

# A Structural Approach on Short Stories Used in Teaching the Grade 6 Pupils

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**Abstract:** Education is very essential to every individual. It is a change for the better and could change the life of a person. This study aimed to analyze and interpret the short stories of Ma. Melanie L. Padohinog, which the researcher used in teaching the Grade 6 pupils. This offers an extensive interdisciplinary understanding on the relevance of the short stories to the pupils. It describes the narrative functions using Vladimir Propp's theory of Russian Fairy tales as to how the short stories be read in terms of narrative structure, and how these literary works be used to inculcate the pupils. The narrative functions found in the three short stories were: initial situation/preparation, interdiction, violation, delivery, trickery, struggle, victory, liquidation, solution, and recognition. The short stories become the springboard of moral lessons for the pupils to apply in their real life situation. Through them, the pupils have been cognizant of the values they need to have and show or share with others.

**Keywords:** Structural Approach, Short Stories, Teaching, Pupils

## 1. Introduction

Education is very essential to every individual. It is a change for the better and could change the life of a person. It is not only limited to those who can afford but it is always available to those who are willing, willing to endure the difficulties it may bring as life's quest continues.

One's own language enables a child to express himself easily, as there is no fear of making mistakes. Multi-Lingual Education encourages lecture participation by children in the learning process because they understand what is being discussed and what is being asked of them. They can immediately use the Mother Tongue to construct and explain their world, articulate their thoughts and add new concepts to what they already know (Nolasco, 2010).

In the education sector, especially in this time of new normal, modules are now being used to students since face-to-face learning is still suspended. With this situation, teachers found it difficult to get in touch with their students, especially if there is unstable connection that would only provide them of the chance to interact with each other. Some teachers provide learning materials that would somehow cater the learning gap. They provide modules for their learners.

Schools shared the materials they produced. They also produced a Tagalog translation of the teacher guide, which was written in English (Williams, et al., 2014). This paper aimed to analyze and interpret the three short stories by Ma. Melanie L. Padohinog, which were used by the researcher in teaching Grade 6 pupils. This provides a broad interdisciplinary understanding on the relevance of the short stories to the pupils. Specifically, this aimed to answer: 1) How can the short stories be read in terms of narrative structure?; 2) What are the narrative functions drawn from the said short stories?; and 3.) How can these selected literary works be used to inculcate the pupils?

## 2. Related Studies and Literature

Some relevant studies were reviewed, which the researcher believes could help and serve as guide in the conduct of this research.

A study by Coldovero and Aguila (2020) analyzed the Ati-atihan Festival of Kalibo, Aklan as a literary event. They used the method by Vladimir Propp for the narrative functions found in the *Barter in Panay*, which is said as the foundation in the celebration of the Ati-atihan Festival. Vladimir Propp's theory of Russian Fairy tales. Using Propp's theory, they found these following narrative functions: initial situation, preparation, violation, absentation, absentation and meditation, acquisition, transference, branding, recognition, and transfiguration.

Another study the researcher reviewed was from Lopez and Aguila (2021). They analyzed and interpreted the Gaddang legends using also Propp's theory of Russian Fairy tales. The common narrative functions found were: meditation, exposure, delivery and punishment. The Gaddang legends reflect the historical improvements in their being. The legends have become functional in the conservancy and transmission of the Gaddang culture. Through them, the Gaddangs have been cognizant of Magat, Battalan, Bayun, and all their legendary heroes who epitomize their beliefs and unconventional behavior. In Cauayan City, the Gaddang literatures were preserved and have historical value.

The three short stories of Ma. Melanie L. Padohinog were also analyzed and interpreted using Propp's theory.

## 3. Research Design

This is a descriptive research using the structural approach employing the process by Vladimir Propp in analyzing the three short stories. This study identified the narrative structure found in the short stories and their narrative features based on how the stories were constructed. Vladimir Propp's theory of Russian Fairy tales has thirty-one (31) typical actions, which he called as functions and eight (8) characters, which he called as roles. These served as the

bases in determining the narrative functions drawn in the event according to the narrative functions explicated in the theory (Tohar, et al., 2007; Coldovero & Aguila, 2020; Lopez & Aguila, 2021).

