# Development and validation of an audiobook in Afro-Asian literature

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*Abstract*

*This study developed and validated an audiobook in Afro-Asian literature for Grade 8 students in one of the public schools in Magalang, Pampanga, Philippines. The development of the audiobook involved the selection of the literary pieces based on the Department of Education's Grade 8 learner's module. The audiobook was evaluated as essential by 10 experts using the Evaluation Instrument for DE and ODeL provided by the Graduate Studies of Pampanga State Agricultural University. Twenty literary pieces were audio-recorded. Using the computer, recording sets and audacity software, each literary piece was audio-recorded and converted into mp3 format with cover photo then uploaded in Google drive which was sent to the second and third experts for validation. The validators used the evaluation sheet for audiobook quality and the evaluation sheet for technical/technological factors, accordingly. The developed audiobook underwent two revisions before it came up with a valid output as all the indicators or criteria were met based on the results of the final validation. Based on the aforementioned findings and conclusions, it is highly recommended that the developed and validated audiobook may be used for field testing by future researchers to attest its effectiveness in reading development. Furthermore, the audiobook may be adopted by the Department of Education (DepEd) Pampanga as a supplemental material for Grade 8 English students, specifically struggling readers during the distance learning.*

Keywords: developed and validated; audiobook; Afro-Asian literature

## Introduction

Technological advancements have altered the modern world over the last few decades. The advancement and spread of technology have made teaching and learning more meaningful, particularly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The new normal education's demands and challenges have significantly changed the education system by

urging teachers to look for electronic ways to do the jobs that lectures and textbooks used to do. Developing expertise in the use of technology in teaching and learning has become critical, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As to reading, it is a skill that is vital for academic success. It is one of the essential skills that anybody should be able to learn. It is required in all learning areas. It serves as a gateway for all students to pursue various courses (Sanopao, 2016). Kusumawanti and Bharati (2018) explained that among English proficiencies, reading has the primary role for students' learning success since overall activities of learning are started with and developed by the reading activity.

However, in a 2018 global study called Program for International Assessment (PISA) that included 600,000 students globally, Filipino learners around the age of 15 received a reading comprehension grade of 340 points, which was lower than the average of 487 points. As a result, the Philippines ranked last out of 79 nations in the research, as mentioned above (Manaog, 2020). With this case, the DepEd has launched the *Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa* (3Bs Initiatives) to intensify the advocacy for reading and by pledging commitment to make every learner a reader at his/her grade level (Tomas et al., 2021). However, during the coronavirus pandemic, students worldwide shifted from the classroom to remote, online learning (Benson, 2020).

According to a study from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2021), the number of children lacking basic reading skills was on a downward curve even before the pandemic. In 2020, instead of 460 million children experiencing reading difficulties, that number jumped to 584 million.

With this, the Department of Education (DepEd) ensures the continuity of learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic through Modular Distance Learning (MDL). Learners use self-learning modules (SLM) based on the K-12 Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS) provided by the DepEd (Gonzales, 2021). It is a difficult task for both teachers and students, particularly in reading development (Mataac, 2021). Students must work more autonomously in distance learning than they are used to, so teachers need to adjust how to help the learners read instructional texts (Ferguson, 2020).

However, reading is not a pleasurable activity for struggling readers. Readers who dislike reading do not commit enough time to build the requisite comprehension skills for success on high school equivalency exams or other academic programs (Wagar, 2016). According to a study published in Technology Tools to Support Reading in the Digital Age, technology may be used in various ways for different types of learners. A struggling reader or disabled learner can hear a story read aloud to them (Lynch, 2018). The use of audiobooks, an underappreciated technology and misused in the schoolroom, is one

technique for bridging the gaps (Moore & Cahill, 2016). On the other hand, MP3/MP4 players, mobile phones, and other similar devices are particularly intriguing to young adult readers (12 and up) who are enthusiastic about new educational and communication technology. Audiobooks stimulate their imagination while also strengthening their speech communication and writing skills at this age (Winkelman, 2021).

Several studies have proven that comprehension skills transcend modality, meaning that the process of comprehending and keeping knowledge is the same whether the information is read or heard on a cognitive level. They claim the same thing with non-linguistic modalities in silent film or cartoon sequences, where participants would understand the same story as if they told it verbally. Experiments revealed that they remembered and forgot the same components (Rogowsky et al., 2016). Dana Lee (2018) also agrees that "reading a physical book and listening to an audiobook are two distinct ways of getting to the same place."

