



# Imageries in Grammar Teaching: Effects and Usefulness

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**Abstract**— This descriptive study was conducted for the purpose of determining the effectiveness of using imageries in the field of grammar teaching, particularly in spotting modifier errors. In doing so, researchers made a total of 116 college students taking up a skills-based English subject in the School Year 2019-2020 participate. Their participation came in the form of engaging in a paired work classroom activity and answering a 15-item multiple choice test/ quiz before and after being taught how to use imageries in spotting the previously-mentioned grammar error. Comparison and contrast of performances expressed in frequencies and percentages during the classroom activity and during the quiz were then done to determine possible effects and implications. As a result, it was found that the chosen pedagogical intervention (i.e., usage of imageries) had noteworthy impact in improving students' ability in spotting modifier errors.

**Keywords**— *Imageries, grammar teaching, descriptive study*

## I. INTRODUCTION

For its indispensable utility in life regardless of the situation, language has become an important object of study; in such a field, communication is seen to be helpful especially in facilitating the learning and acquisition of communicative competence among language learners (Choi et al., 2012). Communication, or the actual use of language, is seen to be a part of a lifelong process. Without being able to communicate or make sense of what is being communicated, individuals will be incapable of abstract thinking which in itself, gives way to the expansion of human knowledge and societal evolution.

Another form of communication is literature which, like other art forms, paves the way for human entertainment and expression. It is also said to ignite imagination, arouse noble emotions, and enrich the human mind by allowing it to reflect on life and fill it with new ideas. However, beneficial to humans as it is, communication in itself may likewise be a barrier for the free flow and understanding of ideas. Contributory to this so-called barrier is the fact that languages such as English have complex rules for observation and understanding, and

it also has varieties. Difficult as it may be, English is central to internationalization, but not all “Englishes” or their expressions are the same (Tupas, 2015). Despite this, it is a must to learn or acquire it for any learner as it is considered to be the most popular foreign language (Mirabela & Ariana, 2013).

For the above reasons, learning and acquisition of the English language and its underlying components have become important for language teachers around the globe. Part and parcel of teaching the components of the said language is grammar teaching as it is believed to be a way to help learners use English correctly and appropriately. However, English teachers sometimes find that a word, phrase, or sentence may be ambiguous for learners as it has more than one meaning. The ambiguity, however, can be noticed if one really has linguistic knowledge of how one may best analyze the phrase or sentence. English sentence processing leads to the honing of the analytic skills of a student. The application of different drills and exercises is clear evidence of such a claim, for the more that the students engage with patterns in a language, the more that they become critical and sensitive in processing what they read

or careful in what they produce. Although several accounts of ambiguity resolution have been proposed in recent years, none of them have succeeded in making students consistently and accurately predict meanings in the patterns of new languages; as discussed by Wasow (2015), ambiguity also occurs at the semantic level. It entails two or more possible interpretations of the structure of a clause wherein grammatical and semantic processing interact.

Ambiguity in texts is also seen to be prevalent and contributory to reading and understanding success. It is essential that students are helped as much as possible with the syntactic structures found in the written texts they encounter and trained to recognize and handle them with full accuracy. Because if not, grammatical sentences which have mismatched heads and modifier noun numbers result in slower reading as supported by the study of Desmet (2018).

The dynamicity of the English language requires that its teachers be also on the consistent move to evolve their pedagogy and enhance their curriculum. After all, at the base of any learning process are teachers who serve as catalysts (Suliman et al., 2017). They must always be on the lookout for different innovations that may deliver fruitful learning to different types of learners to ultimately hone their abilities to communicate in the aforementioned global language. One way of doing so is incorporating the use of imageries as aids for linguistic interpretation, as it gives perceivable mental representations of linguistic constructions. According to Green (2017), the ability to construct mental imageries distinguishes a human from other beings as it allows him to build better understanding of things even before they are concretized.