In analyzing the texts (short stories), it requires one to take a careful look at the character, setting, plot, symbol, and other factors influencing it, like the cultural, historical, and social milieu in which it was created (Coldovero & Aguila, 2020; Lopez & Aguila, 2021).

In conducting this research, the researcher followed a process under the influence of Vladimir Propp for the narrative functions.

First, the researcher identified the short stories to be analyzed and interpreted.

Then, the researcher examined the means or ways the reading of the said short stories in terms of narrative functions.

Next, the researcher drafted the overall context in which the reading and analysis appeared.

Lastly, after examining the short stories and developing the answers to the questions, the researcher established into concrete words the interpretation and meaning of the said short stories.

**4. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation**

Using Structuralism, the short stories of Ma. Melanie L. Padohinog, which the researcher used in teaching Grade 6 pupils were examined and analyzed. The summary of interpretation is shown in a tabular presentation.

Table 1 presents the summary of the analysis through structural approach.

**Table 1:** Narrative functions in the short stories of Ma. Melanie L. Padohinog

<i>Kamela: The Kind-Hearted Child</i>	
<i>Events</i>	<i>Narrative Functions</i>
Kamela is a Grade 6 pupil in a small barrio. She lives a simple life with her three siblings and their parents.	Initial Situation Preparation
One day, as she was entering their school gate, she heard a soft cry.  She almost leaped when she stumbled upon a cute puppy. As she looked closer, she found out that it was badly hurt.  It has a wound on its left ear and fresh blood was dripping from it.	Delivery
When she was about to pick up the puppy, a group of three boys called her.  One of them said, "Kamela, never mind that	Trickery

puppy. Look at how disgusting it is!"	
Kamela replied, "Yes, for you this puppy is dirty and smells odd. But like us, they have feelings, too. When people hurt them, they also feel the pain. And when somebody loves and cares for them, they also love back and care for that person."	Victory
Kian, Kamela's classmate, timidly said, "We're very sorry, Kamela. We made fun of the puppy. We did not realize that they also need love and care like us. Don't worry, we will help you bring the puppy to the veterinarian so that it could be treated and be well again."	Liquidation
<i>Respect Begets Respect</i>	
<i>Events</i>	<i>Narrative Functions</i>
Kian is a smart boy who loves to learn almost everything.  He always excels in class the reason why his teacher adores him.  He does all his best just to make his parents proud of him.  He dreams of becoming a policeman just like his father.	Initial Situation
One day, in school, Mrs. Pe, their English teacher, is teaching them about "adjectives".  The whole class is enjoying their lesson.  When Mrs. Pe asked the class to give examples of adjectives, Romeo excitedly raised his hand.  He said, "Fat, Ma'am." Kian is fat. Ha!Ha!Ha!" The whole class laughed with him.	Interdiction          Violation
Mrs. Pe told the class, "Children, will you please excuse me? Romeo, please come with me outside for a while.  "When they are outside, Mrs. Pe said, "Romeo, do you think what you did is good? You know, shaming someone is bad. It is not good to humiliate your classmate. What do you think is the best thing that you will do now?"	Victory
Romeo answered, "Ma'am, I am very sorry. I did not realize that it will hurt you and Kian. Don't worry, Ma'am, I will ask an apology from Kian."  "All right then, it's okay. I'm happy that you understood that it is not good to tease anybody. You may go to Kian now," said Mrs. Pe with a smile.  Romeo went back inside the classroom and talked to Kian.  "I'm so sorry, Kian. I know what I did was wrong and even if you did not say anything I feel that you were hurt. I promise I won't do it again," Romeo said humbly.	Liquidation
"It's okay, Romeo. I accept your apology," Kian said happily.  To respect someone is to show consideration. It can boost the self-esteem of another person.	Solution