In the study of James (2015), findings revealed that audiobooks can assist respondents enhance their reading comprehension skills, engage reluctant readers, and develop their self-perception as readers. The findings also imply that audiobooks' full potential can be realized when they are combined with effective tactics like collaborative learning, ICT integration, and a communicative approach. Also, the study conducted by Zeat (2022) highlighted that EFL university students believe audio books can be a useful teaching tool to employ in class and as an out-of-class assignment to test their reading fluency learning process (Marpa, 2021).

Relevant to this, in the study of Kartal and Simsek (2017), the data indicated that utilizing audiobooks improved pupils' listening comprehension skills. The survey data analysis revealed that audiobooks improved participants' listening comprehension, pronunciation, and motivation. Additionally, by listening to audiobooks, the importance of prosody and phonological awareness in the native language and a foreign language can effectively use the reader's 'inner speech' or inner voice to facilitate reading fluency. The audiobook supports and scaffolds the reading process as the student develops into a more competent reader (Schmitt, 2020).

Moreover, a qualitative analysis conducted by Anisah (2018) and Tusmagambet (2020) discovered that the usage of audiobooks had a favorable overall influence on students' views regarding the use of audiobooks and reading. Similarly, Rahman and Hajar's (2020) study showed that students are interested in audiobooks because they are stimulating, challenging, available, powerful, and innovative in the reading activity.

Furthermore, a local study conducted by Adriano et al. (2018) promotes Philippine Folktales for elementary pupils with poor interest and attitude towards reading folktales

through a different approach using an audiobook. Explaining the connection between reading and listening, Belastock (2019) highlighted that 85% of what students learn is by hearing, and students can listen and comprehend two grade levels above their reading levels. Reading while listening improves comprehension by 76%, and simultaneously listening increases reading accuracy by 52%. Hence, one of the most effective strategies to assist struggling readers in developing an ear for language is reading aloud - a form of modeling where learners can derive meaning from someone else's language and tone when reading a material (Bennett, 2019). Ear-reading can substantially reduce reading barriers and human-narrated audiobooks do generate stories that come to life for the students. Tragant and Vallbona (2018) also affirm that the reading-while-listening mode seems to contribute positively to the students' perceptions and level of engagement when reading in English.

De la Rosa (2020) stated that individuals' learning habits impact class efficiency, even in online classrooms. Listening to a teacher and participating in group discussions is better for auditory/verbal learners. They thrive in interactive surroundings and recall things by repeating them aloud. When listening to a lecture or audio recordings of a class, auditory learners prefer the sound to reinforce what they are learning (Cuizon, 2020). Lastly, listening to a book as a family, whether while doing other things or as a bedtime story, is essential to get books into the house. Significantly, this will assist families where the parents themselves have difficulty reading or lack confidence in reading to their children (Clark & Picton, 2018). Paramount with the content, the narrator's voice, characters' voices, pacing and enunciation, and continuity make a good audiobook. Its special feature could be a spot-on accent or could be an excellent use of music or sound effects within a series as factors in making an audiobook great (Collier, 2018).

**Audiobook**

Audiobooks are audio recordings of a text of a book that a student listens to instead of reading. Audiobooks might be word-for-word transcripts or abbreviated versions of books. Any smartphone, home speaker system, tablet, computer, or in-car entertainment system may play audiobooks (Harris, 2020).

Additionally, these are valuable resources for teachers who have students with learning disabilities. Even children without learning disabilities benefit from the audiobooks since they reinforce the messages in the text contents, allowing for deeper reading comprehension. Audiobooks also assist children in learning words and comprehending the composition they form without the need to decode letters and sounds. It is also more comfortable as spoken language is the first kind of communication learners acquire. As a result, it stands to reason that some children are less agitated and can hear registers better than others (Garcia-Bulle, 2019).

While engaged in other activities, such as traveling or housekeeping, learners can listen to an audiobook. This practicality of consumption, combined with the accessibility provided when there is no need to decode the book's words on the page, appears to be the dominant discourse on audiobooks among publishers, authors, and media, many of whom have written defenses of audiobooks eloquently as a medium. Removing the barriers to reading that can arise, such as weary eyes or trouble deciphering the written text, allows the consumer to access a better number and variety of texts (Watt, 2017).

