

Temporal Analysis on Verb Tense, Narrative Viewpoint, Immediacy Perception, and Character Identification in Literary Reading

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ABSTRACT

Literary works as artefacts reflect the times and social context in which they are produced. Actively reading literature, questioning the texts, and identifying themes are the cornerstone of literary education and critical thinking. This study dwells into a comprehensive exploration of how verb tense and narrative perspective correlate with readers' sense of immediacy and character identity in Contemporary Literature. Through an adapted evaluation tool, the stories' perceptive impact and relatability will be measured under a nonexperimental descriptive research design. Selected SHS students from Colegio de San Juan de Letran were given a literary selection (transposed to multiple versions with varying verb tenses and narrative viewpoints) and an adapted rating tool administered post-reading. Since the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality revealed that the data are not normally distributed, Mann–Whitney U tests were conducted to investigate the differences in literary perceptions by tense and point of view. Findings showed that there were no significant differences in respondents' immediacy perception and character identification between narratives written in the past tense and narratives written in the present tense since both p-values are more than 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that readers perceive the time of a selection regardless of verb tense used and relate or not to the characters regardless of the story's narrative viewpoint. Contemporary Literature teachers and authors of literary works may then emphasize less the impact of verb tense and narrative viewpoint in both teaching and writing literature.

Keywords: Verb Tenses, Narrative Viewpoint, Immediacy Perception, Character Identification, Literature

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the birth of the strengthened senior high school curriculum, the previous SHS system is simplified by reducing the number of tracks and subjects. According to the shaping paper released by the Department of Education (2025), the tracks are cut down from four to two while the number of core subjects are trimmed from an overwhelming number of 15 to a more focused five.

The lessening of the number of tracks promotes the findings that the previous curriculum was often criticized for being overloaded, which led to surface-level learning rather than deep mastery. Thus, the deconstruction of the rigid strand system is one of its most notable modifications. This aims to allow students to choose from clusters of elective subjects for them to design a more personalized and flexible learning path (Chi, 2025). The Department of Education refers to this idea as the “doorway option” similar to the mix-and-match system that is mapped out based on students' interests and career goals.

Prior to its nationwide rollout, a pilot implementation of the proposed revision is closely monitored in the 2025-2026 academic year.

Among the subjects that will be introduced as one of the elective subjects in the academic track is Contemporary Literature 1 and 2. Stemming from the previous subject 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World, the new subject promotes the reading of literary works that are current and most relevant (DepEd, 2025).

In a recent study done in India, the students view reading literature as a positive reinforcement to the linguistic aspects of language learning. Despite the benefits of literature learning being specifically categorized under the approaches focused on language, context, reader, and texts, it is posited that learning is best elicited from literature reading when language is approached in context (Noviadi et al., 2023). This supersedes the notion that literature serves as a reflection of social realities.

As artefacts, literary works reflect the times in which they are produced. Both fictional and nonfictional works are attuned to the authors' experiences that are drawn from social issues, motivations, and even the pulse that are influenced by the society. Literature functions as the lens through which readers can understand struggles, tensions, inequalities, or even political divides and empathize with these challenges individuals in the community face (Tao, 2023).

In order to attain these intended outcomes effectively, the students as readers must develop a sense of critical appreciation towards the text read. The emphasis on active reading, questioning the text, and identifying themes is a cornerstone of literary education and critical thinking (Adler & Dorren, 1972). One important factor that shapes readers' experience and perception is the idea of "recency" in the context of literature.

Statement of the Problem

In a psychological perspective, the serial position effect, which was first discovered by the psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus, observed that readers can effectively recall items from a list depending on its placement in the list (Murre & Dros, 2015, as cited in Cherry, 2024). However, in literature, the sense of "immediacy" pertains to the perceived distance between the reader and the character, as well as the context surrounding the story.

Achieving immediacy in writing stories, in face value, suggests the standard use of verbs in the present tense. An article by Hall-Wilson in 2024, however, said otherwise. It clarified that writing either in past or present tense possesses no direct correlation to the impact of storytelling, given that a deep point of view is achieved.

Similarly, a study by Sandefur (2003) examined the relationship between the use of first-person voice in contemporary American novels and narrative immediacy. Although it is primarily established, as supported by literature, that protagonist-driven narrations promote perceived immediacy, there is still a "substantial temporal gap" between narration and experience.