<i>Graduation During the Pandemic</i>	
Events	Narrative Functions
<p>I was very excited to complete my sixth grade.</p> <p>But that feeling was suddenly replaced with worry when our country was hit by COVID-19. The situation was frightening. It has worsened when the said virus has become a pandemic.</p>	Initial situation Preparation
<p>People began to panic.</p> <p>Others hoarded foods and hygiene materials from grocery stores.</p> <p>Students stopped schooling.</p> <p>Senior citizens and children below 18 years old were not allowed to go outside of their homes.</p> <p>Those who were allowed needed to wear face masks and follow health protocols such as social distancing and washing of hands with soap and water and using alcohol every now and then.</p>	Interdiction
<p>One day, while I was watering the plants in our backyard garden, I received a call coming from my class adviser.</p> <p>“Hello, dear. Good morning. It is with a heavy heart to inform you that your completion program for this school year will be suspended due to COVID-19. I suggest you stay at home and be safe,” my teacher told me.</p>	Delivery
<p>“Hello, Ma’am. Good morning.</p> <p>I am sad to hear that but we could do nothing about it anymore. We’ll just pray that this pandemic ends soon. Thank you, Ma’am, for calling,” I said.</p> <p>The news really broke my heart. I asked myself “Why are these things happening now?”</p> <p>I told my parents about the sad news.</p> <p>They too were unhappy to hear it. “Don’t worry, my child, everything will be back to normal in God’s perfect time. Let’s just trust Him,” my Dad said.</p>	Struggle
<p>Summer came.</p> <p>I still hoped for our completion program in school but it did not happen.</p> <p>Luckily, our teachers thought of a “house to house” distribution of our certificates and awards.</p>	Liquidation
<p>“Issac, do receive your certificate of completion and your award as “With High Honors”.</p> <p>I am happy to tell you that you topped your class this school year. Congratulations!” my adviser announced happily.</p> <p>“Wow! Congratulations, my son. Your Dad and I are very proud of you. Let’s celebrate then!” Mom excitedly said.</p> <p>I am really grateful that despite the pandemic, we have successfully completed our elementary education.</p>	Recognition

This research used the three (3) short stories of Ma. Melanie L. Padohinog, which the researcher used in teaching the students in Grade 6 as springboard for analysis: 1) *Kamela: The Kind-Hearted Child*; 2) *Respect Begets Respect*; and 3) *Graduation During the Pandemic*.

As illustrated in Table 1, Initial Situation/Preparation appeared in *Kamela: The Kind-Hearted Child* as the first narrative function. This narrative function refers to Kamela, a Grade 6 pupil in a small barrio, living a simple life with her three siblings and their parents. The next narrative function was Delivery. One day, as Kamela was entering their school gate, she heard a soft cry. She almost leaped when she stumbled upon a cute puppy. As she looked closer, she found out that it was badly hurt. It has a wound on its left ear and fresh blood was dripping from it. Trickery came next. When Kamela was about to pick up the puppy, a group of three boys called her. One of them said, “Kamela, never mind that puppy. Look at how disgusting it is!” Victory followed after. Kamela replied, “Yes, for you this puppy is dirty and smells odd. But like us, they have feelings, too. When people hurt them, they also feel the pain. And when somebody loves and cares for them, they also love back and care for that person.” Finally, Liquidation was revealed, when Kian, Kamela’s classmate, timidly said, “We’re very sorry, Kamela. We made fun of the puppy. We did not realize that they also need love and care like us. Don’t worry, we will help you bring the puppy to the veterinarian so that it could be treated and be well again.

