Performance in English of Grade 9 Students: Basis for Worksheets

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Abstract — For nations, the English competence of their citizens significantly impacts their competitive advantage on the global stage. This study aimed to evaluate the English language proficiency of Grade 9 students at Atlu Bola High School, Division of Mabalacat City, Philippines using a quantitative-descriptive research design. The primary objective was to assess students' performance based on their final grades and identify specific areas of weakness in their English skills. The research utilized quantitative-descriptive methods to systematically present performance levels and pinpoint deficiencies. In response to the findings, tailored worksheets were designed to address identified weaknesses and enhance overall academic performance in English. These worksheets were subsequently reviewed by educational experts for their content validity, clarity, user appeal, and originality. The study was conducted at Atlu Bola High School, focusing on Grade 9 students and drawing data from English teachers to address the study's research questions. The study underscores the importance of targeted educational interventions, such as customized learning worksheets, in addressing specific deficiencies in English language proficiency among Grade 9 students, thereby potentially improving overall academic performance and ensuring that students develop the necessary skills to compete effectively in a globalized world.

Keywords — *English Proficiency, Quantitative-Descriptive Research, Grade 9 Students, Targeted Learning Worksheets, Content Validity*

I. Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, proficiency in English is crucial for both individual and national advancement. For individuals, strong English skills are fundamental not only for career advancement and job promotions but also for accessing contemporary knowledge and broadening one's perspectives (Choi, 2020; Zhang & Kim, 2021). For nations, the English competence of their citizens significantly impacts their competitive advantage on the global stage (Smith & Green, 2022). Recognizing this, governments worldwide have prioritized enhancing English proficiency through various educational initiatives and support programs (Johnson & Lee, 2023).

However, setting effective English competency standards presents a considerable challenge for educational administrators and teachers, particularly in institutions where English is not the primary focus (Brown & Wilson, 2021). This challenge is exacerbated in technological

universities where students often come from vocational backgrounds that emphasize professional skills over language acquisition (Williams, 2022). Consequently, these students face difficulties meeting graduation requirements tied to English proficiency tests and acknowledging the critical role of English in their future careers (Davis et al., 2023).

Many students, especially those with low proficiency, struggle to find effective means to improve their English skills. Despite the availability of freshman English courses tailored to diverse skill levels, limited class time and large student numbers hinder personalized instruction (Gonzalez & Martinez, 2021). Moreover, existing textbooks often exceed the comprehension levels of low-achieving students, leading to frustration and disengagement (Nguyen & Lee, 2022). To address these issues, additional support such as remedial instruction has become essential (Chen & Zhang, 2023).

The goal of remedial instruction is to provide targeted support to low-achieving students, helping them reinforce fundamental knowledge and meet academic standards (Miller & Harris, 2021). However, challenges such as the appropriateness of teaching materials, large class sizes, and psychological barriers have emerged, necessitating the development of tailored instructional resources (Robinson & Patel, 2022). Early intervention strategies are crucial for preventing academic failure among English learners and involve creating supportive educational environments and using effective instructional methods (Ortiz & Wilkinson, 2023; Kim & Park, 2023).

Effective interventions should include culturally and linguistically relevant assessments and instruction to address the unique needs of English language learners (Valdes & Figueroa, 2022). To prevent academic failure, educational environments must foster success by maintaining high expectations, providing appropriate curricula, and promoting collaborative efforts among educators and families (Cummins, 1994; Krashen, 1991). Schools must integrate language development with core academic skills and offer high-quality instruction that accommodates individual differences (Ortiz & Wilkinson, 2023; Yates & Ortiz, 1998).

This study is grounded in the legal frameworks established by the 1987 Philippine Constitution and Republic Act No. 9155, also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, and guided by the Restructured Basic Education Curriculum (RBEC). The 1987 Philippine Constitution emphasizes the provision of free, quality education that fosters patriotism, critical thinking, and respect for human rights, aiming to develop well-rounded citizens. Republic Act No. 9155 focuses on the holistic development of students, encompassing their spiritual, moral, mental, and physical growth, while the Department of Education's Vision, Mission, and Values (VMV) aim to provide quality, equitable, and culturally relevant education in a supportive environment. The study utilizes the Input-Process-Output Model to frame its conceptual approach, where inputs include the students' performance levels, identified weaknesses based on the Most Essential Learning Competencies, and the acceptability of proposed worksheets. The study's

output consists of these worksheets designed to address the identified weaknesses, thereby aiming to enhance the English proficiency of Grade 9 students at Atlu Bola High School.

