



LANGUAGE COMPREHENSIBILITY IN LEARNER DIARIES OF COLLEGE FRESHMAN STUDENTS IN KALINGA-STATE COLLEGE (KASC)

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Abstract: *This research was conducted to analyze the language comprehensibility in learner diaries of college freshman students of Kalinga-Apayao State College (KASC).*

Specifically, it determined the level of comprehensibility of deviant sentences among students as reflected in their diaries. This is a descriptive research which consisted of 293 students in the five (5) institutes of Kalinga-Apayao State College (KASC), Tabuk City, Kalinga, Philippines.

Findings are: (a.) as regards comprehensibility of deviant sentences, the panel of judges consisting of five (5) English teachers assessed the sentences with a mean of 3.11 interpreted as “comprehensible”. The hypothesis that the students’ deviant sentences were “highly comprehensible” is rejected. (b.) Statistically, the English teachers differed in their assessment of the deviant sentences, hence the hypothesis that English teacher’s differed in their assessment of deviant sentences is accepted. (c.) Among institutes, judged “very comprehensible” deviant sentences were from ITE and IBAE with means of 3.45 and 3.35, respectively. Assessed as “comprehensible” were from the institutes of IAF (3.21) and IEAT (2.77) and IAS (2.75).

Keywords: *language comprehensibility, learner diaries, deviant sentences, errors, Kalinga-Apayao State College*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of communicative competence, the primary goal of second language teaching is the ability to communicate or regard comprehensibility of a message in a particular context is very important. Johanson, (1973) contends that errors affect communication in two ways: comprehensibility of the message and the effect on the relationship between the speaker and the listener. He postulates that comprehensibility of a message is dependent upon the type of error.

Communicative competence. The concept of competence is viewed from various perspectives. To the structuralist, competence is the mastery of the correct usage of the forms – accuracy of the production of sounds, usage of words, and grammatical structure.



Language is viewed as a code, a system that is made up of forms that is the focus of attention. Since structuralists view language as behavioristic in nature, language is nothing but a manifestation of behavior, and language acquisition is but a product of constant exposure established through constant imitation, reinforcement, and repetition to form a set of habits, a process of learning that prevents the commission of error. Emphasizing correctness of form or linguistic accuracy, the structuralist thus maintains that linguistic competence entails the mastery and accuracy on the usage of the form as in the skillful use of the second language on the phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels, hence, the use of pattern drills.

In the 1960's, Chomsky (1965) distinguished between competence and performance. Competence is the intuitive knowledge of rules of grammar and syntax and how the linguistic system of a language operates, while performance is the individual's ability to produce language. Thus language production results from the creative use of a learned set of linguistic rules. He views language learning not as a matter of habit, imitation, and conditioning or a matter of repeated responses to a stimulus but a productive and creative process. He stresses that a learner's implicit knowledge of his language, his knowledge of the system, or a set of internalized language rules enables him to generate an infinite number of sentences acceptable to the native speakers and to be competent enough to distinguish between well-formed and deviant sentences.

Hymes, (1971) coins the term communicative competence in order to contrast it to Chomsky's notion of competence as being too limited. He points out that Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance provides no place for consideration of the appropriateness of socio-cultural significance of an utterance in the situational and verbal context in which it is used thus, it does not account sufficiently for the social and functional rules of language. The notion of communicative competence, he maintains, refers to the social rules of language use and the ability to generate or comprehend utterances that are not so much grammatical but, more important, acceptable to the context in which they are made.

Hymes further defines communicative competence as what the speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech, asserting less boldly that there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar will be useless. One who is competent, he



avers, knows when to speak, when not, what to talk about, with whom, when and where, and in what manner. He knows what is appropriate to say and how it should be said in the different social situations in which he finds himself. Hymes also states that, when one speaks, he bases his choice on the following variables: who (interlocutors) are interacting, where (setting) the communication takes place, what (topic) is discussed, and why (objective/purpose) an utterance is made.

Communicative competence is not linguistic competence, the ability of the speaker-hearer to manipulate the second language on the phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels, an ability that likens to the mastery of the sound system and basic structural patterns of a language (Savignon 1982) but to include knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of the language; knowledge of the rules of speaking (knowing how to begin and end conversations, what topics may be talked about in different types of speech events, which address forms that should be used in different situations, etc.); knowing how to respond to different types of speech acts; knowing how to use language appropriately (Richards, et. al, 1985).

