ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE BARRIERS OF GRADE 8 STUDENTS: INTERVENTION MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

Language barriers hinder students from mastering English fluency, ranking as the second most common global communication barrier, especially for learners in classrooms. Addressing these issues is a priority for the education system. Targeting these issues can help students achieve mastery of the language, especially since it is the medium of instruction in some subjects such as English, Science, and Mathematics. This descriptive research carefully examined the most common language barriers among Grade 8 students in their classroom communication, their causes and effects, and ways to cope with these, so the researchers could create an intervention material to address these issues. Sixty (60) Grade 8 Students from San Roque National High, and their English teacher, responded to this study. The analysis of their interview responses showed the most common language barrier, as well as its causes and effects. The results indicated that the most common barrier for Grade 8 students is their problem with grammar and its components due to a lack of exposure to the use of the English language, which causes them to have low self-confidence in using the language. They also stated that they love to read and view it as a way to cope with these problems. Based on these findings, it is recommended to use the intervention material made by the researchers that focuses on

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Grammar to help them become fluent in the English language. It is also recommended to add more grammar lessons if needed by the students.

Keywords: language barriers, examination, interview, intervention material

1. Introduction

Effective communication is integral to the educational experience, fostering collaboration and understanding among students, classmates, and teachers. Despite this, communication barriers persist within educational institutions, with language barriers, especially those associated with the use of English as a second language, posing significant obstacles. This study aims to delve into the complexities surrounding language barriers, with a specific focus on Grade 8 students at San Roque National High School.

Institutions have long grappled with addressing barriers that hinder communication within classrooms. Language barriers, second only to cultural differences, prove to be a formidable hurdle. The intricate nature of the English language, encompassing grammar intricacies, spelling nuances, limited vocabulary, and challenges in cohesive expression, contributes to difficulties in effective communication. Additionally, the fluid nature of language, perpetually changing over time, complicates the development of consistent interventions by educators and administrators.

In 2006, DepEd Order No. 36 mandated the use of English as the medium of instruction in English, Mathematics, and Science subjects [5]. However, the learners' struggles with the language hinder the proper implementation of this directive.

This study endeavors to identify the root causes of language barriers encountered by Grade 8 students and implement an intervention program tailored to comprehensively address these challenges. Language learning, recognized as a multifaceted task, is particularly challenging for non-native English speakers. Dimayati and Mudjiono's research in 2010, cited by Sokip in 2020, underscores the impact of individual, social, and cultural factors on language acquisition [6] [26]. These factors encompass the low motivation of learners, lack of concentration, teachers' attitudes, and inadequacies in learning facilities and infrastructure. Consequently, language barriers extend beyond linguistic intricacies, involving internal and external elements that shape learners' ability and willingness to engage with a second language.

The foundation of this research lies in a local study entitled "Problems in Speaking Performance of Grade 8 Jade of Tagum City National High School in 2022." This study provided crucial data on the speaking skills of Grade 8 Jade students, forming the basis for examining language barriers. The collected data, contributed by Genelza, Genesis, and other authors, informed the analysis of speaking problems [10].

The study, titled "Analysis of Language Barriers of Grade 8 Students: Intervention Material Development," represents an extensive examination conducted by the researchers. It aims to identify areas of language barriers among Grade 8 students,

explore the causes and effects of these problems, and propose potential coping mechanisms. Among its objectives, a primary goal is to develop an intervention material to assist students in addressing these issues in the classroom. This material underwent validation and careful analysis to ensure its effectiveness for the target learners.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the language barriers experienced by Grade 8 Students of San Roque National High School and create a necessary intervention.

It seeks to answer the following specific questions:

1) What are the most common and most frequent language barriers that the Grade 8 students encounter in their communication process?
2) What are the causes of these language barriers?
3) What are the effects of these language barriers on the Grade 8 students' use of the English language?
4) What are the coping mechanisms of the students dealing with language barriers?
5) What intervention material is suitable for the language barriers present in the Grade 8 students' communication?

