



Grammar Module: An Intervention for the Grade 8 Students Language Barrier in Writing

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Abstract— The previous study made by the researcher reveals that the central issue of the students' use of the English language is the use of grammar itself. All areas of grammar are considered as a difficult and complicated structure of English even for the professionals and students involved in the usage of the said language. Grammar can be seen in both speaking and writing, but the two have the same level of grammar difficulties for some people. This action research used one section from the Grade 8 students who were also the primary respondents from the writing pre-test before the start of this research. The section was selected intentionally with the use of the purposive sampling technique, and it had a total of thirty (30) students inside the given classroom. This research also utilized all the possible sources of data information such as the recorded responses from the pre-test and post-test writing activity. The data was extracted by employing a careful scanning of the texts using the thematic analysis of a qualitative design in research. It was found out that the grammar difficulties of the students from the selected areas were too high before the intervention, but it had a significant decline after the intervention was implemented and produced data with significant relationship. These findings reflected that the implementation of the intervention material containing all the selected grammar areas had contributed to the enhancement of the Grade 8 students' writing, thus, an output like this module can be beneficial for the students' learning.

Index Terms— language barrier, grammar, content analysis, module, action research.

1. Introduction

Grammar has always been a problem for almost all English users in the world, especially when this is applied in speaking and in writing. No one is exempted from the difficulties associated with grammar because even those fluent English speakers around the world have difficulties applying grammar to several contexts because of its complicated and changing structure. How much more the students who are just studying English in school? They are the ones suffering the difficulties of using Grammar especially in writing.

This has been shown in a recent study conducted in Indonesia just in 2021 which assessed the grammatical errors in writing of the Grade 8 students when it came to writing a descriptive text. The stated research was written by Nadziyah Shofiroh from the Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sidoarjo. The aim of his

research was to analyze the grammatical errors of the students based on a taxonomy called Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay's Theory.

The study revealed that the Grade 8 students had difficulties when it came to the use of grammar, which were divided into four based on Dulay's Theory: omission error, addition error, misinformation error, and disorder error. There were four different categories. but they only proved that grammatical problems in students' writings had always been present whatever the form of text might be.

There was also another investigation conducted by Septiawan, et. al. (2020) which also examined the grammatical errors that were seen in students' writing as well. By utilizing a qualitative method of analysis for the data retrieved from the convenience sampling, it was found out that the main common grammatical problems of the students were written in order as the following based on their number of recorded observations: prepositions, articles, singular/plural, adjectives, irregular verbs, tenses, concord, possessive case, and active/passive voices.

These studies were from the international countries where English was used as a foreign language just like in the Philippines. The students targeted by this action research were also not exempted from grammar issues when it came to writing different types of texts. These also stated that grammatical errors could not be avoided even with the influence of interventions, but at least, they were limiting the errors, so the students could produce an acceptable form of writing output.

2. Objectives of the Study

This action research aims to:

(1) Target the grammar issues present in the Grade 8 students' writings, (2) Examine the students' writing skills using a pre-test writing activity, (3) Implement the intervention proper and use the grammar module from the previous study to target these grammar issues, and (4) Determine the effectiveness of the intervention material by the use of a post-test writing activity.

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3. Literature Review

International researchers and organizations conducted several forms of intervention to target and reduce the grammar issues in students' writings at high school level. These interventions were written in different structures that were created based on the given input gathered by the researchers.

In a study conducted by Ke, X., Wahid, P.R.A., & Tingting, G. in 2024, a set of interventions were implemented to find out if they could record the effectiveness of the said interventions to the high school students in China. With the use of the Pure PBL and the GIPBL as intervention methods, both the researchers saw the differences and effectiveness of each method over one another when they were used with regards to the students' profile, the results of pre-test and post-test, as well as their satisfaction in the method of teaching by their teachers. The study concluded that the students could improve significantly using the GIPBL method (Grammar Intervention PBL) since they preferred this method and had shown significant satisfaction level and improvement after the analysis stage.

Writing skills are important because writing is used to translate our thoughts, ideas, information, opinions, and all the things we want to convey into documents or papers that are certainly accessible and useful for others so that the message conveyed through writing is effective and meaningful (Alisha *et al.*, 2019). In writing, students must be able to identify and apply various items included in writing skills (Qamariah *et al.*, 2020). The skills that students must understand in writing include using proper grammar, choosing the right words, using punctuation marks, and choosing good topics so that the information points made can be arranged systematically (Din & Ghani, 2019). By writing, the students can improve their competence in English and develop their critical thinking (Ailinah, 2022).

