	0	0.00
31-40	11	40.74	8	33.33
21-30	14	51.85	15	62.50
11-20	2	7.41	1	4.17
0-10	0	0.00	0	0.00

Mean	29.19	28.42
Standard Deviation	5.51	4.44

Legend: “Not Proficient”, 11-20 “Low Proficient”, 21-30 “Nearly Proficient”, 31-40 “Proficient”, 41-50 “Highly Proficient”

Table 1 presents the level of reading comprehension proficiency of both the control and experimental groups during the pretest. For the control group, most learners were classified under the Nearly Proficient level (51.85%), followed by those in the Proficient category (40.74%). A small proportion of learners (7.41%) fell under the Low Proficient level, while no learners were categorized as Highly Proficient or Not Proficient. The computed mean score for the control group was 29.19, with a standard deviation of 5.51, corresponding to a verbal description of Nearly Proficient. These results indicate that prior to instruction, the majority of learners demonstrated partial comprehension skills but had not yet attained higher levels of proficiency.

Similarly, the experimental group exhibited comparable pretest performance. Most learners were also classified as Nearly Proficient (62.50%), followed by those at the Proficient level (33.33%). Only one learner (4.17%) was categorized as Low Proficient, and none were classified as Highly Proficient or Not Proficient. The experimental group obtained a mean score of 28.42 with a standard deviation of 4.44, likewise interpreted as Nearly Proficient. The close similarity in mean scores, proficiency distributions, and verbal descriptions suggests that both groups started at relatively comparable levels of reading comprehension prior to the intervention.

These descriptive results imply that both the control and experimental groups entered the study with moderate but incomplete mastery of reading

comprehension skills, particularly those requiring higher-order processing such as inference-making, interpretation of character motivation, and vocabulary application in context. The absence of learners in the Highly Proficient category in both groups highlights the need for instructional approaches that go beyond conventional reading practices and explicitly develop deeper comprehension processes. Establishing this baseline equivalence strengthens the internal validity of the study, as any differences observed in post-intervention performance may more confidently be attributed to the instructional approach rather than initial group disparities.

The baseline pattern observed in Table 1 is consistent with the findings of Cervantes (2025), in a quasi-experimental study involving Grade 6 learners in Bulacan, which reported that most students initially performed at the Fair or Nearly Proficient level in reading comprehension, with limited representation at higher proficiency levels. The study further noted that learners with such starting profiles often struggle with vocabulary knowledge and inferential comprehension, resulting in slow or minimal gains under conventional instruction. In this context, the pretest results of both groups in the present study reflect a similar comprehension landscape among Filipino learners, reinforcing the need for sustained, language-focused, and literature-based interventions such as Project La-Le-Li to promote meaningful advancement in reading proficiency.

**Table 2.** *Level of Comprehension Proficiency in the Posttest of the Control and Experimental Groups*

Scores	Control		Experimental Posttest	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
41-50	1	3.70	4	16.67
31-40	13	48.15	18	75.00
21-30	11	40.74	2	8.33
11-20	2	7.41	0	0.00
0-10	0	0.00	0	0.00
Mean		31.15		36.29
Standard Deviation		5.81		4.24

*Legend: “Not Proficient”, 11-20 “Low Proficient”, 21-30 “Nearly Proficient”, 31-40 “Proficient”, 41-50 “Highly Proficient”*

Table 2 presents the level of reading comprehension proficiency of the control and experimental groups in the posttest. For the control group, most learners were classified under the Proficient level (48.15%), followed by those in the Nearly Proficient category (40.74%). A smaller proportion of learners remained at the Low Proficient level (7.41%), while one learner (3.70%) reached the Highly Proficient category. No learner was categorized as Not Proficient. The control group obtained a mean score of 31.15, with a standard deviation of 5.81, resulting in a verbal description of Proficient. These results indicate modest improvement in comprehension proficiency following conventional instruction.

In contrast, the experimental group exhibited markedly stronger posttest performance. A large majority of learners (75.00%) were classified under the Proficient level, while 16.67% reached the Highly Proficient category. Only a small proportion of learners (8.33%) remained Nearly Proficient, and none were categorized as Low Proficient or Not Proficient. The experimental group achieved a higher mean score of 36.29, with a standard deviation of 4.24, also interpreted as Proficient. Compared with the control group, the experimental group demonstrated both a higher concentration of learners in the upper proficiency levels and less score

dispersion, suggesting more consistent performance gains.

