

Effectiveness of English Learner's Material in Enhancing Grammatical Competence of Grade 9 Bilingual Students: A Basis for Supplementary Material Development

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Abstract

The study was conducted in order to determine the level of effectiveness of the English learner's material on the grammatical competence of randomly selected Grade 9 bilingual students of a public secondary school in the Philippines. The students were subjected to grammar test and self-rating assessment of grammatical competence in participle, gerund and adverb before and after using the English learner's material. Answering the survey questionnaire for assessing English instructional materials was limited to the perception of the respondents of the study. Based on the findings, Grade 9 students are not grammatically competent. The teacher's guide for Grade 9 teachers are not effective in guiding them in the teaching of their lessons. The learner's material used by the students are not effective in helping the students understand their lesson and activities. Thus, the study suggested that to improve the grammatical competence of the students, more relevant and useful supplementary materials should be made and given to them. These materials should address their needs or weaknesses. Teaching-learning materials should be constantly evaluated to better guide the teachers and effectively enhance the grammatical competence of Grade 9 bilingual students.

Keywords: Effectiveness of English Learner's Material, Grammatical Competence, Grade 9 Bilingual Students

Introduction

English language is used as an international language by almost all countries in the world. English as an international language (EIL) is an innovative area of study. Since the world is more globalized and internationalized, EIL helps people to understand the use and the role of English in the modernized world they are living in today. English is also used for intercultural communication. Through this, a person can develop a high level of understanding not just with the community where he belongs but also with other communities with different cultures and beliefs. Other countries offer EIL program to help their students gain an advanced understanding of the use of English in the different fields like education, workplace and communication (Monash University Handbook, 2017).

Since change is the only permanent thing that may happen anytime, there is a need for continuous adjustment in order to cope with the said changes. The changes in education brought by the 21st century require knowledge and skills that will help the students become competent. In relation to this, from the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC), the Philippine government implemented the K to 12 program in order to equip the students with skills necessary for them to become globally competitive individuals. K to 12 program was promulgated under the Republic Act No. 10533 also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. In this program, the students are required to undergo Kindergarten before entering primary education which starts from Grade 1 to Grade 6. Unlike in the previous curriculum, where secondary education has four (4) years of schooling only, the students under K to 12 curriculum have to undergo four (4) years of Junior high school and additional two (2) years of Senior high school to finish secondary education. It is believed that the span of learning of students is within the years covered by the K to 12 program (DepEd, 2015).

Part of the implementation of K to 12 is the usage of different modules with objectives and tasks already written in each module. The tasks and objectives included in the modules are designed to equip the learners with skills needed for higher education and employment since the focus of the new curriculum is to enhance the skills of the students rather than mastery of the subject matter. However, there are some tasks included in the modules that are not aligned with the skills that some of the students have. Due to that, the students will not be able to gain the skills necessary for a particular kind of activity. Thus, it is not always possible to produce a book that can cater all the needs of all the students (Thakur, 2015).

Nowadays, some schools encountered problems similar to the above. Some of the tasks written in the modules are not appropriate for some of the students resulting to failure to attain some of the objectives.

The Grade 9 students of a public secondary school in Calamba City, Philippines are among those who are faced with the difficulties when modules and activities do not match their skills. There are tasks included in the English module that are not appropriate for most of the students. Additionally, there are objectives that are difficult for some of the students to attain because those are not aligned with the level of proficiency that the students have.

English language plays a big role in developing the basic skills that the students need, thus, the appropriateness of the tasks with the level of the students should be considered. Despite some of the modifications done by the teachers to align the objectives and tasks with the students' level of grammatical competence, there are still students who cannot cope with the lessons in English. In an interview with the Grade 9 English teachers of a public secondary school, they mentioned that most of the activities included in the learner's material are not suitable for the level that their students have. They also reported that most of the students are having grammatical difficulties in using gerund, participle and adverb properly. This is evident on the quarterly exam results in English 9 for school year 2016-2017. The lowest Mean Percentage Score (MPS), which is 52.3 percent was during the second quarter. It is for this reason that the researcher has considered conducting a study concerning the problem. In line with this, the researcher also aims to develop a supplementary material that will improve the grammatical competence of the students.

