

Constructivist Learning Approach As an Innovation to Improve Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition and Attitude towards Conversation

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Abstract: This study gives emphasis on the effects of using Constructivist Learning Approach as an Innovation to improve Grade 3 learners' vocabulary. Constructivism was born on the basis of Piaget's cognitive development and Vygotsky's structural theory. The constructivist extends to the field of linguistics as well as general literal learning and learning approaches in particular. The basic premise of constructivist theory is that people are said to learn when they have gained experience from what they learn. That is, people create their own meaning through experience. The scope of this research covers 20 elementary students in Grade 3 from Colegio de San Gabriel Arcangel. The researchers determined the learners level of vocabulary acquisition prior to constructivist learning approaches as an innovation in teaching. They also carefully analyzed and observed the Grade 3 Learners' data in accordance to their pretest and posttest scores on vocabulary acquisition as well as the attitude of the learners who have been exposed to the Constructivist Approach in learning vocabulary. This study proves that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the Grade 3 students who were exposed to the Constructivist Learning Approach. This paper helps the researchers to develop a lesson exemplar in English 3 based on the findings of the study as well as to garner a deeper understanding on the said learning approach and its effectivity towards young learners. In the perspective of constructivism theory, students are motivated and directed to learn the main idea through discovery learning.

Keywords: constructivist, conversation, dialogue, vocabulary

Introduction

The Philippines is recognized globally as one of the largest English-speaking nations with (70) seventy percent which is the majority of its population having at least some degree of fluency in the language. English has always been one of the official languages of the Philippines and is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos. It is also one of the nation's strengths which benefited the economic growth of the country. However, based on the recent findings the Philippines' fall from 14th place in 2018 to 20th in the 2019 English Proficiency Index (EPI). EPI measures the average level of English language skills based on the results of an online Standard English Test (SET) administered by English Proficiency Education First, a Swiss-based global company focusing on language, academic, cultural exchange, and educational travel programs. The Philippines' score of 60.14 out of 100 still falls under the "high proficiency" level, its sliding to 20th place shows that other countries have been improving faster as global competitiveness becomes tighter. Last year, the country's score was 61.84, which ranked it 14th among 88 countries. This is a huge concern that needs to be immediately addressed by the education sector. Looking back at the current state of the nation's educational system, teachers tend to use traditional methods of teaching most of the time, especially at the elementary level. Language and vocabulary represent the very foundation of learning to read and write. Children who do not develop strong oral language skills and vocabulary in their early years will find it difficult to keep pace with their peers. Language is not just talk. Prominent

psychologists, such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, recognized the importance of the relationship between language and thought. In other words, children use words as a way to understand important concepts. In fact, language actually drives cognitive development, with words standing for increasingly sophisticated ideas. A recent study indicated that, from age 3 onward, children need to build a vocabulary store of at least 2,500 words per year. The same study stresses that they should encounter and explore at least two new words each day. Vocabulary is an ultimate expression, having an extensive vocabulary will help you express yourself clearly and communicate well with clarity, a linguistic vocabulary is also identical to a thinking vocabulary meaning that you will be able to think concise thoughts with precision. If a student does not have a strong grasp of the vocabulary, then they likely do not have a strong grasp to literary concepts. Additionally, strong knowledge of content vocabulary is required for students to engage in academic conversations. This research aims to use the Constructivist learning approach as an innovation to improve learners vocabulary acquisition and attitude toward conversation. Constructivism had an impact on the intellectual learner in the mid 90s. Constructivism was born on the basis of Piaget's cognitive development and Vygotsky's structural theory in which constructivism has an impact on the development of both micro and macro world technology. Constructivist thinking also extends to the field of linguistics as well as general literal learning and learning approaches in particular. The basic premise of constructivist theory is that people are said to learn when they have gained experience from what they learn. That

is, people create their own meaning through experience. Constructivist thinking is rooted in several aspects of Piaget and Vygotsky's cognitive theories. From Piaget, we learn actively, create schemes, assimilate and accommodate all forms of science, etc. From Vygotsky, we get social constructivism, group work, internships, and so on. Thus, we can say that the "top-down" and "bottom-up" learning methodology is born of constructivist thinking. This means that the teacher will give the main idea then the students will get the details. In this way of thinking, the teacher does not teach the details so that students will find it difficult to find an understanding of the details (Aljohani, 2017: 98). In the perspective of constructivism theory, students are motivated and directed to learn the main idea through discovery learning. For example, learning about vocabulary by playing word strips and other collaborative activities that would help them be active participants in conversations which will eventually improve their attitude towards engagement. The purpose of this study is to observe the changes and improvement in students' acquisition and retention of vocabulary that will enable them to have an effective and positive interaction with their peers during and after the implementation of the Constructivist learning approach in teaching vocabulary. As stated in the constructivist theory of language (Vygotsky 1978), the aim of socialization will increase the amount of language utilized in human development. Some may lead to psychological changes or spans in a short period of time, with the subsequent growth of personal communication following thereafter.

The fundamental idea of his theory was the Proximal Development Zone (ZPD). It refers to a gap between things that a student may be able to achieve and things that they will not be able to achieve.

