

## **A Proposed Instructive Methodology in Teaching English Syntax in the Tertiary Level**

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### **Abstract:**

This descriptive-correlational study was an attempt to propose an instructive methodology to help teachers of English raise the quality of English instruction at the tertiary level of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna, Sto.Niño, Biñan, Laguna, Philippines. The respondents were composed of English, Science and Mathematics faculty and college students from the different colleges of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna enrolled in Communication Arts 1 and 2 subjects during the second semester of AY 2015-2016. Purposive sampling technique was utilized. The study revealed the language problems encountered by the teachers of English do relate closely to the language problems met by the Science and Mathematics teachers ( $t= 1.9529$ ) with critical value of 2.0930 at 0.05 level of significance. The research study concludes with discussion about the significance of the employment/implementation of the proposed instructive methodology which can help improve teachers' techniques and strategies and students' communicative competence in the use of English. It earnestly tries to conceptualize the validity of the paradigm of the teaching-learning of English.

### **Keywords:**

Instructive methodology, English syntax, English paradigm, communicative competence

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### Introduction

Communication in English is obviously a felt need for a purpose of knowledge and experience as have been proven in international conferences on world trade, education, health and other areas of concern. Capability of students to develop communicative competence in English through intelligible instruction in that language is one of the main educative demands and thrusts of education today. English is undoubtedly an international language. It is used in all parts of the world and serves as a tool in bringing about global understanding among the various nations. One of the articles in the Asia Week on private enterprises in Malaysia, entitled, "English Teaching, and the Most Lucrative Enterprise after Growing Tomatoes" posits that the teaching of English in Malaysia is of great value not only in the academe but also in the field (Devedesor, 2000).

In the Philippines, many if not most people tend to judge the quality of education being delivered to the students by their competence in expressing their ideas and experiences in English in most government and private offices and agencies, English is the medium of communication. In the academe, English makes recent available advancement in technology. Using that language knowledge in Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Biology, Philosophy, Law, Medicine and the rest of the disciplines is largely disseminated through the use of intellectual languages, most predominantly, English.

English has been and is still being used for instructional purposes at all school levels, but the problem of poor communicative competence in English prevails even among teachers themselves, and more predominantly, among pupils and students. How to solve this problem is a problem itself because the language of the forthcoming technology era is undoubtedly English.

However, learning would be facilitated much if both the teacher and the students are competent in the use of the medium of instruction. As cited by Nunan (2001), teaching students the way they learn best contributes much to the learning. When students are thought, using strategies that work well with them, the possibility that they will develop greater aptitude in what they are learning is greater. Nunan's thinking applies well to the teaching of English, in the sense that the teacher of English should use strategies that motivate, role model and involve students' activity in the process.

On the other hand, Cabanilla (2000) developed theory of language learning which has three stages. From the 1940's to the 1960's, the descriptive or "habit-formation" approach was applied by most language teachers. The approach called for the audio lingual or aural-oral method of teaching, which was characterized by repetitive pattern practice and substitution drills. The approach tools are based on the principles of language in speech, not in writing; language as a set of habits, and language as what native speakers say, and not what others think they ought to say. The teacher teaches the language, and not teaches about it.

After the 1960's, the cognitive-code theory came up which disagreed with the concept of language as a set of habits. Verbal behavior was the product of cognition, a view shared by transformationalists, hence, the role of the learner was basic in learning, and fluency and accuracy in language could be gained by confronting the learner with tasks and activities that would lead to habitual pronunciation, morphology, and syntax. The third

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theory which dominated the recent nineties was the communication theory, which focused on the functions of motivation and personality factors in language learning.

As recent attitudes and points of views on language learning came up, techniques and other methodologies are disregarded and new ones are introduced. However, Prator (2000), distinguished authority on teaching English as a second language, came up with his theories on the teaching of English, as follows: teaching is more of an art than a science; no methodologist has the answer; try to avoid the pendulum syndrome; place a high value on practical experimentation; look into various disciplines for insights; view objectives as an overriding consideration; consider tested techniques as resources; attach as much importance to what your students say as to how they say it; remember that what is new is not necessarily better with all the viewpoints and insights of language teaching and learning. It is axiomatic that there will be no effective learning if there is no meaningful and upgraded instruction introduced. These must go together hand in hand. Considering the anticipated problem, this study was conducted to contribute to the solutions of the problem on how to improve and upgrade tertiary instruction in English by a way of a proposed instructive methodology in teaching English syntax.

