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Comparing Academic Performance of Grade 7 Students in Independent Learning and Guided Learning in Filipino Language Acquisition

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Abstract

Aim: This study investigated the difference between the performance of the grade 7 students when employed with independent learning and guided learning approaches.

Methodology: This study utilized quantitative approach using quasi-experimental research design. It was conducted at Can-avid National High School at Eastern Samar, Philippines with 20 purposively selected respondents. Data were gathered using validated researcher-made pretest and posttest questionnaires. Paired samples t-test was utilized to determine the difference between the performance of grade 7 students in independent learning and guided learning approach.

Results: Results revealed that the mean difference between the two posttest scores was 3.60 showing guided learning with higher scores, and the test resulted to a t-value of -4.89 and a p-value of 0.003, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This suggests that guided learning had a significantly greater positive effect on the students' performance compared to independent learning.

Conclusion: It has been observed that guided learning appears as a more effective approach than independent learning in promoting language acquisition and academic performance of Grade 7 students, contributing to the current traditional teaching and learning practices.

Keywords: *independent learning, guided learning, language acquisition, Filipino*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, education has increasingly shifted towards learner-centered approaches, emphasizing not just the acquisition of knowledge, but also the development of critical thinking, communication, and collaborative skills. Within this evolving educational landscape, guided practice has emerged as a significant instructional strategy, particularly in language learning. According to Hilcenko (2020), learning is broadly defined as the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or instruction, resulting in a relatively permanent change in behavior potential. This idea is deeply rooted in the work of Lev Vygotsky, who posited that cognitive development is not merely an individual pursuit but is largely shaped through social interactions with more knowledgeable others—such as teachers and parents. According to Vygotsky, language plays a pivotal role in constructing knowledge, highlighting the necessity of communication and collaboration in effective learning environments.

The "we do" concept, also known as guided practice, is part of a teaching approach that involves active student participation and teacher guidance. This method typically follows a sequence of "I do" (teacher demonstration), "we do" (guided practice), and "you do" (independent practice) (Bhure, 2024). This method allows learners to receive real-time feedback while building their confidence and skills under expert guidance. Supporting this, Takahashi (2014) emphasized the crucial role of educators in facilitating learning outcomes, while Chiaro (2023) underscored how guided practice not only accelerates skill development but also enhances learner motivation and engagement.



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However, amid growing advocacy for independent learning—characterized by student autonomy and minimal teacher intervention—some challenges persist. Anderson (2021) acknowledged the potential benefits of independence but also pointed out that without timely support, learners, especially novices, often struggle.

Adolescents aged 13 to 14, such as Grade 7 students in the Philippine basic education system, are at a critical stage of development. While they are increasingly capable of abstract reasoning, their cognitive and linguistic maturity is still in progress. As Aragon and Balallo (2023) found in their study on essay writing challenges among Filipino learners, grammar usage remains a significant hurdle, particularly in the proper use of verb tenses. These linguistic difficulties highlight the need for more structured instructional support to reinforce grammar skills and overall language proficiency.

Despite the recognized value of guided practice, limited studies have explored its specific impact on language acquisition and grammar proficiency among junior high school learners in the Philippine context. Most existing literature either focuses on early childhood education or addresses language learning in higher education settings. This gap underscores a pressing need to examine how guided instructional approaches can support adolescent learners, particularly in mastering complex grammatical concepts in the Filipino language.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of guided learning practices in enhancing the grammatical skills of Grade 7 students, with a specific focus on their usage of verb tenses in Filipino. By addressing this gap, the research seeks to contribute practical insights into how scaffolded instruction can improve language outcomes during a crucial stage of cognitive and linguistic development. The findings of this study are intended to inform more effective, contextually grounded teaching strategies that promotes both learner confidence and linguistic competence in the Philippine classroom.

Objectives

This study investigated the difference between the performance of the students when employed with independent learning and guided learning approaches.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the pretest score of Grade 7 students in Filipino language acquisition before employing the independent learning and guided learning?
2. What are the post-test scores of Grade 7 students in Filipino language acquisition after independent learning and guided learning were employed?
3. Is there a significant difference between the posttest mean scores of grade 7 students using independent learning and guided learning?

Hypothesis

Based on the aforementioned research problem, the following hypothesis was tested on 0.05 level of significance:

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of grade 7 students using independent learning and guided learning.

H_a : There is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of grade 7 students using independent learning and guided learning.

METHODS

Research Design

This quantitative study compares the academic performances of Grade 7 students in independent learning and guided learning for Filipino language acquisition using a descriptive method.