This study dwells into a comprehensive exploration of how verb tenses and narrative perspective correlate with readers' sense of immediacy and character identity in the selections of the subject, Contemporary Literature. As an elective course designed to foster deep appreciation of literature through engagement with reading on a "personal and cultural level" (DepEd, 2025), the establishment of these correlations intends to formulate a paradigm realignment in the teaching of literature. Likewise, it can further benefit contemporary Filipino writers in their endeavor of producing time-relevant works of literature that would complement the findings of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading and analyzing literary works

The teaching of English grammar has always been integrated in studying literature. Stories are authentic artefacts where language can be learned best. Truong (2009) used the word "indispensable" when describing the study of

literature through the lens of English as foreign language teachers. Reading literature benefits English learners by developing their vocabulary through dialogues and prose. Likewise, it enhances students' imagination, critical thinking, and cultural awareness. Truong also highlighted that literature could be best utilized through learner-centered and interactive activities for the teaching of English.

Similarly, literary reading is a significant part of language proficiency as it keeps readers sustained and engaged that contribute to their linguistic competence (Rueda, 2026). The accessibility and relevance are factors that make contemporary literature contribute strongly to language proficiency. Meanwhile, classic literary texts underscore interpretive competence that improve students' higher-order thinking, critical analysis, and interpretive depth.

Russian and Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky associate learning about life with poetry. He utilized literary works as platform for language development, using them as material of inner speech and medium. As Barrs (2016) quoted, "A poem provides a window on that space where inner and our world of experience meet" (Doecke, 2016).

Nonetheless, Erniwati and Mertosono in 2023 had identified several difficulties students encounter when reading and analyzing literary works. These include diction, making inferences, recognizing author bias, summarization and paraphrasing, identifying literary devices, evaluating authors' style, and deducing the elements used in the literary works.

Understanding literary work goes beyond merely understanding the plot and recalling details. It is also about resonating with the different elements of the narrative and applying the stories' implications to different authentic and relevant situations.

Integration of grammar teaching in literature

That is why in a study on the Grade 7 MATATAG curriculum, Cape and Subillaga (2025) forwarded that grammar integration in the study of Philippine literature is a "highly effective" approach to English grammar skills development. It also further promotes deeper appreciation of literary works by making use of real-life contexts as authentic examples in grammar lessons. It makes grammar learning more "meaningful, engaging, and student-centered." The study recommended the integration of Philippine literature into grammar lessons to aid learners connect language learning with cultural exposure. The only limitation of this particular study is its findings' question of applicability across various grade levels, which is one of what this research intends to address.

In a broader sense, language has always been found in texts. That is why studying it in texts is inevitable (Weinrich, 2003 as cited in Weber, 2018). Grammar is no longer a concept detached from natural and authentic contexts, thus, making it better studied and learned in natural settings. It represents, portrays, and articulates world in texts in a special way.

One specific way of integrating grammar within the context of literature was exemplified by Risko in 2024 called "character dialogue analysis." In this activity, the learners explore the dialogue of characters for the teacher to springboard the teaching of grammar aspects such as punctuations, dialogue tags, indirect speeches, and others. This allows for the utilization of literature excerpts to illustrate how authors structure their sentences to convey the emotions and personality traits of his characters. This is just one way to emphasize how readers can explore the nuances of grammar through character interactions in the stories.

Looking into the side of authors in literary writing, it is the different facets of grammar that they explore and experiment with what style and artistic innovation they would use in English literature. Rhyming patterns in poetry, the syntactic structure of prose, and word choice in literary writing are all under the jurisdiction of grammar. That is why through authors' use of syntax, punctuation, and other literary devices, writers develop their unique voice and literary identity (Sheraliyevna, 2024). As readers employ deep analyses of a literary work's grammatical intricacies, they also gain insights into the narrative style, cultural contexts, and thematic motifs of

the writers. Meanings, depth, and other interpretive analysis are unearthed, making writing styles an integral element in effectively delivering the writer's intention.

When thinking about grammar in literature, it is not just limited to being correct. Managing one's linguistic mechanisms can serve as a powerful tool in delivering author intention effectively and meaningfully.

Appealing to the readers' emotions

Grammatical stylistics, nonetheless, are not enough to bring a story to life in the readers' imagination. Appealing to reader emotions still requires authors to employ extensive exploration of literary devices and a play of narrative elements. For Nasir (2020), it is imperative for writers, in order to tell a great story, to be able to take away readers from the real world and into the world of the narrative. Thus, a literary device that should be played around with to achieve this is with the creative use of imagery, which is no longer new in literature writing. This is simply the way of making readers feel something; by appealing to their senses. This way, they are kept entertained and curious to be excited about what the author has to offer.

Aside from using imageries, tone and mood setting is also another way in which authors can captivate readers' character identification. As Paton (2026) defined, tone reflects what attitude the author has towards his events or characters. Consequently, mood is described as the "emotional atmosphere" readers encounter while reading. These two establishes the emotional rhythm a particular narrative aims to have. Although these elements are implicitly expressed in writing, they help readers comprehend narratives beyond just following the plot.