Research objectives

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the English learner's material used by the Grade 9 students of a public secondary school in enhancing their grammatical competence. It specifically: (i) determined the level of grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students during

the grammar test in terms of forms of participle, uses of gerund, and types of adverb; (ii) assessed the level of effectiveness of the English instructional materials in enhancing the English grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students; (iii) analyzed the difference in the grammar test scores and self-rating assessment on grammatical competence in participle, gerund and adverb of the Grade 9 students; and (iv) formulated an action plan to enhance the grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students.

Significance of the study

The researcher believes that this research would be able to contribute significantly to the improvement in the grammatical competence of the students as well as those not directly involved, will gain benefits because their grammatical competence will be determined and the developed supplementary material will be helpful to align the activities with the level of the students. Therefore, the students will have a bigger chance of improving their grammatical competence and academic performance.

The study could help the English teachers develop the grammatical competence of their students by using the developed supplementary material for the Grade 9 students.

The result of the study will help the school administration to find ways and develop programs that will help not just the Grade 9 students but also other grade levels in enhancing their grammatical competence. It can be their basis to provide and support the students for improving and developing the skills of their students.

Likewise, the study could help other researchers. By adding the result in the growing field of educational researches, this will serve as their guide in their future related studies with the same nature and scope of the study.

Materials and Methods

Research design

The study used descriptive research design. Descriptive research is considered as statement of affairs as they are at present with the researcher having no control over the variables (Dudovskiy, 2016).

This research design is appropriate in determining the level of grammatical competency in participle, gerund and adverb of the Grade 9 students, assessing the effectiveness of the English instructional materials in enhancing the grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students through teachers' and students' perception and evaluating the grammatical competence of Grade 9 students in participle, gerund and adverb before and after using the English 9 learner's material.

Selection of respondents

The subject of the study was consisted of 118 enrolled Grade 9 students of a public national high school. They were drawn from a population of 167 regular students from the three sections with varied types of students. The sample respondents were selected through simple random sampling with the application of proportional allocation.

Proportional allocation was used to get the proportions of the respondents from each section among the three sections in Grade 9 level (Table 1). After proportional allocation, simple random sampling using fish bowl method was applied to get the representatives from each section.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents per section

Section	Population Percentage	Number of Students/ Section
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Diamond	59	35.3	42
Pearl	56	33.5	39
Ruby	52	31.1	37
Total	167	100	118

For the selection of teachers, purposive sampling was done since there were only three (3) Grade 9 English Teachers.

Instrumentation

To determine the grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students during the grammar test. A series of grammar tests was administered among the respondents. These tests covered the forms of participles, uses of gerunds and the types of adverbs.

To determine the effectiveness of the English instructional materials, specifically the teacher's guide and the learner's material. In assessing the teacher's guide, four aspects were considered: general features, methodological guidance, supplementary exercises and materials, as well as context. General features covers the teachers' understanding of the objectives and methodology of the text. Methodological guidance assesses the effectiveness of the teacher's guide in terms of providing techniques for activating students' background knowledge before reading the text as well as in providing specific examples and method for each lesson. Supplementary exercises and materials were assessed to determine the effectiveness of the material in providing the teachers with exercises and review lessons in grammar, particularly in participles, gerunds and adverbs. Context evaluates the appropriateness of the material to the curriculum.

Data collection procedures

The researcher made an assessment on grammatical competence in participle, gerund, adverb, and 60-item grammar test, which consisted of 20 items each in participle, gerund and adverb for the students to answer. Survey questionnaire on teachers and students' perception in assessing the level of effectiveness of the English instructional materials in enhancing the grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students was prepared for the English 9 teachers and randomly selected Grade 9 students. Then, a grammar test to the student respondents was administered for an hour. Afterwards, the assessment on their grammatical competency level in participle, gerund and adverb before and after using the English 9 learner's material was conducted. The survey questionnaire on teachers and students' perception on assessing the effectiveness of the English instructional materials that they are using in enhancing the grammatical competence of their students was also distributed. After getting all the necessary data needed for the study, the data were analysed to come up with the proposed action plan that will improve the level of grammatical competency of the respondents.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percent distributions were used in presenting the level of competence of Grade 9 students in grammar. Concerning the effectiveness of the Grade 9 English teacher's guide & learner's material and the assessments on the grammatical competence of the students, the five-point Likert Scale ranging from needs improvement (1.00 –

1.49), Below Average (1.50 – 2.49), Average (2.50 – 3.49), Above Average (3.50 – 4.49) to Superior (4.50 – 5.00) and the simple mean were used.