### Methods

This study was conducted at the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna, City of Biñan. This made use of the descriptive design and employed purposive sampling in choosing five (5) English and six (6) Science and Mathematics regular faculty and 300 respondent-students out of 1200 college freshmen from the different colleges of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna enrolled in Communication Arts 1 and 2 subjects during the second semester of Academic Year 2015-2016.

The study utilized a survey using a questionnaire to: determine the demographic profile of the respondent-teachers, and the problems met by both teachers and students in the use of English as a medium of instruction.

Before the actual data gathering started, the researcher made a letter seeking permission to conduct the investigation from the concerned deans of the University. Final administration of the questionnaire was done upon the approval of the aforesaid request. The researcher personally did the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires with the assistance of the his friends who voluntarily extended their immeasurable help just for the success of the study. After which, the data were collected and tabulated for statistical analysis with the guidance of his statistician and adviser.

To answer the problems in-depth and test the hypotheses, appropriate statistical tools were used, such as percentage to find out the frequency or distribution of responses and the total number of respondents; ranking to show the positional significance of the variables; weighted mean to determine the central tendency of respondents' perceptions; arithmetic mean to find the sum of all weighted means and the number of items/criteria, and standard deviation to know the sum of the square of the difference between the weighted mean and arithmetic mean.

Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Profile of the Respondent-Teachers**

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondent-teachers in terms of the considered variables.

<b>Sex</b>	F	%	F	%
Male	2	40	1	16.67
Female	3	60	5	83.33
<b>Age</b>				
40 and above	4	80	5	83.33
Below 40	1	20	1	16.67
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
PhD	2	40	2	33.33
Units in PhD	1	20	1	16.67
MA	1	20	3	50.00
Units in MA	1	20		
<b>Length of service in the present school</b>				
10 and above	3	60	3	50.00
Below 10	2	40	3	50.00
<b>Performance Rating for the last three (3) years</b>				
Outstanding	2	40	1	16.67
Highly Satisfactory	3	60	5	83.33
<b>Years of Teaching Experience</b>				
20 and above	4	80	1	16.67
Below 20	1	20	5	83.33
<b>Languages used @ Home</b>				
Filipino	0		2	33.33
English/Filipino	5	100	3	50.00
Pampanga/Tagalog	0		1	16.67
<b>Languages used with associates outside the classroom</b>				
Filipino	1	20	1	16.67
English/Filipino	4	80	5	83.33
Total	5		6	

As regards the profile of the respondent-teachers, majority were female which has an implication that females are more engrossed in teaching compared with male teachers. As to age, a greater part of the respondents were in the 40 and above age group. In terms of educational attainment, preponderance of them had PhD degrees or units, the results imply that instruction by the teachers concerned who know the psychology, principles and methodology of reaching ensures more effective learning on the part of the students. As regards length of service in the present school, best part of the respondent-teachers had been teaching in the university for almost 10 years and above which further indicates that the respondents had adapted themselves to the policies, standards and regulations of the university and are enjoying their teaching tasks. They also apparently appreciate the social and professional climate of the educational institution. Meanwhile, as to the respondents' performance rating for the last 3 years, majority of the respondents were highly satisfactory teaching performance ratings for the last three years. This further infers that the respondents had highly satisfactory adapted the strategies and techniques to improve

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the quality of instruction, which in turn, will be beneficial not only for them but also for the students. With regard to years of teaching experience, majority of the respondents were teaching in the university for more than 20 years and above. Findings imply that long years in the teaching profession are likely tantamount to effective and efficient delivery of learning to the students. Finally, findings indicate that mainstream of the respondents are consistently into the use of the combination of English and Filipino languages when conversing with fellows at home and with associates outside the classroom.

### Extent to which Problems Encountered by Teachers of English Themselves Affect Instruction in English.

Table 2 presents the problems encountered by of English and the extent to which these problems affect instruction in English.

