

# Common Grammatical Errors among Non-English Major Teachers

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**Abstract-**The teaching of grammar has been a constant struggle for many teachers in the different parts of the world. This is due to its complexity in form and structure. The inherent problem in the imparting of knowledge about grammar is that teachers have been increasingly poorly prepared for this task and have not been well prepared for the teaching of grammar in their education courses. The aim of this study is to identify and analyse the common grammatical errors of non-English major teachers. The study utilized a grammar test. The grammar test is classified into 3 parts namely Parts of speech 1 and 2, Verb Tenses 1 and 2 and Sentence Structure. The data were analysed using the frequency and Paired T-Test. The finding shows Verb tenses are the most committed grammatical errors by the non-English major teachers with 37.08%, respectively. The results revealed that Non-English major teachers do not know how to turn Positive sentences into negative sentences and not knowing how to formulate WH questions. In the other hand, Pronouns and verbs has the least committed grammatical errors by the non-English major teachers with 0.42%. There is no statistically difference in the common grammatical errors of non-English major teachers when data are grouped according to Elementary and Secondary school teachers. Based on these findings, it is recommend that teachers should encouraged to have a respectful regard for grammar not as an end in itself, but a tool for learning how to communicate clearly and effectively. Teachers must think and speak in English only and somehow avoid L1 if they are teaching subjects that English as the medium of instructions. And administrators should organize seminar or trainings to teachers in language teaching especially on grammar for the teachers to increase their grammar competency.

**Keywords-** grammar, errors, competency, teachers, achievements, learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

English language can be considered as the modern lingua franca, because it is widely used language in the world. Grammar is a set of rules that decide how the words are arranged into formation of a meaningful unit. The study of grammar is considered an important aspect in the learning of English language here in our country. One of the aims of the English language is to enable learners even teacher to speak, write and make presentations in internationally acceptable English that is grammatical, fluent and appropriate for purpose, audience, context and culture. Teachers' knowledge of grammar and how it functions is acknowledge to contribute to effective language use.

Grammar and language structures were important parts of training in the study of English. English grammar teaching has been given progressively less emphasis in English speaking countries [1], as more emphasis has been placed on spontaneity and creativity, rather than on collections of form.

The inherent problem in the imparting of knowledge about grammar is that teachers have been increasingly poorly prepared for this task over last 50 years [2]. As teachers have not been well prepared for the teaching of grammar in their education courses for such a long period of time [3].

Grammatical errors is a term used in prescriptive grammar to describe an instance of faulty, unconventional, or controversial usage, such as misplaced modifier or an inappropriate verb tense. Grammatical errors are usually distinguished from factual errors, logical fallacies, misspellings, typographical errors, and faulty punctuation. Grammar is important because it is the language that makes it possible for us to talk about language. As human beings, we can put sentences together even as children we can all do grammar. But to be able to talk about how sentences are built, about the types of words and words group that make up sentences that is knowing about grammar. And knowing about grammar offers a window into the human mind and into our amazingly complex mental capacity. Highlighted the importance of considering errors in the language learning process, there has been a shift in emphasis towards an understanding of the problems research paper face on the study of a language[4].

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the grammatical competency and proficiency of teachers. In the study "Investigation into English Grammar Proficiency of Teachers", the results revealed that there was indeed a lack of

grammar knowledge to some degree of most of the respondents. And Grammar understanding may be more difficult for teachers of English who come from a non-humanities background [5].

The study “level of Proficiency of teachers in English speaking as medium of instruction”, the results revealed that teachers were deficient in grammar and vocabulary, however average in fluency, pronunciation and confidence, which speaking in English [6].

When English is considered as the medium of instruction it is directly linked with the speaking competency of the teachers [7]. In the present situation, a teacher is not in position to do full justice to adopt English as medium of instruction in the whole sessions [8]. Some of the problems are difficulty in overcoming the barrier of mother tongue or L1, problems of forming new language habits, problems of pronunciation [9].

These studies have been conducted to find out the grammar ability and difficulties that could provide careful evidence to improve the grammatical competence that is an important part of communicative competence.

