

# Contextualized Drills as Intervention Materials in Enhancing Grammar Skills of Grade 8 Learners

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**Abstract:** *It is beyond dispute that drills play a vital role in learning English grammar. Incorporating contextualization in drills in the process of language learning is considered a strong foundation in the development of material. Recognizing this, the researcher scrutinized the outcomes of contextualized drills on the level of grammar skills of learners. A quasi-experimental design was utilized in this study, with 70 Grade 8 student participants. The 35 learners in the control group used the PPP method, while the 35 learners in the experimental group used contextualized drills and followed the CAP method. Both groups answered the 50-item pretest and posttest. Though both groups showed improvement in grammar skills based on the results of their posttest, it was found that there is a significant difference in the mean gain scores of the experimental group ( $M = 12.29$ ,  $SD = 6.07$ ) and the control group ( $M = 5.34$ ,  $SD = 3.68$ );  $t = -5.79$ ,  $p < .05$ , in favor of the experimental group. This suggests that the experimental group performed better than the control group after utilizing the contextualized drills. The study recommends that English teachers in other grade levels use contextualized drills in teaching grammar. They are encouraged to develop their own contextualized drills to meet the needs of students. School administrators should initiate trainings and workshops on the development of contextualized materials. Finally, curriculum developers will do well to emphasize the grammar points mentioned in this study because this is where students are weakest.*

**Keywords:** contextualized drills, grammar skills, quasi-experiment study

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every learner needs knowledge and skills to face and surmount challenges in this demanding society. Recognizing this, the Department of Education (DepEd) never stops responding to the needs of Filipino learners. In fact, DepEd has begun its latest reform in education through the implementation of the curriculum that promotes lifelong learning, the Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum (EBEC), commonly known as the K–12 curriculum.

Based on the K–12 Curriculum Guide for English, the main goal of the Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum is to produce competent and effective users of the English language. English language learners need to develop their communicative competence. It will be achieved once the speaker acquires the four components of communicative competence. These are grammar competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Among them, the researcher opted to focus on grammar competence, which allows learners to skillfully manipulate valuable language rules and forms to construct meaningful sentences.

Evidently, 21st-century learners find grammar difficult to learn, and they fail to learn it because it is associated with mind-numbing rules. As a result, learners fail to produce grammatically correct sentences, leading to low scores in their written output, such as themes, and even in quarterly examinations, indicating that they are not linguistically and communicatively competent learners and users of the English language.

In fact, the researcher administered a diagnostic test in English grammar to Grade 8 learners at Parada National High

School in the school year 2018–2019. It revealed that nobody got a score in the range of 61–75. As indicated, the highest score is within 46–60 obtained by one learner, interpreted as skilled, while 1 (1%) of the learners got the lowest score within the 0–15 range. The majority of the learners (64, or 74.42%) got scores between 16 and 30, interpreted as lacking skills in grammar. Barman (2014) commented that learners remain weak in grammar despite years of effort. Because of this, they fail to write and speak English correctly, and this weakness persists when they enter the workforce later. It is the teachers' responsibility to equip students with skills in using the English language accurately. According to Paystrup (2014), grammar today is especially worse than it was in the past. It is different because of the fast and easy texting, messaging, and brevity of Twitter. This technological onslaught makes it all the more imperative to teach grammar in school. With this, the researcher opted to conduct a study about the grammar skills of the Grade 8 learners.

These results factually confirm a common observation that learners are not good at grammar, strongly indicating the need for materials that may remedy their deficiency. At present, teachers use materials taken from textbooks, which are sadly decontextualized. Another problem is the scarcity of learning materials, which definitely limits the teaching-learning process. Morales (2017) argued that the materials needed to teach the subject and cover the competencies included in the curriculum guide are still unavailable. This has prompted the researcher to develop learning resource drills in English grammar to address the need. This study is anchored on the principle that the utilization of contextualization can enhance the grammar skills

of learners so that they will be knowledgeable and proficient in the English language.

