

Communicative Learning Module for English Basic Essentials

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Abstract: This research determined the status of Communicative Approach in teaching English grammar in English Proficiency 1 for freshmen at Carcar City College during Academic Year 2018-2019. The findings of this study were used to come up with a Communicative Learning Module. Specifically, the study determined the pre-test performance of the students in the English Essentials in terms of Verb Tense, Phrasal Verb, and Question Formation and Tag Question. This also sought the post-test performance of the students in terms of aforementioned English Essentials after the Communicative Approach was applied. Lastly, this investigation determined the significant mean gain between the pre-test and post-test performance of the respondents. This study used quasi-experimental method and utilized universal sampling. There were 27 respondents involved in this investigation. Six strategies were used during the teaching-learning process and these are the task-completion, information-gathering, opinion-sharing, information-transfer, reasoning gap, and role play.

Keywords: English Teaching, English Essentials, Communicative Approach, Quasi-experimental, Carcar City, Cebu, Philippines.

I. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

A. Introduction

Historically, grammar and language structure were significant parts of training in the study of English language. In recent decades, however English grammar teaching has been given dynamically less accentuation in English speaking nations (MacFarlane, 2015). Spontaneity and creativity are more stressed rather than on accuracy of structure. There are now appears to be an awareness that grammar needs to be instructed even to native English speakers for the purposes of clear communication.

Learning and teaching of a second language has turned into an imperative need rather than a luxury in today's world due to the fact that multilingualism has gained significant importance as people are to follow the rapid developments in various areas. Teaching of English, which is the most well-known language utilized for global correspondence, has dependably been important in education system (Denkci-Akkas, F., & Coker, B., 2016).

Improvement in English speaking abilities entails confidence and mastery of the grammar rule. Exposing students to a communicative language teaching instruction can most likely enhance their communication skills with good grammar usage (Alvarez, 2017). In addition, learning a second language normally results from formal instruction and directly points to the school setting (Econg-Baena, 2013). As evidently noticeable to the Filipino students, they have difficulty in expressing themselves using the target language. Some may be able to express their feelings and ideas; however, the quality of their sentence construction may sometimes be misunderstood by the other interlocutor and thus may result to confusions and conflicts.

The primary aim of conducting this study is to determine the efficacy of communicative approach in teaching English grammar. This is to address the deficiency in learning grammar in order for the second language learners improve their communication competence to be able to convey understandable and meaningful interactions.

Carcar City College, a local college situated in Carcar City, Cebu, is an institution supported by the Local Government Unit which offers tertiary education to the constituents of Carcar City and its neighbouring town. Most of the students enrolled in this school are financially deprived and come from remote areas of the town. This school is offering six (6) degree programs of which one of these is Bachelor of Arts in English Language. Majority of the English Language learners have deficiency in grammar skills and could hardly participate in any speaking activities and oral recitations. This is not only evident during speaking, but also very noticeable during writing activities.

As evidently noticeable in the performance and pen and paper assessments, the English language learners have difficulty in expressing themselves using the target language. Due to this problem, a research must be conducted to experiment a teaching grammar approach and to know its efficacy and status in teaching English grammar. This study benefits and provides the researcher regarding the efficacy of communicative approach to the AB-English 1 students of Carcar City College in the school year 2018-2019 as basis for Communicative Learning Module.

B. Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on Barry McLaughlin's (1987) Second Language Learning Theory as cited by Rod Ellis (2009). Furthermore, this is also supported by David A. Kolb's (2016) Experiential Learning Theory.

In Barry McLaughlin's Theory of Second Language Learning as cited in the study of Rod Ellis (2009), he emphasizes the explicit and implicit knowledge in Second Language Learning, Testing, and Teaching. Implicit and explicit knowledge of the second language (L2) are two central constructs in the field of second language learning. Furthermore, communicative approach is highlighted in this theory. The communicative approach is an approach used in teaching grammar for second language (L2).

Communicative approach is also known as implicit teaching approach since the students are subconsciously learning the syntax of the target language. Moreover, it is also defined as the instinctive and procedural knowledge that is customarily accessed automatically in fluent performance and that cannot be articulated. Thus, during the teaching-learning process, if the syntax of the language can be verbalized by the learner of the target language, he fully understands the structure and has the capacity to explain if the sentence is grammatically erroneous or not. If the learner cannot verbalize, then this means that even though he has the ability to use the target language, however, he cannot explain the composition of the sentence structures. In other words, L2 learners simply learn through their experience with the target language.