Hence, the researcher conducted a survey through giving teachers an English grammar test to identify the common grammatical errors of non- English major teachers teaching subject using English as their medium of instruction.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The overall purpose of this study is to identify the common grammatical errors of non-English major teachers teaching subject using English as their medium of instruction. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the common grammatical errors of non-English major teacher?
2. Is there a significant difference in the common grammatical errors of non-English major teachers when data are grouped according to Elementary and Secondary School Teachers?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study on the common grammatical errors of non-English major teachers would be beneficial to the following:

**Administrators:** The outcome of the study would enable school administrators to advance and develop new programs that will enhance the grammatical competence of the teachers. It will also provide as a linguistic assessment of the teachers over-all performance in grammar. This would also give the administrators the idea on how to reinforce instructions that will enhance linguistic aspect of the over-all academic performance.

**Teachers:** This study would help the Non-English major elementary and high school teachers understand their role in maximizing learning through the use of English language in teaching their lesson.

**Future Researchers:** This study would also benefit future researchers who would study the same or related topic. This could serve as a guide or reference for them, especially for those who would like to study long-term impacts of English language as a medium of communication.

### **Scope and Delimitation**

This study is concerned with the grammatical errors of non-English major teachers teaching subject using English as the medium of instruction of selected schools in one district in the division of Zamboanga City, Philippines.

The researcher selected the respondents for this study based on who are available during the conduct of the survey. Specifically the participants came from 4 different elementary and 2 secondary schools in one district in the division of Zamboanga City, Philippines. These schools were chosen as the focal place for the conduct of the survey because the researcher work near these schools.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The study utilized the Descriptive Research Design. A descriptive research design collects data in order to answer questions about the current status of the subject or topic of study and uses formal instruments to study preferences, attitudes, concerns or interest of a sample [10].

A total of twenty (20) Non-English major teachers coming from different schools in one district in the division of Zamboanga City, Philippines were considered in this study. A convenience sampling was used in selecting the respondents for this study. Specifically, there are twenty (20) respondents from Different schools in one district in the division of Zamboanga City, Philippines of which ten are teachers teaching in Elementary, and ten (10) are teachers teaching in secondary. All are non-English major teachers, specialization in Science, Math, Social Studies, MAPEH and TLE, were the medium of instructions is English.

The study employed an English grammar test in determining the common grammatical errors of non-English major teachers. The grammar was divided into four parts: Part A -Parts of Speech (Pronouns/ Verbs, Plural Nouns ,A/An/the, Comparative Adjectives) Part B-Parts of Speech 2 (Prepositions-Place, Prepositions–Time, Prepositions–Other, Conjunctions) Part C-Verb Tenses 1 (Simple Present/Present Progressive, Simple Past/Past Progressive, Simple Past/Past Perfect, Mixed Tenses) Part D-Verb Tenses 2 (Yes/No Questions, WH Questions/Tag Questions, Negative Sentences and Part–E-Sentence Structure (Simple Sentences, Compound Sentences, Complex Sentence, and Mixed Sentences.

The researchers personally went to some of the schools in one district in the division of Zamboanga City, Philippines to ask permission from the school principal to allow the researcher gather the data by administering the grammar test.

The Non-English Major Teachers were asked to answer a 100 items English Grammar Test in 1 hour and 30 minutes. Then, the grammar tests were collected. After gathering the data, the responses were tabulated, for error analysis then, the initial results were treated using statistical tools.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### IV.

**Table 1:** The results of grammatical error analysis of the Non- English Major Teachers

Parts of English Grammar Test	Numbers of Errors	Percentage
<b>1. Part of Speech 1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5.42 %</b>
1.1 Pronouns/ Verbs	1	0.42 %
1.2 Plural Nouns	3	1.25 %
1.3 A/ An/ The	5	2.08 %
1.4 Comparative Adjective	4	1.67 %
<b>2. Parts of Speech 2</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>11.25 %</b>
2.1 Preposition- Place	11	4.58 %
2.2 Preposition- Time	7	2.92 %
2.3 Preposition- Other	3	1.25 %
2.4 Conjunctions	6	2.5 %
<b>3. Verb Tenses 1</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>27.92 %</b>
3.1 Simple Present/ Present Progressive	13	5.42 %
3.2 Simple Past/ Past Progressive	12	5.00 %
3.3 Simple Past/ Present Perfect	26	10.83 %
3.4 Mixed Tenses	16	6.67 %
<b>4. Verb Tenses 2</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>37.08 %</b>
4.1 Yes/No Questions	21	8.75 %
4.2 Wh Questions	27	11.25 %
4.3 Tag Questions	10	4.17 %
4.4 Negative Sentences	31	12.91 %
<b>5. Sentence Structure</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>18.33 %</b>
5.1 Simple Sentences	1	0.42 %
5.2 Compound Sentences	9	3.75 %
5.3 Complex Sentences	15	6.25 %
5.4 Mixed Sentences	19	7.92 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100 %</b>