However, the audiobook, sometimes known as an "a-book," has been criticized as a literary shortcut. Studies claimed that it is convenient to avoid seriously understanding a work, although this reproach has not diminished the audience's enthusiasm (Kilduff, 2020).

**Advantages of the audiobook as a learning material**

Teachers of second-language learners, learning-disabled students, and struggling readers or nonreaders have long used audiobooks in the classroom. Audiobooks have shown to be a successful approach for these students to acquire literature and enjoy books in many circumstances. However, they have not been widely embraced by readers who are ordinary, passionate, or brilliant (Johnson, 2021).

Audiobooks are also learning tools that, like written content, may be carried anywhere on a mobile device and consumed at any time. They also have the benefit of storing a large number of books on a single device, which makes them handier. While audiobooks do not have the same retention capacity as printed books, repetition through hearing improves recall. It allows students to obtain material outside the classroom as often as they desire (Garcia-Bulle, 2019).

Additionally, improved fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and confidence are a few advantages that emergent readers enjoy. Students will not benefit from audiobooks' advantages if society continues to look down on narrated literature (Waite, 2018).

Audiobooks inspire higher levels of emotional engagement than surrealistic encounters of the same narrative. Subjects in a 2018 study conducted by University College London's (UCL) Experimental Psychology department were exposed to audio and video adaptations of various popular novels from genres, starting with *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1887) to *The Girl on the Train* (2015). Subjects were asked questions about their degrees of engagement after listening and watching each of these. Still, their physiological responses were also recorded, including heart rate (related to information processing) and body temperature (related to emotional arousal) to assess less conscious types of engagement.

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While the participants thought the videos were more entertaining than the audiobooks, their physiological changes indicated more involvement than the films (Richardson et al., 2018).

Given this, educators must help struggling readers and those with learning difficulties discover a bridge to content while teaching lower-level reading skills. Many educators employ an organized literacy program evidence-based, although this takes time, sometimes one or two years. Students struggling to read can comprehend beyond their capacity to read, just as any young child can. They seek a tool that will assist them in automating the decoding process and reinforcing skill development in lower-level reading processes. Access to human-read audiobooks can also be a reliable strategy for keeping both processes — comprehension and cognition — simultaneously (Ali, 2018).

On another angle, some people complain that audiobooks are undermining traditional literature. Their protestations, however, are pointless. Audiobooks come in a variety of formats, much like printed books. It is not in vain to point out that audiobooks have some additional advantages. Students pay attention and pick up new vocabulary. Students who wish to be authors would benefit much from audiobooks (Reily, 2019). Audiobooks intend to make listeners feel the words. They evoke emotion by utilizing a tone of voice that brings the dish to life (Bolaños, 2020).

**Audiobook for distance education**

Families and educators are refining at home instructional reading practices as they adjust to life in the world of distance learning—especially for learners who struggle with reading comprehension (Oczkus, 2020). In recent years, technology integration has been at the top of most K-12 school and district goals. Still, with the unanticipated shift to remote learning, technology's position in K-12 education has evolved dramatically. Technology integration is used in traditional classrooms to enhance and modify teaching and curriculum, and it plays a supporting function in conventional instruction. However, in this new instructional environment, technology plays a very different purpose in distance learning. Technology has become crucial in the distant classroom, rather than supporting, improving, and revolutionizing education. Instruction is now possible due to technological advancements (Leustig, 2020).

Compared to traditional in-person learning environments, distance learning environments necessitate higher student motivation, discipline, and focus. Students may find it challenging to stay interested for a variety of reasons. The subject could be too complicated or not hard enough; they could be distracted by other stimuli; they could feel separated from their teacher and classmates, and the topic could be inaccessible. Students also participate in various ways, and not every student's participation will be the same. Teachers have an immense influence on student engagement by rethinking and adapting

learning experiences for the remote learning context to meet the needs of all students (Herburger & Sacco, 2020).