The shift in language learning from linguistic competence to communicative competence evolved a shift from task-centeredness to person-centeredness. Whereas, the sole concern of linguistic competence is the message, Allwright (1977) suggests that communication, being the ultimate goal of language teaching and language learning should be the major element in the process.

Comprehensibility. Khubhandani (1978) maintains that certain deviations from the norm could be more appropriate in specific situational context thus making ungrammatical sentences comprehensible. It has been hypothesized that some types of errors do not necessarily lead to communication breakdown despite the fact that the receiver cannot avoid noticing the mistake. Hence, there seems to be no clear-cut dichotomy or acceptability versus unacceptability or intelligibility against unintelligibility of particular sentences.

In the context of communicative competence, the primary goal of second language teaching is the ability to communicate or regard comprehensibility of a message in a particular context is very important. Johansson (1973) contends that most foreign language learners do not aspire to become full-fledged members of the foreign language community; they merely want to communicate. He further points out that, if the primary goal of teaching a



second language is for the learner to be able to communicate in a foreign language, the evaluation of error should be how such an error affects communication and not what grammar rule is involved or the like. He suggests how errors can affect communication in two ways. Firstly, errors can affect the comprehensibility of the message (referring to errors that are lexical and/or grammatical in nature) and secondly, errors can affect the relationship between the listener and the speaker (referring also to some errors in lexical style and grammar).

One of the characteristics of language is redundancy that permits the comprehensibility even of deviant sentences where many words may be omitted. Spolsky (1973) maintains that, due to the redundant nature of language, comprehensibility of messages is nonetheless possible, as in the case of telegrams where the message can be understood even though a good proportion of words are omitted. This means that every message contains many elements that can be omitted without a breakdown in communication. In order to ably interpret distorted or incomplete messages, a learner must possess knowledge of the language on all levels-phonology, lexical and semantic. This knowledge would enable him to make valid guesses about certain percentage of omitted elements and similarly supply these items when they are missing.

Lindell (1973) stresses that certain types of errors, no matter how obvious they appear to the receiver, do not lead to misunderstanding thereby rendering the message of the learner still comprehensible and the learner understood. Moreover, Olsson (1973) makes a strong point that even deviant utterances of second language learners can convey some comprehensible message and this he probed in a study that sought to confirm that the structure of a sentence is far less important for communication than the semantic aspect of the sentence.

In the study Evaluation of Composition Errors in Rhetorical Acts Used in Agricultural Science by Freshman College Students by Hufana (1982), the results showed that the number of errors in the deviant sentences affected comprehensibility in definition but not significantly in classification and description. The types of errors significantly affected comprehensibility. Sheffe's test revealed that lexical errors affected comprehensibility more than either morphological or syntactic errors.



Hamada's study titled An Error Analysis of Written Compositions in Four Rhetorical Acts by PMA Fourth Class Cadets (2001) revealed that most of the deviant sentences were judged as having "Average Comprehensibility" or were fairly understood.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

From the above concepts, theories and research findings found in the rationale, this research was conceptualized. The paradigm articulates how this research was conducted.

Figure 2 illustrates how the study was conducted. It consists of three parts. The first box in the paradigm is the input, which draws insights from communicative competence and comprehensibility theories, error analysis and learner diaries.

The second box contains the process, the analyses of the comprehensibility of the deviant sentences as assessed by English teachers.

Drawn from the input of the research, the analyzed output on the evaluation of deviant sentences.