These results imply that while traditional instruction led to incremental improvements in comprehension proficiency, the Project La-Le-Li intervention produced substantially stronger learning outcomes. The notable shift of experimental group learners toward the Proficient and Highly Proficient categories suggests more effective development of higher-order comprehension skills such as inferencing, interpretation, and vocabulary application. The lower standard deviation further indicates that learning gains were more uniformly distributed among learners exposed to the La-Le-Li model, highlighting its effectiveness in supporting a wider range of reading abilities.

The posttest outcomes of the experimental group are consistent with findings from Inducil (2025), who reported that Grade 7 learners who received explicit, structured, and contextualized vocabulary instruction demonstrated significantly higher comprehension gains than those taught through conventional methods. Inducil further found that learners exposed to targeted language instruction not only achieved higher posttest scores but also showed greater consistency in performance. Similarly, the present study’s experimental group benefited from the language-integrated and

literature-based design of Project La-Le-Li, reinforcing local evidence that explicit language support embedded in meaningful reading contexts

leads to stronger and more sustained comprehension development.

**Table 3.** *Level of Comprehension Proficiency in the Retention Test of the Experimental Group*

Scores	Retention Test	
	Frequency	%
41-50	12	50.00
31-40	11	45.83
21-30	1	4.17
11-20	0	0.00
0-10	0	0.00
Mean	39.625	
Standard Deviation	4.13	

*Legend: “Not Proficient”, 11-20 “Low Proficient”, 21-30 “Nearly Proficient”, 31-40 “Proficient”, 41-50 “Highly Proficient”*

Table 3 presents the level of reading comprehension proficiency of the experimental group in the retention test, which was administered two weeks after the posttest. A substantial proportion of learners (50.00%) were classified under the Highly Proficient level, while 45.83% remained in the Proficient category. Only one learner (4.17%) was categorized as Nearly Proficient, and no learners fell under the Low Proficient or Not Proficient levels. This distribution indicates that the majority of learners demonstrated strong and advanced comprehension skills at the time of the delayed assessment.

The retention test yielded a mean score of 39.63 with a standard deviation of 4.13, corresponding to a verbal description of Proficient. Compared with earlier assessments, the high concentration of learners in the Proficient and Highly Proficient categories, alongside the reduced score variability, suggests that comprehension performance stabilized and became more consistent over time. The low standard deviation reflects minimal dispersion of scores, indicating that learning

gains were retained by most learners rather than concentrated among only a few high performers.

These results imply that the reading comprehension gains achieved through the Project La-Le-Li intervention were sustained and consolidated beyond the immediate instructional period. The shift toward higher proficiency levels in the retention test suggests that learners were able to internalize comprehension strategies, vocabulary knowledge, and interpretive skills developed during instruction. This pattern reflects durable learning, particularly for higher-order comprehension skills such as inferencing, interpretation of themes, and contextual vocabulary use, which are critical for secondary-level literary reading.

The sustained performance observed in the retention test is consistent with findings from Acbangin (2025), who reported that learners exposed to authentic and text-based reading materials demonstrated not only significant post-intervention gains but also strong retention of comprehension skills over time. Acbangin emphasized that

instruction anchored in meaningful literary texts promotes deeper processing and longer-term retention of reading skills. Similarly, the results of the present study affirm local evidence that literature-based and language-integrated instruction, as implemented in Project La-Le-Li, supports lasting improvement in reading comprehension rather than short-term performance gains.

**Difference in Comprehension Proficiency Between Learners in the Control and Experimental Group**

This section discusses the difference in comprehension proficiency between learners in the control group and the experimental group. The comparison is presented to determine the effect of the intervention on learners’ comprehension performance. The results of the statistical analysis comparing the pretest and posttest performances of both groups are shown in Tables 6 and 7, which serve as the basis for identifying significant differences in comprehension proficiency between the two groups.