A story's theme being its relevant human experience also aid in expressing the emotions in literature. As previously mentioned, authors employ various literary stylistics to convey complex emotions. Setting the story theme as a relatable element makes readers deeply connected to both the characters and the narrative. For instance, stories exploring themes on love, pain, anger, and joy may elicit reader emotions aside from simply just following the plot. This can be achieved even more effectively through the previously mentioned literary devices such as imageries, symbolisms, poignant dialogues, and other flourishes. Relatable themes can easily make readers resonate with the story and make them empathize with the characters, fictional or nonfictional. They are then challenged to be insightful and reflective of their human emotions.

Literature does not solely aim to inform nor entertain, it should appeal to the readers in such a way that its intended message is relayed meaningfully. Authors have a variety of devices to help achieve this goal. These are not incidental flourishes or techniques that only serve for aesthetic purposes. They are creative, carefully crafted, and intentional strategies for the narrative's overall impact to be successfully implemented. One element that these bodies of literature missed to mention is the use of narrative perspective. Thus, this study intended to provide the significance of a story's point of view in influencing readers' emotional experience.

Temporal analysis in literature reading and writing

Having established that grammatical aspects plays a pivotal role in literary writing, specifically in expressing the author's intent, other bodies of literature highlights how the time element in stories is impacted by these stylistics. Makenzie (2024) underscored in his study that time is not merely a backdrop for writers to allow their stories to take place. Instead, the use of time can be for the readers to actively engage with the text. The sequence of plot points can also serve as prompt for the readers to navigate through fragments in narratives and interpret these scenarios from different angles. These writing strategies can further promote readers' emotional connection to the characters as well as their experiences as they are directly exposed to their memory, identity, and perception of time.

As to when the relationship between time and literature was first established, a collection of scholarly studies on time in literature published in 1991 provided an analogy with how impossible it is to determine when a fact being described first happened. For instance, if a star is moving from one point to another, describing it would

not happen at the same time as it originally happened. Such intervals between reality and fiction make temporal analyses on literature more relevant.

This concept is further contextualized by Genette (1980) as cited in Abdulrazziq and Geedallah (2021). Genette beautifully defined time in literature as having the unique ability to structure a story's plot sequence. It can freely tell the readers at what actual point in the story is the part that they are currently reading. In short, story time can be far different from narrative time. Stories are usually narrated in linear temporality.

The temporal relationship between story time and narrative time was categorized by Genette into three determinations: order (chronology), duration (speed), and frequency (repetition). Respectively, readers can have a sense of time in stories when reading literature according to how the events in the story are sequenced, how these events can speed up, match story time, pause, and skip time, as well as the number of times an event takes place in the narration.

These widely accepted temporal relationships was challenged by an older literature by Perry in 1965, stating that analyzing poems and the events involved in the narration do not necessarily have to involve time as a relevant element. According to Perry, poetry could be analyzed by simply dwelling into its structure of meanings, whether these meanings are static or dynamic. Technically speaking, there are no mental mechanism that could make meanings occur simultaneously with an word or image. This is because making meanings happen selectively; active construction and continuous action of concatenated meanings are actual prerequisite to comprehending and empathizing with the narrative elements.

As this study focuses on the temporal analysis of contemporary literature, is it important to note that time as a literary element is a relevant factor in transferring author intentions and in readers' meaning-making. It should not be taken merely as a platform to get the plot going but as an encompassing factor that impact readers' sense of being in synch with the plot's series of events.

Research Questions

The study aims to study how verb tense and narrative perspective in reading selections in Contemporary Literature affect the readers' immediacy perception and character identification. Consequently, the study will determine how the relationship between the variables can be utilized in the development of policy frameworks both in literature reading and writing. Specifically, this study intends to answer the following:

1. What is the difference between the immediacy perception of readers in a literary selection read in the past and present tense as well as how the same selection in the 1st and 3rd point-of-view affects their character identification?
2. What are the analogous relationships between the two independent variables with the two dependent variables?
3. How do variations among the independent variables in the literary text affect the chronological perception and character identification of readers in Contemporary Literature?

Hypotheses:

H^{A1} : The data sets are normally distributed.

H^{01} : The data sets are not normally distributed.

H^{A2} : There is a significant relationship between immediacy perception and verb tenses.

H^{02} : There is no significant relationship between immediacy perception and verb tenses.

H^{A3} : There is a significant relationship between character identification and narrative perspective.

H⁰³: There is no significant relationship between character identification and narrative perspective.

H^{A4}: There is a significant relationship among the four variables.

H⁰⁴: There is no significant relationship among the four variables.