EFL students in Indonesia find some difficulties in writing. English learners are generally asked to do written assignments and their English competence can be seen in their writing performance (Pradnyana *et al.*, 2022). Writing skill is still considered difficult by students, especially in writing English texts. In fact, writing requires broad knowledge and deep thought processes to produce words, sentences, and paragraphs as well as English grammar (Kumala *et al.*, 2018). In the writing process, to write a sentence or paragraph, students must understand grammar well. But often in the writing process students cannot avoid mistakes and errors or often the sentences they make are grammatically incorrect (Erlangga *et al.*, 2019).

4. Materials and Methods

A. Design

This case study utilized a mixed-method research design to determine the language barriers of the Grade 8 students in their communication process. Mixed methods research (MMR) integrates quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or sustained program of inquiry to generate a more complete understanding than is achievable with a single method (Fetters, 2020).

B. Participants

A total of thirty (30) Grade 8 students from one section at Dayap National High School were the chosen participants of this research. The researcher intentionally chose this section due to the recorded number of grammatical problems present in the students' writings. Since this research was labeled as a type of classroom-based action research, the scope and limitations of the intervention material was only allotted for that section.

C. Data Collection and Analysis

This action research took advantage of pre-test and post-test as a way of collecting the necessary data to answer the research question. Both the said methods had been done using a writing activity that assessed all the areas of grammar which were aligned in the target of the material for the intervention. The initial writing pre-test assessed how much they knew about grammar without the use of the grammar module yet. It was then followed by the intervention proper with a course of different activities as stated in the objectives of the material.

The post-test was conducted after the intervention which allowed a chance for the students to showcase what they had learned in an actual writing activity. The said writing task had no strict format and formality in order for them to write freely based on their preferred topic. The writings were collected after the allotted day for the data analysis to compare the results from the pre-test.

Since this research relied on a qualitative design, thematic analysis became a practical tool for the researcher to analyze the data extracted from the pre-test and post test-writing activities. Thematic analysis is a method to analyze qualitative data. It involves the identification and reporting of patterns in a data set, which are then interpreted for their inherent meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Liebenberg *et al.*, 2020; Xu & Zammit, 2020); these patterns can be found on the basis of understanding the meaning of keywords used by participants.

This action research carefully examined all the outputs by reading and observing all the patterns of data written by the students during the process. The pattern was recorded and counted to determine the times that it was observed in the text. When the data was quantified in relation to the observed responses, a series of explanations was made to ensure that the data was understandable and valid. It also employed some statistical tools to determine its significant differences.

5. Results and Discussion

The use of frequency and percentage tables after the thematic analysis enabled the researcher to write the data from the following outputs. Both the pre-test (before intervention) and post-test (after intervention) writing activity had separated patterns of observation, which were counted to calculate their frequency and percentage from the total number of observations. The results were written below:

Table 1
Frequency of students with grammar difficulty before and after intervention

Grammar Difficulty	Before Intervention		After Intervention	
	f	%	f	%
Subject-Verb Agreement	20	66.67	9	30
Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases	22	73.33	6	20
Verb Tenses and Tenses Consistency	23	76.67	18	60

Table 2
Students' performance before and after intervention

Grammar Lessons	Before Intervention		After Intervention	
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Subject-Verb Agreement	3.67	Developing	4.40	Proficient
Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases	3.53	Developing	4.60	Proficient
Verb Tenses and Tenses Consistency	3.27	Developing	3.73	Developing
Overall	3.49	Developing	4.24	Proficient

Table 3
Difference in the performance of students in grammar lessons

Grammar Lessons/Performance	t-stat	df	t-crit	p-value	Analysis
Subject-Verb Agreement	-4.0974			0.0003	Significant
Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases	-5.7570	29	2.0452	0.0000	Significant
Verb Tenses and Tenses Consistency	-1.8825			0.0698	Not Significant
Overall	-5.7784	29	2.0452	0.0000	Significant

The use of verb tenses and its consistency had been recorded as the most experienced grammar difficulty by the students when it came to writing. It was recorded with a frequency of twenty-three (23) observations before the intervention was introduced to them, reaching almost seventy-seven percent (77%) among the other grammar difficulties. It was followed by the grammar difficulty in prepositions and prepositional phrases with a recorded frequency of twenty-two (22) observations which was equivalent to seventy-three percent (73%). Even though the difficulty in Subject-Verb Agreement got the lower number of observations among the other two, it was still considered a problem as it had a total of twenty (20) observations equivalent to almost sixty-seven percent (67%).