In addition, audiobooks can help struggling readers in a remote learning setting if combined with characteristics that make it easier to absorb and appreciate the information. The freedom that distance learning provides students is one of its advantages. They can learn not just from schools worldwide, but they may also do it at their own pace. Over two-thirds of respondents (63%), according to the study, prefer online education because it allows them to balance job and family obligations (Guta, 2020). Further, audiobooks are a great form of entertainment since they let learners listen to stories whenever and wherever they want. Audiobooks are beneficial to the brain and have numerous cognitive benefits, ranging from increased reading comprehension to a wide-ranging vocabulary (Sachs, 2020).

Given the demands of online learning, people should embrace technology as a delivery mechanism for literature rather than competing. Unlike previous formats such as bulky books-on-tape or books-on-CD, audiobooks are more mobile and accessible than ever before. New York Times bestsellers are just a headphone cord away for a fraction of the price of a hardback book for smartphone users. Despite the ease and portability of audiobooks, many individuals are still hesitant to brag about the titles they have heard. The traditional method of consuming literature looks to be reading a text or even an e-book (Waite, 2018).

**Afro-Asian Literature**

The K-12 Program's eighth-grade English curriculum predominantly focuses on African-Asian or Afro-Asian literature (Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, 2012). Students in the eighth grade should have an "understanding of the diverse genres through the types offered by Afro-Asian countries to show appreciation for Afro-Asian heritage" by the end of the first quarter (Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, 2012, p. 34). The learners will be exposed to Asian and African cultures through literature as a result of this.

The literature study falls into two categories: straightforward enjoyment and admiration and analysis and description. Students are required to display communicative competence and multiliteracies by the end of the school year through their comprehension of Afro-Asian literature and other text types to grasp Afro-Asian culture better. People of mixed African-Arab or African-Asian heritage write Afro-Asian literature. African and Arab countries such as South Africa, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and India, as well as Asian countries such as North and South Korea, Japan, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines are among them (Be, 2016).

Afro-Asian literature reflects the cultures and traditions of African and Asian cultures and their philosophy of life, which are typically meditative and hauntingly attractive. Afro-Asian literature reflects the disruption and tension of developing countries seeking success. Every student must comprehend how this literature influences a nation's history and culture. Simply put, Afro-Asian literature is the literary output of Africa and Asia's many countries and civilizations. It comprises oral traditions and written and published prose and poetry from the beginning to the present (Acut, 2021).

Hence, educators who are teaching Afro-Asian literature must consider the learners' reading comprehension abilities. Aside from decoding, one of the aims of reading literature, according to Concannon-Gibney and Murphy (2012), is comprehension. The ability to improve a student's reading comprehension determines the effectiveness of a teacher's approach. Language and literature teachers, on the other hand, have several issues. These concerns differ from one situation to the next and change as the learners' needs change. According to Musa (2007), students in the Asian environment are deficient in literary comprehension and analytical skills because the literature materials are too difficult for the students to understand.

Moreover, the level of English reading comprehension among university students in Japan has been "steadily declining" (Nishida, 2013). In the Philippines, one out of every four people cannot read English (Social Weather Stations, 2008). Furthermore, according to a classroom analysis by Protacio and Sarroub (2013), being an effective reader in a Philippine classroom is more about fluency than comprehension.

**Purpose of the research**

In the face-to-face educational setting, audiobooks are less accessible because of libraries' lack of gadgets and technology, specifically audio player and audio recording sets. However, personal devices became affordable and accessible during distance learning. Instruction is now possible due to technological advancements (Kahill & Moore, 2017; Leustig, 2020). Educators must help struggling readers and those with learning difficulties. This tool will assist in automating the decoding process and reinforcing skill development in lower-level reading processes. As proven from cited studies, access to human-read audiobooks can be a reliable strategy for keeping both processes — comprehension and cognition — simultaneously (Ali, 2018).

The aforementioned studies have proven the effectiveness of an audiobook as an instructional material to improve reading skills. It is a tool that has been reported to be convenient and can easily be accessed by the learners during the pandemic. Since audiobooks are not yet available and accessible in the Division of Pampanga, particularly in Grade 8 English, the researcher aims to develop and validate an audiobook as an instructional material in Afro-Asian literature.