As gleaned from table 1, Part of speech 1 shows that 1 error committed by the respondent in item 1.1 Pronouns / Verbs with the percentage of 0.42 % , in item 1.2 Plural Nouns 3 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 1.25 % , in item 1.3 A / An / The 5 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 2.08 % and in item 1.4 Comparative Adjective 4 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 1.67 % . To sum it all a total of 13 errors committed by the respondents with a total percentage of 5.42 % .

Part of speech 2 shows that 11 errors committed by the respondents in item 2.1 Prepositions –Place with a percentage of 4.58 % , in item 2.2 Preposition – Time 7 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 2.92 % , in item 2.3 Preposition- Other 3errors committed by the respondents with the percentage 1.25 % and in item 2.4 Conjunctions 6 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 2.5 % . To sum it all a total of 27 errors committed by the respondents with a total percentage of 11.25 % .

Part of speech 3 Verb tenses 1, shows that 13 errors committed by the respondents in item 3.1 Simple Present / Present Progressive with the percentage of 5.42 % , in item 3.2 Simple Past / Past Progressive 12 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 5.00 % , in item 3.3 Simple Past / Present Perfect 26 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 10.83 % and in item 3.4 Mixed Tenses 16 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 6.67 % . To sum it all a total of 67 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 27.92 % .

Part of speech 4 Verb Tenses 2, shows that in item 4.1 Yes / No / Questions 21 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 8.75 % , in item 4.2 *Wh* Questions 27 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 11.25 % , in item 4.3 Tag questions 10 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 4.17 % and in item 4.4 Negative Sentences 31 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 12.91 % . To sum it all a total of 89 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 37.08 % respectively.

Lastly, part of speech 5 Sentences Structure, shows that in item 5.1 Simple Sentences 1 error committed by the respondent with the percentage of 0.42 % , in item 5.2 Compound Sentences 9 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 3.75 % , in item 5.3 Complex Sentences 15 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 6.25 % and in item 5.4 Mixed Sentences 19 errors committed by the respondents with the percentage of 7.92 % . To sum it all a total of 44 errors made by the teachers with a percentage of 18.33 % .

Data from table 1 indicated that the most frequent errors were Verb Tenses 2: Yes/ No Questions, *Wh* Questions, Tag Questions and Negative Sentences (37.08%), Verb Tenses 1: Simple Present/ Present Progressive, Simple Past/ Past Progressive, Simple Past/ Present Perfect, and Mixed Tenses (27.92%), Sentence Structure: Simple Sentences, Compound Sentences, Complex Sentences, and Mixed Sentences (18.33%), Parts of Speech 2: Preposition- Place, Preposition- Time, Preposition- Other and Conjunctions (11.25%) and Parts of Speech 1: Pronouns/ Verbs, Plural Nouns, A/An/The and Comparative Adjective (5.42%) respectively.

**Table 2 :** Errors committed by the teachers when data are grouped according to Elementary and Secondary

STATEMENT	Elementary teachers = 10	Secondary School teachers = 10	Mean difference	t-observe	t-critical	INTERPRETATION
<b>Part of speech 1</b>			<b>0.4872</b>	<b>15.713</b>	<b>1.729</b>	<b>0.4898</b>
1.1 Pronouns/ Verbs	<b>1.9091</b>	<b>2.0000</b>				
1.2 Plural Nouns	<b>1.8182</b>	<b>1.8889</b>				
1.3 A/ An/ The	<b>1.6364</b>	<b>4.1111</b>				
1.4 Comparative Adjective	<b>1.8182</b>	<b>4.0000</b>				
<b>Part of speech 2</b>						
2.1 Preposition- Place	<b>1.4545</b>	<b>1.4444</b>				
2.2 Preposition- Time	<b>1.7273</b>	<b>1.5556</b>				
2.3 Preposition- Other	<b>1.8182</b>	<b>1.8889</b>				
2.4 Conjunctions	<b>1.7273</b>	<b>1.6667</b>				
<b>Part of speech 3</b>						
3.1 Simple Present/ Present Progressive	<b>1.3636</b>	<b>1.5556</b>				
3.2 Simple Past/ Past Progressive	<b>2.3636</b>	<b>1.5556</b>				
3.3 Simple Past/ Present Perfect	<b>1.0909</b>	<b>1.2222</b>				

