

# A MIXED METHOD STUDY ON GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: BASIS FOR ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the grammatical competence of senior high school students. It concentrates on their capacity to understand and write grammatically correct language. The study aims to shed light on the current level of grammatical proficiency among this particular set of learners and to pinpoint possible growth areas. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods strategy is used in the research to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. While quantitative data entails giving grammar tests and assessing the results, qualitative data entails studying students' and teachers' interviews. It aimed to establish a fact that describes the grammatical competence of Grade 11 senior high school students in Maragusan National High School. The quantitative approach utilizing a validated test questionnaire revealed that the spelling component has a mean of 5.09 and considered the lowest proficiency of 40.96, which describe the respondents did not meet expectation. Moreover, the qualitative inquiry of 5 student-participants and 5 teacher-participants using an in-depth interview for their experiences and possible activities in addressing the students' difficulties. The six structured themes generated emerging themes such as Not Focused on Learning Grammar, Difficulty Word Use and Spelling, Lack of Study and Exploration of Grammar, and Poor Memorization. The emerged themes on the difficulties of the students spelling, subject verb agreement and grammar. In addition, the coping strategies like reading activities, internet search, listening to podcast and watching videos are the emerged themes raised. All these would be properly addressed through work the enhancement activities being implemented.*

**Keyword:** *explanatory sequential mixed methods design.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English is currently recognized as the dominant international language of communication. As the world becomes increasingly connected through modern technology, the importance of English has become even more apparent. Today, people from different regions can communicate quickly and easily thanks to technology. Therefore, it has become crucial to possess strong English language skills and proficiency. Particularly for participating in global commerce. This is due to the widespread use of English in business and education. Additionally, English is valued for its practicality as a means of communication at the international level and for its potential to enhance one's employment opportunities. (Estanislao, 2013).

Furthermore, using the English language in communication is essential in connecting with other people. As such, writing with proper grammar is considered an effective tool for language (Sadiku, 2015). As the 21st century continues, writing has become a vital skill in producing language and an essential skill in communicating.

Globally, Demir (2019) investigated the grammatical competence of Turkish senior high school students. Their findings revealed that students struggled with complex grammatical structures and encountered difficulties in applying grammar rules in contextualized situations. The study recommended incorporating explicit grammar instruction, providing error correction feedback, and facilitating communicative activities to enhance grammatical competence among students.

In the Philippines, where English is widely used in education, business, and other domains, having a good command of English grammar is crucial for students to succeed. However, there have been concerns about the grammatical competence of students in the Philippines.

According to Sioco and De Vera (2018), junior high school students in Pangasinan struggle with English grammar, and this has been attributed to various factors, such as the lack of exposure to English outside the classroom, inadequate English language teaching methods, and a lack of resources. Similarly, Maningo (2020) notes that Filipino students often have difficulty with grammar because of the influence of their native language, which has different rules and structures than English.

The researcher interviewed Senior High School teachers at Maragusan National High School with regard to the grammatical problems of the students. According to their feedbacks, the students often commit mistakes in terms of subject verb agreement and spelling. This is the reason why the researcher conducts a study about the grammatical competence of Senior High School Students of Maragusan National High School.

### 1.1 Research Questions

1. What is the level grammatical competence of Grade 11 Senior High School students according to the following indices:
  - 1.1 subject-verb agreement
  - 1.2 pronoun-antecedent agreement
  - 1.3 spelling
  - 1.4 capitalization and punctuation?
2. What are the difficulties in grammar being experienced by the student-participants?
3. What are the coping strategies used by the student-participants in addressing grammatical problems?
4. What activities could the teacher-participants suggest that would help enhance the skills in English grammar?
5. What grammar enhancement program could be crafted based on the data gathered?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

The researcher used an explanatory sequential mixed method as the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of a research question by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), an explanatory sequential mixed method two-phase research design involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data in the first phase, followed by collecting and analyzing qualitative data in the second phase to help explain or interpret the quantitative results. The purpose of the second phase is to provide a more in-depth understanding of the research question or phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, Asenahabi, (2019) added that the explanatory sequential mixed method entails gathering and analyzing data in two separate phases within one study—first quantitative, then qualitative.

