

The Effect of Communicative Grammar on the Grammatical Accuracy of Students' Academic Writing: An Integrated Approach to TEFL

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1. INTRODUCTION

From the ground which was clearly stated that most of the Ethiopian secondary school students are not proficient and competent enough in their command of English in general and in their grammatical accuracy in writing in particular Haregweign (2008, p24) and the study's result forwarded by Tesfaye Abebe (1991) and Mesfin Abera (2004) that secondary school students cannot even write a single grammatically correct sentence, Haregewain Abate has conducted the dissertation which was aimed for two purposes. Firstly, to fulfill the requirement of her doctoral degree and secondly to answer the question often raise from both teachers and students toward effective grammar teaching and learning approaches. Therefore, she made her leading title "The Effect of Communicative Grammar on the Grammatical Accuracy of Students' Academic Writing: An Integrated Approach to TEFL".

Indeed, it is obvious that for senior or experienced teachers or instructors facing the greatest number of students who cannot even communicate with their instructors as well as their books or materials. The rationale is lack of basic grammar knowledge which can make them capable enough to tackle easily the level of learning they are required to succeed. Thus, the researcher contributed her own scholastic role by making her objectives on investigating to know; the effect of communicative grammar on the grammatical accuracy of students' academic writing, major problems related to teaching communicative grammar in the context of writing, and major problems related to learning communicative grammar in the context of writing. Accordingly, pilot study was carried out for six weeks and main study was also held for four months.

After all, the results of the pre-test showed that there was no significant difference between the average scores of the control and the experimental groups at '0.05' level of significance. On the other hand, the results of the statistical analysis of the independent sample test in the post-test showed that the students in the experimental groups improved grammar accuracy in their written compositions in all cases ($P < 0.05$) at '0.05' level of significance. This implies that communicative grammar in the context of writing did improve the students' grammatical accuracy in their writing abilities. In general, it was found out that teaching grammar in communicative manner in the context of writing has positive significant effect on the learners' learning of grammar aspect. However, the reviewer doubts that the title itself was predictive and informative. Meaning that; the researcher knows the possible finding result before conducting the research and coming across the result. This increases subjectivity and biases on the trustworthiness of the findings.

2. SUMMARY

The main objective of the research was to investigate whether communicative grammar in the context of writing could help students achieve grammatical accuracy in writing; however, it has no specific objectives (the specific objectives were substituted by research questions). In order to collect data for the study, four methods of data collection were used. These were: pre-test and post-test, a questionnaire, interviews with both students and teachers and classroom observations. In addition, teaching materials on communicative grammar in the context of writing were prepared for the experimental groups while the control groups used the grammar exercises appended to the Grade 11 English textbooks. Then, the

students' grammatical accuracy in their writing before and after the experiment was assessed on the basis of the pre- and post-test results, and the test/re-test reliability of the tests was established.

Accordingly, it was found out that the scores of the pre-and post-tests on two different occasions for the same group were highly consistent ($P = 0.739$ pre-test; $P = 0.682$ post-test). Thus, it has been proved that both pre-and post-tests were reliable. Accordingly, in the mark / re-mark reliability has been considered very significant, and the inter-rater correlation of all the groups was highly consistent, the major findings obtained through the four methods discussed so far are presented briefly as follow. Pre-and post-test result was the core data used in the study. A T-test was used to compare the average scores of the control and experimental groups. The results of the pre-test showed that there was no significant difference between the average scores of the control and the experimental groups at '0.05' level of significance.

On the other hand, the results of the statistical analysis of the independent sample test in the post test showed that the students in the experimental groups improved grammar accuracy in their written compositions in all cases ($P > 0.05$) at '0.05' level of significance. This implies that communicative grammar in the context of writing did improve the students' grammatical accuracy in their writing abilities; however, although the scientific result tells us the significant value, it seems that the result was predicted before conducting the study.