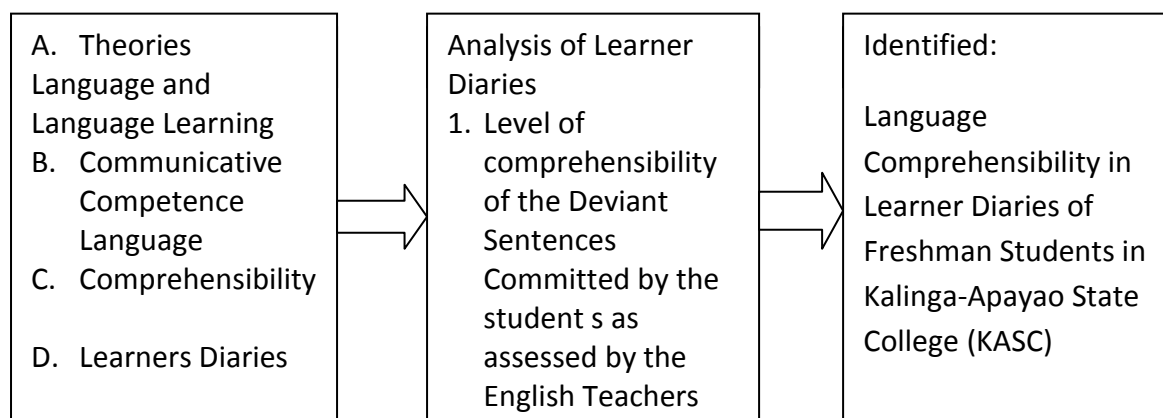


Figure 1: Paradigm of the Study

OBJECTIVES

This research was conducted to analyze the language comprehensibility of the deviant sentences found in learner diaries of college freshman students of Kalinga-Apayao State College (KASC) for the school year 2010-2011.

Specifically, it determined the level of comprehensibility committed by the students as reflected in their diaries.

Hypotheses of the study

- (a) The comprehensibility level of the deviant sentences committed by the students in their diaries as assessed by the English teachers is "very comprehensible".



- (b) There is a significant difference in the judgment of deviant sentences among the English teachers.

Population of the Study

This research paper was conducted in the five (5) institutes of Kalinga-Apayao State College (KASC), Tabuk City, Kalinga Province during the second semester, school year 2010-2011. These are the Institute of Arts and Sciences (IAS), Institute of Business Administration and Entrepreneurship (IBAE), Institute of Teacher Education (ITE), Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (IAF), and Institute of Engineering Information and Applied Technology (IEIAT).

The student-respondents of this study were 293 college freshman students from the five (5) institutes of KASC enrolled in English 2 (Writing in the Discipline) and the teacher-respondents were composed of English (5) teachers who acted as panel of judges to evaluate the level of comprehensibility of deviant sentences.

The researcher applied the stratified sampling technique, where, the distribution of the 293 students in the 19 different major courses across five (5) Institutes, were identified as follows: Institute of Arts and Sciences (60), Institute of Business Administration and Entrepreneurship (62), Institute of Teacher Education (29), Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (47), and Institute of Engineering Information and Applied Technology (95).

Sample student population was chosen using the Sloven's Formula:

Where:

n	=	sampling population
N	=	whole population
e	=	standard error at .05 level

Friedman's test showed the following formula:

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Instruments

The respondents answered a set of guide questions as a basis for writing their diaries. From their written comments and reactions, comprehensibility of the deviant sentences was elicited. The questionnaires were administered twice a week in English 2 classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 ½ hours a day for three weeks to enable the students to write something in their diaries.



For the comprehensibility of the deviant sentences, the researcher, listed down the deviant sentences and were evaluated by a panel of judges composed of five (5) English teachers. A four-point Likert scale was used to determine the comprehensibility of the deviant sentences as follows (4) very comprehensible, (3) comprehensible, (2) fairly comprehensible and (1) incomprehensible.

Data Collection Procedure

A letter to conduct the study was sought from the President of Kalinga – Apayao State College, and the different Institute Deans. When permission was duly granted, guide questions were given and explained to the student-respondents as regards the writing of their diaries, which was done per Institute in KASC. The researcher administered the evaluation of the deviant sentences with regard to their level of comprehensibility to the teacher-respondents.

Statistical Analysis

The data gathered were identified, analyzed, and interpreted using descriptive and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics used were: percentages, ranks, weighted means, and ANOVA. Inferential statistics was used for hypotheses testing.

The college freshman students wrote their diaries based on a set of questions asked. From these diaries, deviant sentences were elicited for analysis.

Weighted mean was used to determine the level of comprehensibility of the deviant sentences committed by the college freshmen as perceived by the panel of judges.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test if there is a significant difference in the judgment of deviant sentences among the English teachers.