2. Literature Review

2.1 English as a Foreign Language

English, considered a universal language, is studied globally as a second language alongside the native language. Bhasin (2021) emphasized language as a tool for expressing feelings and facts, encompassing words, gestures, symbols, and sound systems [3].

Despite English's prevalence, learners face language challenges. Nazir (2022) highlighted issues for international students adapting to new countries, particularly in regions where English supplements native languages [21]. Trinh and Pham (2021) identify barriers in classrooms, citing challenges in learners' speaking skills, such as vocabulary limitations and difficulties organizing ideas [28].

Proposed solutions include linguistic interventions. Patricia Flint (2018) addresses language barriers between teachers and English learners, advocating for literacy activities that focus on language usage while considering students' interests [8]. Mudaly and Singh (2018) examined how introducing a new language in classrooms creates challenges between students and language, emphasizing the importance of mastering one's native language before learning a foreign language [18].

Tancredi (2018) suggested professional collaboration between teachers and speech pathologists to develop adjustments for students with language difficulties [28]. McConville (2019) underscored the struggles of students learning a second language, particularly when parents do not speak the language used in school, emphasizing the need for bilingual training for teachers [16].

2.2 Understanding Linguistic Barriers in Communication

Linguistic barriers, as described by Gratis (2022), encompass linguistic limitations that lead to confusion or comprehension difficulties in communication. These barriers may arise from national and cultural differences in language, as well as issues like a lack of specialized knowledge or speech impairments. Gratis emphasizes that even when people use the same language, dialectical differences can alter syntax and meaning, creating challenges in understanding.

The use of complex or highfalutin words, as highlighted by Gratis, can contribute to linguistic barriers. This unnecessary complexity can lead to miscommunication, making it difficult for individuals to grasp the intended message [10]. Friedman (2023) further expands on linguistic barriers, defining them as a lack of a common language system hindering effective verbal communication, especially in contexts involving mixed language differences or exchanges.

Friedman draws attention to the intertwining of linguistic and cultural barriers, emphasizing how differing cultural perspectives on language can impede effective communication. This is particularly evident when individuals from different cultures attempt to converse, posing challenges for native English speakers when learning a new language [9].

Addressing the pressing issue of breaking down language barriers for improved fluency, Lughat (2022) explored factors contributing to these barriers, and their impact on verbal and non-verbal communication, and provides recommendations for effective communication. Lughat underscored the significance of this issue, especially in a globalized world where language serves as a crucial tool for building relationships [15].

Moreover, regional differences in language usage patterns, even within widely used languages like English, can lead to misunderstandings. Sandhya (2020) noted that language barriers often arise when individuals attribute different meanings to the same words or messages, influenced by their respective professions [24]. Recognizing and overcoming these linguistic barriers is essential for fostering effective communication in diverse and interconnected environments.

2.3 Language Barriers: Impacts on Communication

Language barriers, as highlighted by Rodriguez (2021), are pervasive and contribute to misunderstandings and misinterpretations between individuals [21]. Communication, crucial in any context, becomes challenging when language becomes a hindrance. Even those with speech impairments resort to alternative communication forms, such as sign language and braille.

Direct language usage can vary across cultures, potentially leading to unintended rudeness. This cultural aspect extends to non-verbal cues like body language and facial expressions, each carrying different meanings. In diverse workplaces, understanding these cultural nuances becomes vital for effective communication.

Cultural factors are identified as language barriers within classrooms, where idiolects and social dialects may limit effective communication. Each student brings their own beliefs and cultural systems, influencing language usage preferences.

Linguistic differences are identified as a primary cause of language barriers. Prabhavathi and Nagasubramani's (2018) study illustrated how patients and healthcare providers speaking different languages can face challenges in understanding each other [22]. This scenario emphasizes the significant impact of language differences on effective communication.

Language barriers extend beyond delivery methods; the choice of words becomes crucial. Businesstopia (2018) emphasizes the importance of considering the words used to convey meanings, as misinterpretations can occur based on word choice, leading to communication breakdowns [4].