The implementation of the intervention had benefited a lot in lowering these numbers. The highest recording grammar difficulty, which was the Verb Tenses and Tenses Consistency, had recorded a bit of improvement. It only had eighteen (18) responses after the intervention, which was equivalent to sixty percent (60%). It was sixteen percent (16%) lower compared to the data before the intervention. It was followed by the Subject-Verb Agreement grammar difficulty which recorded nine (9) responses after the intervention and was equivalent to thirty percent (30%). It was almost thirty-seven percent (37%) lower than the data before the intervention. The Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases had become the least observed grammar difficulty with only six (6) number of responses after the intervention equivalent to twenty percent (20%) of the observations. It was fifty-three (53%) lower than the first data.

The students' performance referred to the score they got before and after the intervention. It came from their writing activity analyzed by thematic analysis and statistics. Before the intervention was shown to the students, the mean score for the Subject-Verb Agreement area was 3.67, Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases was 3.53, and the Verb Tenses and Tenses Consistency recorded a mean score of 3.27. The overall combined mean score for the three grammar areas was 3.49.

Then after the intervention was implemented, the scores were recorded as well. The Subject-Verb Agreement was then

recorded with a mean score of 4.40, Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases had a mean score of 4.60, and the Verb Tenses and Tenses Consistency had a mean score of 3.73. Compared to the mean scores before the intervention was implemented, the mean scores after the intervention had significantly increased.

The use of the statistical tools was to determine if the recorded patterns of observations after the thematic analysis had a significant difference. The three grammar lessons /performance were analyzed based on the given data they produced. Subject-Verb Agreement and Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases areas had a significant difference after the analysis, while the Verb Tenses and Tenses Consistency had no significant difference to data given with the p-value less than 0.05 significance.

This action research targeting the language barrier of selected Grade 8 students in writing through an intervention was conducted by using pre-test and post-test writing activities to gather data from the thirty (30) respondents to identify the level of difficulties on the selected grammar areas presented in the intervention material. This action research aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the level of grammatical errors written by the students during the writing pre-test activity which was aligned to the intervention material used in the study?
- 2) How do the students improve their use of grammar during the intervention proper based on the set of activities and lessons presented from the module?
- 3) What is the level of grammatical errors written by the students in a post-test activity after the course of the intervention proper and the implementation of the grammar module?
- 4) How do the results from the pre-test writing activity compare to the post-test writing activity? Are there significant changes in the observed pattern of results after the content analysis?

The researcher hypothesized that the three grammar areas such as the Subject-Verb Agreement, Prepositions and

Prepositional Phrases, and Verb Tenses and Tenses Consistency were the three most common grammar issues affecting the students' writings in the English subject. By utilizing a pre-test at the start of the action research, the researcher aligned the data to the content of the intervention module and found out that the level of their difficulties in the three areas were high as reflected in the frequency and percentage formula. With the implementation of the intervention module through lessons and sets of activities, the researcher expected a decline in the level of the data. It was done through a post-test. The writing outputs after the intervention had produced better data than the pre-test. There was a significant improvement in the grammar areas as the number of errors had significantly declined.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Grammar has been one of the students' most common writing barriers in English. With the use of the intervention material (grammar module), this action research enhanced the students' writing skills by targeting the three most common grammar areas they are experiencing. The intervention reduced the number of errors they are committing in writing as shown in the post-test and has produced desired outcomes and significant differences.

Considering the careful analysis of outcomes from this action research, the researcher made the following recommendations for its readers and beneficiaries:

- 1) This research utilized thirty (30) students only from one section of the target area. While this might still be good to produce data, it would not be enough to produce a conclusion for the whole sector of the chosen respondents such as the Grade 8 students. It might be best to have respondents from different sections of students as well to produce more quantifiable results and conclusions.
- 2) Grammar is a wide and difficult English area for research. So, just as what the researcher did with the study, choose what grammar areas will be best to target for efficiency and specific focus on the desired research.
- 3) Statistical tools can also be used in qualitative research, but make sure they are validated or checked by an expert in the field to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy in the study. This study used statistics tools as recommended by an expert teacher in the field and validated its appropriateness for the target of the study.
- 4) The intervention material used in this action research

was validated by three experts in the field of education to ensure its accuracy and validity for the target learners. When creating an output such as this, make sure that the content is checked and validated to avoid confusion and risks of wrong learning for the students.

- 5) The intervention material, or any other outputs intended for any studies must be used as a supplementary learning tool only. It should not replace the main module or material used by the schools or any other learning institutions.

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