Results and Discussions

This section primarily discusses the findings of the study. The discussion is divided into four parts. The first part tackles the level of grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students during the grammar test. The second part presents the assessment of the level of effectiveness of the English instructional materials in enhancing the English grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students. Discussed in the third part is the assessment on grammatical competence in participle, gerund and adverb of the Grade 9 students. The last part presents the proposed action plan to enhance the grammatical competence of Grade 9 students.

Grammatical competence of grade 9 students

Table 2 shows that the competence of the Grade 9 students in grammar in terms of forms of participle is average (10.18) while their competence in both the uses of gerund and types of adverbs is below average with mean average of 8.36 and 7.16, respectively.

Fifty-four (45.8 percent) of the respondents assessed their competence in the form of participle as average. Thirty-three (28.0 percent) students assessed their competence in the form of participle as below average. Only two (1.69 percent) students assessed themselves as superior. This shows that majority the students have not mastered the application of the correct forms of participles in sentences. They have difficulty in answering questions that require the use of participles.

The findings reveal that in terms of the use of gerund, 48 students (40.7 percent) and 18 students (15.3 percent) assessed their competence in using gerunds as below average and needs improvement, respectively. The result shows that majority of the students have difficulty in identifying and using gerunds in phrases and sentences.

In addition to the above, results show that 51 (43.2 percent) and 24 (20.3 percent) of the students assessed their competence in the types of adverbs as below average and needs improvement, respectively. The figures stated comprise 63.6 percent of the respondents which shows that majority of the students find the identification and use of the different types of adverbs difficult.

Table 2. Level of competence of Grade 9 students in grammar

Performance Level	Forms of Participle		Uses of Gerund		Types of Adverb	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Superior	2	1.69	3	13	2	2.54
Above Average	27	22.9	13	11.0	2	1.69
Average	54	45.8	36	30.5	41	34.7
Below Average	33	28.0	48	40.7	51	43.2
Needs Improvement	2	1.69	18	15.2	24	20.3
n	118		118		118	
Average	10.18		8.36		7.16	

Verbal Interpretation	<u>Average</u>	<u>Below Average</u>	<u>Below Average</u>
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Legend: 17-20, Superior (S); 13-16, Above Average (AA); 9-12, Average (A); 5-8, Below Average (BA); 0-4, Needs Improvement (NI)

In relation to this, Kosheleva (2020) stressed that “without learning the proper grammar rules of the language a person is trying to acquire, he cannot be fluent in a language”. Furthermore, the study of Rahka (2014) stated that the grammatical competence of the students affects the linguistic competence and way of communicating with other people. Correspondingly, the results of the study are in consonance with the study conducted by Millrood (2014). He examined students’ grammatical competence in relation with the cognitive approach. His study focused mainly on the precepts of cognitive science and he considered the grammatical competence of the language learners as semantic network of concepts, categories, and prototypes in which he exclaimed as part of knowledge and grammar skills.

Effectiveness of the English instructional materials

Table 3 shows that the respondents assessed the teacher’s guide as below average in terms of general features, supplementary exercises and materials as well as in context, with mean average of 2.34, 2.00, and 2.37, respectively. With a mean score of 2.67, the teacher’s guide was assessed as average in terms of methodological guidance. Overall assessment of the material was interpreted as below average (2.37).

The results show that the teachers assess the teacher’s guide in English as not being effective enough in terms of helping understand the objectives and methodology of the text as indicated in the general features.

In terms of methodological guidance, the teachers assessed the teacher’s guide as average, implying that they do not find the material effective enough in providing techniques, examples and method in teaching the lessons. This also implies that the material needs improvement for it to be effective enough.