It can be concluded that, throughout the process of the study, grammar items were presented in context for students to practice the selected grammar items in meaningful and purposeful activities, communicative grammar items were integrated with writing tasks, as shown finally in the experiment, communicative grammar in the context of writing could improve students' grammar accuracy in their writing abilities.

3. CRITIQUE

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa where there is an access of getting resources which means both relatively better qualified human and up to dated materials such as books, internet, and informant agents more than the other schools which are in Ethiopia but on border line with none of an access of those all mentioned above. Therefore, it makes difficult the generalization of the finding for the other area students who are learning in different context.

The study was inclined to narrate the past education system, and the weaknesses it has. This is to show that the uncovered advantages of integrating communicative grammar in writing skills context. However, as an advantage draw backs also should be discussed, but the researcher didn't give emphasis for opponents' arguments. There is a mixture of beliefs regarding grammar instruction Cathy. C. W and Mirta B. M (2012) and Noguchi, R. R. (1991, p.4) wrote that there are two probable reasons which cause the failure of grammar instruction. Firstly, formal grammar, being uninteresting or too difficult, is not adequately learned by students, and the second is formal grammar, even if adequately learned, is not transferred to writing situation.

3.1. Statement of the problem:

The study has no background section; however, the statement of the problem incorporated the conceptual frame work which means the seriousness of the problem to be investigated has been stated from the very general concept to the specific manner. The problem was well communicated or justified based on the literatures conducted at abroad and in the country particularly in Addis Ababa University. The researcher has tried her best to justify the worthiness of the problem if studied. In addition, since the nature of the research was mixed approach which means involving both quantitative and qualitative paradigms, it has both hypothesis for experiment and questions for the qualitative as well as other nature of quantitative which can be answered through questions and important variables which were needed to be included, have been incorporated.

On the other hand even if spatial and conceptual delimitation was clearly stated, the research questions such as for example, What major problems related to teaching communicative grammar in the context of writing did Grade Eleven teachers in this study face during the experiment? And what major problems related to learning communicative grammar in the context of writing did Grade eleven students' in this study face in the experiment? (p.7) were not directly meet the general objective the researcher set to achieve and it may not be that directly related with the stated problem.

3.2. Literature review:

Hart (2001) defines of an academic literature review as:

The selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfill certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed (Hart, 2001, p. 13).

So, a literature review is a narrative account of information that is already currently available, accessible and published, which may be written from a number of differing paradigms or perspectives, depending on the standpoint of the writer.

Observing the study in the concept of this definition, the author did not use the literature to make the context of the problem clear. Instead what she tried to make was, putting things turn by turn and showing the sequence of everything from the past up to the case to be studied. In addition, what can be seen in the literature was grouping and concepts which are related with two points of study which means communicative grammar and writing texts with context in their lexical relations. On the other hand, either hypothesis or research questions no one has been supported by literature. However, in the literature relevant cites which generally suggest the issue are incorporated (p.6 & 7). The researches cited either in statement of the problem or review of related literature was relevant to the variable used and even though not sufficient to some extent she tried to discuss her findings with up to date and credible literature.

3.3. Research Design:

The study has research design, but not clearly discussed. (I.e. does not show the method reflect or augment other studies of the same topic, things what make the method feasible, how realistic is it and why this method produce data that will answer the research questions; as well as, how does the method address questions of validity and reliability and ways through which the researcher overcome the limitations of the method were not clearly discussed. See (p.89) However, unlike design the sampling technique was clearly mentioned. The researcher used was convenient and random sampling techniques for the rationale the schools were selected for the pilot and main study were near for her work place and for random give equal chance for all subjects of the study to be included. Therefore, it can be said that adequate and justifiable. The researcher did not raise the issue of validity, but to make reliable study she has mentioned in the procedure of the study how she was carrying out pre test and post test as well as how those tests were statically calculated and inter rater which shows the reliability of test has been carried out.