### 2.2 Research Respondents and Participants

This study employed a concurrent mixed method sampling. This sampling procedure proceeded by combining the qualitative and quantitative methods. Furthermore, universal sampling was used in the quantitative approach and with purposive sampling in the qualitative approach. According to Yin (2009), purposive sampling is all about being subjective in choosing the participants. The participants of this study will be based on purposive sampling.

The respondents of the quantitative approach of this study included all the Grade 11 HUMSS students of Maragusan National High School- Senior High School Department. Further, 5 senior high school teachers and 5 senior high school students was selected for the in-depth interview.

As Boote et al. (2009) coined that in-depth interview emphasizes on the one-on-one conversation between an interviewer and a participant, in which the interviewer asks open-ended questions to explore the participant's perspectives, experiences, and opinions on a particular topic in great detail. The researcher conducted an in-depth interview to 5 students and 5 teachers.

### **2.3 Research Instrument**

Two distinct instruments were used in this study. A validated test questionnaire was utilized for the quantitative inquiry and an interview utilizing a validated semi-structured interview guide was used for the qualitative aspect.

#### *Quantitative Analysis*

Only the standard descriptive equivalents of the ratings based on School Form 5 Report on Promotion and Learning Progress and Achievement under DepEd Order 8, s. 2015. used to facilitate the grammatical test results of the Grade 11 HUMSS students. In the quantitative inquiry, a 40-item test using a validated questionnaire was utilized. The grading scale scores and descriptive ratings are as follows: 90 - 100 for Outstanding, 85 - 89 for Very Satisfactory, 80 – 84 for Satisfactory, 75 – 79 for Fairly Satisfactory, and Below 75 for Did Not Meet Expectation.

#### *Qualitative Analysis*

The participants' responses were collected, documented through note-taking and audio recording, and subsequently analyzed. These responses were then categorized into major themes that reflected various aspects of the phenomenon. To ensure validity, the triangulation strategy was employed to cross-reference evidence from different individuals and establish consistency in the descriptions and themes in qualitative research. The researcher carefully scrutinized each information source and presented supporting evidence to validate each theme.

### **2.4 Research Procedure**

First, the researcher asked permission from the Division of Davao de Oro through a letter. Once approved by the division superintendent, the researcher will prepare another letter for the school principal for the conduct of the study. Further, the Grade Level Head gave a schedule for the conduct of the grammatical test to the students. After the schedule was set, then the conduct of the test followed.

The researcher developed an interview guide for conducting in-depth interviews to gather information on the causes and coping strategies of the study participants. Using this method, the researcher was able to obtain a detailed understanding of the participants' experiences. During the interview, the researcher took notes and also used an audio recorder to ensure accurate documentation of the interview process.

After transcribing the responses, they were provided to the data analyst for analysis. The data were then interpreted by developing themes from the responses. This study utilized semi-structured interviews, which included key questions to guide the exploration of certain areas but also allowed for flexibility to explore ideas or responses in greater depth (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick, 2008).

According to Williams (2007), the data was collected through lengthy interviews that aimed to comprehend and interpret the participants' perceptions of events. To ensure sufficient data was gathered, each interview was allotted a minimum of 30 minutes, with additional time allowed if necessary. Subsequently, the responses were transcribed and furnished to the data analyst. After themes will be developed from the responses, the data were interpreted.

### **2.5 Statistical Treatment/Data Analysis**

The quantitative and the qualitative data were analyzed separately in this study. The quantitative and the qualitative results were merged to plan an overall interpretation. The following tools were used to analyze these two distinct data:

*Quantitative Analysis*

Only one statistical tool used to facilitate the test results of the level of grammatical competence of grade 11 senior high school students.

**Mean.** This was used to determine the level of grammatical competence of grade 11 senior high school students.

**Class Proficiency.** This was used to know the level of competence or mastery that a student has achieved in a particular subject or course. Class proficiency in this sense would indicate how well a student understands and performs in the class, usually measured through assessments, tests, projects, or other evaluation methods.