**Table 2**  
**Extent to which Problems Encountered by Teachers of English Themselves Affect Instruction in English**

Indicators	Weighted Means	Verbal Interpretations	Ranking
1. Experience in teaching English.	4.40	AME	6.5
2. Specialization or major in English in college.	4.50	AME	5
3. Participation in -service training programs for teachers in English.	4.00	AME	8.5
4. Tendency to use difficult terms in English when teaching.	3.60	AME	11
5. Competence in second language teaching.	4.00	AME	8.5
6. Pursuit of graduate or further studies in English.	4.60	AVM	2.5
7. Skill in motivating learning experiences in simple but comprehensive English.	4.60	AVM	2.5
8. Use of English when talking with students informally outside the classroom.	4.40	AME	6.5
9. Tendency to code-switch when teaching.	3.80	AME	10
10. Use of English when teaching.	4.60	AVM	2.5
11. Use of Modules and other instructional materials in English.	4.60	AVM	2.5
Mean	4.28	AME	

<b>Legend:</b>	<b>Weighted Mean (WM)</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
	4.51 - above	Affects to a Very Much Extent (AVM)
	3.51 - 4.50	Affects to a Much Extent (AME)
	2.51 - 3.50	Affects to Some Extent (ASE)
	1.51 - 2.50	Affects to a Negligible Extent (ANE)
	0.51-1.50	No Effect at All (NEAA)

In regard to the teachers of English themselves, the table indicates that pursuit of graduate or further studies in English, skill in motivating learning experiences in simple but comprehensive English, use of English when teaching, and use of modules and other instructional materials when teaching all obtained a weighted mean score of 4.60 with a verbal interpretation of “ affects to a very much extent.”

The rest of the indicators had weighted means ranging from 3.60 to 4.50 which indicate that the extent effect on the instruction of English is to “much extent.”The average weighted mean 4.28 reveals that the problems encountered by teachers of English themselves affect instruction in English to a much extent. The results imply that to fulfill the task of facilitating learning in English, the teacher of this subject should restrict himself to the use of English when communicating with students not only during the formal classroom situation but also in informal conversation outside the confines of the classroom to ensure continuity and consistency in the learning and teaching of English.

Oldford’s (2000) study relates to the present study in answering the need for the particular modules that can help upgrade English instruction. Integration of technology in the curriculum, particularly in the teaching-learning process as cited by the researcher, is a response to the problems in the present study.

Brant’s (2001) work relates to the present study and agrees on the need to know students’ difficulty in the medium of instruction used and encouraging them to use the natural way of learning. However, devised learning styles can be the possible solution to the students’ problem of learning English effectively and their communicative competence in that language.

**Extent to Which Language Problems of Students Affect the Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English.**

**Table 3**  
**Extent to which Language Problems of Students Affect the Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English**

Indicators	Weighted Means	Verbal Interpretations	Ranking
1. Using English as predicted communication when performing tasks in the classroom.	4.67	VME	3.5
2. Responding to the teacher’s motive questions.	4.50	ME	5.5
3. Sharing one’s own experiences in English which relate to the lesson.	4.40	ME	8
4. Understanding scientific terms.	4.50	ME	5.5
5. Understanding mathematical terms in English.	4.80	VME	2
6. Interpreting science concepts in correct English.	4.40	ME	8
7. Expressing mathematical concepts and processes in good English.	4.40	ME	8
8. Discussing new lessons in good English.	4.83	VME	1
9. Relating past learning experiences coherently with new learning experiences.	4.20	ME	10
10. Interest in learning new ideas and thinking process in English.	4.67	VME	3.5
Mean	4.54	VME	

**Legend:**

<b>Weighted Mean (WM)</b>
4.51 - above
3.51 - 4.50
2.51 - 3.50
1.51 - 2.50
0.51 - 1.50

<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
Very Much Extent (VME)
Much Extent (ME)
Fairly Much Extent (FME)
To a Little Extent (LE)
To A Very Little Extent I (VLE)

Table 3 presents the extent to which language problems of students affect the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English. As shown in the table, the problem on discussing the new lesson in good English was considered as the main problem as evidenced by its obtained average weighted mean of 4.83 with the verbal interpretation of “very much extent.” The results imply that students are generally experiencing difficulty in expressing themselves in good English when they are asked to chat about new lessons in English.