A four-point Likert scale was used in judging the comprehensibility of deviant sentences of the students in their diaries as shown below:

Statistical Limit	Point Value	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
3.26-4.00	4	Very Comprehensible	(VC)
2.51-3.25	3	Comprehensible	(C)
1.76-2.50	2	Fairly Comprehensible	(FC)
1.00-1.75	1	Incomprehensible	(I)



The significant level at 0.05 was set on the basis of rejecting or accepting the hypotheses of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Level of Comprehensibility of Deviant Sentences Among College Freshman Students in their Written Diaries

According to Burt and Kiparsky (1972), global errors significantly hinder communication than others. Powell (1975) concluded that errors in word order impede the intelligibility of a message while Olson (1973) hypothesized that more serious deviations such as semantic errors would block communication to a higher degree than syntactic errors.

These errors, some educators claim, carry a high degree of stigma, hence, deviancy from grammatical or phonological norms elicit reactions that may classify persons unfavorably (Richards, 1973).

This section is an evaluation of the level of comprehensibility of the deviant sentences. A panel of judges was tasked to evaluate the level of comprehensibility of the deviant sentences. Composing the panel of judges were 5 English teachers. Based on the results of the evaluation, a comparison was made to determine if there existed a significant difference in the comprehensibility of the deviant sentences as evaluated by the members of the panel.

The deviant sentences that were evaluated were lifted from the learners' comments or reactions on the eight categories of classroom related ideas (cohort 1) found in their learner diaries.

To determine the level of comprehensibility of the deviant sentences, a 4-point Likert scale was used for this purpose. The scale reads as follows: 4 (Very comprehensible or fully understood), 3 (Comprehensible or fairly well understood), 2 (Fair or fairly understood), 1 (Incomprehensible or hardly understood).

B. Level of Comprehensibility of Deviant Sentences as Assessed by English Teachers

Comprehensibility is viewed as the intelligibility of the intended message despite some errors, or deviance, in grammatical form or structure as an indication of the learner's interlanguage. If comprehensibility or ability to communicate is regarded as an essential aim in second language learning as cited by Hufana (1982), errors have been observed to affect listener-speaker relationship. It often happens that even though meaning is understood,



interlocutors get uncomfortable by the deviant form of the message. For example, Richards (1974) observes that deviancy from phonological and grammatical norms of a speech community elicit evaluational reactions that may classify a person unfavorably. Sometimes, certain types of errors are corrected automatically while others are dismissed without too much thought. Table 5 presents the teacher-respondents' evaluation of the deviant sentences pertaining to the degree of comprehensibility. The table shows the individual evaluation of the college English teachers as judges in each Institute on the deviant sentences committed by college freshman students.

Judge 1 gave ITE the highest weighted mean of 3.58. This was followed by IBAE with a weighted mean of 3.46. Both results were interpreted as "very comprehensible". The third highest is IAF with a weighted mean of 3.0, interpreted as "comprehensible" followed by IEIAT with a weighted mean of 2.50. The lowest was IAS with a weighted mean of 2.45. Both results were interpreted as "fairly comprehensible".

For Judge 2, ITE ranked first having obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.32 which is interpreted as "very comprehensible". This was followed by IAF with a weighted mean of 3.25 and IBAE with a weighted mean of 3.20. These results were interpreted as "comprehensible".

Table 1. Level of comprehensibility of deviant sentences as assessed by English teachers

INSTITUTE	JUDGE 1		JUDGE 2		JUDGE 3		JUDGE 4		JUDGE5		GWM	OAR	DE
	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R			
IAS	2.45	5	2.50	4	2.53	5	3.00	5	3.25	4	2.75	5	C
IBAE	3.46	2	3.20	3	3.33	2	3.50	1	3.27	3	3.35	2	VC
ITE	3.58	1	3.32	1	3.55	1	3.45	2	3.36	1	3.45	1	VC
IAF	3.00	3	3.25	2	3.27	3	3.25	3	3.30	2	3.21	3	C
IEIAT	2.50	4	2.33	5	2.94	4	3.10	4	3.00	5	2.77	4	C
Total	3.00		2.92		3.12		3.26		3.24		3.11		
Rank	4		5		3		1		2				

Legend

DE = Descriptive Equivalent

GWM = Grand Weighted Mean

OAR= Over All Rank

Statistical Limit	Point Value	Descriptive Equivalence	Symbol	Meaning
3.26-4.00	4	Very Comprehensible	VC	Fully Understood
2.51-3.25	3	Comprehensible	C	Fairly Well Understood
1.76-2.50	2	Fairly Comprehensible	FC	Fairly Understood
1.00-1.75	1	Incomprehensible	I	Hardlv Understood



Ranked fourth was IAS with a weighted mean of 2.50. The least weighted mean of 2.33 was given to IEIAT. Both results were interpreted as “fairly comprehensible”.