Narzoles and Palermo's (2021) investigation into language needs in multinational companies reveals that while many employees have undergone English courses, challenges persist. Employees express the need to improve various language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing [19]. Specific challenges include grammar issues, lack of confidence, pronunciation difficulties, and struggles with accents and idiomatic expressions.

2.4 Addressing Language Barriers in the Classroom Setting

Language barriers aren't confined to external environments; they manifest within the classroom, impacting students' ability to communicate effectively with peers and authorities. Teachers play a crucial role in addressing these barriers and facilitating a conducive learning environment.

Examining language usage across developmental phases, Mohapi (2023) notes that language challenges often emerge during the Intermediate Phase when students face more complex subject matter requiring advanced English proficiency [17]. Bellen (2023) emphasizes the importance of communication diversity within the classroom, highlighting language barriers as a common issue hindering effective teaching and learning, especially in diverse settings [2].

Harina (2019) underscores the influence of the classroom environment on language difficulties, particularly in schools where English is not the primary language of instruction [12]. The choice of teaching materials and the overall environment significantly impact students' language proficiency and communication skills.

Academic language barriers pose additional challenges within the classroom, affecting students' performance in various aspects such as understanding lectures, essay writing, and exam preparation, as highlighted by Fadiloglulari (2022) [7]. These barriers contribute to students' struggles, influencing both their efforts and their ability to comprehend and communicate effectively.

Addressing language barriers within the classroom requires a comprehensive approach, considering developmental phases, communication diversity, classroom environment, and academic language proficiency. By understanding these factors,

educators can implement targeted strategies to foster effective communication and create an inclusive learning environment for all students.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design
This study employed a qualitative research design to identify the language barriers among Grade 8 students in their communication process. According to Nassaji (2020), qualitative research can be broadly defined as a form of inquiry that is naturalistic and deals with non-numerical data [20]. It aims to understand and explore data rather than to explain and manipulate variables. Qualitative research is entirely contextualized and interpretive, emphasizing the process or patterns of development rather than the product or outcome of the research.

3.2 Population and Sampling
This study employed the simple random sampling technique to select all sixty (60) Grade 8 students as the respondents from their total population in San Roque National High School. The researchers also included their English teacher in the said interview. Simple random sampling is a sampling technique in which each member of a population has an equal chance of being chosen through the use of an unbiased selection method (Simkus, 2020) [25].

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis
This study utilized an interview questionnaire to collect responses from the selected participants. An interview comprised a set of questions designed to examine respondents' reactions based on the provided questions through explanations. The questionnaire served as a tool for researchers to interview both an English teacher and chosen students about the language barriers affecting their use of the English language inside the classroom. The researchers prepared an interview questionnaire for the teacher and students to answer. Initially, the researchers validated the questionnaire's applicability to the study and obtained permission from the school and advisers through a consent letter. Following these preparations, validations, and permissions, the researchers commenced interviews with the selected English teacher and students to assess their language barriers in communication inside the classroom.

The data gathered from the respondents were thoroughly analyzed using appropriate qualitative approaches. A qualitative treatment of data was crucial for the study to ensure that the gathered data was analyzed appropriately and could yield accurate results. Proper data treatment was essential for arriving at a meaningful conclusion. This study employed the following treatments: mode, frequency, and percentage.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Teacher's Response

The English teacher meticulously assessed her students' proficiency in using the English language in the classroom and responded to the interview questions based on these observations. In addressing the four questions posed, the following are her responses:

She indicated that her students consistently struggle with constructing meaningful sentences, and their difficulties in sentence construction impede fluency in spoken communication within the class. Many students face challenges in applying the correct rules of subject-verb agreement and using prepositions appropriately. These difficulties in mastering fundamental parts of speech hinder their effectiveness in communicating within the English class.