**Theoretical Framework of the Study**

This study is anchored to Clark and Paivio's (1991) foundational work on Dual Coding Theory (DCT) which describes human actions regarding how cognitive processes function on the modalities of verbal and nonverbal representations. According to DCT, the imaging system integrates many items into a single integrated image which aids in the learning of new content. Mueller (1980) also suggested that a single-mode method is sufficient for high proficiency learners, but dual-coded content assists poor achievers in filling gaps in previously learned information. To this end, it has long been recognized that image creation and visuals may improve text comprehension. Parallel actions of reading with a listening event, often called RWL, have been stated to produce one's previous knowledge of listening to itself. According to Chang (2006), integrating both input modalities through Reading-While-Listening (RWL) was discovered to help students be familiar with the natural flow of the target language and, most importantly, encourage text chunking for improved learning. RWL has used spoken materials such as conversations, tales, lectures, and movies to improve both reading and listening comprehension on these grounds. Because literature is dual coded as instructive assistance, the researcher employed Afro-Asian literature as the listening material in this study.

**Conceptual Framework of the Study**

This study utilized Paivio's (1986) Dual Coding theory model. The combination of textual and auditory data assists the reading process, resulting in greater comprehension, fluency, and maximizing readers' learning potential. In this study, selections from Afro-Asian Literature from the DepEd Grade 8 English Learner's Module were audio-recorded as a material for listening input.

**Methodology**

This study utilized the quantitative research method, which involves the process of gathering and evaluating numerical data. It was used to look for patterns and averages, make predictions, assess causal links, and extrapolate results from larger groups. It can be utilized to understand a subject in-depth or to develop fresh research ideas (Bhandari, 2021). Mainly, this study is a developmental research design, a systematic study of the invention, development, and evaluation of programs, processes, and learning products that need to meet validity, practicality, and effectiveness criteria (Richey & Klein, 2014). It is congruent with the aim of this research which is to develop and validate an audiobook in Afro-Asian literature.

**Participants of the Study**

The researcher selected three sets of validators. The first set of experts was composed of ten (10) secondary school teachers from different schools in the Division of Pampanga.

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They were master's degree holders with a minimum of three years in service, and they were asked to evaluate the list of literary pieces to be included in the audiobook. The second set of validators who validated the audiobook recording based on quality was composed of five experts: four panel members and one master teacher. Lastly, the third set of validators composed of five Information Communication Technology (ICT) experts validated the developed audiobook based on technical/technological factors. The second and third sets of validators mentioned were from different schools in Pampanga, and master's or doctorate degree holders with at least five years of teaching experience.

**Research Instruments**

Three sets of evaluation instruments were used in this study. The first instrument was provided by Pampanga State Agricultural University (PSAU) - College of Education to evaluate topics to be included in the audiobook. It has sections for the evaluator's name, subject expertise, and the list of topics to be included in the audiobook. It also has a column where validators have to put a checkmark corresponding to their response. To interpret the score, the Lawshe Table for minimum values of content validity ratio was used with the formula: $CVR = [E-(N/2)/(N/2)]$. Since the number of respondents was ten (10), the minimum values should be 0.6 and above to be considered essential. On the other hand, the values 0.4 and below are considered not essential.

The second instrument was the evaluation sheet for the audiobook. It was made by the researcher with inputs from Macahilig (2020) and Esgunn (2021) and approved by the panel members. It was used by the second set of validators. It has sections for the name of the evaluator, position, highest educational attainment, and the five criteria: 1) Pronunciation, 2) Tone, 3) Clarity, 4) Fluency, and 5) Voice Animation. Lastly, the third evaluation instrument contains the technical/technological factors from the DE/ODeL evaluation instrument. It includes the name of the validator, position, highest educational attainment, and the five technical descriptions of the audiobook. The second and third instruments mentioned also consist of yes/no columns where the validators have to put a checkmark corresponding to their response.

**Results and Discussion**

The development of the researcher-made audiobook in Afro-Asian literature underwent three stages: Gathering Preliminary Data, Development of the Audiobook, and Validation of the Audiobook. The DepEd Grade 8 Learner's Module was the sole reference for the audio-recorded narration of literary pieces. The researcher used the Evaluation Instrument and Rating Sheet for DE and ODeL provided by the College of Education-Graduate Studies of Pampanga State Agricultural University with a checklist validation sheet of essential and non-essential topics. The researcher chose 24 literary topics from First to Fourth Quarter to be evaluated by the first set of experts. After identifying the essential