With regard to Judge 3, she gave ITE the highest weighted mean of 3.55 and IBAE ranked next with a weighted mean of 3.33. Ranked third is IAF with a weighted mean of 3.27. The above results were interpreted as “very comprehensible”. Fourth in rank is IEIAT with a weighted mean of 2.94. The lowest weighted mean was given to IAS with 2.53. Both institutes had a descriptive equivalent as “comprehensible”.

Judge 4 ranked IBAE first having obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.50 (very comprehensible). This was followed by ITE with a weighted mean of 3.45 which was also interpreted as “very comprehensible”. Third rank with a weighted mean of 3.25 was IAF, followed by IEIAT with a weighted mean of 3.10. The lowest weighted mean was given to IAS with 3.0. The above results were interpreted as “comprehensible”.

As regards Judge 5, ITE got the highest weighted mean of 3.36; IAF ranked next with a weighted mean of 3.30 and IBAE ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.27. All the three institutes were judged as “very comprehensible”. Fourth in rank was IAS with a weighted mean of 3.25 (comprehensible). The lowest weighted mean was given to IEIAT 3.0, also interpreted as “comprehensible”.

To sum up, there were varied results on the evaluation of the English teachers as judges on the level of comprehensibility of the deviant sentences of college freshman students in their written diaries. As shown in Table 5, Judge 4 gave the highest rating with a mean of 3.26 (very comprehensible). This was followed by Judge 5 with a mean of 3.24 (comprehensible). Judge 3 rated the deviant sentences as “comprehensible” with a mean of 3.12. Judge 1 rated the deviant sentences with a mean of 3.0 (comprehensible) while judge 2 gave the lowest rating among the panel of judges with a mean of 2.92 also “comprehensible”. In general the English teachers rated the deviant sentences an overall mean of 3.11 evaluated as “comprehensible”. This indicates that the deviant sentences written by college freshman students are comprehensible despite the errors they committed in their diaries.

This implies that the college freshman students have not fully reached the native speakers’ competence. This observation can be supported by Beardsmore (1977) who stated that the relationship affecting the interpretability of the sentence is more serious than errors that do not hinder communication regardless of their degree of deviance.



The errors on the deviant sentences depict the interlanguage status of the learners. Richards (1974) as cited by Hufana makes reference to interlanguage as the language used by second language users. This learner language is viewed as a corpus of sentences uniquely defined by the nature of second language learner. In the context of interlanguage studies of first language acquisition reveal that certain errors which characterize those of second language learners are also reflected in the speech of children learning their first language.

C. Level of Comprehensibility of Sentences by Institute

Table 6 shows the level of comprehensibility of deviant sentences by Institute. Ranked first among the Institutes was ITE in which the deviant sentences were “very comprehensible” with a total weighted mean of 3.45. The table also shows that ITE was consistently in the level of “very comprehensible” as evaluated by the five judges. This means that the deviant sentences found in the diaries of ITE learners as evaluated by the English teachers are fully understood. This was followed by IBAE, with an evaluation, interpreted also as “very comprehensible” with a mean of 3.35. Moreover, among the Institutes, IAF posed third in the evaluation with a mean of 3.21 whose deviant sentences were judged “comprehensible”. Fourth in rank was IEIAT, with a mean of 2.77. Finally, the lowest in rank was IAS with a mean of 2.75, also “comprehensible”.

It was found that the sentences contain lexical, morphological and syntactic errors. The errors in these sentences were considered as weak errors because, even if there were indications of poor grammar usage, there was no interference in the meaning (Adairhauck’s 1996, Vaura 1996). This confirms Hendrikson’s (1979) idea that local errors are errors which do not hinder communication. That is, ideas may not be quite clear but, its meaning can still be comprehensible since the entire content of an utterance can be the basis of understanding its meaning.