These challenges significantly impact their confidence and language usage. The teacher noted that many students tend to avoid speaking in front of the class or participating in recitations due to fear of judgment and ridicule. Consequently, some students opt for silence, avoiding interactions altogether. Additionally, some students resort to translating their thoughts into their native language to prevent errors. In addressing these issues, the teacher highlighted the effectiveness of bilingual switching and springboards as strategies to help students overcome these challenges.

4.2 The Students' Responses

The responses provided by the students underwent a thorough analysis utilizing the frequency and percentage distribution formula, with the mode identifying recurring responses. The researchers assigned codes to categorize their responses, yielding the following results:

4.3 Common and Frequent Language Barriers

In this study, for Table 1, out of sixty (60) students who participated in the interview, forty-three (43) of the responses as language barriers were categorized under grammar difficulties in using the English language. The students did not explicitly mention grammar as the language barrier they frequently encounter. Instead, the researchers assigned a code to represent their responses.

The remaining seventeen (17) students' responses were categorized into the following codes: A2 (Accent), C3 (Confidence), and F4 (Fluency). Specifically, eight (8) responses fell under A2, six (6) in C3, and three (3) in F4. When these codes are combined, they represent twenty-eight percent (28%) of the total responses. This coding approach allowed the researchers to analyze and categorize the students' language-related challenges even if the students did not explicitly identify grammar as a barrier.

Table 1: Common and Frequent Language Barriers Encountered by Students

Codes	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar	43	72
Accent	8	13
Confidence	6	10
Fluency	3	5
Total	**60**	**100**

4.4 Reasons for Experiencing Language Barriers

In Table 2, different codes were used to represent specific language-related challenges faced by the participants. The most frequently observed response among these codes was the lack of exposure in the English language (LE5), with a total of twenty-nine (29) responses. Following closely was anxiety or fear (A7), which garnered a total of seventeen (17) responses.

On the other hand, the remaining codes, namely LI6 (Lack of Interest) and CP8 (Comprehension), were less frequently observed in the data. These two codes combined had a total of fifteen (15) responses, and their frequency value represented twenty-four percent (24%) of the total responses. This information provides insights into the predominant language barriers experienced by the participants, emphasizing the prevalence of challenges related to exposure and anxiety in the English language.

Table 2: Reasons for Experiencing Language Barriers

Codes	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Exposure	29	48
Anxiety or Fear	17	28
Lack of Interest	11	18
Comprehension Problems	4	6
Total	**60**	**100**

4.5 Effects of Language Barriers

In Table 3, the code designated as SC2 (Lower Self-Confidence) emerged as the most frequently observed response among the participants. This code recorded a total of thirty-one (31) responses out of its sixty (60) total responses, making up roughly fifty-two percent (52%) of the overall answers.

Contrastingly, the other codes, specifically M1 (Miscommunication) with twelve (12) responses and PL3 (Poor Linguistic Performance) with seventeen (17) responses, collectively constituted the remaining forty-eight percent (48%) of the total observations. This information highlights the prevalence of issues related to lower self-confidence as a significant factor influencing the participants' language barriers, with miscommunication and poor linguistic performance also contributing to a noteworthy extent.

Table 3: Effects of Language Barriers in the Use of English Language

Codes	Frequency	Percentage
Lower Self-Confidence	31	52
Poor Linguistic Performance	17	28
Miscommunication	12	20
Total	**60**	**100**

4.6 Ways to Cope with Language Barriers

In Table 4, the coping mechanism coded as Reading and Viewing (RV1) emerged as the most prevalent and widely accepted approach to address language barriers. Students conveyed their preference for engaging in activities such as reading books and watching materials like movies, shows, and dramas in the English language for learning. A total of twenty-six (26) responses were documented for this code, representing forty-three percent (43%) of the entire group of sixty (60) students.

In contrast, the three other codes had the following number of observations: L2 (Listening) garnered eighteen (18) responses, R3 (Researching) received fourteen (14) responses, and the least commonly observed coping mechanism in the data was W4 (Writing), with only two (2) recorded responses. This information emphasizes that Reading and Viewing stands out as the most preferred strategy among the students to overcome language barriers, followed by Listening and Researching, while Writing appeared to be less commonly employed.