topics to be included in the audiobook, recording the audio-narrated literary pieces was done by the researcher in a closed and noise-free room. Computers, recording sets, and audacity software were used in developing the audiobook. The audacity software was particularly used to edit and add music to the audio-recorded narrations. The developed audiobook was then distributed to the second and third experts through the Google drive link. After the initial validation of the material in terms of quality, two validators answered 'no' regarding pronunciation, and one validator answered 'no' concerning the tone, clarity, fluency, and voice animation. Particularly, one validator commented that two samples have very long pauses which make them not exciting to listen to. So, necessary revisions were made by the researcher based on the experts' suggestions and comments, then requested for the second validation. The second validation revealed that all the descriptions in terms of the audio-recording quality garnered 'yes' except for the pronunciation. With this, revisions were done by the researcher for the second time. After the third and final validation, all descriptions from the audiobook quality garnered 'yes' response from all the validators.

**Table 1.** Development of an Audiobook in Afro-Asian Literature

| Stages | Description |
|---|---|
| A. *Gathering of Preliminary Data* | ▪ *Gathering of Afro-Asian literary pieces to be included in the audiobook based on the DepEd Grade 8 learner's module*<br>▪ *Evaluation of the essential and non-essential topics through the instrument from the institution*<br>▪ *Identification of the essential topics to be included in the audiobook based on the content validity ratio result from the first evaluation* |
| B. *Development* | ▪ *Recording of the audio-narrated Afro-Asian literature pieces using the computer, recording set, and audacity software* |
| C. *Validation* | ▪ *Validation of the audiobook by sending the audio-recorded narrations to the validators through the use of Google drive link*<br>▪ *Editing and revisions of the audiobook based on the first and second evaluations were made* |

Meanwhile, the developed audiobook obtained 'yes' response from all the validators from the initial validation on technical/technological factors. Therefore, no necessary revision was made. The development and validation of an audiobook in Afro-Asian

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literature were done after all the sets of experts answered "yes" in the evaluation instruments. This process was congruent with the simplified Research and Development (R&D) methods by Febriana (2016). The R&D, in the previous studies, was used to develop and validate educational products which consist of studying the research findings related to the product to be developed, developing the product based on these findings, and revising it to correct deficiencies until the product meets defined objectives.

**Table 2.** Content validity ratio of the number of respondents indicating "Essential"

| Literary Pieces | Number of Respondents indicating Essential | Lawshe | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | N | CVR | |
| 1. *The Hands of the Blacks* by Louis Bernardo Honwana | 9 | 0.8 | *Retained* |
| 2. *I am an African Child* by Eku McGred | 9 | 0.8 | *Retained* |
| 3. *The Soul of the Great Bell* by LafcadioHearn | 10 | 1 | *Retained* |
| 4. *The Story of the Aged Mother* by Matsuo Basho | 10 | 1 | *Retained* |
| 5. *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam* | 8 | 0.6 | *Retained* |
| 6. *Tiki Tiki Tembo,* a Chinese Folktale | 4 | -0.2 | *Removed* |
| 7. *Makato and the Cowrie Shell* by Supannee Kanchanathiti | 9 | 0.8 | *Retained* |
| 8. *The Two Brothers,* an Egyptian Folktale | 10 | 1 | *Retained* |
| 9. *Outwitting a Crocodile,* retold by Chok Yoon Foo | 8 | 0.6 | *Retained* |
| 10. *Batu Belah Batu Bertangkup (The Devouring Rock),* a Famous Malay Folktale | 6 | 0.2 | *Removed* |
| 11. *The Legend of Banyuwangi,* an Indonesian Folktale | 9 | 0.8 | *Retained* |
| 12. *The Peasant, the Buffalo, and the Tiger: A Tale of Strength and Wisdom,* a Story from Vietnam | 7 | 0.4 | *Removed* |
| 13. *Vision* by Feraya | 10 | 1 | *Retained* |
| 14. *Alibaba and the Forty Thieves* | 10 | 1 | *Retained* |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15. | *On Fatalism* by *The Holy Imam Shafay* | 7 | 0.4 | *Removed* |
| 16. | *African Plea* by Roland Tombekai Dempster | 10 | 1 | *Retained* |
| 17. | *Escape from Slavery* by Francis Bok with Edward Tivman | 7 | 0.4 | *Removed* |
| 18. | *The Capture* by Alex Haley | 7 | 0.4 | *Removed* |
| 19. | *Africa* by David Diop | 10 | 1 | *Retained* |
| 20. | *The Wonder Tree*, an Arabian Folktale | 9 | 0.8 | *Retained* |
| 21. | *The Women in Black* | 8 | 0.6 | *Retained* |
| 22. | *The Wonderful Pear Tree* | 7 | 0.4 | *Removed* |
| 23. | *A Glimpse of Africa* by Mary Penick Motley | 7 | 0.4 | *Removed* |
| 24. | *Why Frogs Cry in the Rain* by Kris Lee | 8 | 0.6 | *Retained* |
| | **n=10** | | | |