Significance of the Study

To the SHS students. This study will see if it can challenge the concept of verb tense and narrative viewpoint having a direct effect on readers' immediacy perception and character identity to having no significant correlation. Thus, the following sectors will benefit from the findings and recommendations of this study:

To the SHS students. Reading and understanding literature is a complex undertaking. The integration of grammar teaching for second language learning increases the significance of this course. On a personal note, the findings of this study will help boost human understanding as to how readers connect to the story elements that celebrated authors have produced as part of our history, culture, and educational artefacts.

To the teachers. As primary implementers of the new curriculum, particularly the subject Contemporary Literature, the findings of this study aim to inform them as to the interceptive impact of literary selections to the readers. It will likewise empower the integration of teaching grammar in Literature subjects, specifically verb tenses and point of view.

To the curriculum developers. To the curriculum developers. Developing a curricular framework that sees the incorporation of language in literature subjects is no simple chore. Activities and other parts of the lesson development have to be carefully drafted in order to maximize the attainment of the set objectives. Solidifying the relationships among immediacy perception, character identity, verb tenses, and narrative perspective will establish the collaboration between the two subjects in focus.

To the literary writers. To the literary writers. The study findings will inform writers of literature on how their works affect the perception of their target readers. Such understanding can serve as a contributing factor to the decision making of authors when choosing the devices, form, and other styles in writing.

Scope and Limitations

Writing stories in the second-person is a challenging and uncommon endeavor. In the typical setup, the stories are either being told through the point of view of the author or the character. In a book about the findings of a study, Iliopoulou (2019) had observed that despite the fact that second-person texts exist and are continually present all throughout the history of literature, it is still undeniable that such forms of writing appear seldom in an author's body of works. This goes to show how uncommon this way of writing is.

Another challenge in literary writing is the use of the future tense. Although the said verb form is being utilized as integrated in stories in the present tense, a literary work written purely in the future tense is almost nonexistent. Combining writing in second-person and the future tense is almost an absolute impossibility (Reilly, n.d.). However, Reilly added that these devices can be regarded as a gimmick to allow readers to "potentially experience what the writer wishes."

Taking these into consideration, the second-person point of view in writing and the full use of the future tense will not be included in the pool of literary selections.

Definition of Terms

Character identification. Character identification in literature, specifically as defined in this study, is the extent to which the reader connects or relate to the character or characters read in the story. This may be illustrated when

the reader and a character share similar experiences, beliefs, values, norms, or other elements where connection may be established.

Contemporary Literature. In the strengthened senior high school curriculum, which is implemented in full actuality in the 2026 school year, Contemporary Literature is what remains of Literature-based subjects. Offered as an elective across different pathways, Contemporary Literature is offered in two parts: Contemporary Literature 1 and 2.

Immediacy perception. This refers to how close or how far in terms of time the readers perceive the events in the story. Immediacy perception is the relevance of the time an event in the story happens to the time the story is being read.

Narrative perspective. More commonly known as point of view, narrative perspective in literature indicates who the narrator of the story is (through the appropriate use of pronouns). In literature, the first POV is used when the story is being narrated by the character. The second POV, although used very seldom, is when the reader is narrating. The third POV is used when the author of the story is also the one telling the narrative. In this study, literary selections in the second POV is disregarded due to the fact that it is almost never used.

Verb tense. Verb tense in grammar basically covers three forms of the verb, the past, present, and future. Although the correct form of the verb is used in order to indicate when an action happens, this study will look at how varied verb tense affect the immediacy perception of the readers.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Theoretical Framework

The course of this study is principally anchored from the Narrative Immersion Theory, which dwells into the phenomenon wherein the reader feels transported into the story and feeling mentally and emotionally invested to a literary work. Categorically, the intensity of “immersion” that the reader feels depends on several cognitive and affective factors.

Similarly, Gerrig’s (1993, as cited in Green & Brock, 2000) Transportation Theory described the extent to which readers are “transported,” immersed, and absorbed in the story they are reading. The theory described this process as something mental in nature, integrating attention, imagery, and feelings all together.

In a 2019 study by Allan on narrative immersion, one of the contributing factors that impact one’s immersive attachment towards a story are verb tenses and their aspects (simple, perfect, progressive). Another factor of immediacy are narrative features related to the point of view in writing because they can draw the reader directly into the story.

The Reader-Response Theory, which originated in the 1960s, focuses on the experience and interpretation of the readers towards a text. This theory particularly highlights that the meaning of texts is not fixed and is open to various interpretations. Understanding a literary selection, being a subjective endeavor, allows the readers to have varying reactions, either receptibility and resistance, towards the story read (Long, 2024).

