

# Activities for Developing Communicative Competence in Grade 9 English Modules

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**Abstract**—The use of modules in teaching aims to develop communicative competence—the core goal of English language learning, however, current modules often place excessive emphasis on grammar and fall short in providing engaging, authentic tasks. This study aimed to analyze tasks and activities according to classification of task types, categorization of mode of communication and aspects of communicative competence. This study analyzed the tasks and activities in the Grade 9 English Modules using content analysis design, through CEFR modes of communication, and communicative competence categories. Findings showed that reading and writing were emphasized, while speaking was minimal and listening absent. Linguistic competence was most addressed; sociolinguistic and strategic competences were least. The study highlights an imbalance in macro skill integration and communicative competence in the modules. To foster well-rounded communicative competence, future modules should include more listening and speaking activities, collaborative tasks, and a stronger focus on sociolinguistic and strategic skills.

**Index Terms**—Communicative Activities, Communicative Competence, Macro skill.

## 1. Introduction

In today's interconnected world, communicative competence is a key goal of English language teaching. It enables students to express ideas clearly and understand others, which is essential for academic and real-world success. The K to 12 and MATATAG curricula emphasize 21st-century skills, particularly the ability to communicate effectively across contexts.

However, challenges persist, especially in Grade 9. Studies (e.g., Alvarado, 2023; Gador, 2022) highlight issues in implementing the spiral progression approach and using English modules that are too broad, grammar-focused, or lacking in realistic, engaging tasks. As a result, students struggle with comprehension, writing, and real-life language use.

Recent assessments, including Phil-IRI and EDCOM 2, show a significant number of Grade 9 learners reading below grade level, which hampers the development of communicative competence. Classroom observations and SBM results echo this concern.

Given these challenges, there is a clear need to evaluate and improve communicative tasks in Grade 9 English modules to

better support learners and fulfill the curriculum's goals.

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of communicative competence has evolved considerably over the decades, shaping how language teaching is approached in both theoretical and practical terms. Introduced by Dell Hymes (1972) as a response to Chomsky's narrow focus on linguistic competence, communicative competence encompasses not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately in diverse social contexts. Building on this, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a model that identifies four key components: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Later, Bachman and Palmer (1996) expanded this framework to emphasize the dynamic, goal-oriented nature of language use, introducing the concept of language ability, which integrates both knowledge and performance in real-world contexts. These theoretical foundations underpin many studies exploring how language proficiency is developed and assessed through classroom instruction and materials.

Closely tied to communicative competence are the four macro skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—which serve as the primary means through which language learners engage in communication. Research by Jordà (2018) and Nguyen (2016) underscores that communicative competence cannot be fully developed without integrating all four macro skills in a balanced way. For example, writing competence involves both macro elements like coherence and task relevance and micro elements like grammar and vocabulary. Studies have also shown that deficiencies in listening and reading, particularly when paired with limited exposure to authentic materials, can hinder overall communicative proficiency (Dimaano & Huong, 2019). Thus, macro skills play a vital role in the development of a learner's holistic communicative ability.

Empirical research and content analysis studies have revealed that many instructional materials—particularly English learning modules and textbooks—often focus heavily on grammar while underrepresenting other aspects of communicative competence, such as sociolinguistic and strategic components. For instance, studies by Dangan and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2021) and Tindugan (2023) emphasized the

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need for supplementary and contextualized materials to address learners' specific needs.

Several studies have used content analysis to evaluate how well English modules and textbooks incorporate communicative competence and macro skills. Researchers like Maulidiyah (2021) and Caner and Çelik (2020) found that while communicative competence components were present in materials, they were unevenly distributed and often lacked authenticity. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is frequently used as a benchmark in these analyses, promoting task alignment with real-life language use (Puspitasari, 2020; Castro & Villafuerte, 2019).

### 3. Methodology

#### A. Research Design

The study employed a qualitative content analysis design. Its purpose was to evaluate the activities in the existing Grade 9 English Learning Modules. The evaluation was guided by Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) focused on communicative competence.

#### B. Data Analysis

The analysis in this study was limited exclusively to the activities found in the Grade 9 English Learning Modules obtained from the Department of Education Learning Portal.

The classification of communicative competence in the analysis was based on the primary focus of each activity. If an activity emphasized sentence construction or understanding grammatical rules, it was categorized under Linguistic Competence. Activities that required learners to choose appropriate language depending on whether the context was formal or informal were identified as targeting Sociolinguistic Competence. Tasks that assessed the logical organization of ideas, such as coherence in writing or connectedness in speech, were classified under Discourse Competence. Meanwhile, activities that involved planning, goal setting, or revising to overcome communication challenges were considered to promote Strategic Competence. Each task was examined and classified according to these specific aspects of communicative competence to determine the focus and balance within the modules.

Activities were categorized according to their macro skill—whether they focused on reading, speaking, listening, or writing—aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The researcher based the categorization of the modes of communication on established examples and definitions for each mode, ensuring a clear and consistent framework for analysis. For instance, reading activities were identified as those that require the interpretation of written text, while speaking activities involved verbal expression and interaction. Listening activities were classified based on the need for comprehension of spoken language, and viewing activities were associated with interpreting visual media or multimedia content.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

#### A. Macro Skill

Among macro skill, Reading emerged as the most extensively covered macro skill in the learning modules. This was evident through numerous comprehension-based activities where learners were required to identify main ideas, extract supporting details, detect logical inconsistencies, and interpret tone, bias, and satire. Whether students were analyzing song lyrics, paragraphs, articles, or visual texts such as posters and satirical images, the predominant objective was to extract meaning, analyze structure, and respond critically. The most common formats for assessing reading included multiple-choice items, true or false statements, matching exercises, and vocabulary decoding using word banks. Additionally, reading activities were frequently supported by visual aids, such as graphic organizers, charts, and images, enhancing comprehension and engagement.