Table 2 shows that the 24 literary pieces included in the audiobook were evaluated by the 10 English teachers. To interpret the score, the Lawshe Table for minimum values of content validity ratio was used with the formula: CVR = [E-(N/2)/ (N/2)]. The Lawshe (1975) CVR is an item statistic useful in rejecting or retaining specific items. After the items were identified for inclusion in the final form, the content validity index (CVI) was computed for the whole test. The CVI is simply the mean of the CVR values of the retained items. Since the number of respondents was ten (10), the minimum values should be 0.6 and above to be considered essential. On the other hand, the values 0.4 and below are considered not essential. As a result, the evaluators described the 16 literary topics as essential and obtained the Lawshe minimum values of Content Validity Ratio (CVR), which is 0.6 and above. These topics were: *The Hands of the Blacks* by Louis Bernardo Honwana, *I am an African Child* by Eku McGred, *The Soul of the Great Bell* by LafcadioHearn, *The Story of the Aged Mother* by Matsuo Basho, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, Makato and the Cowrie Shell* by Supanee Kanchanathiti, *The Two Brothers, Outwitting a Crocodile* retold by Chok Yoon Foo, *The Legend of Banyuwangi, Vision* by Feraya, *Alibaba and the Forty Thieves, African Plea* by Roland Tombekai Dempster, *Africa* by David Diop, *The Wonder Tree, The Women in Black, and Why Frogs Cry in the Rain* by Kris Lee.

On the other hand, topics including *Tiki Tiki Tembo, Batu Belah Batu Bertangkup (The Devouring Rock), The Peasant, the Buffalo, and the Tiger: A Tale of Strength and Wisdom, On Fatalism, Escape from Slavery* by Francis Bok with Edward Tivman, *The Capture* by Alex Haley, *The Wonderful Pear Tree, and A Glimpse of Africa* by Mary Penick Motley did not meet

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the Lawshe minimum values of Content Validity Ratio and obtained 0.4 and below. Hence, they were interpreted as not essential. In addition, the evaluators suggested four literary topics: *The Tale of Chunhyang, The Singa, The Tale of the Woodcutter and the Tiger, and The Story of Ruth* to be included in the audiobook. Therefore, the 20 literary pieces were needed to be included in the developed audiobook in Afro-Asian literature.

**Table 3.** Validation of the audiobook recording in Afro-Asian Literature in terms of quality

| Description/s | Evaluation | | | | | |
| | First | | Second | | Third | |
| | Yes | % | Yes | % | Yes | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Pronunciation**<br>*The recording is delivered smoothly, and all words are pronounced correctly.* | 3 | 60 | 4 | 80 | 5 | 100 |
| **2. Tone**<br>*The tone is consistently focused, clear, and centered throughout the range of voice.* | 4 | 80 | 5 | 100 | 5 | 100 |
| **3. Clarity**<br>*The voice is clear and easy to understand. The recording is free from any unnecessary background noise.* | 4 | 80 | 5 | 100 | 5 | 100 |
| **4. Fluency**<br>*The selections are read at an appropriate speed and with natural phrasing and proper intonation.* | 4 | 80 | 5 | 100 | 5 | 100 |
| **5. Voice Animation**<br>*The voice recording is entertaining and animated. It includes voice changes for different characters if present or when necessary.* | 4 | 80 | 5 | 100 | 5 | 100 |
| **n=5** | | | | | | |