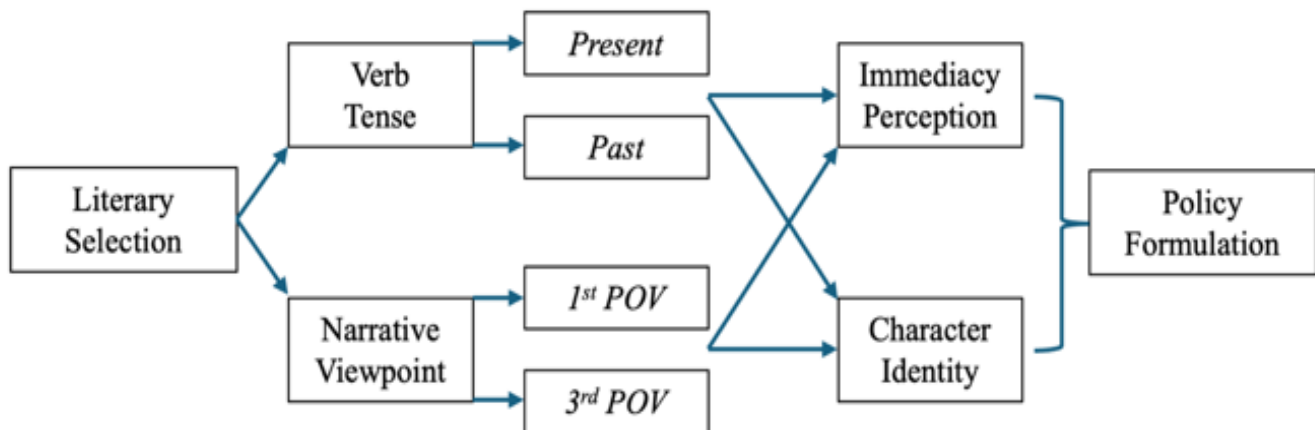
Ultimately, Genette’s Temporal Analysis Theory (1980, as cited in Abdulrazziq & Geedallah, 2021) in narrative discourse studied the relationship between story time and narrative time. This led to the forwarding of three pillars of temporal analysis: order, duration, and frequency.

Conceptual Framework

Guided by the narrative immersion theory, this study particularly spotlights two predetermined factors affecting the readers’ immersive experience: verb tense and narrative viewpoint. Upon identifying the selections in

Contemporary Literature being used as readings in the pilot schools of the strengthened SHS curriculum, they will be categorized according to the verb aspects and point of view used by the authors.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a nonexperimental descriptive correlational research design wherein the participants will be given literary selections to read and rate post-reading. The instrument to be used to determine readers' immediacy perception and character identification is a 5-point researcher made scale. In the absence of an intervention to assess changes in dependent variables, this study utilizes a nonexperimental approach. Such designs do not manipulate any conditions to examine changes in the subjects just to examine a phenomenon (Salmons, 2023).

The results of the two-part survey post-reading will be cross examined through statistical comparison, enabling the researcher to determine the variables' central tendencies and describe their differences. Descriptive correlational research describes the relationships between and among multiple variables without manipulation or causation testing (Aprecia et al., 2022).

Research Locale

Colegio de San Juan de Letran is a private Catholic Dominican educational institution located within the walled city of Intramuros. Now in its 405th year of operation, it was founded in 1620 by Don Juan Geromino Guerrero, a retired Spanish officer and one of the Knights of Malta, originally as a home for the orphans. At present, it offers academic programs from pre-elementary until post-graduate studies the covers programs in education, business, engineering, and liberal arts. Senior high school being part of its academic offerings, including the subject 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World, which is the equivalent of Contemporary Literature in the current SHS curriculum. The said subject is taken by Grade 11 students during the second semester that is why they were selected as the study participants.

Sampling Method

Senior high school students are the target population of this study since Contemporary Literature, formerly 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World, is part of their curriculum. The said subject, however, is a core subject that is included in the strengthened SHS curriculum that took effect in some schools in 2025.

Since the revised curriculum is not yet in its full implementation, only selected schools have piloted this refined version. To make up for this limitation, the Grade 11 students of 21st Century Literature served as respondents. SHS students were selected using a purposive-convenience sampling from the study's chosen locus, Colegio de

San Juan de Letran. The data gathering from the target population was endorsed through the office of the Senior High School Department of Letran.

Through equal random assignments, two large sections were assigned as Group A (who read the selection in the past form and in the third POV), three sections were assigned as Group B (who read the selection in the present form and in the third POV) and the remaining three sections as Group C (who read the selection in the present form and in the first POV). There were 50 students in Group A, 51 in Group B, and 57 in Group C who served as respondents.

Research Instrument

Immediacy perception and character identification are two well-established concepts in literary reading, paving a way for the existence of measurement tools. For both variables, this study made use of an adapted instrument from two studies: the measurement of transportation and identification (Green & Brock, 2000; Cohen, 2001).

The items in the measurement scales are slightly modified and contextualized for the study's use. Selected words are changed to either specific the study's target variables or to unify the tone of the instrument. For instance, since most of the items in the transportation measurement are positively expressed in favor of immediacy perception, the item "I found it easy to put it out of my mind" was changed to "I found it difficult to put it out of my mind."