Table 2. Summary of the table on the level of comprehensibility by institute

INSTITUTE	GWM	RANK	LEVEL OF COMPREHENSIBILITY
IAS	2.75	5	Comprehensible
IBAE	3.35	2	Very Comprehensible
ITE	3.45	1	Very Comprehensible
IAF	3.21	3	Comprehensible
IEIAT	2.77	4	Comprehensible
Total	3.11		Comprehensible
$F_{comp}=0.78$ $F_{crit}=0.57$ at alpha 0.5 *significant			



Legend

Statistical Limit	Point Value	Descriptive Equivalence	Meaning
3.26-4.00	4	Very Comprehensible	Fully Understood
2.51-3.25	3	Comprehensible	Fairly Well Understood
1.76-2.50	2	Fairly Comprehensible	Fairly Understood
1.00-1.75	1	Incomprehensible	Hardly Understood

On the other hand, the more errors there are, the more the intelligibility of an utterance suffers. According to Littlewood (1984), some studies suggest that on the average vocabulary errors affect communication more than grammatical error types. These errors can be irritating, although the amount of irritation caused by these errors depends mainly on their effect on communication, rather than on some independent scale of seriousness. Another consideration on the comprehensibility of a message is the context which can still be possibly understood despite the errors in the combination of syntactic elements which are alien to the target language.

Thus, even if the college freshmen had not fully reached the native speakers competence, the sentences they produce were comprehensible. This observation is supported by Beardsmore (1977) who argues that the relationship affecting the interpretability of the sentence are more serious than errors that do not regardless of their degree of deviance. Statistically, the data reveals that the five English teacher-judges varied significantly as regards their evaluation of the over-all level of comprehensibility of the deviant sentences in the written diaries of college freshman students. This finding is indicated in the computed value which is higher than the tabular value of 0.57 at .05 level of significance. In this case the computed F-value is equal to 0.78. Based on the foregoing data, the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the judgment of deviant sentences in the written diaries of college freshman students as assessed by English teacher-judges on the level of comprehensibility is accepted. This means that the five English teacher-judges differ in their overall evaluation of the comprehensibility of the deviant sentences found in the written diaries of college freshman students.

Basbas (2003) contends, that this finding may not be conclusive since there can still be other factors which can influence a teacher's evaluation of student errors such as personality factors, educational background, teacher's training and academic preparation. In a similar vein, Hufana (1982), asserts that judgment of the deviant sentences vary



depending on factors like age, educational level, training or degree of exposure to the target language.

These results indicate that the English teacher- judges were most generous in their assessment as regards to the comprehensibility of the deviant sentences or the understanding the intended messages of the deviant sentences. This phenomenon is attributed to the fact that the teachers of English possess the highest proficiency in the target language because of their educational qualification. Furthermore, these results confirm the hypothesis by Spolsky (1973) as cited by Hufana (1982) on the redundant nature of language. Spolsky contends that messages in normal language can be understood even though a good proportion is omitted or masked; or in other words, every message contains many elements that can be omitted without breaking down communication. In this context, the English teachers are presumed to have a better knowledge of the English language.

Hufana (1982), in her research, found that the three types of errors: lexical, syntactic, and morphological, which occurred in the deviant sentences significantly irritated the panel of judges in the five rhetorical acts. The three sets of judges including bilingual teachers of English, technical teachers of agriculture, and undergraduate students, varied in their assessments of the deviant sentences. The students were the most “tolerable” to errors; the technical teachers regarded the most deviant sentences “quite tolerable” and English teachers “intolerable”.

Lindell’s study (1973) as cited by Palasico (2011) revealed that certain types of errors do not lead to misunderstanding despite the fact that the receiver cannot avoid noticing the errors. Hamada (2001) sought to analyze errors committed by fourth class cadets in their written compositions. In the level of comprehensibility of the deviant sentences along rhetorical acts of description, exemplification, definition, and comparison, the judges differed in their evaluation of most deviant sentences. Likewise, in terms of the overall level of comprehensibility of the deviant sentences along four rhetorical acts, the judges differed in their evaluation of the most deviant sentences by English teachers followed by cadets, non-English teachers and officers.

