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The Allure of the Global Narratives: Investigating Students' Interest in Foreign Literature Over Local Texts

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Authors:

¹Bebie Joyce D. Sacramento, LPT
Polonuling National High School

²Josevic F. Hurtada, PhD
DepEd Division of Sultan Kudarat

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ABSTRACT

The growing influence of global media, the widespread use of English in education and popular culture, and the increasing accessibility of international literary works through digital platforms have shaped students' reading preferences. This study explored students' interest in foreign literature over local texts and examined the factors influencing such preferences. Employing a qualitative research design through a narrative inquiry approach, the study gathered and analyzed students' experiences and perspectives regarding their engagement with different literary works. The analysis focused on understanding how language, culture, themes, accessibility, and personal motivations shape students' literary interests. Findings revealed that many students demonstrate stronger engagement with foreign literary works, often describing them as more exciting, varied, and intellectually stimulating. Exposure to these texts contributes to the development of vocabulary, comprehension, and analytical thinking, while also broadening learners' cultural awareness and global perspectives. Students are particularly drawn to the distinctive narrative styles, imaginative themes, and unpredictable plots commonly found in foreign literature. Their curiosity, personal motivation to explore different cultures, and the influence of media and digital platforms further encourage engagement with international texts. Accessibility also plays a role, as digital resources and translated materials make foreign literature more readily available to learners. Despite this preference, students continue to recognize the importance of local literary works in representing familiar cultural values, traditions, and social realities. Local texts foster cultural identity and deepen students' appreciation of Filipino heritage. Overall, the findings suggest that students hold positive attitudes toward both global and local literature, viewing them as complementary sources of learning. Integrating diverse literary materials in the curriculum can therefore support language development, cultural appreciation, and critical thinking while cultivating balanced literary engagement among learners.

Keywords: *intercultural awareness, narrative engagement, reading motivation, literary preference*



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INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

The increasing visibility of global media, the dominance of English in education and popular culture, and the accessibility of foreign literary texts through translations, streaming adaptations, and digital platforms have heightened students' preference for global narratives over local works. This growing trend raises critical questions about cultural identity, literacy engagement, and curricular relevance in developing contexts. Evidence shows that learners' motivations and attitudes toward reading significantly influence not only their comprehension but also their choice of literary materials

Globally, students' fascination with foreign literature is strongly shaped by cultural globalization and the prestige of dominant literary traditions (Ahadiyyah, 2024; Aljabri, 2024). In many ESL/EFL settings, English-language texts are often prioritized because they are seen as gateways to global opportunities and cultural capital (Lee & Chen, 2022; Zhang, 2021). This dynamic reinforces the view of foreign texts as more appealing than indigenous or localized works. However, much of the international literature focuses on broad globalization trends or language-learning strategies, with fewer studies comparing students' affective engagement with foreign versus local narratives in secondary and tertiary educational contexts (Aljabri, 2024; Ahadiyyah, 2024). Empirical studies remain limited in linking students' explicit interest in foreign texts with factors such as curriculum design, media exposure, and identity formation, particularly in multicultural classrooms.

In the Philippines, research highlights the dual necessity of promoting local literature for cultural identity while addressing systemic challenges in literacy. Incorporating regional and indigenous texts has been shown to enhance student engagement and cultural appreciation (Rosales, 2023; "Utilizing Local Literary Texts," 2023). At the same time, the PISA 2018 findings revealed the urgency of improving reading comprehension, as Filipino students scored significantly below the global average (OECD, 2019; Tan, 2021). Surveys and classroom-based inquiries show that while many Filipino learners are drawn to global narratives through popular culture and media, others respond positively when exposed to localized and contextualized teaching strategies (Rosales, 2023; Tan, 2021). Few studies systematically analyze why Filipino learners increasingly prefer foreign narratives over local texts, and how these preferences affect their engagement, motivation, and identity formation.

The educational context of South Central Mindanao is marked by linguistic diversity, multicultural traditions, and abundant local literatures. Yet regional studies reveal that students



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often show stronger interest in global narratives, influenced by English dominance and mass media (Camacho, 2022; Dela Cruz & Dizon, 2021). Division-level studies in Mindanao further highlight links between reading motivation, attitude, and comprehension, but these do not explicitly explore the tension between foreign and local literary preferences (Santos & Javier, 2024; Libdan et al., 2023). Region-specific research is scarce that isolates the drivers—media influence, school practices, and aspirational identity—behind students’ preference for foreign texts and investigates the implications for local-literary engagement and cultural continuity.