*Qualitative Analysis*

Responses from participants were gathered, written down and recorded using an audio recorder, and then analyzed. Major themes that characterized the various facets of the phenomena were created from these comments. To support evidence from several sources in descriptions and themes in qualitative research, the triangulation approach was developed. Each data source was evaluated by the researcher, who then offered proof to back up a topic. Due to the information's reliance on numerous individuals or sources, the study's accuracy is ensured. It motivates the researcher to produce a report that is truthful and believable in this way (Creswell, 2012).

**3. FINDINGS**

The findings presented the result of the convergent parallel mixed method reports on the findings from the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative databases. It is divided into two parts.

The first part is about the results of a quantitative–descriptive assessment of the 104 Grade 11 HUMSS students utilizing a 40-item test questionnaire.

The second part is the results of the qualitative – phenomenological inquiry utilizing an in-depth interview to 10 participants (5- student participants and 5 teacher participants). The responses of the participants were analyzed and common themes were identified. Further, in order to protect the identities of the participants, the codes were used in accordance to the ethical standards for qualitative research. The results were presented based on the order of research questions used in this study.

**3.1 Level of Grammatical Competence of Grade 11 Senior High School Students**

Presented in Table 1 are the mean test scores of the grade 11 students of Maragusan National High School. The result of the said test was based by the standard descriptive equivalents of the ratings based on school form 5 report on promotion and learning progress and achievement under DepEd order 8, s. 2015.

	Highest Possible Score	Mean	Class Proficiency	Description
Subject-verb agreement	40	6.28	62.88	Did Not Meet Expectation
Pronoun-antecedent agreement	40	5.88	58.84	Did Not Meet Expectation
Spelling	40	5.09	40.96	Did Not Meet Expectation
Capitalization and Punctuation	40	5.68	56.82	Did Not Meet Expectation

**Fig -1:** Level of Grammatical Competence of Grade 11 Senior High School Students

It shows the result of the diagnostic test given to the 140 respondents. The grammatical test was composed of subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. The component under subject-verb agreement yielded a mean of 6.28 and a class proficiency of 62.88 which manifested under the description of did not meet the expectation. The component under pronoun-antecedent agreement gained also did



not meet expectations by yielding a mean test score of 5.88 and a class proficiency of 58.84. In addition, the component under spelling resulted has a mean of 5.09 and consider the lowest proficiency of 40.96 which describe the respondents did not meet the expectation. The spelling is one of the difficult areas being experienced by students (Stirling, 2011). Further, the component under capitalization and punctuation gained also did not meet expectations by yielding a mean test score of 5.68 and a class proficiency of 56.82.

Overall, the subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation had the same description ratings which is did not meet expectations which means the students failed to pass the test.

### 3.2 Suitable Activities to Use in Improving Grammar Skills.

*Reading activities.* Utilizing written texts as a tool to strengthen and improve comprehension of grammatical conventions, sentence construction, and language usage. Students can increase their understanding of grammatical principles and successfully use them in their own writing and communication by participating in such activities.

*Do internet search.* Browsing on the internet can help in gathering data and learning English grammar. By conducting an internet search, users can gather information, conduct research, solve problems, learn about new topics, and stay informed about various subjects.

*Exploration.* Exploring the purpose and rules enhanced the knowledge in grammar usage, in order to correct the mistake.

*Listen to the podcast.* Students may enhance their understanding of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and general language ability by actively listening to podcasts. Podcasts frequently include examples of real-world language use, narratives, and interactive activities, making the learning process interesting and pleasurable. Student-

*Write a story.* Engaging in writing stories can help in improving the grammatical abilities of the students. Students get the chance to practice a number of grammatical concepts by creating tales, including sentence construction, verb tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and acceptable word usage.

*Watch videos.* Utilizing video content specifically designed to enhance students' grammar skills. Students may strengthen their understanding of grammar, increase their vocabulary, and enhance their general language ability by watching these videos.

### 3.3 Ways in which Teacher could Help in Improving Grammar Skills

*Extend time.* Students' grammatical abilities can be considerably improved by giving teachers more time. With additional time allotted, teachers may give thorough and in-depth grammar training, guaranteeing that students have a firm understanding of grammatical ideas. This extra time gives teachers the chance to go through grammatical concepts in-depth, provide clear justifications, and offer lots of opportunity for practice and reinforcement.