As the researchers of this study examine the significance of the use of imageries as an innovative way to address the problems on lexical and structural ambiguities in the form of linguistic modifiers, a potential pedagogical solution may be derived and used in the wider English as a second language learning context. With these, this study aimed at determining the effectiveness of the use of imageries in delivering or teaching the said grammar topic in the collegiate level. To do so, the following specific problems were first answered:

- 1.) How may learners be described in terms of accuracy in identifying modifier errors prior to the intervention (i.e., being taught through the use of imageries)?
- 2.) How may the learners be described in terms of their passing score frequency and percentage and general score average after being subjected to the intervention?
- 3.) What implications for the teaching of grammar, particularly modifier errors, do the results of this study serve?

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The flow of the research processes in this study is outlined in Figure 1 which illustrates the conceptual framework of this study. With the help of a simple classroom activity, the researchers of this study were able to establish its relevance and determine the current ability of the target population in identifying modifier errors. Following the process of establishing relevance or needs, the researchers proceeded to administering the intervention while teaching in class. After the administration of the chosen intervention, a test on making students identify modifier errors was executed. Differences in performance before and after the intervention were then recorded through simple frequency and percentage to pinpoint possible effectiveness.

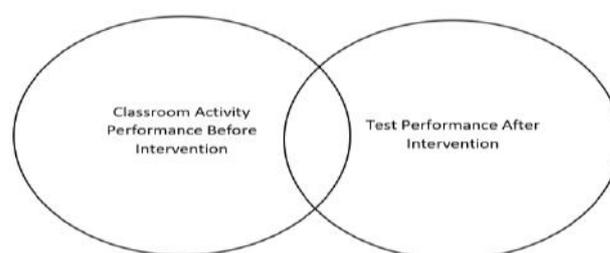


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

## III. METHODS

This action research paper employed the Descriptive Status and Evaluative Designs in achieving and answering its objectives and/ or research questions.

According to Paler-Calmorin and Calmorin (1995), a study that may both be classified under the descriptive status and the descriptive evaluative designs is a study whose general aims are for the identification of a current phenomenon or condition followed by the appraisal of the effectiveness of a chosen action in possibly making the identified phenomenon better. This study followed the aforementioned research designs in that it involved the description of respondents' collective performance in relation to spotting modifier errors and subsequently followed by testing to check or validate whether changes in initial performances have occurred with the help of a chosen pedagogical action.

Specifically, the initial collective performance of 116 college students taking up the subject Academic Literacy in the first semester of school year 2019-2020, under the bachelor's degree programs accountancy, business administration, and medical technology, was first determined through a simple classroom activity that required them to engage in paired oral recitations and tell whether or not given statements had modifier errors.

Following the execution of the said classroom activity, collective performance of the identified participants was determined.

After establishing students' initial collective performance, the researchers proceeded to implementing a certain pedagogical intervention which was the use of imageries in the teaching and spotting of modifier errors. This then served as the intervention phase of the study.

Following the intervention phase, a paper-and-pencil test was administered. It was composed of 15 multiple-choice items that required takers to identify statements that did not contain modifier errors, thereby requiring the execution of the same learning skill which was initially measured and observing the assessment method called the Parallel-Forms Method wherein items used in the pre and post-intervention stages cover or target the same set of contents or involve the execution of the same learning skill (Calmorin, 2004). In other words, both activities, as in the classroom activity and the paper-and-pencil test, had similar nature but did not involve identical items. During this stage, the participants were asked to individually take the test as a form of recorded quiz, where 9 (i.e., 60% of 15) served as the cut-off passing score.

When data both from the pre and post-intervention stages were collected, the researchers proceeded to doing their analysis of the said data. This process involved identifying in terms of frequency and percentage the abilities of the respondents to spot modifier errors before and after they were exposed to the usage of the chosen intervention (i.e., usage of imageries). Because of doing so, the researchers were able to come up with results and conclusions regarding the possible effectiveness of the class intervention applied.

#### IV. RESULTS

Doing all of the previously-mentioned processes, the researchers were able to come up with the following results in response to the specific problems of this study:

1.) In classes composed of 24 to 39 students, only one to three pairs or two to six (i.e., 7-15%) were able to correctly spot sentences with modifier errors on their first encounter of them. On average, in a sample size of 116 college students, only 3.44 or 3% (i.e., 3 students) of them are predicted to have the ability to do the said skill with ease.

