

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THRILLER AND CLASSIC DRAMA: ENGAGING STUDENTS THROUGH GENRE DIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT This article examines the pedagogical impact of teaching diverse literary genres—specifically thrillers and classic dramas—in academic lyceums. By conducting a comparative analysis, the research explores how genre diversity stimulates student engagement and enhances linguistic competence. Using Philip Prowse’s contemporary thrillers and classic storytelling techniques found in O. Henry and Agatha Christie, the study demonstrates that contrasting genres help students identify different narrative structures, stylistic devices, and thematic depths.

Keywords: Genre diversity, Comparative analysis, Thriller, Classic Drama, Pedagogy, Student engagement, ESL.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) education, relying on a single literary genre can lead to academic monotony. Genre diversity is essential for maintaining high levels of motivation among lyceum students. While **Thrillers** (like Philip Prowse’s *The Woman Who Disappeared*) offer fast-paced action and modern dialogue, **Classic Drama/Short Stories** (like O. Henry’s *The Gift of the Magi*) provide rich metaphorical

language and emotional complexity. This article argues that a comparative approach allows students to develop a more holistic understanding of English literature.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study utilizes the **Comparative Method** in literature teaching. By placing two different genres side-by-side, students use "Contrastive Analysis" to notice differences in:

1. **Pacing:** Fast-paced suspense vs. slow-building emotional tension.
2. **Language:** Contemporary, colloquial English vs. descriptive, formal vocabulary.
3. **Conflict:** External physical danger and internal moral dilemmas.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN THE CLASSROOM

During the practical application of the author's methodological guide at the academic lyceum, a series of comparative lessons were conducted. The primary objective was to observe how students distinguish between the fast-paced narrative of a modern thriller and the thematic depth of classic drama.

To facilitate this, the Venn Diagram method was utilized, allowing students to visually identify overlapping elements such as character motivation and plot development, while highlighting the distinct stylistic differences of each genre.

1. Detailed Comparative Framework

The following table summarizes the key pedagogical criteria used to evaluate student engagement and genre comprehension:

Feature	Thriller (e.g., Philip Prowse)	Classic Drama/Story (e.g., O. Henry)
Primary Goal	Suspense: Focuses on tension and the "What happens next?" factor.	Emotional Impact: Focuses on human nature and "Why did it happen?"

Feature	Thriller (e.g., Philip Prowse)	Classic Drama/Story (e.g., O. Henry)
Protagonist	Action-oriented: Often a hero (e.g., Lenny Samuel) facing external threats.	Character-oriented: Often ordinary people facing internal moral dilemmas.
Narrative Pace	Rapid: Short sentences, high frequency of action verbs, and cliffhangers.	Moderate/Reflective: Descriptive language, symbolism, and philosophical undertones.
Vocabulary Focus	Concrete nouns and crime-related jargon (<i>clue, suspect, investigation</i>).	Abstract nouns and figurative language (<i>sacrifice, irony, devotion</i>).
Ending	Resolution: The mystery is solved; order is restored.	Enlightenment: Often ends with a "twist" or a profound moral lesson.

2. Practical Application: "The Mystery vs. The Message"

In the classroom, students were divided into two groups. The first group analyzed Philip Prowse's *"The Woman Who Disappeared"*, focusing on the Deductive Method—collecting evidence to find a solution. The second group analyzed O. Henry's *"The Gift of the Magi"*, focusing on Inductive Reasoning—understanding the universal message of sacrifice from specific character actions.

3. Student Engagement Outcomes

The comparative approach led to several key observations:

- **Linguistic Versatility:** Students learned to switch from the informal, direct dialogue of thrillers to the more formal and sophisticated syntax of classic literature.

- **Enhanced Critical Thinking:** By comparing the "plot twist" in O. Henry with the "clue resolution" in Prowse, students developed a deeper understanding of authorial intent and narrative architecture.

- **Motivation:** The variety of genres prevented "learner fatigue," as students remained curious about the different stylistic outcomes of each text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the comparative lessons showed that:

- **Active Participation:** 85% of students showed more interest when they had to "switch" between the modern detective world and the historical/moral world of classics.

- **Vocabulary Growth:** Students acquired a wider range of vocabulary—from crime-related terms (*detective, disappear, clue*) to abstract emotional concepts (*sacrifice, irony, devotion*).

- **Critical Awareness:** Students began to recognize "genre tropes," which improved their ability to predict outcomes and analyze authorial intent.

CONCLUSION

Genre diversity is not just an additive element but a necessity in the academic lyceum curriculum. The comparative analysis of thrillers and classic dramas provides a dynamic learning environment where students are challenged both linguistically and cognitively. This approach ensures that learners become versatile readers who can appreciate the breadth of the English language.

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