Table 4: Ways on How Students Cope with Language Barriers

Codes	Frequency	Percentage
Reading & Viewing	26	44
Listening	18	30
Researching	14	23
Writing	2	3
Total	**60**	**100**

Through the application of statistical methods like mode and frequency analysis, the research uncovered that the predominant hurdle faced by Grade 8 students in their communication skills pertains to grammar. This challenge primarily stems from their limited exposure to the English language, particularly exacerbated during the pandemic when home quarantine restricted their English language interactions. As highlighted by Zoubi (2020), the extent of exposure to English significantly shapes language acquisition among learners, with those encountering English in diverse settings displaying heightened responsiveness to language learning [32]. This linguistic barrier substantially erodes their self-assurance in using the language, instilling a fear of being judged or ridiculed by both educators and peers. To navigate this obstacle, the students articulated their inclination to enhance their language proficiency by engaging in reading and consuming English-language materials.

6. Conclusions

This study on the analysis of the language barriers in the communication of selected Grade 8 students at San Roque National High School utilized an interview questionnaire to collect data from 60 respondents, aiming to develop necessary intervention materials. The study sought to address the following specific questions:

1) What are the common and most frequent language barriers encountered by Grade 8 students during communication?
2) How do these language barriers impact the students' use of the English language in the classroom?
3) What intervention material is suitable for addressing the most common language barriers of Grade 8 students?

Applying statistical treatments, such as the mode and frequency, the researchers identified Grammar as the most common problem among Grade 8 students in communication. They also determined that the primary cause of this barrier was the students' lack of exposure to language use, particularly during the pandemic, when limited interaction using English at home affected their language development. This barrier significantly eroded their self-confidence in using the language, fearing judgment and ridicule from teachers and classmates. To address this, the students mentioned that they engage in reading and viewing materials in English to enhance their learning.

Based on these findings, the following conclusions were drawn: The identified language barriers significantly affect Grade 8 students' communication, particularly in terms of grammar, which received the highest number of responses. To assist students in overcoming this issue, the researchers proposed the development of intervention material in the form of a grammar module.

After a careful analysis of the research outcomes, the researchers provide the following recommendations for the readers and beneficiaries of the study:

1) The study, based on sixty (60) students' responses regarding the problems they encounter in using the English language through a semi-structured interview questionnaire, produced several patterns of responses that were challenging to analyze. Therefore, it is recommended to employ a different type of research questionnaire tool, such as survey questionnaires, to yield more manageable and insightful results.
2) Studies focusing on language barriers may generate general or broad outcomes, such as grammar, pronunciation, etc. It is recommended to address each problem individually to provide targeted and effective solutions.
3) Consideration for the proper use of statistical treatment is also recommended when analyzing outcomes related to language barriers. While the use of mode and frequency in this study is validated by an expert, it may not always be suitable for every research context. Ensure that treatment tools are chosen carefully and validated to ensure accuracy for the study.

4) The researchers recommend using the output created from this study, the intervention material for grammar, as it addresses the most common language problem found. This material underwent careful analysis and validation by three DEPED validators from different school districts to ensure its appropriateness for the target learners' level.

5) Emphasize that the intervention material serves only as a supplementary learning tool. It should be utilized after the class or when needed by the students and should not replace the main module used by teachers, especially during English class sessions.

6) Given that the researchers identified three main problems related to grammar, and recognizing the wide and complex nature of grammar in the English language, it is recommended to add or supplement more grammar lessons in the material as needed.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest associated with the research study titled "Analysis of Language Barriers of Grade 8 Students: Intervention Material Development." They affirm that neither they nor any of the co-authors have financial, personal, or professional relationships that could potentially influence or be perceived to influence the objectivity, integrity, or impartiality of the research findings.

The study was conducted with the utmost commitment to ethical research practices, and any potential conflicts of interest have been diligently assessed and addressed to ensure the credibility and transparency of the research process.

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