The initial step in learning a new language has always been the teaching of vocabulary. Every idiomatic acquisition is accompanied by the acquisition of this phrase (Gifford, 2013). As Thornbury maintains, "Fluency persists after the pronunciation scheme has been established completely" (2002, p. 160). A person's personality may be defined via their language in conversations, psychological tests, and almost all exams. Anderson and Freebody (1979) found that there is a significant connection between vocabulary tests and overall intelligence. A strong depth and breadth of language means that individuals with strong depth and breadth of language have more proficiency in both speaking and comprehending messages, which should be considered clever, according to Gifford (2013, p. 18).

In addition to reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities, "the quantity of one's vocabulary is a good indication of a wide range of scholastic achievements and competence," including "broad scientific method, culture, and the crafts," according to the authors. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., et al.

Evolving Vocabulary Approaches (eVocs) are a kind of innovation or digital method that educators may use to assist students increase their vocabulary and desire to engage in language learning activities. Researchers use the term eVoc to highlight that the methods are based on technical tools, as

well as to symbolize the potential for development that may be elicited when the internet and other forms of communication are utilized in educational settings. For what purpose does it become essential to learn new words? Understanding a document requires an understanding of the language used to communicate personal views and concepts expressed within it. Baumann and Kame'enui (2004), as well as Pearson et al. (2007), discovered a significant relationship (0.6 to 0.8) between vocabulary competency and literacy proficiency.

It emphasizes the importance of the learner's contribution to every learning scenario as an active meaning-maker and problem-solver, which is emphasized by constructivism. When it comes to classroom instruction, the learners are at the center of it all. Teachers must highlight the important significance that students' encounters with or interactions with their surroundings have in their overall learning and development.

Child is exposed to any reading materials, this will boost their progress in reading comprehension.

Action Research Questions

The primary aim of this study is to determine the effects and significant changes in using the Constructivist Learning Approach as an Innovation to improve learners' vocabulary acquisition and attitude toward conversation.

At the end of this study, the following questions are expected to be answered:

1. What is the learner's level of vocabulary acquisition as prior to constructivist learning approach as innovation in teaching?
2. How may the Grade 3 Learners be described during pretest and posttest on vocabulary acquisition?
3. What is the attitude of the learners who have been exposed to the Constructivist Learning Approach?
4. Is there significant difference between the pretest and posttest on vocabulary acquisition that was exposed to Constructivist Learning Approach?
5. What lesson exemplar in English 3 may be developed based on the findings of the study?

METHODS

Closed questions are preferred in quantitative research. It is frequently impossible for a respondent to provide extended, free-form answers once they have been given a set of answer lists. This design makes quantitative research far more efficient than qualitative research utilizing open-ended questions. Users don't have to go through the time-consuming process of coding a huge number of open-

ended responses, thus it's more efficient. This study utilized one-group pretest-posttest experimental design to determine the Constructivist Learning Approach as an Innovation to improve learners' vocabulary acquisition and attitude toward conversation.

According to Allen (2017) pointed out that the one-group pretest–posttest design is used by researchers to assess the effect of innovation or intervention on a specific population. The gain score was used to define the dependent variable. The difference in score between the treatment group's pretest and posttest scores is calculated. Since the treatment group comprises of people who have been purposefully assigned from the selected group, these structures may be able to regulate potential external variables. The performance assessment was used to assess the treatment group's performance.

The respondents of the study were supposedly selected as participants of the research study. Purposive Sampling Technique was used to conduct the study. It is a method of selecting people with similar attributes or precise qualities. (Samosa, 2021)

The researchers employ the pre-test and post-test which are composed of 20 items in Table of Specification (TOS) to test the respondents to their knowledge and skills in vocabulary acquisition. The Table of Specification (TOS) was utilized to ensure the validity and reliability of test questions and administered by the researcher's teacher to validate and give further comments and recommendations for the instrument's improvement for the respondents to enrich learners' vocabulary acquisition. Likert scale was also used in this study for assessing the learners attitudes toward vocabulary acquisition and to see if there is an improvement in their behavior.

The researcher files a letter asking permission to perform research to the school, which would be recorded by the principal and research coordinator, and then given to the school division for approval and authorization to do the research in Colegio De San Gabriel Arcangel in San Jose del Monte Bulacan.

After the application is granted, researchers send a consent form to all students, parents and guardians informing the participants in the study. The project would concentrate on establishing Open Educational Resources (OER) exposure, responsiveness, and high-quality delivery, participants were told.

Before officially begin the study, researchers conduct another letter addressed to the listed school. To guarantee that the outcome remains confidential. Researchers examined the data collected from the participants thoroughly.