The findings of the study imply that the teacher’s guide is unable to provide the teachers with the appropriate lessons based on the objectives. The material does not have the answer key to the exercises.

The level of effectiveness of the supplementary exercises and materials included in the teacher’s guide was assessed as average, which means that the teachers do not find the materials adequate for the needs of the students.

In terms of context, the teacher’s guide was assessed as below average (2.48). This implies that the teachers find the teacher’s guide ineffective in providing lessons and materials appropriate for the learners. In addition to this, the material is not aligned with the curriculum. Overall assessment of the material was below average (2.37) which implies that the teachers do not find the teacher’s guide effective as a material in teaching grammar among the Grade 9 students.

Table 3. Level of effectiveness of Grade 9 English teacher's guide

	General Assessment		
	MA	VI	SD
1. General Features	2.34	BA	0.58
2. Methodological Guidance	2.67	A	0.91
3. Supplementary Exercises and Materials	2.00	BA	1.73
4. Context	2.48	BA	0.58
Overall Assessment	2.37	BA	0.95

Legend: MA = Mean Assessment; VI = Verbal Interpretation; 4.50-5.00 Superior (S); 3.50-4.49 Above Average (AA); 2.50-3.49 Average (A); 1.50-2.49 Below Average (BA); 1.00-1.49 Needs Improvement (NI)

In relation to this, Buen (2010) emphasized the importance of modules in developing and instituting different educational programs that will be utilized in school. Similarly, Dodd (2015) concluded in his study that supplementary materials increase the motivation, and thus, the learning of the students.

In order to assess the level of effectiveness of the Grade 9 English learner's material, the researcher considered content and structure, assessments/evaluation, resource materials, and learning outcomes.

Content and structure covers the provision of correct, up-to-date information appropriate for the students, based on the curriculum and matches the expected outcomes. Assessments/Evaluation gauges whether the learner's material is challenging, grammatically correct, easy to understand. It also refers to the grading criteria, instructions and assignments. Resource materials refer to the effectiveness of the learner's material in helping the students understand the lesson and if the material contains complete information.

Table 4 shows that the level of effectiveness of the learner's material as assessed by the students. The results show that in terms of content and standard, assessment and evaluation, resource materials, and learning outcomes the assessment is average 2.89, 3.01, 2.93 and 3.00, respectively. This is a clear indication that the respondents do not find the material effective enough.

The results also show that the respondents find the materials to be inadequate in terms of lessons and exercises that are appropriate for them. The outcomes of the teaching and the lesson are not effectively defined. Overall assessment is average (2.98).

Table 4. Level of effectiveness of Grade 9 English learner's material

	General Assessment		
	MA	VI	SD
1. Content and Structure	2.89	A	0.96
2. Assessments/Evaluation	3.01	A	0.96
3. Resource Materials	2.93	A	0.89
4. Learning Outcomes	3.00	A	0.89
5. Overall Assessment	3.11	A	0.98
Overall Assessment	2.98	A	0.93

Legend: MA = Mean Assessment; VI = Verbal Interpretation; 4.50-5.00 Superior (S); 3.50-4.49 Above Average (AA); 2.50-3.49 Average (A); 1.50-2.49 Below Average (BA); 1.00-1.49 Needs Improvement (NI)

Assessments on grammatical competence of grade 9 students

Another objective of the study is to determine the self-rating assessments on the grammatical competence of the students before and after using the learner's material. The assessment covered lessons on participles, gerunds and adverbs. The students needed to assess their competence in identifying, forming and using the three concepts in sentences. “

Table 5 shows that the overall assessment of the grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students before using the materials was below average (1.81) while the assessment after using the materials was average (2.68). This shows an increase in their competence. For all three components used, participle, gerund and adverbs, the assessment before using the materials was below average while the individual assessment after using the materials was average. The mean average before and after using the materials were 1.69 and 2.64, 1.89 and 2.81, 1.86 and 2.61 for participle, gerunds and adverbs, respectively.

The findings of the study imply that the materials used were effective in enhancing the grammatical competence of the Grade 9 students. There was a significant improvement in their ability to identify and use participles, gerunds and adverbs.

The results is supported by the study of Reddy (2013) who believed that aligning the supplementary materials with the learning styles that the students have will help them understand the lesson easier.