3.4 Mixed Tenses	<b>1.1818</b>	<b>1.3333</b>				
<b>Part of speech 4</b>						
4.1 Yes/No Questions	<b>1.0909</b>	<b>1.2222</b>				
4.2 Wh Questions	<b>2.0909</b>	<b>1.1111</b>				
4.3 Tag Questions	<b>1.4545</b>	<b>1.5556</b>				
4.4 Negative Sentences	<b>1.1818</b>	<b>1.2222</b>				
<b>Part of speech 5</b>						
5.1 Simple Sentences	<b>1.9091</b>	<b>2.0000</b>				
5.2 Compound Sentences	<b>1.5455</b>	<b>2.7500</b>				
5.3 Complex Sentences	<b>1.1818</b>	<b>1.3333</b>				
5.4 Mixed Sentences	<b>1.1818</b>	<b>1.0000</b>				
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>1.5772</b>	<b>1.8208</b>				
<b>STANDARD DEVIATION</b>	<b>3.3681</b>	<b>5.8273</b>				

Table 2 shows the significant difference between the mean scores of teachers as they were grouped according to Elementary teachers and Secondary teachers. 10 Elementary teachers and 10 Secondary School teachers took the test. T-test was used to test the significant difference between the two means. The computed t-value was 15.713 as compared to the t-critical at alpha 0.05 level of significance which is 0.000.

**Table 3.** Quantitative analysis when data are grouped according to Elementary teachers and Secondary School teachers.

Source of variation ( Within Group )	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-observed	t-critical	Interpretation
Elementary Teachers	1.5772	3.3681	0.4872	15.713	1.729	0.4898
High School Teachers	1.8208	5.8273				

As determined by Paired t-Test in table 2, it shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the common grammatical errors of Non-English major teachers when data are grouped according to Elementary teachers and High School teachers. As expected, both teachers teaching in Elementary and Secondary committed grammatical errors in terms of forms and structure.

## V. CONCLUSION

The evidence of grammatical errors indicated that the Non-English Major Teachers had some difficulties in using grammatical forms and structures. However, these errors did not affect communication process much since the teacher could get themselves understood: only a few percent of Pronouns/Verbs , Plural Nouns , A/An/The and Comparative Adjective. Nevertheless, teachers still need to pay special attention to these errors, especially Verb Tenses 2: such as Yes/No Questions, *Wh* Questions, Tag Questions and Negative Sentences, the most frequent errors made by the teachers. Besides, there were some language problem of syntactic errors, substances errors, and lexical errors, that teachers have to emphasize when teaching to help the students use better English to a more advanced level.

As for the errors made by Non-English major teachers, it could be analysed for the causes of errors that most of the errors were influenced by intralingual interference: overgeneralization, ignorance of the rule restrictions, and incomplete application of rules. Modality, or level of exposure to the target language (English) was an important source of errors. As a result, teachers need to realize the important of these factors influencing the errors made by them. Furthermore, the errors from this research study can be used for improving learning and teaching process, including giving appropriate feedback and developing teaching materials to solve specific grammatical problems of the teachers in order to develop their language proficiency effectively.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve more the grammatical competence of the non-English major teachers in one district in the division of Zamboanga City, Philippines, the study made the following recommendations:

1. Teacher must have practice the grammar oral or written for fluency in the language in order to keep on with English language. Teachers should encouraged to have a respectful regard for grammar not as an end in itself, but a tool for learning how to communicate clearly and effectively
2. Teachers must think and speak in English only and somehow avoid L1 if they are teaching subjects that English as the medium of instructions.
3. The Department of Education, Zamboanga City division should organize seminar or trainings to teachers in language teaching especially on grammar for the teachers to equip information to increase their grammar competency. A mix of individual self-training and group professional development would, I all likelihood, be an ideal situation for teachers who need further training in English grammar.

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