In the story *Respect Begets Respect*, the Initial Situation was also the first narrative function found. Kian is a smart boy who loves to learn almost everything. He always excels in class the reason why his teacher adores him. He does all his best just to make his parents proud of him. He dreams of becoming a policeman just like his father. It was followed by Interdiction, when one day, in school, Mrs. Pe, their English teacher, is teaching them about “adjectives”. The whole class is enjoying their lesson. When Mrs. Pe asked the class to give examples of adjectives, Romeo excitedly raised his hand. He said, “Fat, Ma’am. Kian is fat. Violation came after, when the whole class laughed with him. After then, there was Victory. Mrs. Pe asked the class for an excuse. She told Romeo to come with her outside for a while. She confronted Romeo about the attitude of Romeo during the class and that was not good. It is not good to humiliate his classmate. The narrative Liquidation followed after. Romeo asked apology to his teacher. Romeo went back inside the classroom and talked to Kian and asked apology. Lastly, the Solution was found. Kian accepted the apology of Romeo. To respect someone is to show consideration. It can boost the self-esteem of another person.

In *Graduation During the Pandemic*, there was also an Initial Situation. The hero was very excited to complete her sixth grade. But that feeling was suddenly replaced with worry when our country was hit by COVID-19. The situation was frightening. It has worsened, when the said virus has become a pandemic. It was followed by Interdiction. People began to panic. Others hoarded foods and hygiene materials from grocery stores. Students stopped schooling. Senior citizens and children below 18 years old were not allowed to go outside of their homes. Those who were allowed needed

to wear face masks and follow health protocols such as social distancing and washing of hands with soap and water and using alcohol every now and then. The narrative function Delivery came next. One day, while the hero was watering the plants in the backyard garden, she received a call coming from her class adviser. "Hello, dear. Good morning. It is with a heavy heart to inform you that your completion program for this school year will be suspended due to COVID-19. I suggest you stay at home and be safe," my teacher told me. Struggle came after. The hero was sad to hear that but we could do nothing about the situation anymore, praying that this pandemic ends soon. The news really broke the hero's heart. She told her parents about the sad news. They too were unhappy to hear it. Then, there was a liquidation. Summer came. The hero still hoped for the completion program in school but it did not happen. Luckily, the teachers thought of a "house to house" distribution of our certificates and awards. Finally, there was recognition. The teacher announced the honors of the class. They were all happy and grateful that they have successfully completed their elementary education.

The short stories feature values that pupils need to embrace, especially that they are still in their young age. The guide of the teacher is really indispensable then. The teacher, as a facilitator, must always be patient, compassionate, committed and considerate. Pupils need to be guided accordingly. Their behaviors must be corrected at an early stage. Through stories read inside the classroom, their thoughts, opinions, ideas, and worldviews are lifted and recognized. The moral lessons from the stories somehow give them enlightenment and serve as guide to their path as they continue walking on their journey to life's quest.

Modules were provided and prepared in order for the learners to continue their studies and learn while staying at home. They were designed not only for them to master the knowledge and skills but rather develop their attitudes through the different stories being presented.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

This research is an attempt to read the short stories Ma. Melanie L. Padohinog the researcher used in teaching Grade 6 pupils using Structuralism. Based on the analysis and interpretation presented, the following have been concluded:

- The short stories of Ma. Melanie L. Padohinog were read through structural approach using Vladimir Propp's theory of Russian Fairy tales, which has thirty-one (31) typical actions, which called as functions and eight (8) characters, which called as roles. These served as the bases in determining the narrative functions drawn in the three short stories according to the narrative functions explicated in the theory.
- The narrative functions drawn from the short stories were: initial situation/preparation, interdiction, violation, delivery, trickery, struggle, victory, liquidation, solution, and recognition.

- The short stories become the springboard of moral lessons for the pupils to apply in their real life situation. Through them, the pupils have been cognizant of the values they need to have and show or share with others.

### 5.2 Recommendations

In cognizance with the results of this research, the following were recommended:

- Through this study, teachers would not limit their pupils to reading stories, poems, etc., which they can anchor their interpretation lessons.
- For pupils, they are encouraged to become more cognizant of the stories that are ubiquitous to the province, and relevant, especially to present situation.
- To other researchers, may this study inspire them to conduct studies in other fields or genres, using structural approach.

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## Author Profile



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