The rest of the indicators had weighted means ranging from 4.20 to 4.80 which indicate that the extent to which the language problems of students affect the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English was to a very much extent. The finding in an indicative that

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students' incompetence in the use of English language may lead to problems in the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics subjects which in turn has great impact on the teachers of these subjects.

Stanford's study (2001) revealed that while instructional methodology is significantly exceptional, teaching is described in terms of teacher-student relationship. The effective teacher should be able to communicate very well and to design lessons and implement the curriculum for meaningful learning. The teacher must develop the communicative techniques that will establish favorable relations with learners in diverse classroom setting.

Van Der Walt's (2000) inquiry supports the present study's aim to solve one of the learning difficulties experienced by the students in social interaction and other academic activities, the inclusion of the film study in the curriculum to help students develop skill in analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating language content and mechanics.

Rico's research (2001) provided the current study with clear, relevant reasons for the importance of being proficient in the use of English, and the viability of communicative competence in English in the country's social, economic, political life. Hence, the current study emphasizes the need for Filipino educators to be proficient in the use of English in order to improve the quality of instruction which would enhance students' role in the social, cultural, economic, and political life of their communities.

### **Difference in the Perceptions of the Respondent Groups on the Extent to which the identified Problems Affect Instruction in English.**

**Table 4**  
**Difference in the Perceptions of the Respondent Groups on the Extent to which the identified Problems Affect Instruction in English**

Teachers	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean Difference	t computed @ $\alpha = 0.05$	t critical	Interpretation
English	4.28	0.3656	0.26	-1.9529	2.0930	Not Significant
Science and Mathematics		0.2009				

Table 4 presents the difference in the perceptions of the respondent groups on the extent to which the identified problems affect instruction in English, as shown in the table, no significant difference was observed since the computed t-value of -1.9529 was lower than the obtained critical value of 2.0930 at 0.05 level of significance; hence, the hypothesis was accepted.

Acceptance of the hypothesis signifies that the language problems encountered by the teachers of English do relate closely to the language problems met by the Science and Mathematics teachers. This further implies that effects of the language problems in the teaching English, Science and Mathematics are not significantly different.

Richard Brant's (2001) articles posit that teaching according to style, also known as instructional diversity represents philosophical change from traditional to mutual

accountability. For example, if students do not learn the way they are taught, teach them the way they can best learn to enable them to teach themselves.

**Extent to which the Language Problems in the Use of English Affect the Students’ Learning of Science and Mathematics in English.**

**Table 5**  
Extent to which Language Problems in the Use of English Affect the Students’ Learning of Science and Mathematics in English

Indicators	Weighted Means	Verbal Interpretations	Ranking
1. Modules and other instructional materials in English are beyond our understanding.	3.48	FME	1
2. Teachers use difficult terms when explaining ideas and thinking processes.	3.40	FME	3
3. Teachers do not use concrete teaching aids when introducing abstract ideas and thinking process.	3.33	FME	4
4. Our parents’ educational attainment is very low.	2.59	FME	13
5. Teacher participation in our teacher-learning activities is not much .	3.28	FME	5
6. I did not have a good background in English in High School.	2.83	FME	11
7. My parents do not follow up my performance in school.	2.62	FME	12
8. We hear teachers in our school talk in Filipino or in vernacular when not teaching.	2.89	FME	10
9. Teachers’ motivation of our lesson is not effective.	3.17	FME	6
10. Instead of using concrete teaching aids to make lessons clear, our teachers code-switch from English to Filipino or use Taglish.	3.47	FME	2
11. Our teachers do not motivate us strongly enough to improve our oral and written English.	3.13	FME	7
12. The language we speak at home interferes with our use of English.	2.93	FME	9
13. We hear our own teachers speak in Filipino within the school premises.	3.05	FME	8
14. We are too poor to afford to buy the required books in English.	2.22	LE	14
Means	3.03	FME	