The identification measurement, on another hand, needed further adjustments since it was originally intended for viewing instead of reading. For example, the item "While viewing program X, I felt as if I was part of the action," it was altered to "While reading the story, I felt as if I was part of the action."

Data Gathering Procedure

One literary selection is predetermined ("The Licked Hand: An American Urban Legend"). The selection is then converted to three different versions: in present tense, in past tense (in 3rd POV), and in 1st POV. After the reading of each selection, the survey form is provided for spontaneity in describing the after effects of the story read in terms of the two dependent variables. The process is to be repeated until the target number of literary selections is reached.

Statistical Treatment

Analyzing and interpreting the data gathered through the adapted instrument and after reading the selection required both descriptive and inferential statistics to present its findings. Firstly, mode of central tendency, specifically the mean of the respondents' answers in each question are presented to lay out the general responses of the students regarding immediacy perception and character identification after reading varied versions of the story. Shapiro-Wilk test of normality is conducted to determine if the data sets have normal distributions. The test's result showed violation of normality, leading to the utilization of Mann-Whitney U tests. It is a nonparametric statistical procedure for comparing two independent samples.

Ethical Considerations

Social value

The teaching of literature in the revised SHS curriculum and its inseparable pedagogical practices with grammar teaching invites a paradigm shift in our viewpoint on how these subject matters are dealt with. Establishing a concrete correlation between narrative techniques and indirect characterizations in literary reading can redefine two major things: how authors write literary works and how these stories are being read and studied. Similarly, it can further benefit contemporary Filipino writers in their endeavor of producing time-relevant works of literature that would complement the findings of this study. It is acknowledged that such factors become basis and inspiration for authors when writing stories. Ultimately, this study aims to establish the impact stories give to the temporal understanding of the readers that depend on the way they are written.

Informed consent

A researcher-made informed consent will be produced and presented to the respondents prior to the actual accomplishment of the research instrument. The informed consent details the study's objectives, the nature of data gathering, the participants' risks and benefits, as well as how data gathered are to be stored, protected, and disposed upon the study's fulfillment. It will be ensured that the contents of the form will be clear, concise, and comprehensible to the level of the target respondents. Ultimately, they have to signify their agreement to proceed with data gathering once the consent form has been read and understood. All participants who do not wish to proceed will be allowed and will no longer be obliged in any form to continue.

Vulnerability of the participants

Having established that the literature subject highlighted in the study is Contemporary Literature, which is a subject in the strengthened SHS curriculum, it is inevitable that the respondent group would have individuals of minor age. Despite belonging to the vulnerable group, it is rest assured that the respondents will not be exploited in any way since the data that will be gathered from them is merely about literary perception. Their reactions to reading literature would not reflect their moral, norms, beliefs, values, religion, or any aspect of their humanity that may be taken against them.

Risk and benefits

As an elective course designed to foster deep appreciation of literature through engagement with reading on a "personal and cultural level" (DepEd, 2025), the establishment of these correlations intends to formulate a paradigm shift in the teaching of literature. Curriculum implementors can realign the activities and other lesson development parts to strengthen the reading and understanding of literary works and its teaching. Regardless of the participants' age group, the study sees no harm that may be inflicted upon them due to the incorruptibility of the data required from them. Data gathering procedures will also consider highly their convenience and will be targeted at their most available time.

Privacy, transparency, and confidentiality

Soliciting the names of the respondents would not be imperative in the research tool. They may opt to indicate their name, but the identity of the respondents would not be reflected in the results. The strata (e.g., section) and the cluster (e.g., strand, track, etc.) where they belong are included in the data collection for the sole purpose of consolidating the results according to the study variables. Aside from this demographic and the actual respondents of the students in the tool, no other personal data will be asked. The data extracted from the digitized research instrument would be treated with transparency by doing no alterations or modifications. The raw version of the findings would be stored temporarily for immediate review and further analysis. The data would be stored in an encrypted Google Drive folder accessible only to the researcher. It would be restricted from access to the public for possible data privacy violations. Five months after the accomplishment of this study, all data stored will be permanently deleted. No backup data or shortcuts would be produced whatsoever.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Using the adapted research instrument that measures immediacy perception and character identification, responses were solicited among the three groups of respondents after reading the modified versions of the literary selection. First, the story was converted from its original version that was written in the past tense to a version that is written in the present tense. Two groups of students (Group A and B) read the selection in its two forms and the means of their responses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Immediacy perception of readers for the story read in the past and present tense