The main point as to why this particular theory is relevant and significant in this study is because this is stressing the naturalness of the learning of the target language since this is more into active and meaningful exchange of ideas and feelings.

As highlighted and emphasized in this study, the research limits the dependent variables to be included in this study. These variables are Verb Tense, Phrasal Verb, and Question Formation and Tag Question. These are also called English Basic Essentials since these are some of the fundamental topics that a language learner should master. These English Basic Essential topics are carefully selected by the researcher since this is also commonly misused by the students. These English Basic Essential topics mainly emphasized Verbs since this particular function of word provides the time element as well as the action. Therefore, the time element and action should be parallel to promote logical and understandable exchange of ideas. Incorrect usage of functions of words may cause conflict and misunderstanding. This is one of the aims as to why this study must be conducted.

Another indispensable theory that this research is anchored on is the Experiential Learning Theory of David A. Kolb (2016). This emphasizes that the experience matters to the learning of a particular learner. This theory stresses that students' learning is optimized when the students take an active rather than passive role in the learning process. In the teaching-learning process, specifically in language learning, as the main aim of this topic, learners undergo different phases to achieve real learning. These phases are the exposure phase, participation phase, internalization phase, and dissemination phase.

In *exposure phase*, a topic is presented, and students are given the opportunity to reflect on their own encounters in this area and to relate the subject to their personal learning goals. In the connection of this to this study, the students have an exposure using the target language which is English since this is the required language to be used in an English class. As they use the language in a natural form of communication, the learners also seek to reflect as to how they use the language. In the *participation phase* the students become personally involved as they take an interest in an activity, either

in the classroom or outside, intended to expand on or upgrade their previous experience. In the *internalization phase* a debriefing exercise is initiated by the facilitator, and the students have the opportunity to ponder on their participation in the activity and discuss potential consequences on their future behaviour or attitudes. And finally, in the *dissemination or transfer phase* the students apply and present their learning, linking it with the world outside the study hall.

In this study, since this is anchored on Experiential Learning Theory, the approach that is to be used in classroom instruction should be more into application and the activities and strategies to be integrated should allow the students perform and practice so it will be more practical and useful to the real world.

The activities and strategies to be used in Communicative approach are task-completion, information-gathering, information-transfer, opinion sharing, reasoning gaps and role plays. In *task completion*, this includes games, puzzles, map-reading, and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus is on using a target language to complete a task. In *information-gathering*, this includes student-conducted surveys, interviews, and researches in which students are required to use their linguistic resources to collect information. In information-transfer, this requires learners to take information that is presented in one form and represent it in a different form. In opinion-Sharing, it includes activities in which students compare values, opinions, and beliefs. Reasoning-gap involves deriving some new information from given information through the process of inference or practical reasoning. Finally, in role play, this involves activities in which students are assigned roles and improvise a scene or exchange based on given information or clues.

The Communicative Approach and these six strategies are essential and relevant in this study to make teaching and learning English grammar, specifically the selected English Essentials, interesting and fun. The philosophical notions of experiential learning can provide the foundation for all instructional practices, including the formation of the learning environment, the setting of purposes, the choice of projects, the sequencing of activities, and the evaluation of learners (Knutson, 2003). Experiential learning emboldens personal input, initiative, and self-direction in the learning process. Activities begin with retrieving the specific past involvements of students, and then building on these encounters to construct a framework for learning unique to the requirements and learning style of each student. It has a value of personal involvement-the full person in both his feeling and cognitive facets being in the learning event. It is self-initiated. Experiential learning challenges all learner aspects holistically, rather than disintegrating the learning process into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skill attainment.

C. Statement of the Problem

This research determined the status of using Communicative Approach in teaching English grammar in English Proficiency 1 for Freshmen at Carcar City College during Academic Year 2018-2019 as basis for Communicative Learning Module.

Specifically, it sought answers of the following sub-problems:

1. What is the pre-test performance of the students in the English Essentials as to:
 - 1.1 Verb Tenses;
 - 1.2 Phrasal Verbs; and
 - 1.3 Question Formation and Tag Questions?
2. Using the Communicative Approach, what is the post-test performance in the aforementioned English essentials?
3. Is there a significant mean gain between the pre-test and post-test performances in the indicated English essentials?
4. Based on findings, what communicative learning module can be designed?