This study aligns with SDG 4: Quality Education, particularly in strengthening reading outcomes (Target 4.1) and fostering literacy and lifelong learning (Target 4.6). It also contributes to Target 4.7, which emphasizes education for cultural appreciation and global citizenship. By analyzing students’ literary preferences, the study seeks to balance global exposure with the preservation of local identity, promoting inclusive and culturally relevant education (UN, 2023; OECD, 2019).

The goal of this study was to investigate the underlying factors that drive students’ preference for foreign literature over local texts, focusing on the roles of media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity in shaping these choices among secondary schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato division for school year 2025-2026.

Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the underlying factors that drive students’ preference for foreign literature over local texts, focusing on the roles of media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity in shaping these choices among secondary schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato division for school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following:

1. How do students describe their experiences in reading foreign literature compared to local texts?
2. What factors influence students’ interest in foreign literature over local texts?
3. How do students make sense of the cultural and thematic differences between foreign and local literary works?
4. In what ways do students’ personal narratives reveal their attitudes and values toward global versus local literature?



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically the narrative inquiry approach, to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing students’ preference for foreign literature over local texts. Narrative inquiry is particularly suitable for exploring lived experiences and personal perspectives, allowing researchers to capture how participants make sense of their educational and cultural contexts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). By focusing on students’ narratives, this study can illuminate how media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity interact to shape literary preferences.

The approach aligns with the objective of understanding the subjective meanings and motivations behind students’ choices, rather than measuring these phenomena quantitatively, which may overlook the richness and complexity of personal experiences (Riessman, 2008). Narrative inquiry further enables the exploration of temporal, social, and cultural dimensions, providing a holistic view of how students’ literary interests develop within their school environment.

Participants of the Study

Table 1 displays the qualifications of the participants based on the criteria set by the researcher prior to the selection of qualified informants of the study.

Table 1

Participants’ Inclusion Criteria

Qualifications
Participants: 15 Students
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active Engagement in Literature: Students must have experience reading both foreign and local literary texts, demonstrating familiarity with a variety of genres and authors to provide meaningful insights into their preferences. 2. Enrollment Status: Participants must be currently enrolled as secondary school students in Tupi South District, South Cotabato division, during the school year 2025-2026, ensuring that their experiences reflect the current curriculum and learning environment.



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3. **Willingness to Participate:** Students must provide informed consent (and parental consent if under 18) and demonstrate willingness to share their personal experiences, opinions, and reflections regarding their literary preferences.
4. **Language Proficiency:** Participants must have sufficient proficiency in English and/or Filipino to articulate their thoughts clearly, enabling effective participation in interviews, discussions, or narrative-based data collection.

Sampling Technique

During the conduct of this study, a Purposive Sampling Technique was intentionally utilized to carefully select fifteen (15) students from secondary schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato division for school year 2025-2026.

Additionally, purposive sampling of this group ensures the credibility and richness of qualitative data, as participants are deliberately chosen based on their qualifications and lived experience with the phenomenon under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). A sample size of fifteen is also deemed sufficient in qualitative inquiry because it allows for in-depth exploration of participants' narratives while maintaining manageability in terms of analysis (Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020). By adhering to these criteria, the study balances the need for diversity of perspectives across schools with the depth of understanding required to examine how digital exposure to foreign languages influences students' attitudes toward the Filipino language.

Research Instruments

In this study, a semi-structured interview functioned as an exploratory instrument during both in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to explore the underlying factors that drive students' preference for foreign literature over local texts, focusing on the roles of media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity in shaping these choices among secondary schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato division for school year 2025-2026.

The validity and appropriateness of this tool were substantiated through a rigorous evaluation process conducted by a panel of experts who possess expertise in the development of relevant research instruments.

Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure the research's reliability, the researcher maintained a strict adherence to a predefined set of procedures. The primary objective of this study is to explore the underlying



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factors that drive students' preference for foreign literature over local texts, focusing on the roles of media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity in shaping these choices among secondary schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato division for school year 2025-2026.

In the initial phase, the researcher diligently sought formal authorization from both the Superintendent of DepEd-South Cotabato and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies (CGS). This authorization is essential to obtain the necessary permissions for the researcher to conduct the study, emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations.

Following this, a secondary authorization letter will be sent to the District Supervisor, explicitly requesting access to the specific data required for this research. A meticulously crafted survey questionnaire was developed, subjected to rigorous evaluation, and then administered to the targeted participants.

The researcher employed a Purposive Sampling Technique to carefully select secondary school students as participants in this study. Assuming strict adherence to established EWMCI-Research Ethics Committee, the researcher proceeded with conducting interviews and facilitating Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), all of which was conducted through face-to-face interactions.

Ultimately, the data collected from interviews and FGDs were systematically organized, subjected to comprehensive analysis, and interpreted using the thematic analysis approach. This approach is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the issues under investigation.