Survey Question	Past Tense		Present Tense	
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
While I was reading the narrative, I could easily picture the events in it taking place.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
While I was reading the narrative, activity going on in the room around me was out of my mind.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I could picture myself in the scene of the events described in the narrative.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
I was mentally involved in the narrative while reading it.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
After finishing the narrative, I found it difficult to put it out of my mind.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
The narrative affected me emotionally.	5	Somewhat agree	4	Neither agree nor disagree
I found myself thinking of ways the narrative could have turned out differently.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I found my mind focused while reading the narrative.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
The events in the narrative are relevant to my everyday life.	5	Somewhat agree	4	Neither agree nor disagree
The events in the narrative have changed my life.	5	Somewhat agree	4	Neither agree nor disagree

Using a 7-point Likert scale, results showed that there were four items that got the highest mean scores of 6 (“Agree”) for the students’ immediacy perception in the story with verbs in the past tense. Meanwhile, none are rated 6 in the story’s version of verbs in their present tense and these responses resulted to three items rated with 4 (“Neither agree nor disagree”).

Originally written in the third POV, the same selection is once again converted into a version that is written in the first POV. These two versions were read by the two groups of respondents (Group A and C) and the means of their answers for the questions measuring their character identification are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Immediacy perception of readers for the story read in the 3rd and 1st POV

Survey Question	3rd POV		1st POV	
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
While reading the story, I felt as if I was part of the action.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
While reading the story, I forgot myself and was fully absorbed.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I was able to understand the events in the story in a manner similar to that in which the characters understood them.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I think I have a good understanding of the main character.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I tend to understand the reasons why the character does what he or she does.	5	Somewhat agree	6	Agree
While reading the story, I could feel the emotions the characters portrayed.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
During reading, I felt I could really get inside the character's head.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
At key moments in the story, I felt I knew exactly what the characters were going through.	5	Somewhat agree	6	Agree
While reading the story, I wanted the character to succeed in achieving his or her goals.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
When the character succeeded, I felt joy, but when he or she failed, I was sad.	5	Somewhat agree	6	Agree

In both groups of readers, their responses are averagely between 5 and 6 only (“Agree” and “Somewhat Agree”). This implies that the story, either written in the third or first POV, made the readers relate to the character as well as with the events that are happening in the story. It can also be noted that all items got a 5 mean rating from the group who read the story in its third POV version. Although it is yet to be proven by inferential statistics, it can slightly be observed that the readers can relate to the character a little more when the narrative was in the first POV.

When asked to describe the extent to which the readers (Group A and B) relate to the characters, the readers were first asked to read the same literary selection that are in its original past form and a transposed version that is in the present tense (see Table 3).

Table 3. Character identification of readers for the story read in the past and present tense

Survey Question	Past Tense		Present Tense	
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
While I was reading the narrative, I could easily picture the events in it taking place.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
While I was reading the narrative, activity going on in the room around me was out of my mind.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I could picture myself in the scene of the events described in the narrative.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
I was mentally involved in the narrative while reading it.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
After finishing the narrative, I found it difficult to put it out of my mind.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
The narrative affected me emotionally.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
I found myself thinking of ways the narrative could have turned out differently.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
I found my mind focused while reading the narrative.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
The events in the narrative are relevant to my everyday life.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree
The events in the narrative have changed my life.	6	Agree	5	Somewhat agree

While those who read the original version of the story garnered a majority of responses that indicates that they relate to the character, the readers who were introduced to the version of the story in the present tense found it a little less relatable. Interestingly, this denotes that verb tenses in a story does nothing to boost readers' character identification.

Lastly, the story in its original form written in the third POV and its version converted to the first POV were introduce to the participants (Group A and C) to determine if narrative viewpoint has an effect on the readers' character identification (see Table 4).

Table 4. Character identification of readers for the story read in the 3rd and 1st POV

Survey Question	3rd POV		1st POV	
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
While reading the story, I felt as if I was part of the action.	5	Somewhat agree	6	Agree
While reading the story, I forgot myself and was fully absorbed.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I was able to understand the events in the story in a manner similar to that in which the characters understood them.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I think I have a good understanding of the main character.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
I tend to understand the reasons why the character does what he or she does.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
While reading the story, I could feel the emotions the characters portrayed.	4	Neither agree nor disagree	5	Somewhat agree
During reading, I felt I could really get inside the character's head.	5	Somewhat agree	6	Agree
At key moments in the story, I felt I knew exactly what the characters were going through.	5	Somewhat agree	5	Somewhat agree
While reading the story, I wanted the character to succeed in achieving his or her goals.	4	Neither agree nor disagree	5	Somewhat agree
When the character succeeded, I felt joy, but when he or she failed, I was sad.	4	Neither agree nor disagree	5	Somewhat agree

Data shows that the readers from Group A are quite unsure as to the extent of their character identification after reading the story in the third POV. Interestingly, the measure of character identification slightly improved among the readers from Group C who read the selection converted into the first POV narration. This states that narrative viewpoint has a slight statistical effect on the character identification of the readers.