D. Statement of the Null Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant mean gain between the pre-test and post-test performances in the English essentials as to:

- a. Verb Tenses;
- b. Phrasal Verbs; and
- c. Question Formation and Tag Questions.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Design

This investigation was a quasi-experimental and a quantitative research since this used statistical treatment to get the significant mean gain which was being asked in one of the sub-problems in the statement of the problem. This sought to determine the efficacy of Communicative Approach in teaching English grammar. This also utilized a 60-item multiple choice pen and paper assessment in conducting pre-test and post-test to the respondents to see their progress in learning English language grammar through the use of Communicative Approach.

B. Sampling

The type of sampling that was used in this study was Universal Sampling because this is a type of sampling where the whole population of interest is studied. This sampling was appropriate in this research since the study was conducted inside the classroom for several meetings and all students were included in the teaching-learning process. Besides, the population size was manageable since the target group was small and set apart by an unusual and well-defined characteristic. The advantages of Universal Sampling are this often gives deeper insights into a target population than partial samples would be capable of, and this has the potential to allow a researcher to paint a much more complete picture, and greatly reduces guesswork. This also eliminated the risk of biased sample selection that is often encountered in random study samples. Using universal sampling, twenty Seven (27) first year students that were enrolled in Bachelor of Arts in English Language were involved in the investigation.

C. Instruments

The research tool used in this study was an adapted test questionnaire from the book Grammar In Use Intermediate by Raymond Murphy and William R. Smalzer (Third Edition). The test questionnaires contained all English Essential topics that were stipulated in the statement of the problem such as verb tenses, phrasal verbs, and tag questions and question formation, which are the dependent variables in this study. The test questionnaires were composed of 60 grammar test items. These served as evidences of students' learning in English grammar when Communicative Approach in teaching English grammar is applied in the teaching-learning process. Next, Post-Test was conducted and data were gathered afterwards. The next procedure was to tabulate the data and used appropriate statistical tool to treat the problem. This was then followed by giving of conclusions and recommendations. Finally, the output of this study is Communicative Learning Module. This is to supplement students' learning even without the assistance of an English Language facilitator. The content of the adapted test questionnaire fitted to the topics included in the institutional syllabus in English Proficiency 1 course of Carcar City College.

D. Statistical Treatment

The statistical treatment that was used in this study, specifically in getting the answer of the third sub-problem stipulated in statement of the problem was T-Test. This was to get the mean gain of the two tests that were being administered.

E. Tables

TABLE I: Pre-test Performance in English Basic Essentials

| English Essentials | Hm | am | SD | Z | Description |
|---------------------------------|----|-------|------|-------|---------------|
| Verb Tense | 12 | 7.78 | 1.83 | 16.94 | Below Average |
| Phrasal Verb | 12 | 11.44 | 3.00 | 14.60 | Average |
| Question Formation/Tag Question | 12 | 11.96 | 2.93 | 16.03 | Average |

Legend:

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| Hm→ | Hypothetical Mean |
| Am→ | Actual Mean |
| Sd→ | Standard Deviation |
| Z→ | z-test |

TABLE II: Post-test Performance in English Basic Essentials

| English Essentials | Hm | Am | SD | Z | Description |
|---------------------------------|----|-------|------|-------|---------------|
| Verb Tense | 12 | 9.04 | 2.23 | 15.89 | Average |
| Phrasal Verb | 12 | 13.11 | 2.98 | 17.68 | Above Average |
| Question Formation/Tag Question | 12 | 12.67 | 3.42 | 14.05 | Average |

Legend:

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| Hm→ | Hypothetical Mean |
| Am→ | Actual Mean |
| Sd→ | Standard Deviation |
| Z→ | z-test |

TABLE N. Mean Gain between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Performance

| English Essentials | mean of post – test | mean of pre – test | t - test | Tabled Value | Decision |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Verb Tense | 9.04 | 7.78 | 2.413 | 1.706 | Reject Ho |
| Phrasal Verb | 13.11 | 11.44 | 4.100 | 1.706 | Reject Ho |
| Question Formation/Tag Question | 12.67 | 11.96 | 1.467 | 1.706 | Fail to Reject Ho |

C. Conclusion**Pre-test Performance in English Basic Essentials**

The pre-test has a total of 60 items in which the three (3) English Essentials has 20 items each—20 items for verb tense, 20 items for phrasal verb, and 20 items for Question Formation and Tag Question. The Hypothetical Mean of each English Essential is 12 which is the sixty percent (60%) of 20. The Hypothetical Mean that is set is based on the institutional passing percentage for A.B. English Language. The number of respondents in this study is 27, which is the total number of population of A.B. English Language freshmen (2018-2019).

