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## Varied Strategies In Improving The Linguistic Competence Of Selected Elementary Teachers: An Action Research

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### Abstract

This action research was conducted on the school year 2013-2014 which primarily aimed to determine the linguistic strategies that would develop the linguistic competence among the teachers who voluntarily participated in the study. Using the convenience sampling, there were 18 elementary teachers who are teaching from Grade One to Six. To meet the objective of this action research, a 100-item multiple choice type of test taken from the study of Liozo (2011) was utilized as the research instrument. A pre-test was first conducted and after the intervention of different varied strategies, post test was conducted and compared. Based on the comparison of the pre-test and post-test, it is safe to say that the strategies introduced to the teachers were able to enhance their competence linguistically. The number represented by half of the respondents would say that the conduct of the action research yield positive result.

**Keywords:** action research, linguistic competence, strategies, mentoring, monitoring

### I. Rationale

One of the indicators to evaluate the performance of the school is its result on the National Achievement Test which is conducted every year to all grade III and VI of all private and public schools nationwide. Based on the school data, the Grade VI result specifically on English subject was below the National passing rate (75%).

Many researcher correlates the low performance of the pupils to the competence of the teachers. As cited by Liozo (2011) in her study, the performance of their pupils in in one of the districts in Zamboanga City could be attributed to the competence of their Teachers who are Moderate Users of English Language. This result may not be so surprising due to fact that English is not the native language of the teacher. However, it is only alarming because English is one of the media of instruction in the Philippines and this language is used in teaching the major subjects in the elementary level such as Science and Mathematics. It is also believed that teachers, should be conscious of communication strategies, and they should have a variety of techniques to design and implement activities and tasks that are relevant to teaching to enhance their students' strategic competence and their overall communicative competence so that they would communicate effectively and successfully.

The ultimate goal of English language teaching is to develop the learners' communicative competence which enables them to communicate successfully in the real world. According to Canale (1983) communicative competence comprises grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Since the main concern of this paper is strategic competence, we shall

examine only this component of communicative competence. Strategic competence refers to the learners' use of strategies during the course of communication to bridge the gap in their linguistic knowledge. Many writers stress the importance of the strategic or linguistic competence as an essential component in the communicative competence and they suggest that it plays a major role in communicating successfully to develop second language learners' communicative competence (Canale 1983; Canale/Swain 1980; Wannaruk 2002).

Therefore, after diagnosing the level of competence of the respondents, the researcher aimed to conduct an action research on how to improve the linguistic competence of the 18 respondents who are extremely limited user of the language.

## II. Methodology

This study was conducted on the school year 2013-2014 which primarily aimed to determine the linguistic strategies that would develop the linguistic competence among the teachers who voluntarily participated in the study. Among the total population, there were 18 elementary teachers who are teaching from Grade One to Six. They were selected employing the convenience sample.

To meet the objective of this action research, a 100-item multiple choice type of test taken from the study of Liozo (2011) was utilized as the research instrument. A pre-test was first conducted and after the intervention of different varied strategies, post test was conducted and compared to check if significant difference exist for every level of the linguistic competence.

## III. Intervention

After the approval of the action research proposal, the researcher came up with the following plan to address the low linguistic competence of the participating teachers:

**Table 1. Planned Strategies**

<b>Planned Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All these strategies will be discussed during the In-Service Training</li> <li>• Constant monitoring and mentoring</li> <li>• Providing assistance /materials</li> </ul>
1. Using Dictionary	
2. Using Context Clues	
3. Reading Voraciously	
4. Use it or Lose It	
5. One word A day	
6. Improving Reading Habit	
7. Using the English language even Outside the Class	
8. Mentoring	

This action research was done for six month (October 2014 –March 2014) during the second semester of the school year. The schedule below on the monitoring and mentoring was religiously followed by the researcher:

**Table 2. Schedule of the Conduct of the Strategies**

Grade Level Taught	Schedule
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Grade One	Every 1st Monday and Friday of the Month
Grade Two	Every 2nd Monday and Friday of the Month
Grade Three	Every 3rd Monday and Friday of the Month
Grade Four	Every 4th Monday and Friday of the Month
Grade Five	Every 1st Tuesday and Thursday of the Month
Grade Six	Every 2nd Tuesday and Thursday of the Month

#### IV. Evaluation of Results

The level of the linguistic competence of the teachers were categorized into four; competent user, moderate user, limited user and extremely limited user. They were determined according to their scores during the Pre-test and Post Test. Table 3 below shows the individual result of the participating teachers:

**Table 3. Result of the Pre-Test and Post-Test**

Participant	Pre Test	Level of Linguistic Competence	Post Test	Level of Linguistic Competence	Remarks
Participant 1	23	1	47	2	Improved
Participant 2	45	2	50	2	Same level
Participant 3	39	2	47	2	Same level
Participant 4	57	3	77	4	Improved
Participant 5	45	2	79	4	Improved
Participant 6	27	2	54	3	Improved
Participant 7	58	3	53	3	same level
Participant 8	57	3	48	2	Decreased
Participant 9	68	3	80	4	Improved
Participant 10	34	2	24	1	Decreased
Participant 11	78	3	85	4	Improved
Participant 12	56	3	60	3	Same level
Participant 13	62	3	59	3	Same level
Participant 14	71	3	79	4	Improved
Participant 15	64	3	58	3	Same level
Participant 16	43	2	39	2	Same level

Participant 17	68	3	76	4	Improved
Participant 18	64	3	83	4	Improved

Level 4 (76-100 = competent user of the English language)

Level 3 (51-75 = Moderate user of the English language)

Level 2 (26-50 = limited user of the English language)

Level 1 (1-25 = extremely limited user of the English language)

As shown in Table 3, the result revealed that among the 18 participants, 9 or 50% of them were able to increase the level of their linguistic competence. While 7 or 38.89 of them were just with the same level of linguistic competence and the 2 or 11.11 unfortunately decreased the level of their linguistic competence.

Based on the comparison of the pre test and post test, it is safe to say that the strategies introduced to the teachers were able to enhanced their competence linguistically. The number represented by half of the respondents would say that the conduct of the action research yield positive result.

## V. Conclusion

As revealed on the data gathered from the whole process of the study, the respondents Linguistic Competence in English was improved through:

1. Facilitating in the In-Service training and giving lectures on the topic related to vocabulary development such as using references like dictionary, using context clues, reading voraciously, use it or lose it strategy and learning One New word A day.
2. Sharing information on the new trends or strategies in teaching and learning grammar and vocabulary.
3. Having incidental teaching/mentoring/assisting.
4. Encouraging respondents to enrol in the graduates school program to enhance their professional competence and learn new methods and techniques in the teaching-learning process.

## VI. Recommendations

Based on the result of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Regular conduct of the SLAC and In-Service Trainings and proper choosing of topics delivered during the said activities. Topics to be included should be those of great help to the teachers especially those new and innovative ones.
2. Teachers should upgrade themselves by enrolling the Graduate school and other academic programs of the Department of Education.
3. Attending higher level of trainings such as those conducted by the Division, Region and National Office.
4. Strong implementation of the Mentoring programs through the recommendations of the school heads and assistance of the Master teachers.

## **VII. References**

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