Table 5. Assessments on grammatical competence of Grade 9 students before and after using the learner's material

	General Assessment					
	Before			After		
	MA	VI	SD	MA	VI	SD
1. Participle	1.69	BA	0.71	2.64	A	0.81
2. Gerund	1.89	BA	0.82	2.81	A	0.90
3. Adverb	1.86	BA	0.81	2.61	A	0.88
Overall Assessment	1.81	BA	0.78	2.68	A	0.86

Legend: MA = Mean Assessment; VI = Verbal Interpretation; 4.50-5.00 Superior (S); 3.50-4.49 Above Average (AA); 2.50-3.49 Average (A); 1.50-2.49 Below Average (BA); 1.00-1.49 Needs Improvement (NI)

Development of the proposed action plan

An action plan provides instructional support and is a comprehensive way to monitor change and progress across a variety of objectives and goals within multiple areas. In the case of this study, an action plan is proposed to help the students achieve grammatical competence through the construction and use of supplementary materials in class.

The objectives of the proposed action plan are to improve the grammatical competence of the students and to produce supplementary materials that will help the students achieve the desired competence in grammar. With the foregoing, various strategies have been formulated, to be implemented by the English teachers with the help of the coordinator and school head.

The success of the action plan will be evaluated using indicators that will measure and determine the level of achievement in each area.

Table 6. Action plan for improving the grammatical competency of Grade 9 students

Objectives	Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Time Frame	Success Indicators
1. To improve the grammatical competence of the students	Assess the grammatical competency of the students in terms of: participles, gerunds and adverbs	English Teachers	Beginning and end of the lesson period	Increase in the mean scores of students by at least 10%
	Provide appropriate lessons on the topics		Year round	Improvement in the students' grammatical competence
	Construct assessment tools to measure the students' competency	English Coordinator	Year round	Level of competence of students is determined
	Provide supplementary materials to further enhance the skills of the students		Year round	Produced appropriate supplementary materials
	Evaluate the effectiveness of the supplementary materials		End of every period	Increase in the quarterly grades of the students by at least 2% per quarter

2. To produce effective and appropriate supplementary materials	Gather and assess materials from different sources	English Teachers	Year round	Gathered different materials from various sources
	Determine the strengths and weaknesses of students in terms of grammar	English Coordinator	End of the lesson period	Gathered data on the strengths and weaknesses of students
	Use the data on strengths and weaknesses of students to determine their needs in terms of grammar materials	School Head	Every period	Established needs of students
	Prepare interesting supplementary materials about participles, gerunds and adverbs		Year round	Produced (at least 2 materials per quarter) appropriate supplementary materials for students
3. To enhance the grammatical skills of the students	Quiz Bee	English Teachers	Quarterly	Increase in the grammatical competence of the students (in terms of 1% increase in their quarterly grades)
		English Coordinator		

English Camp	November	Enhanced self-confidence of the students as shown in their participation in the various activities and competitions
School Head		

Conclusions

The study provides evidence that the Grade 9 students are not grammatically competent in terms of the use of participles, gerunds and adverbs; the teacher's guide for Grade 9 teachers are not effective in guiding them in the teaching of their lessons; the learner's material used by the students are not effective in helping the students understand their lesson and activities in producing better results in grammatical competency.

Knowing this fact, the study suggested that to improve the grammatical competence of the students, more relevant and useful supplementary materials should be given to the students. These materials should address the needs or weaknesses of the students so that they may be more meaningful. Teacher's guides and learner's materials should be assessed and evaluated further so that modules may be improved to effectively guide the teachers and students. Performance and progress of students should be monitored to determine the effectiveness of materials in teaching. More materials should be provided to the students to enable them to learn the different concepts in English grammar. Strengths and weaknesses of students in grammar should be identified to match the supplementary materials and modules with the competencies required among the students and to address their needs. The modules should be made interesting and informative to keep the interest of the students. The teachers may also consider giving the students regular drills on the topics discussed and occasional games to raise the interest of the students. Supplementary materials should be produced and implemented as basis for evaluation as well as revision to further suit the needs of the students in the area focused by the study.

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