Based on table number 1, the pre-test performance of the respondents in Question Formation and Tag Question has the highest actual mean which is 11.96 which means the students are in Average level on this particular English Essential. The probable reason as to why the question formation and tag question got the highest actual mean was the students are exposed to different teachers with different art of questioning skills and besides, asking questions is natural and intuitive. This is in consonance with the study of (Mahmud, M., 2015). In the proponent's findings, it shows that the students' tendency to ask questions and the factors influencing their capacity in asking questions such as the class situation, their psychological factors, and teacher's image over the students. Gradually, the language learners acquire the pattern in asking questions naturally without even knowing why it is structured in such way.

This is then followed by Phrasal Verb which has an actual mean of 11.44, and this indicates that the students are also in Average level on this English Essential. The probable reason as to why Phrasal Verb is in the second rank is that the language learners grasp or acquire phrasal verbs in a natural way. Language learners even used phrasal verbs unconsciously in different situations. This English Essential did not get the highest actual mean in the pre-test since it was hard for the respondents to point out which phrasal verb is suitable in the context for this is not initially learned through formal instruction. This is usually acquired through listening to a conversation, watching movies, and participating in any socializing forms. This is similar to the study of (Al Nasarat, S., 2018) in which the proponent made mention that Phrasal Verbs are frequently used in informal English speakers produce them unconsciously.

Lastly, the respondents only got an actual mean of 7.78 in Verb Tense which means they are in Below Average level in this particular English Essential. The respondents explicitly showed their struggle in tenses of verbs since the Verb tenses in the Philippine context is totally different from the English Verb Tenses. This is similar to the article in Everyday Grammar which was posted on December 31, 2015 which stated that Learning Verb Tenses can be difficult to learn in a

foreign language. Different cultures think different ways about time. Chinese, for example, has no grammatical verb tenses. Other languages, like Indonesian, express time only through adverbs — there are no changes to the verb form.

Post-test Performance in English Basic Essentials

The post-test performance in English Basic Essentials includes the Verb Tense, Phrasal Verb, and Question Formation and Tag Question. Before the respondents took the post-test, the facilitator applied the Communicative Approach in teaching grammar, particularly in English Basic Essentials. During the teaching-learning process, the strategies that were applied were task-completion, information-gathering, opinion-sharing, information-transfer, reasoning-gap, and role plays. These mentioned strategies are mainly used in Communicative Approach. Table 2 shows the performance result of the students' post-test after the application of Communicative Approach. The topics, approach, strategies, and procedures were intricately planned to have a vertical teaching-learning process.

The post-test has a total of 60 items in which the three (3) English Essentials has 20 items each—20 items for verb tense, 20 items for phrasal verb, and 20 items for Question Formation and Tag Question. The same with the pre-test, the Hypothetical Mean of each English Essential is 12 which is the sixty percent (60%) of 20. The Hypothetical Mean that is set is based on the institutional passing percentage for A.B. English Language. The number of respondents in this study is 27, which is the total number of population of A.B. English Language freshmen (2018-2019).

Based on table number 2, the post-test performance of the respondents in Phrasal Verb has the highest actual mean which is 13.11 which means the students are on Above Average level on this particular English Essential.

A. Learning Verb Tenses Using Communicative Approach

For the Phrasal Verbs, one (1) whole day was spent for this session. The facilitator integrated different strategies under Communicative Approach. For Phrasal Verb 1 (General Points of Phrasal Verbs), the activity called “Use Me Correctly” was used. This is a reasoning-gap strategy. There was also interactive discussion with the facilitator and peer brainstorming to make use of the English Language. For Phrasal Verb 2 (In and Out) an activity called “Wordless Drama” was integrated. This is a reasoning-gap strategy. The respondents find this strategy fun and challenging. For Phrasal Verb 3 (On and Off), the reasoning gap strategy was employed in the instruction. Lastly, in Phrasal Verb 4 (Up and Down) also utilized role-play strategy.

A detailed and thorough explanation of the pre, during, and post-activities can be seen in the Appendix C day one (2). The respondents were surprised to know the meaning of some of the phrasal verbs. The respondents also admitted that it is hard to recall the meaning of the Phrasal Verbs since not all are used regularly.

Referring back to table number 2, this is then followed by Question Formation and Tag Question which has an actual mean of 12.67, and this indicates that the students are in Average level on this English Essential.