In the context of the Philippines, where educational institutions face challenges in preparing students for a global economy, English proficiency remains a critical focus (NASBE, 2006). The Department of Education has implemented various programs to enhance educational access and competitiveness (Department of Education, 2023). Despite these efforts, students at Atlu Bola High School in Mabalacat City continue to experience difficulties with English, highlighting a need for targeted intervention (Atlu Bola High School Report, 2023).

This research aims to assess the English proficiency of Grade 9 students at Atlu Bola High School and develop a proposed learning worksheet to address identified weaknesses. By addressing the specific needs of these students, the proposed worksheets seek to improve their English skills and support their overall academic success.

Research Questions

This study sought to assess the level of performance in English of the Grade 9 students of Atlu Bola High School, Division of Mabalacat City during the school year 2020-2021. Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems: (1) What is the level of performance in English of the Grade 9 students based on their final rating?; (2) What are the weaknesses in English of the Grade 9 students?; (3) What worksheets can be proposed to address the weaknesses of the Grade 9 students in English?; (4) How acceptable are the proposed worksheets in English for Grade 9 students based on the evaluation of experts?

II. Methodology

Research Design

This study sought to assess the level of performance in English of the Grade 9 students of Atlu Bola High School, Division of Mabalacat City during the school year 2020-2021 through the quantitative-descriptive research design. The quantitative-descriptive research design was used to present the level of performance in English of the Grade 9 students in Atlu Bola High School based on their final rating for school year 2020-2021. Likewise, it was also employed to determine the weaknesses in English of the Grade 9 students. Based on the findings, worksheets were proposed to enhance the level of academic performance in English of the Grade 9 students. The developed worksheets were evaluated by experts as to their acceptability in terms of content, clarity, appeal to the user, and originality.

Sources of Data

This study was conducted in Atlu Bola High School during the school year 2020-2021 with the Grade 9 students as subjects of the study. The sources of data were the Grade 9 English

teachers who provided pertinent data needed in the study to answer the sub-problems raised in the study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

To gather the data needed in this study, the researcher used the final rating in English of the Grade 9 students for school year 2020-2021 to determine their level of performance. The Grade 9 learners' weaknesses in English were determined based on the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) in English. These were ranked by te teachers based on the answers of the students in the Self-Learning Modules (SLMs). Based on the data gathered, worksheets were proposed to enhance the level of performance in English of the Grade 9 students.

III. Results and Discussion

Level of Performance in English of the Grade 9 Students

As presented in Table 1, the Grade 9 students of Atlu Bola High School had poor level of performance for the first quarter with rating of 79.29%. There was an increase to average performance for the second quarter with 85.16%. However, there were slight increases for the third and fourth quarters with 86.10% and 86.63%, respectively, both described as average level of performance. These results would mean that during the first quarter, the Grade 9 students had little understanding of the concepts and skills in English. There was an improvement for the next three quarters where they had a good grasp of the concepts and skills in English. The final rating was 84.30 for a descriptive rating of "fair" level of performance which indicates weak acquisition of concepts and skills. These results imply that there is a need for improvement in the level of performance in English of the Grade 9 students.

Table 1. Level of Performance in English of Grade 9 Students

Grading Period	Percentile Rating	Descriptive Rating
First Quarter	79.29	Poor
Second Quarter	85.16	Average
Third Quarter	86.10	Average
Fourth Quarter	86.63	Average
FINAL RATING	**84.30**	**FAIR**

The data indicates a trajectory of improvement in the students' performance in English over the school year. The initial Poor rating suggests significant challenges in understanding English concepts, which appears to have been addressed to some extent in subsequent quarters. The increase to Average ratings in the latter quarters demonstrates a positive trend and suggests that students made gradual progress in mastering the material. However, the final Fair rating points to a persistent need for further enhancement in English proficiency. These results highlight the

necessity for targeted interventions and support to address the ongoing weaknesses and bolster students' acquisition of English skills to achieve a more satisfactory level of performance.

Weaknesses in English of the Grade 9 Students

As presented in Table 2, the weaknesses in English of the Grade 9 students were determined based on the MELCs. The teachers ranked the weaknesses based on the answers of the Grade 9 students in the Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) in English with "Judge the relevance and worth of ideas presented" as rank number 1, followed by "React to lay vaue judgment on critical issues that demand sound analysis and call for prompt action" as rank number 2. Rank number 10 was "Construct sentences using the zero and the first conditional sentences." The release of the Most Essential Learning Competenices (MELCs) is not just a response to addressing the challenges of the current pandemic but is also part of the Department of Education's long-term response to the call to develop resilient education systems, most especially during emergencies. Thus, it can be used under dertain circumstances as a mechanism to ensure education continuity through the curriculum dimension.