**Table 4.** Significant Difference of the Pretest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

Variable	Mean	t-value	p-value	Decision	Verbal Interpretation
Control Group	29.19	0.533	0.596	Failed to	Not Significant
Experimental Group	28.42			Reject H <sub>o</sub>	

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 presents the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to establish baseline equivalence between the control and experimental groups prior to the implementation of Project La-Le-Li. The control group obtained a mean pretest score of 29.19, while the experimental group recorded a comparable mean of 28.42. The computed t-value of 0.533 with a p-value of 0.596, tested at the 0.05 level of significance, indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups’ pretest comprehension scores.

The absence of a significant difference confirms that both groups entered the study with statistically equivalent levels of reading comprehension, satisfying a critical requirement for quasi-experimental research. Establishing baseline equivalence is essential in school-based studies where random assignment is not feasible, as it

minimizes selection bias and strengthens internal validity. According to the Institute of Education Sciences (IES, 2022), demonstrating equivalence on pre-intervention academic measures is a fundamental condition for making credible causal claims about instructional effectiveness. When groups are shown to be comparable prior to treatment, observed posttest and retention differences can be more confidently attributed to the intervention rather than to pre-existing disparities.

The results in Table 6 establish a statistically sound foundation for subsequent analyses. The confirmed baseline equivalence strengthens the internal validity of the study and supports the attribution of any later differences in comprehension performance to the implementation of Project La-Le-Li rather than to initial differences between the groups.

**Table 5.** Significant Difference of the Posttest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

Variable	Mean	t-value	p-value	Decision	Verbal Interpretation
Control Group	31.15	-3.503	<0.001	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Highly Significant
Experimental Group	36.29				

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

Table 5 presents the results of the independent samples t-test comparing the posttest reading comprehension scores of the control and experimental groups after the implementation of Project La-Le-Li. The control group obtained a mean score of 31.15, whereas the experimental group achieved a noticeably higher mean score of 36.29. The computed t-value of -3.503 with a p-value of 0.001, tested at the 0.05 level of significance, indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The statistically significant difference between the posttest scores of the control and experimental groups shown in Table 7 may be attributed to the instructional features embedded in Project La-Le-Li, particularly its sustained use of authentic literary texts, explicit language focus, and structured collaborative meaning-making routines. Unlike conventional instruction received by the control group, learners in the experimental group consistently engaged in activities that required inference-making, vocabulary analysis in context, interpretation of character motivation, and discourse-level reasoning across complete literary works. These components likely facilitated deeper cognitive processing and more effective transfer of reading strategies to assessment tasks, resulting in higher posttest performance.

This finding is strongly supported by Acbangin (2025), who reported a highly significant difference in posttest comprehension scores between learners exposed to authentic reading materials and those taught through conventional methods. Acbangin found that learners who engaged with meaningful, real-world texts demonstrated substantially higher comprehension gains and stronger retention than their counterparts, emphasizing that authentic reading experiences promote deeper understanding rather than surface-level recall. Similar to Project La-Le-Li, Acbangin’s intervention integrated vocabulary development, contextual interpretation, and sustained engagement with complete texts, which contributed to learners’ improved performance.

**Difference Between the Posttest and Retention Test Scores of the Experimental Group**

This section presents the difference between the posttest and retention test scores of the experimental group. The analysis aims to determine the sustainability of learners’ comprehension proficiency after exposure to the intervention. The results, as reflected in the succeeding tables, serve as the basis for examining whether the gains achieved by the experimental group were retained over time.

**Table 6.** Significant Difference of the Posttest Scores and the Retention Test Scores Experimental Group

Variable	Mean	t-value	p-value	Decision	Verbal Interpretation
Posttest Scores	36.29	3.204	0.004	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	Highly Significant
Retention Test Scores	39.63				

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

Table 6 presents the results of the dependent t-test comparing the posttest and retention test scores of the experimental group. The experimental group obtained a mean score of 36.29 in the posttest and a higher mean score of 39.63 in the retention test. This increase indicates that learners not only maintained their post-intervention comprehension levels but demonstrated further improvement after the two-week interval. The upward movement in mean scores suggests continued consolidation of reading comprehension skills following exposure to the Project La-Le-Li instructional model.