Data Transcription Process

In this study centered on uncovering the underlying factors that drove students' preference for foreign literature over local texts, focusing on the roles of media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity in shaping these choices among secondary schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato Division for School Year 2025–2026, a content or thematic analysis approach was employed to examine the collected data. This methodology, as described by Flick (2014), Ngag (2023), and Braun (2009), involved the systematic categorization of textual components, including statements, phrases, and words, into organized groupings or categories. These categories were either derived from established frameworks or custom-developed to align with the study's specific objectives.

To execute this analytical process, a series of essential steps were diligently followed.

Initially, all data sources, such as interview transcripts, notes from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and relevant documents, were meticulously organized and prepared for analysis. This phase ensured the systematic arrangement and accessibility of the data.



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Subsequently, the researcher deeply engaged with the data by conducting a thorough review of interview transcripts and FGD notes. This immersive process aided in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the content and context embedded within the collected information.

The third step involved initiating a systematic coding process. Initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful segments or patterns within the data. These codes captured essential concepts, ideas, or themes related to the narratives of the students regarding their preference for foreign literature over local texts.

Following coding, the identified codes were grouped into preliminary themes based on shared meaning or relevance. This step aimed to establish an initial structure for organizing the data.

Next, the emerging themes and their corresponding codes underwent a process of review and refinement. The researchers ensured the consistency and clarity of these themes and made necessary adjustments. Each refined theme was assigned a descriptive name that succinctly represented the content it encapsulated, facilitating easy identification and interpretation.

Relevant data excerpts, such as quotes or segments extracted from interviews and FGDs, were selected and associated with the respective themes. These excerpts served as supporting evidence for the identified themes.

Finally, the thematic analysis extended beyond surface-level identification. The researchers interpreted the meaning and implications of each theme within the context of the study's objectives. They sought patterns, connections, and variations within the themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the students' narratives.

This meticulous and structured process of thematic analysis enabled the researchers to systematically explore and comprehend the underlying factors that drove students' preference for foreign literature over local texts, focusing on the roles of media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity in shaping these choices among secondary schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato Division for School Year 2025–2026.

Data Analysis

This study used thematic analysis to identify factors influencing students' preference for foreign literature over local texts in secondary schools in Tupi South District during School Year 2025–2026. It focused on key influences such as media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity.



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The process involved organizing and reviewing data from interviews and FGDs, coding significant ideas, grouping them into themes, refining these themes, and supporting them with relevant excerpts. Finally, the data were interpreted to uncover patterns and deeper meanings.

Overall, this structured approach helped explain why students favored foreign literature and how various social and educational factors shaped their reading preferences.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on investigating the interest of secondary school students in foreign literature compared to local texts within selected schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato Division for School Year 2025–2026. The study involved students enrolled in Grades 10, who have had exposure to both local and foreign literary texts through classroom reading programs and English curriculum activities. Utilizing a descriptive-narrative research design, the study collected data through surveys, interviews, and reflective journals to explore students' preferences, motivations, and perceptions regarding literature.

The research was limited to students' self-reported experiences and interest and does not evaluate their literary performance or comprehension. It is conducted within the selected secondary schools of Tupi South District due to accessibility and relevance to local curriculum implementation, aiming to understand how cultural exposure and personal interest shape students' engagement with global narratives versus local literary works.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Grade 10 students' experiences with foreign vs. local literature show that foreign texts often spark stronger interest, curiosity, and engagement, but also present greater difficulty due to unfamiliar vocabulary and language barriers. Despite these challenges, foreign literature helps improve vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills, while also broadening cultural awareness and global perspectives.

Students tend to prefer foreign literature because of its unique themes, unpredictable plots, and influence from media and peers, though access to these materials can be limited. Meanwhile, local literature remains important for fostering cultural identity and national pride.

Overall, both foreign and local texts contribute to students' emotional growth, academic development, cultural understanding, and moral learning, highlighting the importance of balancing both in education.



Conclusion

The following conclusions were made in light of this study's findings:

It has been concluded that balancing foreign and local literary materials in the curriculum is important to foster both skill development and cultural grounding. Encouraging students to explore diverse texts can strengthen language proficiency, curiosity, and intercultural understanding, promoting well-rounded literary competence.

Also, students are drawn to foreign literature not only for enjoyment but also for cognitive and linguistic growth. Educators and institutions should leverage students' curiosity and media influence while improving access to diverse texts to foster sustained reading habits and enhance global literary awareness.

Also, students' engagement with literature is shaped by a dynamic interaction between language proficiency, cultural awareness, and educational exposure. While students show curiosity and openness toward global literary works, their recognition of the cultural significance of local literature reflects an emerging balance between global awareness and national identity. This suggests that literature education should intentionally integrate both foreign and local texts to cultivate critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and appreciation for cultural heritage among learners.