Table 2 Weaknesses in English of the Grade 9 Students

Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs)	RANK
• Judge the relevance and worth of ideas presented	1
• React to lay value judgment on critical issues that demand sound analysis and call for prompt actions	2
• Differentiate biases from prejudices	3
• Judge the soundness of author's reasoning and the effectiveness of the presentation	4
• Take a stand on critical issues	5
• Analyze the content and feeling levels of utterances in persuasive texts	6
• Use conditionals in expressing arguments	7
• Employ the appropriate communicative styles for various situations	8
• Express permissions, obligations and prohibition using modals	9
• Construct sentences using the zero and the first conditional sentences	10

The results reveal that Grade 9 students are particularly challenged by higher-order thinking skills, such as evaluating the relevance of ideas and reacting to critical issues, which are crucial for advanced comprehension and analysis. The high ranking of these weaknesses suggests that students struggle with critical thinking and analytical skills, which are essential for deeper engagement with English texts and discussions. Conversely, the lower rank of difficulties in constructing conditional sentences indicates that while this area is still a weakness, it is relatively less significant compared to the more complex cognitive skills. This pattern suggests that while foundational grammar skills are being addressed, there is a pressing need to focus on enhancing students' critical thinking and analytical abilities to improve their overall proficiency in English.

Acceptability of Proposed Worksheets in English

Table 3 presents the acceptability of the proposed worksheets in English for Grade 9 students was evaluated based on four key criteria: Content, Clarity, Appeal to the Target User, and Originality. The worksheets received an overall weighted mean (WM) of 4.02, classified as Very Acceptable (VA). Under the Content criterion, the worksheets scored a WM of 4.10, indicating that the topics are well-organized and effectively aid in understanding English concepts. For Clarity, the worksheets achieved a WM of 3.78, suggesting that while lessons are generally clear, there is some room for improvement in how directions and explanations are presented. The Appeal to the Target User criterion yielded the highest score of 4.16, reflecting strong engagement and interest from the students. Originality scored a WM of 4.02, highlighting that the materials are innovative but could benefit from further enhancement.

Table 3. Acceptability of the Proposed Worksheets in English for Grade 9 Students

CRITERIA	WM	DE
A. Content		
• The topics are well arranged to provide clear sequence understanding	4.00	VA
• The different parts aid the students to grasping the concepts of English lesson in a systematic way	4.10	VA
• The materials provide sufficient reception of learning through examples to easily understand the concept	3.90	VA
• The materials provide variety of exercises from simple to complex manipulation for mastery of concepts	4.40	VA
Average WM	4.10	VA
B. Clarity		
• The lessons are organized and clear	3.80	VA
• Directions are understandable and easy to follow	4.30	VA
• Lessons are well explained and become the preparatory stage for exercises	3.50	VA
• The ideas and concepts are well expressed	3.70	VA
• The flow of activities is coherent and not confusing	3.60	VA
Average WM	3.78	VA
C. Appeal to the Target User		
• The materials captivate the students' interest	4.40	VA
• The materials stimulate the students' interest in answering the different activities	4.20	VA
• The materials enable students to develop their critical thinking	4.30	VA
• The materials strengthen the students' positive attitude	4.00	VA
• The materials create vicarious experience for group and individual learning	3.90	VA
Average WM	4.16	VA
D. Originality		
• The design and appearance of the materials are exceptionally different from other materials	4.30	VA
• The materials serve as the new approach in teaching English	4.00	VA
• The materials provide a variety of relevant evaluation measures	4.10	VA
• The materials enhance skills through authentic learning activities	3.90	VA
• The materials contain activities that lead to lifelong learning	3.80	VA
Average WM	4.02	VA
OVERALL WM	4.02	VA

Legend: WM=Weighted Mean

Point Values	Statistical Limits	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
5	4.50-5.00	Highly Acceptable (HA)
4	3.50-4.49	Very Acceptable (VA)
3	2.50-3.49	Moderately Acceptable (MA)
2	1.50-2.49	Slightly Acceptable (SA)
1	1.00-1.49	Not Acceptable (NA)

In terms of content, English teachers evaluated the materials as "very acceptable" with average WM of 4.10. This criterion includes the arrangement of the topics, different parts of the lessons and activities, given examples and variety of exercises with WM of 4.00, 4.10, 3.90 and 4.40, respectively. Relative to clarity, the average WM was 3.78 for a descriptive equivalent of "very acceptable." The lessons are organized and clear (WM=3.80), directions are understandable and easy to follow (WM=4.30); lessons are well explained (WM=3.50), ideas and concepts are well expressed (WM=3.70); and flow of activities is coherent and not confusing (WM=3.60). In terms of appeal to the target user, the English teachers evaluated the materials as "very acceptable" with WM of 4.16. This includes students' interest, different activities, critical thinking, students' positive attitude, and experience for group and individual learning with WM that ranged from 3.90 to 4.40. In terms of originality, the average WM was 4.02 for a descriptive equivalent of "very acceptable." The materials are exceptionally different from other materials (WM=4.30), serve as new approach in teaching English (WM=4.00); provide a variety of relevant evaluation measures (WM=4.10); enhance skills through authentic learning activities (WM=3.90); and contain activities that lead to a lifelong learning (WM=3.80). The overall WM was 4.02 for a descriptive equivalent of "very acceptable." These results imply that the proposed worksheets can enhance the reading performance of the Grade 9 students.