Moreover, most of the college freshman students possess a fair command of the language, as their written diaries show. Dommergues (1976) claims that when a student is presented with ungrammatical sentences in his second language, the chances that he will accept them as correct, largely depends on the stage he has reached in mastering that language. In



addition, when he judges an utterance in the second language, he is liable to be led astray by the correspondence either with patterns in his native language or with the overgeneralized patterns in his approximate second language. This phenomenon typifies the learner in the state of interlanguage. This is in agreement to the contention of Spolsky, who asserts that when distorted or incomplete messages are given to someone who does not know the language well, there is bound to be a considerable difference in comprehensibility. The results of this finding gives proof to Jain's (1970) claims that the competence of a second language learner is characterized by indeterminacy. This implies that, when the learner possesses rules, he is no longer discovering the second language. Instead, he has arrived at a system that is inadequate from the point of view of accepted grammar and, when he uses this language in a creative mood, these sentences are grammatical in terms of his grammar. Thus, a second language learner, being himself in an interlanguage state and using language creatively, therefore applies the rules of his native language to the rules of the target language. Thus, with what little knowledge he possesses about the target language, he does best to approximate the rules of his first language to the target language. Hence, due to his inadequacy with the rules of the second language, he cannot but identify with another learner of the target language.

Khubhandani (1978) maintains that certain deviations from the norm could be more appropriate in specific situational context thus making ungrammatical sentences comprehensible. With this, it has been hypothesized that some types of errors do not necessarily lead to communication breakdown despite the fact that the receiver cannot avoid noticing the mistake. Hence, there seems to be no clear-cut dichotomy or acceptability versus unacceptability or intelligibility against unintelligibility of particular sentences.

The findings of Hamada's (2001) on comprehensibility of deviant sentences underscore the goal of language teaching that should be communication. Whenever necessary and possible, there is a need to gradually shift the focus of language teaching from the grammatical to the communicative properties of a language, from linguistic competence to communicative competence. A reorientation of teaching goals thus is in order. Where communicative competence is the specific goal of language teaching, the learner then is able to demonstrate the ability to use his knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication to realize a communicative purpose.



In this regard, Gonzales (1995) noted that a course in English should not be taught as a course about the language. Rather, it should be taught along how useful the language is in the lives of the students. The mastery, and even memorization, of basic sounds, core vocabulary, and common structures are not powerful means of learning a language. What is necessary is for the student to begin using his limited competence to communicate about reality, about what he is most concerned with and interested in, and in the peculiar academic setting. The content that would offer itself to immediate use is specific content in which he is involved about which he can communicate – his specialization, his ambitions – in the case of the student.

Hufana's (1982) study on comprehensibility and tolerance test revealed potentially significant implications. Generally, errors did not block communication. It should be reiterated that the goal of language teaching should be geared towards communicative competence rather than linguistic competence. To this effect, Wilkins holds the view that what people want to do through language is more important than the mastery of language as an applied system. In the context of communicative competence, the classroom instruction should allow the learner natural communicative opportunities.

Finally, Olson (1973) makes a strong point that even deviant utterances of second language learners can convey some comprehensible message and this he probed in a study that sought to confirm that the structure of a sentence is far less important for communication than the semantic aspect of the sentence.

SUMMARY

- (a.) As regards comprehensibility of deviant sentences, the panel of judges consisting of five (5) English teachers assessed the sentences with a mean of 3.11 interpreted as "comprehensible". The hypothesis that the students' deviant sentences were "highly comprehensible" is rejected.
- (b.) Statistically, the English teachers differed in their assessment of the deviant sentences, hence the hypothesis that English teacher's differed in their assessment of deviant sentences is accepted.
- (c.) Among institutes, judged "very comprehensible" deviant sentences were from ITE and IBAE with means of 3.45 and 3.35, respectively. Assessed as "comprehensible" were from the institutes of IAF (3.21) and IEAT (2.77) and IAS (2.75).

CONCLUSION



Comprehensibility of deviant sentences reflects the fact that in spite of errors, the message of deviant sentences can be understood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comprehensible sentences refer to sentences containing some errors yet the message can be understood. In this context, teachers develop the communicative competence of students by promoting fluency rather than accuracy. That is language lesson should be communicative and interesting to promote interaction and free expression without fear from the teacher's criticism of errors committed by students.

It is further recommended that this study on the level of comprehensibility of deviant sentences among college freshman students be replicated in other state colleges in the Cordillera. On the other hand, it is suggested that private schools may undertake research on the level of comprehensibility of deviant sentences among their students as basis in comparing public and private schools' performance of freshman students.

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