The computed t-value of 3.204 with a p-value of 0.004 indicates a statistically significant difference between the posttest and retention test scores. Since the p-value is lower than the set significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected, and the result was interpreted as highly significant. This statistical outcome confirms that the increase in learners' retention test scores was unlikely due to chance and reflects a measurable improvement in comprehension performance over time.

These results imply that the comprehension gains produced by Project La-Le-Li were durable and sustained, rather than temporary. The higher retention scores suggest that learners were able to internalize reading strategies, vocabulary

knowledge, and interpretive skills developed during the intervention and continue applying them even after direct instructional support had ended. This pattern indicates deep learning, particularly in higher-order comprehension processes such as inferencing, theme interpretation, and contextual vocabulary use, which are essential for secondary-level literary analysis.

The findings are supported by the study of Kassem (2022), who emphasized that when learners are repeatedly exposed to authentic texts and are encouraged to articulate, revisit, and refine interpretations, comprehension skills become more resilient and transferable across time. Gu et al. (2021) also emphasized that sustained interaction with literary texts, combined with guided discussion and strategy integration, promotes deeper comprehension and more transferable reading skills.

### Mean Scores and Percentages of the Reading Comprehension and Literature Learning Competencies in English 9- Fourth Quarter

This section presents the analysis of the most and least mastered competencies of both groups in the posttest. Identifying these competencies provides insight into which aspects of reading comprehension were most effectively developed.

**Table 7.** Mean Scores and Percentages of the Reading Comprehension and Literature Learning Competencies in English 9- Fourth Quarter

Reading Comprehension (RC) and Literature (LT) Competencies	Posttest			
	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	Mean Score N=27	%	Mean Score N=24	%
Explain the literary devices used. (RC)	17.4	64.4	18	75.00
Determine tone, mood, technique, and purpose of the author. (RC)	18.4	68.15	17.9	74.58
Explain how the elements specific to a literary piece contribute to the development of its theme. (RC)	19.33	71.59	17.8	74.17
Express appreciation for sensory images used. (RC)	17	62.96	16.375	68.23
Analyze literature as a means of connecting to the world. (LT)	15.25	56.48	14.25	59.38
Explain how a selection may be influenced by culture, history, environment, or other factors. (LT)	16.66	61.7	15.166	63.19
Draw similarities and differences of the featured selections in relation to the theme. (LT)	16.125	59.72	14.375	59.90

Table 7 presents the posttest mean scores and corresponding percentages of the control and experimental groups across selected Reading Comprehension (RC) and Literature (LT) competencies in English 9 during the fourth quarter.

For reading comprehension competencies, the experimental group obtained notably higher mean scores in explaining literary devices, determining tone, mood, technique, and purpose, and explaining how elements contribute to theme

development, with percentage scores ranging from 74.17% to 75.00%. In comparison, the control group’s performance in these same areas ranged only from 64.40% to 71.59%, indicating moderate mastery levels. Similarly, in expressing appreciation for sensory images, the experimental group achieved a higher percentage (68.23%) than the control group (62.96%), suggesting a deeper engagement with literary texts among learners exposed to the intervention.

In literature competencies, both groups showed comparatively lower performance levels; however, the experimental group still demonstrated a consistent advantage. For analyzing literature as a means of connecting to the world, explaining cultural and historical influences, and drawing similarities and differences among selections, the experimental group slightly surpassed the control group in all indicators, reflecting better analytical and comparative skills.

These results indicated that the experimental group consistently outperformed the control group in all listed competencies, both in mean scores and percentage achievement. This suggested that the instructional intervention was more effective in strengthening both reading comprehension and literature competencies, particularly those requiring higher-order thinking skills, compared to traditional instruction.

The pattern observed in Table 9 is supported by the local study of Cervantes (2025), which found that learners' comprehension improved when instruction emphasized strategic reading processes, guided analysis, and extended engagement with texts. Although Cervantes reported limited gains from short-term interventions, the study highlighted that learners struggled most with inferential and interpretive tasks when instruction lacked sustained and structured language support. In contrast, the stronger performance of learners in the present study suggests that Project La-Le-Li's sustained, literature-based, and strategy-oriented design addressed these gaps more effectively. This alignment with local evidence strengthens the conclusion that structured engagement with literary texts can significantly enhance learners' interpretive reading competencies.