B. Learning Question Formation and Tag Question Using Communicative Approach

For the Question Formation and Tag Question, one (1) whole day was spent for this session. The thorough and detailed flow of this English Basic Essential can be seen in the Appendix C day 3. This was also administered using Communication Approach. Most of the strategies used were role-play, information-transfer, reasoning-gap, and information gathering. The respondents find this topic the most challenging and they also got a lot of questions to the facilitator as to how to formulate other types of questions. Instead of giving the right answer, the facilitator encouraged the respondents to convert statements into question forms and tag question forms. The respondents were also motivated to even construct more questions and have it critiqued by their peers then to the facilitator.

Referring back to table number 2, lastly, the respondents got an actual mean of 9.04 in Verb Tense which means they are in Average level on this particular English Essential.

C. Learning Verb Tense Using Communicative Approach

For the Verb Tenses, one (1) whole day was spent for all tenses. The first topic was present continuous tense wherein the pre-activity was a charade and the post-activity has utilized role-play strategy. There was also an interactive discussion regarding the topic in which students can actively clarify, verify, analyze, and ask for more questions. The next topic was simple present and its post-activity has utilized information-transfer strategy. For the simple past, a strategy information-gathering was used in the post-activity. The next topic was past continuous in which reasoning-gap strategy was used in

the post-activity. For simple future, the strategy opinion-sharing was integrated. For Future continuous, the same strategy was used in simple future. For present perfect tense, a strategy called task-completion was incorporated. For past perfect tense, the information-transfer activity was employed in the instruction. For future perfect tense, the task-completion activity was also used. For present perfect continuous, the role-play strategy was integrated. For the past perfect continuous, the information –transfer strategy was utilized, and lastly, the task-completion strategy was used in future perfect continuous.

After the first day of teaching-learning process, although physically and mentally tired, the language learners are beyond grateful for the in-depth learning since the respondents enjoyed the games, activities, and other interactive discussions. The respondents admitted that verb tenses were tricky and still a little confusing; however, they showed determination and eagerness to learn knowing the fact that they specialized in English Language.

Mean Gain between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Performance

The whole population of AB-English first year students, which consisted of 27 students, were gathered for the pre-test. The pre-test was conducted to assess the students' performance in Basic English Essentials, specifically in Verb Tenses, Phrasal Verbs, and Question Formation and Tag Question.

Based on table n, the Phrasal Verb has the highest mean gain of 4.100. In the pre-test performance, the students were in Average level and in the post-test performance the students were in Above Average level. This means that there is a significant mean gain between the pre-test and post-test performance of the respondents and thus, this rejects the Null Hypothesis. This is in consonance with the findings of Oblast (2013) in his study, Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Phrasal Verbs, in which after he applied cognitive strategy in phrasal verb learning to the grade eights students, the results in post-test was higher than the results in pre-test. In other words, through providing the students with suitable and appropriate approach and strategies, there will be improvement in their learning.

The Verb Tense has the next highest mean gain of 2.413. In the pre-test performance, the students were in Below Average level and in the post-test performance; the students were in Average level. This means that there is a significant mean gain between the pre-test and post-test performance of the respondents and thus, this rejects the Null Hypothesis. This is also in consonance with the findings of Nelson (2017) in her study, Grammatical Acquisition of Present and Past Tense Verb Forms in a Communicative Setting, in which 70% of the respondents or English language learners were learning verbs in a communicative setting. In other words, there is an improvement in verb tense learning after applying communicative strategies.

Lastly, the Question Formation and Tag Question has the lowest mean gain of 1.467. In the pre-test performance, the students were in Average level and in the post-test performance the students were also in Average level. This means that there is no significant mean gain between the pre-test and post-test performance of the respondents and thus, this fails to reject the Null Hypothesis. In consonance with the study of Cobbina (2013), this researcher did not emphasize if the learners, after being exposed to different strategies in improving their question construction skills, got some progress in this particular essential skill. The researcher made mentioned that question formation is an inherent feature of human language. As stipulated on the researcher's study, the respondents were able to identify agreement markers or subject marking on verbs however these could not be adequately expounded due to time and space constraints.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is a significant mean gain between the pre-test and post-test performance of the students in terms of Verb Tense since they improved from Below Average to Average. There is also a significant mean gain between the pre-test and post-test performance of the students in terms of Phrasal Verb because they have improved from Average to Above Average level. Lastly, there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of the students in terms of Question Formation and Tag Question since the level of the respondents was a constant Average.

Thus, through using Communicative Approach and its strategies in teaching English Language Grammar is effective and efficient, since the respondents not only gained in their post-test but also were able to use the target language in the teaching-learning process.

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