*Conduct remedial instruction.* Remedial Instruction from the teachers contributed an impact to the students. Remedial classes provide targeted and focused instruction for students who are struggling with grammar concepts.

*Facilitate and devise engaging activities.* The facilitation of and creation of fun activities by teachers may significantly help students' grammatical abilities. Teachers may better engage students and motivate them to study by designing engaging lessons that are fun and engaging for them. Students can actively apply grammatical principles in important circumstances through engaging activities like grammar games, discussions, role plays, or multimedia presentations.

*Organize grammar workshops.* The grammar abilities of students can be greatly enhanced by teachers who conduct grammar workshops. These courses offer concentrated teaching that is completely focused on grammatical principles and regulations. Teachers may offer thorough lectures, rectify frequent grammatical problems, and provide focused practice tasks by structuring the learning environment. In workshops, students may fully immerse

themselves in grammar-related themes, participate in engaging discussions, and practice their learning via practical exercises.

*Use technological advancement.* Teachers can greatly help pupils' grammatical abilities by utilizing technology improvements. Through the use of technology, grammar training may be improved and made more interactive and engaging. Teachers can make use of grammar-related software, online grammar resources, or instructional websites that provide interactive grammar courses, tests, and activities. With the use of these tools, students may independently learn grammar while getting immediate feedback and monitoring their development.

### 3.4 Grammar Mastery Program

The Grammar Mastery Program is designed to help senior high school students in terms of the development of their grammatical abilities. Grammar principles must be well understood and used in order for communication, both written and spoken, to be effective. However, a lot of students have trouble with grammar, which results in misunderstandings, poor writing, and a decrease in their general language skills.

The Grammar Mastery Program seeks to provide students the grammatical skills they need to succeed in their studies and future ambitions by offering thorough teaching, enjoyable activities, and constant practice. The curriculum acknowledges the value of good grammatical proficiency in a variety of academic fields, occupations, and everyday conversations. Additionally, it recognizes the connection between grammatical proficiency and linguistic growth, critical thinking, and general academic performance.

### 3.5 Implication for Practice

*Causes for the Difficulties in Grammar.* The problems students have learning grammar are significantly impacted by their lack of consistent practice and not focused on learning the grammar. Without regular practice and focusing, students find it difficult to apply grammar rules correctly, which leads to grammatical mistakes and inconsistencies in both their written and spoken language. Lack of practice also restricts students' exposure to various sentence forms and grammar patterns, which impairs their capacity for precise and clear communication. Additionally, a lack of experience makes it difficult for students to recognize and fix grammatical problems since they are unfamiliar with the most frequent errors. It takes practice and focus to learn to increase vocabulary and comprehend how to use words correctly in various grammatical circumstances. In this context, the school should engage the students in various task and activities that will motivate them to focus in learning the grammar.

*Rules of English Grammar Found Difficult.* Spelling and subject-verb agreement issues are only two examples of the wide-ranging effects that poor grammar may have on student's language skills. Communication problems might arise from problems with subject-verb agreement because they can produce phrases that are ambiguous and grammatically wrong. It might be confusing and difficult to understand the meaning of a sentence if the subjects and verbs are not in harmony.

Similar to grammar issues, spelling issues can make it difficult to communicate effectively in writing since misspelled words can make it difficult to understand and leave a bad impression. The confidence of students in their writing skills may be impacted by inaccurate spelling.

These issues show how important it is to give grammatical rules specific education, practice, and reinforcement. Teachers may assist students in building solid foundations in subject-verb agreement and spelling by addressing these issues through clear teaching, interesting activities, and customized support. Making these improvements beneficial for the students.

*Suitable Activities to Use in Improving Grammar Skills.* Effective language training depends heavily on the selection of appropriate grammar-enhancing activities. The comprehension, application, and retention of grammatical rules among students can be improved through interesting and well-planned exercises. Grammar instruction may be made fun and engaging by include exercises like sentence creation games, error correction assignments, and grammar games. These exercises provide students the chance to use language in a real-world setting, encouraging a greater comprehension of how grammar works in communication. Active participation and peer-to-peer learning can also be encouraged through tasks that stimulate peer cooperation, such group discussions and cooperative learning exercises. Students can be exposed to real-world instances of grammar usage through the use of genuine texts, writing exercises, and multimedia materials, enabling them to see grammar rules in use in real-world situations.