2.) In terms of their general average score in identifying modifier errors in the 15-item paper-and-pencil test, the takers can be said to have adequate ability in doing the said skill after yielding 11 out of 15 or 73% as their average. Ninety-five out of 116 or 82% of them passed while 21 or 18% did not.

3.) For the teaching of grammar, particularly the spotting or identification of modifier errors, this study proved the chosen intervention (i.e., the usage of imageries) to be effective as evidenced by the increase in the number of students who were found to correctly spot sentences with modifier errors during the paper-and-pencil test.

Prior to the intervention, an average of only 3% or 3 out of 116 students who were able to spot modifier errors was found. After the intervention, such percentage increased wherein the average score that the participants were able to produce was 11 or 73.33% out of the 15 points found in the quiz. The 95 students out of the 116 takers or 82% of the them had passing scores, suggesting satisfactory ability to spot modifier errors.

Ineffectiveness of the suggested intervention for select students possibly implies that other than difficulty in spotting modifier errors, they may also have difficulty in terms of comprehending what is written as comprehension plays a vital role in enabling people to interpret correctly what they are reading. Without mastery of reading comprehension skills, people may have difficulty in realizing or spotting statements with modifier errors. The teaching or honing of reading comprehension along with grammar teaching may then be given attention as well.

#### V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of pairs per class that were able to correctly identify statements with modifier errors in the classroom activity conducted by the researchers. Other than the frequency and percentage of pairs per class, the table also presents the average percentage of students from the whole sample size.

The frequency of pairs that were able to correctly spot statements with modifier errors ranged from 1 to 3 or around 7 to 15% of class populations whose sizes varied from 24 to 39 students each. On average, only about 3 to 4% of the total population of 116 students, as in around four students, was observed to be capable of spotting modifier errors.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Participants Answering Correctly the Classroom Activity (n=116)

Section/ Course	Frequency (1 pair:2 students)	Percentage
Medical Technology (39)	3	15.38%
BSBA Mgmt. & Entrepreneurship (24)	1	8.33%
BSBA Marketing Management (27)	1	7.40%
Accountancy (26)	3	11.53%
Average	2	3.44%

Table 2 shows the average scores and percentages of the takers divided as to their courses or sections followed by the general average of the whole sample or group.

The average score per section or course ranged from 9 to 12 points or 60 to 80% of the whole test. On average, the whole group of 116 students yielded 11 points in the quiz or 73.33%.

Table 2: Average Score and Test Performance of the Participants in the Quiz (n=116)

Course/ Section	Average Score	Percentage
Medical Technology (39)	12	80%
BSBA Mgmt. & Entrepreneurship (24)	9	60%
BSBA Marketing Management (27)	11	73.33%
Accountancy (26)	11	73.33%
General Average	11	73.33%

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage of students who met the 60% criterion or attained a score of at least 9 in the quiz and passed it.

Ninety-five students or 82% of the population were able to pass the quiz while 21 or 18% were not able to gain passing scores. With the wide gap size-wise of 64% between those who passed (82%) and those who did not (18%), it can be inferred that the intervention, as in the use of imageries, has the potential of assisting students to have

the needed ability to spot modifier errors. Using data also presented in the previous tables, it may be observed that there was an increase of 67% to 75% from the post-intervention test passers as compared to those who passed during the pre-intervention. This is further supported by the fact that the percentage of those who passed post-intervention is significantly higher than the output yielded from the pre-intervention phase with only 7 to 15% serving as the resulting value (as seen in Table 1).

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Students' Overall Performance During the Quiz (n=116)

Descriptor	Frequency	Percentage
Passed	95	82%
Failed	21	18%

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Keeping in mind the limitations of this present action research, its researchers recommend the following who wish to delve on the same:

1.) Other statistical methods of analysis, not limited to simple frequency and percentage, be employed in

interpreting and processing gathered data and be subjected to the validation of a statistician;

2.) Testing be done more than once or in cycles to further check on score reliability;

3.) Instruments for data collection be subjected to expert validation; and

4.) Use of imageries for grammar teaching, particularly in spotting modifier errors be further explored in the classroom for its potential pedagogical efficacy.

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