

## LEVEL OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR PROFICIENCY OF SECONDARY TEACHERS IN ZONE 2, DIVISION OF ZAMBALES

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**ABSTRACT :** Good grammar is the foundation of effective communication, regardless of the country and the language they are using. This research study identified the Level of English Grammar Proficiency of teachers. It was conducted among Secondary Teachers of Zone 2, Department of Education, Division of Zambales during the school year of 2022-2023. The study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design, a combination of survey questionnaire and 80-item multiple choice test as research instrument; and descriptive and inferential statistics for analysis of data. Findings revealed that most of the teacher-respondents were female middle adults. The level of grammar proficiency of teacher-respondents was based on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the standard reference for English Proficiency Level. The level of their proficiency in Word Order was proficient, Tense and Aspect was advanced, Determiners was proficient, Connectors was proficient, Punctuation was proficient, Sentence Construction was upper intermediate, Parts of Speech was proficient, and in Word Choice was proficient. Based on the results of the study, a plan was developed to improve the level of English grammar proficiency of secondary teachers.

**KEYWORDS::** English grammar, Grammar proficiency level, secondary teachers

### I. INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English is a critical component of a successful modern society. English is the third most spoken and most widely taught language on the planet. English skills are necessary for any country to fully benefit from global commerce; access the latest science, technology, and innovation; and exert influence in the world. (Runde, 2017)

The Filipinos' English competency in 2020 placed seven spots lower on a global proficiency index compared to last year. International company Education First ranked the Philippines 27th in its 2020 English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), with the country garnering a score of 562 out of 700. From 2016 to 2018, the Philippines managed to remain in the top 15 of the index, placing 13th, 15th, and 14th, respectively although the number of countries in the index varied. It included 88 countries in 2018 and 72 in 2016. In 2019, when the index grew to include a total 100 countries, the Philippines fell six spots compared to the year previous, but managed to remain in the Top 20. The country's "Proficiency Band," which is based on score rather than rank, has consistently remained at "high" from 2016 to 2020. The proficiency bands range from very low proficiency to very high. Education first said, it came up with the index by administering its English Standard Test to over 2.2 million individuals across 100 countries and regions, 54% of whom were female and 46% of whom were male. The median age of test takers, the company said, was 26 years old and 94% of them are below the age of 60. (De Guzman of Philstar Global, 2020)

### II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

This research study employed a descriptive research method with the survey questionnaire and 80-item multiple choice test as the main research instrument. For Shields (2013 as cited in Costales, 2018) descriptive method includes the collection of data to test the hypothesis and to answer the questions concerning the present status of the study. Each of them employs the process of disciplined inquiry through the gathering and analysis of empirical data, and each attempts to develop knowledge.

The study described the results of grammar proficiency test and survey questionnaire for public secondary teachers in Zone 2, Division of Zambales. The answers were solicited from the teacher-respondents. The results were interpreted to assess the level of English grammar proficiency of teachers.

### Instrument

The instrument that was used in gathering the data for the present study was composed of survey questionnaire and 80-item multiple choice test.

The instrument was composed of three (3) parts: The first part was the profile of the teacher – respondents which include the age, sex, years in service, and field of specialization. The second part was 80-item multiple choice test that was used to assess the English Proficiency of teachers in Grammar: word order, tense and aspect, determiners, connectors, punctuation, sentence construction, parts of speech, and word choice. The third part identified the grammatical challenges encountered by teachers. The teacher-respondents answered from the scale ranging from 4 (Very Challenging), 3 (Challenging), 2 (Sometimes Challenging) and 1 (Not Challenging) for Grammatical Challenges.

### Data Analysis

The statistical treatment of this research study was utilized descriptive statistical tools such as percentage, frequency counts and mean. The inferential statistics were ANOVA and Pearson R. All the data that obtained in the instrument were tallied, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted accordingly.

## III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This part presented the summary of the results of the research study.

### 1. Profile of the Teacher-Respondents

**Age.** The mean age of the teacher-respondents was 35.8 years old. This particular age was categorized into middle adulthood. Middle adulthood ranges from 35 to 40 years old who often accommodate bigger responsibilities in life.

**Sex.** Out of 100 teacher-respondents, there were 25 male and 75 female. Majority of the respondents were female. This indicated that women were enthusiast in teaching profession rather than men. They were more passionate and patient in dealing with students.

**Years in Service.** The mean year in service was 8.91. The result implied that most of the teacher-respondents were patiently teaching for almost one decade. They were showing dedication and passion in honing the skills of the students to become the best version of their selves in the future.

**Field of Specialization.** Majority of the teacher-respondents specialized in English. They were Language teachers who were teaching grammar and other components of language. MAPEH major had the least number of teachers who specialized on it.