Writing also featured prominently, often integrated with reading activities. Many tasks required learners to first process a reading text and then produce a written response. For instance, in one module, students were instructed to read original sentences in inverted word order and rewrite them using normal structure. In other cases, students wrote reflections, evaluations, or personal responses based on a given reading material.

In contrast, speaking was the least emphasized macro skill. Only three activities across all modules explicitly targeted oral communication. These tasks focused on the correct pronunciation and articulation of sounds. One activity required students to read sentences aloud, emphasizing the accurate pronunciation of individual sounds, while another involved reciting a poem, encouraging proper intonation and rhythm. Both tasks aimed to build oral fluency and boost learners' confidence in spoken English, but their limited presence highlighted a significant underrepresentation of speaking practice in the curriculum.

Notably, listening was entirely absent from the modules. There were no activities explicitly designed to develop students' listening comprehension or auditory processing skills. Unlike reading, writing, and even the minimal inclusion of speaking, listening was not addressed at all.

The disproportionate emphasis on reading and writing, along with the minimal inclusion of speaking and the complete absence of listening, suggests that the English 9 learning modules are heavily relied toward receptive and written language skills. This imbalance indicates that students are not being adequately exposed to the full range of communicative experiences, potentially limiting their ability to develop comprehensive language proficiency, particularly in oral and auditory communication.

#### B. Communicative Competence

Tasks and activities in the Grade 9 learning modules analyzed the aspects of communicative competence presents, particularly: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic.

Linguistic Competence was the most prominently emphasized among the four communicative competencies. This

was consistently evident across nearly all modules, especially in tasks centered on vocabulary building, grammar, and sentence formation. Specific activities, such as identifying structural types of words, completing vocabulary-in-context exercises, and grammar drills involving gerunds, clearly illustrated this focus. These tasks prioritized grammatical accuracy and correct word usage, including the application of morphological rules, the proper use of modals, and the construction of complete and grammatically correct sentences.

Discourse Competence was also evident communicative skill, particularly in tasks requiring students to produce extended texts or organize information logically. There were writing activities, such as informative essay writing, personal narrative writing with sequence signals, and sequencing events in a plot, required students to arrange their thoughts coherently, use appropriate transitions, and maintain unity across paragraphs. Discourse competence was also observed in activities involving paragraph organization and text revision, such as revising text for relevance and coherence, where students needed to identify and correct issues that disrupted the flow and clarity of a text.

Strategic Competence, was present in several key activities that required learners to use strategies, interpret non-verbal cues, or infer meaning from limited information. Tasks such as facial expression interpretation, logical inference selection activity, and reading comprehension and inference engaged students in interpreting indirect meanings, using context clues, or choosing the most logical response in the face of ambiguity. Additionally, writing tasks like narrative essay with sequence signals showed strategic competence when students had to navigate lexical gaps or uncertainty by paraphrasing or rephrasing their thoughts to maintain clarity.

Sociolinguistic Competence was present with a least number of activities. Based on the findings, several prominent themes emerged from the activities that were align in sociolinguistic competence. These themes included pressing social issues such as prejudice and biases, the influence and impact of social media, environmental concerns, health precautions, and the dynamics of family relationships.

The analysis also revealed that essay writing activities commonly integrated all four aspects of communicative competence (linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic and Strategic). These tasks required students to produce extended, contextually meaningful, and expressive language, allowing them to apply grammar and vocabulary accurately (Linguistic), organize ideas coherently (Discourse), use language appropriately in social and cultural contexts (Sociolinguistic), and employ strategies to convey meaning effectively (Strategic).

The findings further revealed that there were reading activities where all four aspects of communicative competence were incorporated. Activities in the modules such as choosing the appropriate responses in a dialogue, advertisement comprehension, inference and diagram completion, and comprehension of advertisements required students to engage with language on multiple levels. These tasks asked learners to apply their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, follow

logical text structures, interpret cultural and social cues, and use inferencing strategies to understand deeper meanings within the texts.

It is inferred that Linguistic Competence is the most emphasized aspect in the English 9 modules, reflecting a traditional focus on grammar and vocabulary. While Discourse and Strategic Competence are moderately addressed through extended writing and inferencing tasks, Sociolinguistic Competence is the least developed, with limited activities targeting contextually appropriate language use.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the findings the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There was an imbalance in the coverage of macro skills within the English 9 learning modules underscores the need for a more holistic approach to language instruction.
2. There is a predominant emphasis on Linguistic Competence in the English 9 modules, with moderate attention given to Discourse and Strategic Competence, and minimal focus on Sociolinguistic Competence.

## 6. Recommendations

1. To cultivate well-rounded communicative competence, future module development must intentionally integrate more speaking and listening activities, ensuring that learners are equally equipped in all facets of language use.
2. To foster a more balanced development of communicative competence, future instructional materials should purposefully integrate more activities that promote sociolinguistic awareness and real-world language use in diverse social and cultural contexts.

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