Morales (2017) argued that the materials needed to teach the subject and cover the competencies included in the curriculum guide are still decontextualized. In an article on language teaching, Rhalmi (2016) enumerated problems with learning materials: (1) they are not meaningful; (2) they are mechanical; (3) they do not convey much meaning; and (4) they are decontextualized. Recognizing this, the researcher was challenged to develop contextualized drills to enhance the grammar skills of students. Torres (2015) stressed that the key feature of K–12 is the delivery of lessons through contextualization. In Republic Act 10533, Section 5, it stipulates that curriculum shall be contextualized and applicable globally. In other words, the development of contextualized drills in English grammar provides learners with sufficient materials to direct and guide their own learning experience (Enhanced Basic Education Act 2013, 2013).

Hopefully, the contextualized drills developed by the researcher may lead the learners toward accurate understanding and correct use of grammatical structure and a strong linguistic foundation. The materials are expected to be a great help in acquiring the competencies prescribed by the DepEd.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The general problem of this study was: How may the use of contextualized drills help enhance the grammar skills of Grade 8 learners?

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the pretests of the control and experimental groups?
2. Is there a significant difference between the posttests of the control and experimental groups?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the following:
  - 3.1 Control Group; and
  - 3.2 Experimental Group?

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the precise questions, the researcher proposed the following hypothesis to be tested.

1. There is no significant difference between the pretests of the control and experimental groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the posttests of the control and experimental groups.
3. There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the experimental group.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Design**

The action research used the quantitative research method to examine the independent and dependent variables. According to Bernardez (2011), it employed statistical analysis for the numerical data gathered; hence, it is considered more objective than the qualitative method. Specifically, it used quasi-experimental, nonequivalent groups with a control and experimental group pretest and posttest design data to investigate whether an intervention would have an upshot for the experimental group. The grammar tests developed by the researcher were used as the pretest and posttest of the research, which were used as the main baseline data of the study.

To determine the participants' baseline level of grammar skills, the researcher first conducted an objective needs analysis. The researcher prepared a 50-item teacher-made pretest. There are five questions allotted per grammar lesson. To ensure symmetry between the control and experimental groups, all the participants took the test, and the results of the needs analysis proved that the control and experimental groups have the same level of grammar skills and prior knowledge about English grammar.

### **2.2 Respondents**

The participants of the study consisted of 70 Grade 8 learners at Parada National High School during the School Year 2019–2020. To determine the subjects of the study, purposive sampling was used. Since the researcher handled two (2) heterogeneous sections, one section was assigned to the experimental group and one to the control group. The Grade 8 Gumamela and Grade 8 Daffodil learners were the participants of this study.

### **2.3 Instrument of the Study**

To determine the level of the grammar skills of the participants, the researcher developed the pretest and posttest, which covered the ten identified least-mastered grammar points.

These are the following: (1) parallelism; (2) conjunctions; (3) simple present tense; (4) simple past tense; (5) simple future tense; (6) subject and verb agreement; (7) sentence patterns; (8) modals; (9) active and passive voice; and (10) formulating who, what, when, where, why, and how questions. In each grammar lesson, the researcher allotted five questions. The 50-item teacher-made pretest and posttest were checked and validated by the head teacher, master teachers, and select English 8 teachers of Parada National High School. Moreover, the majority of the items in the pretest and posttest were adapted from different K–12 English 8 books.

### **2.4 Statistical Analysis**

The pretest and posttest scores were used as bases to determine the level of grammar skills of the learners. The researcher used the scale below:

Scores	Level of Grammar Skills
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41-50	Highly Skilled
31-40	Skilled
21-30	Moderately Skilled
11-20	Lacking Skills
0-10	Without Skills

The results of the pretest and posttest were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. Upon checking that all assumptions preliminary to the conduct of statistical analysis tests were satisfied, the following were used: (1) an independent samples t-test to compare the pretest of the control group and experimental group and the posttest scores of the two groups and the mean gain scores of the two groups; and (2) a paired t-test to compare the pretest scores and posttest scores of the control group and the experimental group as well.