### 2. Level of Grammar Proficiency of Teacher-Respondents

#### 2.1 Word Order

The mean was 81.0 which indicated that most of the teacher-respondents were proficient when it comes to Word Order in Grammar. They were able to arrange and write a sentence with the correct order of the words/phrases.

#### 2.2 Tense and Aspect

The mean result was 62.0 (advanced), it revealed that most of the teacher-respondents were able to identify correctly the tense and aspect of the words. They were able to know when to use past, present, or future tense of the verbs. They could confidently write a correct sentence or paragraph.

#### 2.3 Determiners

The mean score was 72.1 which indicated proficient level. The teacher-respondents were proficient enough in using determiner/s in sentences. They were able to use determiner at the beginning of a noun group to indicate the thing they are referring to.

#### 2.4 Connectors

The mean level was 76.3 (proficient). The result showed that the teacher-respondents were proficient in using connector/s in connecting the ideas of two different sentences, phrases, or sections.

#### 2.5 Punctuation

The mean level was 73.8 (proficient). The teacher-respondents were proficient in using punctuation marks. They were able to use punctuation correctly to separate sentences and parts of sentences, and to make their meaning clear.

#### 2.6 Sentence Construction

The mean score was 52.0 under upper intermediate level. The result showed that the teacher-respondents were under upper intermediate level when it comes to sentence construction. They were quite good enough in constructing sentences but not proficiently enough. They knew how the basic grammatical elements of a sentence but not the complex ones.

### 2.7 Parts of Speech

The mean level was 72.1 (proficient). The teacher-respondents were proficient in identifying the different parts of speech. They were able to understand well the role of a word plays in a sentence and how the word functions in meaning as well as grammatically within the sentence.

### 2.8 Word Choice

The mean level was 72.1 (proficient). The teacher-respondents were proficient in terms of choosing the right word. They were able to use effective and precise word in writing that conveys information not just in a functional way, but also to enlighten the reader.

### Summary of the Level of Grammar Proficiency of Teacher-Respondents

The level of grammar proficiency of teacher-respondents in Word Order was 81.0 (proficient) and ranked as no. 1, Connectors 76.3 (proficient) no. 2, Punctuation 73.8 (proficient) no. 3, followed by Determiners, Parts of Speech, and Word choice with the mean of 72.1 (proficient) and ranked as no. 4, Tense and Aspect 62.0 (advanced) no. 5, and Sentence Construction 52.0 (upper intermediate) no. 6.

### 3. Grammatical Challenges Encountered by the Teacher-Respondents in Grammar

Indicator 1, I can construct sentences correctly ranked as no. 1 (Challenging), while indicator 3 and 4, I can write different types of sentences and I can choose the appropriate words for the sentence/paragraph both ranked as 8.5 (Challenging), and indicator 6, I can use correct punctuation marks when I write ranked as no. 10 (Challenging). The computed overall weighted mean on the grammatical challenges encountered by the teachers in grammar was 2.79 which interpreted as challenging.

### 4. Significant Difference between the Level of Grammar Proficiency and Profile of the Teacher-Respondents

**Word Order.** The significant values for Age (0.95), Sex (0.15), Years in Service (0.37), and Field of Specialization (0.23) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There was no significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of Word Order.

**Tense and Aspect.** The significant values for Age (0.34), Sex (0.87), Years in Service (0.37), and Field of Specialization (0.19) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, do not reject the hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of Tense and Aspect.

**Determiner/Quantifiers/ Articles.** The significant values for Age (0.68), Sex (0.57) and Years in Service (0.91) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, do not reject the hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of Determiner/Quantifiers/Articles. While on the Field of Specialization (0.01) which was lower than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, reject the hypothesis. There was a significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and field of specialization of the teacher-respondents.

**Connectors.** The significant values for Age (0.28), Sex (0.80), Years in Service (0.55), and Field of Specialization (0.54) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, do not reject the hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of Connectors.

**Punctuation.** The significant values for Age (0.44), Sex (0.22), Years in Service (0.46), and Field of Specialization (0.52) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, do not reject the hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of Punctuation.

**Sentence Construction.** The significant values for Sex (0.13), Years in Service (0.61), and Field of Specialization (0.27) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, do not reject the hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of Sentence Construction. While Age (0.01) was lower than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, reject the hypothesis. There was a significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and age of the teacher-respondents in terms of Sentence Construction.

**Parts of Speech.** The significant values for Age (0.48), Sex (0.90), Years in Service (0.68), and Field of Specialization (0.93) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, do not reject the hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of Parts of Speech.

**Word Choice.** The significant values for Sex (0.15), Years in Service (0.37), and Field of Specialization (0.23) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, do not reject the hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of Word Choice. While on the Age was 0.01 which was lower than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, reject the hypothesis. There was a significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and age of the teacher-respondents in terms of Word Choice.