*Ways in which School can Provide Help Students Cope with Grammatical Difficulties.* The methods that school use to support students in dealing with grammatical issues have a big impact on their language growth and academic achievement. Students who are having trouble with grammar, schools can provide targeted interventions like additional grammar training or remedial programs. These treatments can offer individualized help and target troublesome areas. A thorough writing program that combines grammar education at all grade levels may also be implemented in schools. Students may learn to apply grammatical principles in the context of their own writing by incorporating grammar education into writing lessons, which will improve their comprehension and usage of grammar.

Additionally, schools may give students access to tools like writing centers, grammar handbooks, and internet programs for grammatical correction. Creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment that encourages open communication and fosters a growth mindset is also crucial. This includes providing constructive feedback on students' written work, offering opportunities for revision, and emphasizing the importance of grammar as a tool for effective communication. By implementing these strategies, schools can provide the necessary help and support to students coping with grammatical difficulties, empowering them to improve their language skills and succeed academically.

*Ways in which Teacher could Help in Improving Grammar Skills.* The methods used by teachers to assist pupils in developing their grammar abilities have a significant impact on both their academic and linguistic development. Teachers may provide students precise and methodical grammar training to make sure they fully comprehend grammar principles, rules, and structures. They are able to provide explanations that accommodate various learning styles, pertinent examples, and the division of difficult grammatical concepts into digestible chunks. Teachers can relate language to the experiences and interests of their students by incorporating grammar education into relevant and real-world settings. Teachers help students understand the practical value of grammar in successful communication by integrating grammar practice into writing assignments, debates, and oral activities. Teachers also play a critical role in timely and constructive comments on students' written work, concentrating particularly on grammar errors. They can guide students in identifying and correcting grammar mistakes, providing explanations and offering strategies for improvement. Furthermore, teachers can create a supportive classroom environment that encourages risk-taking and promotes active engagement in grammar activities. By fostering a positive attitude towards grammar learning and providing opportunities for collaboration and peer feedback, teachers help students develop confidence and motivation in improving their grammar skills. Ultimately, through their teaching approaches and support, teachers have a significant impact on students' grammar proficiency of the students.

### **3.5 Implication for Future Research**

In as much as the study was limited to the responses of the students of Maragusan National High School, Maragusan West District, Division of Davao de Oro, the following implications for future research are considered:

First, future research may be conducted by selecting other group of junior high students coming from the same school.

Second, another research of the same focus may be conducted to another location to investigate the same problem on grammatical competence of junior high school students.

Third, conduct interview of the other research participants may be conducted to see whether their idea on their grammatical competence is the same with the senior high school students.

Fourth, this study was conducted in a public school, specifically secondary students. Further research could be done to investigate the same problem among other secondary schools and even private institutions.

Finally, the findings of the study are viewed from the lens of the selected secondary school research participants. Another research could be done to find out the teachers' perception on grammatical competence among the junior high school teachers of Maragusan National High School.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

By looking at the scores in the 140-item validated test questionnaire on the level of grammatical competence of senior high school students, the components of subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation manifested they did not meet expectations as a result of the test. In addition, the spelling is yielded the lowest mean which is 5.09, and the lowest proficiency 40.96 that resulted to did not meet expectation description. Most of the students found out that spelling is the most difficult component for them.

The difficulties being experienced by most of the students was spelling, subject-verb agreement, and grammar. These are rampant that resulted to low scores on their test. All of these were remedied or addressed with their coping strategies like reading activities, internet searches, listening to podcasts, and watching videos.

The result in the quantitative inquiry may be justified with the qualitative data or vice versa. In other words, the test scores may be warranted by the difficulties they faced in the level of their grammatical competence. Meaning, the did not meet expectation rating is due to the difficulties mentioned, which eventually addressed as they learned through the different activities being conducted.

#### 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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