**2.5 Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher wrote a letter to the Schools Division Superintendent of Bulacan requesting permission to conduct a study about the use of contextualized drills in enhancing the grammar skills of Grade 8 learners at Parada National High School. Then, the researcher secured permission from the school principal to conduct the 10-week module intervention program among the target learners. The learners and parents were also informed through a letter about the rationale and procedure of this research study.

The pretest was administered to both the control and experimental groups before conducting the intervention. The researcher made sure that the learners in both groups who participated in the study were on equal footing prior to the intervention. The pretest results served as reliable baseline data for comparing the posttest results so as to determine the effect of contextualized drills in teaching English grammar and in enhancing the grammar skills of Grade 8 learners.

The posttest was administered to the two groups after the treatment was given to the experimental group. The posttest was parallel to the pretest to ensure that both tests measured the same competencies. Moreover, the posttest results are intended to measure the achievement attained after the intervention.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This part elucidates the data obtained from 70 Grade 8 learners of Parada National High School who answered a 50-item pretest and protest in English grammar, which served as the main basis for determining the effectiveness of the newly developed contextualized drills in enhancing the grammar skills of the Grade 8 learners.

**Part I. Pretests of the Control and Experimental Group**

Displayed in Table 1 is the result of the independent sample t-test of the control and experimental groups’ pretests using a 0.05 level of significance. The computed p-value of 0.79 is greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). It reveals that there is no significant difference between the scores of the control and experimental groups on their pretest, which redounds to the failure to reject

the null hypothesis. Kelly (2019) stated that the pretest assesses

Table 1

*Independent Samples t-test of the Pretest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups*

	N	Mean	Var.	df	t	P (two-tailed)
Control Group	35	20.71	7.03	68	0.26	0.79
Experimental Group	35	20.26	7.49			

*Level of Significance = 0.05*

the proficiency of the learners in the skills and competencies that are going to be taught during the intervention program. Furthermore, a pretest was developed through a backward planning process, which was popularized by educators Wiggins and McTighe.

The insignificant difference manifests that the control and experimental groups are parallel to each other in terms of students’ grammar skills and prior knowledge about English grammar, even though the samples were chosen independently.

**Part II. Posttests of the Control and Experimental Group**

After the intervention program, the researcher administered a 50-item posttest, which consisted of test items on ten grammar lessons. The learning competencies and number of items were parallel to the pretest. It aimed to compare the results of the learners’ scores in the pretest and posttest through an independent sample t-test. With this, it established the effect of contextualized drills on the level of grammar skills of the learners.

Table 2

*Independent Sample t-test of the Posttest Scores of the Control and Experimental Group*

	N	Mean	Var.	df	t	P (two-tailed)
Control Group	35	26.06	8.02	68	-2.99	0.004
Experimental Group	35	32.54	10.03			

*Level of Significance = 0.05*

Table 2 shows the comparison between the results of the posttest of the control group and the experimental group. It is readily seen that the control group obtained a posttest mean of 26.06. Meanwhile, the experimental group registered a mean of 32.54.

The posttest scores of the two groups were compared using an independent sample t-test. Based on the results, it can be gleaned that there is a significant difference between the posttest scores ( $t = -2.99, p < 0.05$ ) of the two groups. The experimental group, which used contextualized drills, scored higher in the posttest than the control group, which was taught without contextualized drills. The experimental group has a significantly higher level of grammar skills than the control group, who were taught grammar lessons using the conventional method, specifically the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) method.

Therefore, it can be inferred from the posttest scores of the experimental group that the treatment had an impact on the learners and participants' performance after they underwent the contextualized drills. The results of the present study are similar to the findings of Lamsal (2011). He found that the group taught using the drill technique performed better than the group taught using the conventional (usual) way of teaching. Hence, it is concluded from the study that the drill technique is positive and effective in teaching grammar. Group A has increased its average percentage to 83.79 against group 'B', which has increased its average percentage to 64.09.