#### 5. Significant Difference between the Grammatical Challenges Encountered and Profile of the Teacher-Respondents

The significant values for Age (0.56), Sex (0.47), Years in Service (0.29), and Field of Specialization (0.14) were higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, accept hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the Grammatical Challenges Encountered and Profile of the Teacher-Respondents.

#### 6. Significant Relationship between the Grammatical Challenges Encountered in Grammar and the Level of Grammar Proficiency of Teacher-Respondents

The computed Pearson r correlation for Word Order was 0.083, Determiners/Quantifiers/Articles was 0.166, Connectors was 0.083, Sentence Construction was 0.113, Parts of Speech was 0.171, and Word Choice was 0.068 which interpreted as Negligible Correlation or Not Significant relationship. While on the computed Pearson r correlation for Tense/Aspect was 0.213 and Punctuation was 0.226 showed Low Correlation or Significant relationship.

#### 7. Proposed Plan to Enhance the Level of English Grammar

The plan entitled PLUG (Proficiency Level Uplifting in Grammar) aims to enhance the Level of English Grammar Proficiency of secondary teachers specifically in sentence construction. They will be able to construct sentences, paragraphs, letters and etc. correctly.

### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that:

1. Majority of the teacher-respondents were middle adults; female secondary teachers in Language and more than a dedicated to their profession.
2. Teacher-respondents were much proficient in grammar in terms of word order rather than other indicators. They showed a high number of mean score which means proficient. They were able to place properly the words in a sentence to make a meaningful meaning. They knew that if they make an error in placing words, the meaning of the sentence will become different, and with that they were really particular with the correct placement of the words in a sentence. However, they were quite good enough in constructing sentences but not proficiently enough.
3. The results showed that the teacher-respondents found grammar as challenging. It is difficult because they need to study a lot of rules and structures before mastering it. They were most challenged in constructing sentences correctly because they do not know or memorize the rules in grammar and some of them were confused. They were challenged in writing different types of sentences and in choosing the appropriate words for the sentence/paragraph because they were knowledgeable in writing different types of sentences and they know what words will be chosen or used in a sentence. However, they were least challenged in using correct punctuation marks when they write because they know well how to make the meaning of sentences clearer using punctuations, such as periods, commas, semicolons and etc.
4. There was a significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and field of specialization of the teacher-respondents in terms of Determiner/Quantifiers/Articles, their field of specialization affected their level of proficiency, if they were English/Language teachers, they tend to be more knowledgeable and their grammar proficiency level in terms of Determiner/Quantifiers/Articles is higher than those other majors.

There was also a significant difference between the level of grammar proficiency and age of the teacher-respondents in terms of Sentence Construction and Word Choice, it means that their age had something to do with their level/knowledge, if they were young or old, it affected their performance specifically in constructing sentences and choosing the right words to be used. As they aged, they get to gain more experiences, read a lot of books, and learn more knowledge that helped them to improve their writing skills.

5. There was no significant difference between the Grammatical Challenges Encountered and Profile of the Teacher-Respondents. Even if they have different profile, it did not affect the grammatical challenges they encountered.
6. The grammatical challenges encountered by the teacher-respondents showed significant relationship to the level of grammar proficiency in terms of tense/aspect and punctuation. This means that their grammatical difficulties have something to do to their proficiency level in terms of tense/aspect and punctuation. Their level of proficiency in tense and aspect was advanced, which made them least challenged in this because they know how to use tense to show time period in which the verb of a sentence places an action and how the aspect is used to describe or understand how an event unfolds over time. Furthermore, they were proficient in using punctuation marks because they know well how to make the meaning of sentences clearer using punctuations, thus they were least challenged in using punctuations.
7. The plan entitled PLUG (Proficiency Level Uplifting in Grammar) aims to enhance the Level of English Grammar Proficiency of secondary teachers specifically in sentence construction.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the foregoing conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were advised:

1. All teachers despite of their age, sex, years in service, and field of specialization may enroll in advanced education to enhance their skills.
2. School heads may include grammar in INSET or LAC sessions and encourage their teachers to participate different webinars/seminars about Grammar to enhance their level of proficiency.
3. Teachers may review the different rules of grammar to address their grammatical difficulties.
4. Experienced teachers may watch tutorial videos on how to construct sentences correctly and how to choose appropriate words to be updated on the new rules.
5. The teachers may have grammar manual nearby that they can consult when writing to avoid any grammar mistake and make them feel confident in their piece.
6. Teachers may create a list of their grammatical challenges and use it as a guide to improve their level of proficiency.
7. The Department of Education, Division of Zambales may consider and implement the proposed plan.

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