The data from the pretest, posttest and likert scale were first summarized, organized, and simplified using descriptive statistics in order to make sense of the information. It was only via quantitative measurements that all of the statistical analysis could be completed. The frequency, mean, and standard deviations, as well as the variability of the data, were all determined using descriptive statistics. To compare the pretest, posttest, and likert scale score, independent-measures and repeated-measures t tests were performed. If there were statistically significant differences between the three test iterations, the results of this analysis would show whether or not this was the case. Specifically, it was anticipated that both the experimental group and the control group would see an increase in their scores from their pretest to their posttest scores. The purpose of the likert scale was to determine whether or not each group had maintained any learning between the posttest and the likert scale. It was possible to evaluate both reading and writing skills via the test process. Each reading prompt required particular answers, resulting in just one right answer per question. This guaranteed that all students were assessed using the same criteria, regardless of their background or educational background. Due to the fact that just one instructor evaluated all of the exams, uniformity could be guaranteed. The raw test scores received from the assessment instrument served as the basis for the data collected. The results of the tests revealed the participants' level of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge in relation to the particular subject under consideration. To establish the ranges of scores, the data were translated to a scale ranging from 0 to 100.

Results and Discussions

This section summarizes the data gathered using the study's research instruments. It interprets and analyses data acquired to characterize the effectiveness of constructivist learning approach as an innovation to improve learners' vocabulary acquisition and attitude towards conversation in Colegio De San Gabriel Archangel Grade 3 Learners. The findings of the study were as follows

Table 1 Pretest- posttest of Grade 3 learners.

	Pretest score	Posttest score	Gain Score
Mean	82.5	87.5	5

Table 1 contains the pretest and posttest mean of Grade 3 learners which was the respondents of this study and base on the table given above it is clear that the pretest score mean of Grade 3 learners is 82.5 lower than their posttest score mean which has the value of 87.5 and gain score of 5. Upon computing the data, the researchers can say that the innovative effective in.

Fok and Watkins (2017) discovered that constructivist learning. A shift in motivation and strategy toward deeper and more meaning-oriented motivation and strategy was induced by the environment. They also found that the shift happened in groups with students who were more conscious of the change in the learning environment.

Table 2: Attitude of Grade 3 Learners Towards Constructivist Learning Approach

d f	t-test	t-test critical value	Probability level	Decision	Interpretation
18	0.66	2.26	P=<0.05	H ₀ is Accepted	Not Significant
Statement		Mean	Verbal Interpretation		
Sharing own ideas is fun		4.60	High Positive Attitude		
I get tired during the drills		2.05	Low Positive		
I enjoy correcting and completing sentences		4.60	High Positive Attitude		
Identifying verbs are difficult		1.85	Low Positive Attitude		
I find the lesson easy		3.90	Positive Attitude		
I cannot understand the lesson		2.00	Low Positive		
It is hard to participate in any activities		3.40	Positive Attitude		
I can now use and understand action verbs		1.75	Very Low Positive		
I feel uncomfortable all through the lesson		1.75	Very Low Positive		
I do not like learning anything about action words		1.60	Very Low Positive		
Overall Weighted Mean		2.75	Neutral		

Legend: High positive attitude (4.20-5.00), positive attitude (3.40-4.19), neutral (2.60-3.39), low positive (1.80-2.59), very low positive (1.00-1.79).

The presented table above shows the engagement of learners towards innovation or post exposure to the innovation. As

gleaned to the findings of each statements sharing own ideas is fun (x=4.60), I get tired during the drills (x=2.05), I enjoy correcting and completing sentences (x=4.60), Identifying verbs are difficult (x=1.85), I find the lesson easy (x=3.90), I cannot understand the lesson (x=2.00), It is hard to participate in any activities (x=3.40), I can now use and understand action verbs (x=1.75), I feel uncomfortable all through the lesson (x=1.75), I do not like learning anything about action words (1.60). Overall, learners' attitude towards innovation gathered an overall weighted mean of 2.75 which was verbally interpreted as Neutral.

As a result, this study is likely similar to (Nkomo, SA., 2018) that the use of drawings with elementary students allowed kids to showcase oneself; even the most illiterate students in the class were able to communicate without using words.

Table 3 Test of significant difference between the pretest and posttest on metaphoric competence that was exposed to concept-based instruction innovation.

Upon computing the gathered data the researcher were able to identify the t-test value of 0.66 which is lower than the t-test critical value of 2.26 with degree of freedom of 18 and probability level of 0.05. based on these computed data numerical figures the Ho is accepted which means that there is no significant difference between the pre-test score and post-test score of respondents which leads to verbal interpretation of not significant.

Students with positive thoughts and feelings towards the target language tend to have higher language achievement than students with a negative attitude (Donato & Antonek, 2016; Donato, Antonek, & Tucker, 2014).

DEVELOPMENT OF LESSON EXAMPLAR ON GRADE 3 LEARNERS

The findings of this study can be used in teaching Adjectives which has significant role in building the learners vocabulary acquisition and attitude toward conversation. With this lesson, student's will be able to recognize the purpose of the word used in a sentence. Reading of story may assists student to comprehend the context and setting as well as an effective tool for learners to acquire grammatical structures. The efficacy of this topic will help student to think creatively or merging system to produce ideas and insights on their own.

Conclusion:

The effectiveness of constructivist learning approach as an innovation highlighted the ideas of learners' that this teaching pedagogy that helps learner to build their own understanding (Kurt, 2021). Using this method, learner's

performance improved by utilizing a constructivist learning approach when critical thinking is at its own original phases.

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