There is an increase in the performance of the participants after the intervention program. Furthermore, these results revealed that the contextualized drills are effective in enhancing the grammar skills of the Grade 8 learners.

**Part III. Pretest and Posttest of the Control Group**

The scores of the pretest and posttest of the control group were computed and tabulated to determine if there was a significant difference between the pretest's and posttest's scores. Through that, it serves as evidence about the effectiveness of the presentation, practice, and production methods of learning English grammar.

Table 3

Paired t-test of the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Control Group

Control Group	N	Mean	Var.	Df	t	P (two-tailed)
Pretest	35	20.71	7.02	34	8.60	0.000
Posttest	35	26.06	8.02			

*Level of Significance = 0.05*

The overall weighted mean score of 5.00, interpreted as Very Acceptable, proves that the contextualized lecture handouts and reflection journals are very useful in enhancing the academic performance of students in English.

The pretest and posttest scores of the control group were tabulated and compared for their significant differences to gather information on whether the learners actually learned from the lessons during the intervention program.

The results of the paired t-test of the pretest and posttest scores at the 0.05 level of significance revealed that the computed t-value is -8.60 with a corresponding p-value that is less than 0.05 (p = -0.000). There is a significant difference between the mean pretest (M = 20.71, SD = 7.02) and posttest scores (M = 26.06, SD = 8.02).

**Part IV. Pretest and Posttest of the Experimental Group**

It can be gleaned from Table 4 that the scores of the participants from the experimental groups increased in their posttest. A paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the scores in the pretest and posttest of the participants in the experimental group. There was a significant difference in the

pretest scores (M = 20.62, SD = 7.49) and posttest scores (M =

Table 4

Paired t-test of the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the Experimental Group

Experimental Group	N	Mean	Var.	df	t	P (two-tailed)
Pretest	35	20.62	7.49	34	11.98	0.000
Posttest	35	32.97	10.03			

*Level of Significance = 0.05*

32.54, SD = 10.03); t (-11.98), p<.05. This result indicates that after the utilization of the contextualized grammar drills, the student-participants' grammar skills improved.

Similarly, Cortez (2016) observed that through the use of intervention material, the grammar competence of the learners was enhanced. They easily answered the different grammar activities. All in all, the use of intervention materials in teaching and learning English grammar helps the learners and teachers as well to become independent learners.

**Part V. Comparison of the Mean Gain Scores of the Control and Experimental Group**

Independent Samples t-test of the Mean Differences in Posttest and Pretest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

		Group Statistics			
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gain Scores	Control Group	35	5.34	3.678	.622
	Experimental Group	35	12.29	6.066	1.025

  

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Gain Scores	Equal variances assumed	7.889	.006	-5.790	68	.000	-6.943	1.199	-9.336	-4.550
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.790	56.020	.000	-6.943	1.199	-9.343	-4.541

The gain or difference recorded between the posttest and pretest scores of the learners in the control and experimental groups were compared. Since paired differences in the scores of learners in both groups are normally distributed, the independent sample t-test was used.

As can be gleaned from the result of the independent samples t-test in Table 5, there is a significant difference in the mean gain scores of the experimental group (M = 12.29, SD = 6.07) and the control group (M = 5.34, SD = 3.68); t = -5.79, p <.05, in favor of the experimental group. This suggests that the experimental group performed better than the control group after utilizing the contextualized drills.

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are humbly and respectfully offered: (1) English teachers may use contextualized drills in English grammar. Moreover, they are encouraged to develop their own contextualized drills to meet the particular needs of their students; (2) School administrators may include grammar



teaching, contextualization, and the development of learning materials in their in-service training programs, seminars, and workshops.; and (3) Curriculum developers may emphasize the grammar points mentioned in this study because the need for them is established by research. The results of this study may serve as their basis for revisiting the present curricula, and (4) Future researchers may conduct related studies on contextualization and other effective ways to arrest the decline in English proficiency, an overriding concern in English language teaching.

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