Table 3 revealed that on the initial validation of the audiobook quality, two validators answered "no"' in pronunciation, and one validator answered "no" in terms of tone, clarity, fluency, and voice animation. One of the validators also suggested slowing down the pace of one selection and improving the background music and varies the tempo according to the tone of the line and to indicate climactic effect especially in the following lines: *The blood of your sweat, the sweat of your work, the work of your slavery, the slavery of your children.* Another validator also commented that the two samples have very long pauses which make them not exciting to listen to. These led the researcher to revise and record the audio narration of literary pieces based on the comments and suggestions of the validators. Then, the researcher requested for a second validation of the audio material from the

experts. After the second validation, one validator answered "no" in pronunciation, and all five experts responded "yes" to the audiobook's tone, clarity, fluency, and voice animation. Words such as *despotic, magpie, Hearn, strength, towards, cometh, anger, plowed, summoned, baloney, calloused, lo, ancestors, Singa, tedious, Ruth, handkerchief, customary, plateau*, etc. were still mispronounced. Hence, the needed revisions of the audiobook in terms of pronunciation were made by the researcher. The third validation was requested thereafter. Finally, all the descriptions from the evaluation sheet for audiobook recording obtained "yes" from the five experts after the third and last validation. Therefore, the developed audiobook attained the desired rating concerning the quality of audiobook recording. The finding implies that the developed audiobook is congruent with the findings of Cahill and Moore (2017). They affirm that a narrator creates a good audiobook in terms of tone, voice, and emphasis. Pace communicates meaning in the same way that speech displays sense. The narrator's pauses, like the words, convey meaning. The narration must flow with the rhythm of the action in the text. Also, audiobooks include music and other sound components in addition to the narration of the text. The purpose of background music in audiobooks is to enhance the mood connected with the story or information presented.

**Table 4.** Validation of the audiobook in Afro-Asian Literature in terms of technical/technological factors

| Description/s | First Evaluation | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Yes | % |
| 1. Use of the audiobook does not require equipment or applications beyond what is typically available to the students (e.g., operating systems, browsers, application software) | 5 | 100 |
| 2. The audiobook can be accessed by students either through the internet (online) or offline by providing them both hard and electronic copies (from CD, flash drive, and other modes of transferring files) | 5 | 100 |
| 3. The audiobook can be embedded or fully integrated into a Learning Management System for wide dissemination and accessibility | 5 | 100 |
| 4. The audiobook has a user-friendly interface and navigational tools that even novice users can easily follow | 5 | 100 |
| 5. The audiobook volume is good, there is no background or other distracting noise, and there are no technical glitches | 5 | 100 |
| | n=5 | |

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Table 4 illustrates that the initial validation of the audiobook in terms of technical/technological factors garnered "yes" from the five ICT experts. This means that no revision was needed in the developed audiobook.  The agreement of all the validators with the descriptions under the technical/technological factors implies that the developed audiobook is convenient to use and can be accessed by the students easily. It does not require any equipment beyond what is usually available to them. The study of Srivastava et al. (2021) also emphasizes that an audiobook should be easy to use, accessible, and efficient.

**Conclusions**

Based on the findings, it is apparent that developing and validating an audiobook in Afro-Asian literature is a significant undertaking. It is a vital intervention tool, particularly in distance education. Furthermore, in addition to selecting appropriate literary works, it is critical to investigate the characteristics of a good audiobook. Its recording must be presented fluently, with all words appropriately articulated. The tone should be clear, focused, and entered over the range of the voice. The voice should also be clear and easy to understand, with no extra background noise in the recording. When it comes to fluency, the selections should be read at a comfortable pace, with natural phrasing and tone. The voice recording should also be lively and animated. When necessary, it must also include voice changes for other characters.

Not only in in-person classes, but also in online learning, having a diverse set of educational resources is essential. As a result, teachers must create IMs that appeal to the various learning styles of their students. Because the majority of the produced ones being distributed are printed modules, audiobooks may be a viable alternative for those who prefer listening to reading literary works. Comprehension skills transcend modality, according to various studies, which means that the process of processing and remembering information is the same whether the material is read or heard on a cognitive level. As a result, this type of material can aid in the development or enrichment of learners' comprehension.

**Recommendations**

Considering the aforementioned findings and conclusions, the following are hereby recommended: 1) the developed and validated audiobook may be used for field testing by future research to attest its effectiveness in reading development; and 2) the developed and validated audiobook may be adopted by DepEd Pampanga as a supplemental material for Grade 8 English students, specifically struggling readers, during the distance learning.

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