To collect the data four data gathering tools were used these were; experiment, questionnaire completed by the students, interview with students and teachers and class room observations. As a critical reviewer, in my point of view questionnaire, experiment and interview were fair, but I don't think that it is important to use observation tool. Because, the method is not appropriate in the investigation of communicative grammar in the writing context. The researcher has also tried to make the study reliable. This can be seen when she made teachers with the same qualifications and experience in addition pre and post test correlation was used. In addition pilot study by itself can help the researcher to follow the progress of the enquiry in the reliable manner. In order to analyze the data the researcher began from pilot study and they came to the main study first re mark reliability method then correlation between tests and schools as well as raters was made. Accordingly first in quantitative manner experiments and questionnaires and then in qualitative manner the interviews were tried to be analyzed. For analysis of experiments statically t test was used and it was appropriate to be used.

On the other hand, this should be described so that the reader knows what questions or observations were included. Ideally, a copy of the interview schedule, questionnaire or observation framework can be included but this is not always possible due to constraints of space and study style. The reader should at least have an idea of how many items were included in the schedule, the topics covered and whether respondents replies were recorded verbatim or whether their answers were fitted into a set of pre existing codes , fixed choice or multiple choice questions. A second point to note regarding the data collection tool is whether the researcher has developed an original tool or used an existing tool. It is acceptable to use data collection tools that have been developed by previous researchers. It may even be preferable since the tool is more likely to have been subjected to tests for reliability.

3.4. Results and Discussions:

The findings were organized and presented starting from students' and teachers' interview, questionnaire, and the statically analysis of t-test. However, the interview should be presented in the way more than presented in the study. The findings were related with the stated problem and the formulated hypothesis. The result is an adequate and the interpretation of the findings was convincing, but it could be more than presented in the study. While discussing the researcher has tried to use reviewed literature, but she didn't discuss sufficient as intended to be discussed and presented. The study did discuss the methodology used, but it was unclear that exactly what methodology was used.

3.5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations:

The summary was sound and good. However, the broad concept was summarized in listed/ bulleted manner; thus it has tendency of forgetting the main concept and satisfying only on the listed point. In addition, in the research the points have been tried to be summarized; however, all things were not incorporated. The conclusion was also drawn from the findings and the available data. Therefore, the conclusion was convincing; however, it has not summarized the whole points mentioned in the study (p168). The recommendations made in the study were also feasible and logically built on the findings; however, they were not directed/pointed to the concerned bodies or organizations etc. Therefore, it will have the tendency of becoming the shelf value; hence it cannot help the education system if not applicable (not put on the ground)

3.6. Others (References, appendices):

In the study, all citations were listed in the reference list. And the reference lists are complete and up-to-dated. However, as APA citation style, all titles of the books were neither bolded nor italicized. In addition, a wide range of works in the field have been referred, but the works were not well discussed in the finding of the study. Beside of this, the appendices were attached and they were relevant and useful; however, forms which are not communicative activities were also incorporated in the appendices. For example, Under Appendix - N Teaching Material for the Main Study, relative clauses from (p290 – 292). The literature cited was relevant to the study, but there were several instances, which have been noted above, in which the author makes assertions without substantiating them with references.

4. CONCLUSION

Overall the study was very straightly forwarded. (I, e. its contribution to knowledge, theory, or practice in a field, its design and methodology, its findings, in particular, the way how they were presented and interpreted, the researcher's conclusions, the writing quality, clarity, and style, and the organization of the information presented were tried to be communicate/discussed, and the problem intended to be investigated was serious and what can decide one's future life). Therefore, the study area was selective and appropriate; however, in order to have more people be engaged and read the whole study paper, it needs a new, more concise background through which the reader gets to the really good approaches that are relevant to real life activities (authenticity) in the teaching and learning approaches (integrating communicative grammar with the writing context). In general, with the given comments, it was a good, well-written paper with an important message for curriculum designers, material developers, and practitioners. Therefore, the piece, when taken as a whole, it is relevant and very convincing in theory but starts slow and never lays out a concrete way of approaching this complex problem.

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