### **Learners' Perception and Insights on the Implementation of Project La-Le-Li Toward the Improvement of their Reading Comprehension**

Learners' accounts revealed clear changes in how they approached reading tasks after their exposure to Project La-Le-Li, particularly when dealing with long or complex literary texts. Most

learners described moving away from avoidance or surface-level reading toward more deliberate and strategic engagement. One learner explained, "Before, I used to skip parts of long texts, but now I take my time and really try to understand what the author is saying," while another shared, "Even if the text is long, I don't feel scared anymore because I know how to break it down." These statements reflect learners' ability to manage text complexity through strategies explicitly taught during the intervention, helping explain the substantial posttest gains observed in the experimental group.

Learners also reported increased confidence and motivation in reading and interpreting literary texts. Several learners linked this improvement to classroom practices that emphasized interpretation as a process rather than a single correct answer. One learner stated, "I learned that my understanding doesn't have to be perfect at first," while another noted, "I became less afraid of literary texts because I learned that interpretations can differ and still be valid." Learners who still found reading challenging described tasks as "less stressful" and "more manageable," suggesting that Project La-Le-Li reduced reading anxiety and encouraged persistence. These affective changes help explain why comprehension gains were not only achieved but sustained in the retention test.

Collaborative discussion emerged as the most influential instructional feature across all interviews. All learners emphasized that peer interaction improved their understanding of texts. One learner explained, "Hearing how others understood the same story helped me see things I missed," while another shared, "It was easier to understand the text when we talked about it together instead of just reading silently." Learners also reported that explaining their ideas aloud strengthened comprehension. These experiences are closely aligned with the collaborative meaning-making component of Project La-Le-Li and help explain the increased consistency and reduced score variation evident in the retention test results.

Finally, learners demonstrated strong awareness of the reading strategies they developed and their ability to apply these strategies beyond the

English classroom. Most learners identified practices such as annotating texts, summarizing, using context clues, asking questions while reading, and making inferences. Several learners explicitly reported transfer of these strategies, stating, “I now use these strategies when studying other subjects,” and “I try to analyze texts the same way even outside our English class.” Although one learner noted difficulty in consistently applying strategies independently, the overall pattern indicates successful internalization rather than short-term use. Taken together, these learner experiences explain why comprehension gains were sustained and even strengthened over time, affirming Project La-Le-Li’s impact on both reading proficiency and long-term reading habits.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

This study concludes that Project La-Le-Li is an effective instructional approach for improving the reading comprehension skills of Grade 9 learners, demonstrating a measurable advantage over conventional teaching methods. Its literature-centered and language-integrated design supported the development of higher-order comprehension skills, encouraged sustained engagement with texts, and fostered more meaningful and enduring interactions with reading materials. The structured yet flexible nature of the intervention enabled learners to develop confidence, strategic awareness, and deeper understanding of literary texts.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that Project La-Le-Li be further strengthened by providing stronger initial scaffolding for learners who feel overwhelmed by long or complex texts through clearer text chunking, guided comprehension checkpoints, and explicit reassurance that rereading and temporary confusion are normal parts of the reading process. School administrators may consider adopting Project La-Le-Li as a regular instructional approach in Junior High School English to address persistent challenges in reading comprehension and learner engagement, while teachers are encouraged to implement its core features, particularly guided reading routines,

structured peer discussions, and explicit strategy instruction. Learners are likewise encouraged to apply the reading strategies developed through the program across subject areas to support independent learning. Future studies may further refine the model by incorporating learner-suggested enhancements such as increased text choice, extended collaborative discussions, and learner-generated questions, as well as by testing its applicability across different grade levels and educational contexts.

### Acknowledgements

The researchers extend their sincere gratitude to the administration of Bulacan Agricultural State College for their guidance and institutional support throughout the conduct of this study. Special appreciation is also given to St. Paul College, San Rafael, Inc., where the study was conducted, for granting permission, cooperation, and access to the research participants. The assistance, encouragement, and support provided by the school administrators, teachers, and students greatly contributed to the successful completion of this research, making the undertaking both meaningful and academically significant.

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