Finally, it has been concluded that literature education becomes more impactful when students are exposed to both global and local texts, as each contributes unique perspectives that enrich learners' intellectual and cultural growth. Balancing these literary sources in the curriculum can foster deeper engagement, strengthen identity formation, and encourage students to apply literary insights to real-life contexts.

Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. **Department of Education (DepEd)** may strengthen the promotion of Philippine literature by developing engaging and accessible learning resources that present local literary works in more contemporary and relatable formats. This may include integrating modern Filipino stories, multimedia adaptations, and culturally relevant themes that reflect students' real-life experiences while maintaining the richness of Filipino identity.



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2. **School Administrators** may encourage school-wide reading programs and literary activities that highlight both global and local literature, such as reading festivals, book clubs, and literary exhibits focusing on Filipino authors and stories.
3. **Curriculum Planners** may consider revisiting literature selections in the curriculum by incorporating more engaging, age-appropriate, and culturally relevant Filipino literary texts.
4. **Teachers** may adopt creative and interactive strategies in teaching local literature, such as storytelling activities, dramatizations, digital storytelling, and comparative discussions between global and Filipino texts.
5. **Future Researchers** may further explore innovative approaches to teaching Philippine literature, particularly strategies that enhance students' engagement and appreciation of local texts in the digital age. Conducting studies that examine the impact of multimedia resources, contemporary Filipino authors, and culturally responsive teaching practices may provide deeper insights into improving literature instruction and balancing students' preferences between global and local literary works.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

In preparation for the conduct of the this study, all the aforementioned plans and recommendations will be presented to East-West Mindanao Colleges Inc to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures and protocols. Within the context of the research focused on examining the underlying factors that drive students' preference for foreign literature over local texts, focusing on the roles of media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity in shaping these choices among secondary schools in Tupi South District, South Cotabato division for school year 2025-2026, it is imperative to emphasize the paramount importance of ethical considerations. Prior to commencing this study, the following ethical principles will be highlighted:

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent: Before participation, explicit and informed consent was diligently obtained from all participants involved in the study. It was imperative that they possessed a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives, methodologies, potential risks, and benefits. Furthermore, participation remained entirely voluntary, affording participants the autonomy to withdraw from the study at any stage without encountering any adverse consequences.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: To safeguard the identities and responses of the participants, rigorous measures were enacted to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Rather



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than using actual names, pseudonyms or codes were employed to uphold the privacy of the participants. The collected data were securely stored, and access was restricted solely to the research team.

Avoiding Harm: Delicate subjects, such as students' personal experiences and perspectives regarding foreign and local literature, were discussed with meticulous consideration for their potential emotional and psychological impact. Strategies were implemented to minimize distress, and appropriate support mechanisms were made available should the need arise.

Researcher–Participant Relationship: The researcher maintained a professional and respectful rapport when engaging with the participants. Any actions that could exploit or cause harm to the participants were scrupulously avoided, ensuring their dignity and respect throughout the research process.

Data Protection: Adherence to data protection regulations and laws was unwaveringly observed to safeguard the personal information of the participants. Stringent measures were employed to ensure the secure storage and transmission of data.

Voluntary Participation: Participants were assured that their involvement in the study was wholly voluntary and free from any form of coercion or external pressure.

Researcher Bias: The researcher remained vigilant regarding potential biases that might influence data collection and analysis, upholding objectivity, neutrality, and transparency throughout the research endeavor.

Institutional Approval: Before initiating the study, the researcher diligently sought ethical clearance and approval from the appropriate institutional authorities and school administrators concerned with the conduct of the research.

Honesty and Integrity: The research findings were reported truthfully and accurately, devoid of any manipulation or distortion intended to align with preconceived notions or personal biases.

Beneficence: The potential benefits of the research to educational practices and literacy instruction were thoughtfully considered, ensuring that the study positively contributed to understanding students' literary preferences and supported culturally responsive education.

Cultural Sensitivity: The researcher displayed cultural sensitivity by respecting local customs, beliefs, linguistic diversity, and reading preferences within the research setting, refraining from imposing external values on the participants.



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Inclusion and Diversity: The study's structure prioritized inclusivity and diversity by encompassing a wide range of student perspectives regarding the underlying factors that drove their preference for foreign literature over local texts. Particular attention was given to the roles of media exposure, language attitudes, curriculum design, and cultural identity among secondary school students in Tupi South District, South Cotabato Division, for School Year 2025–2026.

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Declaration AI Tools Utilization

I do hereby declare the use AI tools, such as Chat GPT and Grammarly for grammar checking and setence organization purposes only.

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