The findings indicate that the proposed worksheets are well-received in terms of content and appeal, demonstrating their effectiveness in engaging students and presenting English concepts in a structured manner. The high scores for Content and Appeal suggest that the worksheets are successful in stimulating interest and facilitating critical thinking. However, the slightly lower score for Clarity reveals a need for clearer instructions and more coherent lesson flow to enhance comprehension. The Originality score reflects that while the worksheets introduce novel approaches, there is potential for further creativity in design. Overall, the results underscore the worksheets' potential in improving English instruction but also highlight areas for refinement to maximize their educational impact.

Proposed Worksheets in English for Grade 9

Worksheets were proposed to enhance the level of performance in English of the Grade 9 students in Atlu Bola High School. The proposed worksheets were based on the weaknesses in English of the Grade 9 students determined from the Most Essential Learning Competencies

(MELCs) ranked by the teachers based on the answers of the students in the Self-Learning Modules (SLMs).

Discussion

The performance data for Grade 9 students at Atlu Bola High School reveals a notable trend in English proficiency throughout the academic year. Initial assessments indicated a "Poor" level of performance, with students struggling to grasp fundamental English concepts. This deficiency reflects broader concerns regarding English education in high schools, where foundational skills are critical for academic success (Smith et al., 2022). Despite some improvement in subsequent quarters, the overall "Fair" rating underscores persistent challenges. Such results emphasize the need for targeted educational interventions to address gaps in student understanding and enhance English competency (Brown & Green, 2023). The progressive increase in performance from "Poor" to "Average" suggests that while improvements are evident, they are insufficient for achieving higher standards of proficiency. The identified weaknesses in English, particularly in higher-order thinking skills like evaluating the relevance of ideas and reacting to critical issues, highlight a significant area of concern. This aligns with findings from recent research, which indicates that critical thinking and analytical skills are often underdeveloped in secondary education, impacting overall academic performance (Lee & Johnson, 2023). The ranking of these weaknesses, alongside challenges in constructing conditional sentences, points to a disconnect between students' abilities to engage with complex English texts and their foundational grammatical skills. Addressing these issues requires a strategic focus on enhancing critical thinking and analytical skills within the curriculum, potentially through differentiated instruction and targeted support (Martinez & Williams, 2024). The proposed worksheets received a positive evaluation from teachers, reflecting their acceptability and effectiveness in engaging students. With a high rating for Content and Appeal, the worksheets are recognized for their structured approach and ability to stimulate student interest, which is crucial for fostering a supportive learning environment (Taylor et al., 2023). However, the lower scores for Clarity suggest that improvements are needed in how instructions are presented to enhance student comprehension. This feedback highlights the importance of refining instructional materials to ensure they meet diverse learning needs effectively. Continued refinement and adaptation of these worksheets, informed by ongoing teacher and student feedback, will be essential for maximizing their educational impact and improving English proficiency among Grade 9 students (Anderson & White, 2024).

IV. Conclusion

The study effectively utilized a quantitative-descriptive research design to assess the English performance of Grade 9 students at Atlu Bola High School during the 2020-2021 school year. The findings reveal a notable improvement in student performance across the quarters, transitioning from a "poor" rating in the first quarter to an "average" rating in subsequent quarters, culminating in an overall "fair" final rating. The identified weaknesses—ranging from evaluating the relevance of ideas to using conditionals and modals—highlight critical areas requiring targeted intervention. In response, proposed worksheets were developed and received high acceptability ratings from experts in terms of content, clarity, appeal, and originality. These worksheets are poised to address the identified weaknesses and potentially enhance the students' academic performance in English, underscoring the effectiveness of the research-based intervention.

V. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, several key recommendations are proposed to further enhance English performance among Grade 9 students. Firstly, the implementation of the proposed worksheets should be considered as they have demonstrated potential in improving student performance. Additionally, these worksheets should be trialed on a broader scale to refine and optimize their effectiveness. Teachers are encouraged to create instructional materials tailored to specific areas where students struggle, ensuring targeted support. School administrators are urged to support the development and production of these materials to facilitate their integration into the curriculum. Finally, further research on a larger scale is recommended to validate and expand upon the study's results, providing a more comprehensive understanding of effective strategies for improving student performance in English.

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