To determine whether the scores for immediacy perception and character identification follows a normal distribution, Shapiro-Wilk test of normality is conducted. For the tense group, immediacy perception had a Shapiro-Wilk $W = 0.894$ with $p < .001$, and character identification had a $W = 0.845$ with $p < .001$. Likewise, in the POV group, immediacy perception had a $W = 0.953$, $p < .001$, and character identification had a $W = 0.913$, $p < .001$. Since all the p-values were less than 0.05 significance level, the null hypotheses of normality were rejected for all the variables which is an indication that data were not normally distributed.

Table 5. Test of normality

Variable		W (Shapiro-Wilk)	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Immediacy Perception	Tense	0.894	<.001	Reject Ho	Not Normally Distributed
Character Identification		0.845	<.001	Reject Ho	Not Normally Distributed
Immediacy Perception	POV	0.953	<.001	Reject Ho	Not Normally Distributed
Character Identification		0.913	<.001	Reject Ho	Not Normally Distributed

Due to normality assumption being violated, Mann–Whitney U tests were conducted to investigate the differences in literary perceptions by tense and point of view. The Mann–Whitney U test is a nonparametric statistical procedure for comparing two independent samples when underlying assumptions for parametrical procedures, such as the independent samples t-test, are violated.

Table 6. Difference in literary perceptions according to tense and point of view

Variable	Comparison	U-statistic	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Immediacy Perception	Past Tense and Present Tense	587	0.081	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Character Identification		589	0.085	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Immediacy Perception	1st POV and 3rd POV	1241	0.191	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Character Identification		1453	1.000	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 6 shows the results of the Mann–Whitney U test comparing the immediacy perception and character identification in accordance to tense and point of view. Regarding tense, immediacy perception (past tense, present tense group) was $U = 587$, $p = 0.081$ and character identification was $U = 589$, $p = 0.085$. Since both p-values are more than 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that there were no significant differences in respondents' immediacy perception and character identification between narratives written in the past tense and narratives written in the present tense.

Similarly, when comparing first-person POV with third-person POV narratives, immediacy perception yielded a $U = 1241$, $p = 0.191$ while character identification yielded a $U = 1453$ and $p = 1.000$. Both p-values exceeded

the 0.05 level of significance threshold resulting in the null hypothesis being retained. This means that there were no significant differences in the immediacy perception and character identification even when narratives are written either in 1st or 3rd POV.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the differences in tenses and narrative point of views do not significantly affect the readers' literary perception. Comparable levels of immediacy perception and character identification can be attained by the readers even when the narratives are written in past or present tense, or in a first-person or third-person perspective. This suggests that there are other factors to be considered when dealing with literary perceptions. Literary features such as characterization, plot development or style might be of greater influence on reader's literary perception and might be taken into consideration.

CONCLUSION

Findings revealed that neither verb tense nor point of view has no significant effect on the readers' immediacy perception and character identification. The lack of relationship between and among the four study variables has proven that the grammar aspects mentioned are not relevant in the decision making when writing literature as well as on their intended temporal effect to the readers. Makenzie (2024), Genette (1980), and Perry (1965) all forwarded that making sense in time is essential in literary reading and understanding. However, none of these solidifies the role of verb tenses in achieving such intention. Similarly, Nasir (2020) and Paton (2026) emphasized that eliciting reader emotions is part of literature reading and writing, and again, the utilization of varied perspectives in the narration was not the effective mechanism to do so. These bodies of literature are backed up by this study's findings. For instance, a story written and set during the time of William Shakespeare will not feel recent even if it was written in the present tense. Similarly, a reader will not relate to the character of a story even when written in the first point of view. The story's setting and characterization are still seen as the prominent contributing factor to a readers' immediacy perception and character identification regardless of the narrative's tense and POV.

Implications

For the teachers of Contemporary Literature, it should be well noted that the two aforementioned grammar aspects of literary reading have no significant effect on the readers' temporal understanding of narrative texts. Although grammar in literature still plays a vital role in making stories have an emotional impact, other elements aside from the two may be explored. Although previous studies claimed that verb tense and point of view impact immediacy perception and character identification, an experimental approach with statistical analysis done in this study has proven otherwise. Specifically, authors who are about to write stories with the intention of affecting their readers' temporal understanding may remove verb tense and POV out of consideration. Writers may freely choose to write their stories in the past or present tense or first or third point of view and let the other literary elements illustrate the their intended temporal impact. Future researchers who will venture into a similar study that observes a comparable set of variables should broaden their samples' scope. A variety of literary texts to be read by the respondents in varying forms could also promote a better transferability of findings, achieving a more consistent result that may lead to a solid theory development or refinement.

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