**Legend:**  
**Weighted Mean (WM)**  
 4.51 - above  
 3.51 - 4.50  
 2.51 - 3.50  
 1.51 - 2.50  
 0.51-1.50  
**Verbal Interpretation**  
 Very Much Extent (VME)  
 Much Extent (ME)  
 Fairly Much Extent (FME)  
 To a Little Extent (LE)  
 To A Very Little Extent I (VLE)

Table 5 presents extent to which language problems in the use of English affect the students’ learning of Science and Mathematics in English. Of the 14 language problems, 13 affect the students’ learning of Science and Mathematics in English as evidenced by the obtained weighted mean scores ranging from 2.59 to 3.48. On the other hand, only the problem which states that “we are too poor to afford to buy the required books in English” got the weighted mean score of 2.22 with a verbal interpretation of “to a little extent”. Findings imply the need for Science and Mathematics teachers to take part actively in students’ learning activities. Modules and other learning materials need to be revised and simplified to the level of students’ understanding. There must be closed coordination between the teachers and parents to get the cooperation of the latter to follow up their children’s performance in Science, Mathematics and English.

Protherough and his associates’(2001) work support the present study on the stand about the importance of learning the correct use of the English language in Mathematics and Science, particularly. Both the present study and the book agree with the controversial issues on the use of English as medium of instruction in Mathematics and Science. This

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implies that teachers of these subject areas must have communicative competence in the use of the English Language for them to emphasize the subject matter effectively with thorough comprehension on the part of students who have difficulty in learning Mathematics and Science.

### The proposed instructive methodology in teaching English syntax in the tertiary level.

Considering the findings of the study, the following proposed instructive methodology in teaching English syntax in the tertiary level could help improve and upgrade the instruction of English in the locale under investigation. The following diagram indicates the development stages of the proposed program:



Fig. 2. Proposed Instructive Methodology in Teaching English Syntax in the Tertiary Level.

The proposed instructive methodology in teaching English syntax in the tertiary level is illustrated in figure 1. The development process from the top of the paradigm, from “extraction” down to the “open phase.”

**In Extraction**, the teacher elicits the modified grammatical sequence to be taught. The new language topic is introduced in as meaningful and realistic context as possible.

**In Rationalization**, the teacher takes up the formation of the new structure and explains when and why this has to be used. Four of the elicited examples are written on the board. The teacher then explains the notation of the structures to enable the students to respond accurately on cue. After that, the teacher explains the phase in English that suits the age level, capability and learning needs of the students.

**In Proscribed Practice**, the teacher provides meaningful learning activities in which students work in pairs or groups or even as a class, to produce the new structure a number of times. This is also the stage which the teacher ensures that the students produce the

desired structure accurately on cue. He/She corrects errors on the spot during the feedback phase of the proscribed practice.

**In Skills Work**, which is the fourth phase, is integral to the proposed instructive methodology in teaching English syntax because the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills is best interspersed with the other phases. However, given the time, the teacher may provide a separate activity to teach any of the four skills.

**In Open Phase**, which is the fifth phase, aims to enable the students to perform a particular task or activity, which requires them to draw from any of the languages usages they have acquired. The open phase activities encourage students to express their own ideas related to their experiences and communicate what they think spontaneously without thought of being disturbed. Open phase activity emphasizes fluency in the use of language.

The open phase is the time when the students are expected to use their knowledge of previously taught structures. Well motivated, they are encouraged to communicate their ideas freely without qualms or reservations.

Based on the findings, we can conclude that the majority of the respondents were female, in the 40 and above age group, with PhD and master's degrees, had been teaching in the university for almost 10 years and above, with outstanding teaching performance ratings for the last three years, had the teaching experience of 20 years and above, were using the combination of English and Filipino languages when communicating with people at home, and used English/Filipino when communicating with their associates outside the classroom. The problems encountered by teachers of English themselves affect instruction in English to a much extent. The language problems of students affect the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English to a very much extent. Acceptance of the hypothesis signifies that the language problems encountered by the teachers of English do relate closely to the language problems met by the Science and Mathematics teachers. Language problems affect the students' learning of Science and Mathematics in English to a fairly much extent. Hence, there is a need for the proposal of an instructive methodology that will enhance the teaching of English syntax in the tertiary level.

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