This type of research design can be used when the study is about identifying characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories (McCombes, 2023). Considering the nature of the study in comparing academic performances with two different treatments such as the independent and guided learning approaches, this study also used a quasi-experimental design. It is an experimental design used when there are only two conditions and the respondents are matched based on a common variable (Zach, 2021). In this study, the respondents' grade level was identified to be the common variable.



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Population and Sampling

This study employed a purposive sampling of 20 Grade 7 students at Can-avid National High School. Participants were selected from the same section to determine and measure their academic performance in Filipino language acquisition through independent learning and guided learning approaches.

Instrument

Pretest and posttest questionnaires were used in measuring the performance of grade 7 students in Filipino. Each questionnaire is composed of 20-items multiple choice test constructed following the MATATAG curriculum and accompanied by a table of specifications (TOS). In order to establish the validity of the instrument, the researchers consulted experts including two Filipino teachers and a university professor. The reliability of the instrument was also established through pilot-testing which resulted to a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 emphasizing high reliability. The pretest was administered once and the posttest was administered twice since there are two learning approaches under investigation.

Data Collection

In gathering the needed data, the pretest test questionnaire was administered to the respondents before the independent learning was applied. After a week of independent learning, the posttest questionnaire was administered.

Furthermore, the guided learning was applied to the students after two weeks of 'reset' which allows the learners to naturally forget first the topics they learned in independent learning. After a week of applying the guided learning, the posttest questionnaire was re-administered by the researchers.

Treatment of Data

The aforementioned gathered data were checked, classified, tabulated, and analyzed using the identified statistical tools. The study utilized descriptive statistics to analyze the data gathered. Descriptive statistics are fundamental tools for summarizing and characterizing data distributions (Lee, 2020). It provides simple summaries about the sample and the measures together with simple graphics analysis to form the basis of every quantitative analysis of data. In this study, individual raw scores were interpreted and categorized into performance levels ranging from very poor to very satisfactory.

Additionally, inferential statistics such as the paired samples t-test was employed as a statistical tool to interpret the results. A t-test is a statistical test that is used to compare the means of two groups of data. Inferential statistics is a branch of statistics that uses sample data to make inferences about a population (Abdelfattah, 2021).

Ethical Considerations

The researchers followed the ethical protocols in conducting this research. Specifically, the researchers sought permission from concerned offices or individuals before proceeding with the research process. The researchers first secured a permit to conduct the survey through a letter requesting permission from the principal of Can-avid National High School. Prior to data gathering, the respondents were informed using informed consent for emphasizing that their contribution and responses would remain anonymous and that their participation is only voluntary. Researchers ensured the confidentiality of data provided by the respondents and their anonymity. In addition, the researchers ensured that the research process uphold with the ethical standards provided by the institution and protected the safety of everyone involved in the study.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The findings revealed notable differences between independent learning and guided learning approaches. Students who underwent guided learning demonstrated higher academic performance compared to those in independent learning. This result aligns with previous research suggesting that guided practice, with the assistance of knowledgeable others such as teachers, positively impacts students' learning outcomes.

Guided learning provides students with immediate feedback, which aids in skill development and boosts confidence, engagement, and motivation. The social interaction aspects emphasized by Vygotsky play a crucial role in language acquisition, as language is a tool for building knowledge.

While independent learning allows flexibility in study time, it presents challenges such as the lack of immediate assistance and the need for self-motivation. Novices, particularly Grade 7 students, may find it more challenging to learn independently, especially in complex subjects like language acquisition.



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Pretest Scores of Grade 7 Students in Filipino Language Acquisition

The performance of grade 7 students in Filipino language acquisition appeared to be relatively low as shown in table 1. This result suggests that the initial proficiency of the students towards the subject is low. Table 1 shows that majority of students have poor performance scoring 5-8 points and very poor performance scoring 1-4 points in the pretest, with 30% and 25% of students scoring into these points, respectively. This further explains that, on average, students had minimal prior knowledge on Filipino language acquisition before independent learning and guided learning were employed. This is also evident in the overall mean 7.9 and a standard deviation of 1.67, indicating moderate variability in the students' initial performance.

Table 1
Petest Scores of Grade 7 Students in Filipino Language Acquisition

Score	Description	F	%
17 to 20	Very Satisfactory Performance	1	5
13 to 16	Satisfactory Performance	3	15
9 to 12	Fairly Satisfactory Performance	5	25
5 to 8	Poor Performance	6	30
1 to 4	Very Poor Performance	5	25
Total		20	100
Mean			7.95
Standard Deviation			1.67

This result is significant as it provides a baseline for measuring the learning gains of the students after an intervention. Pranata (2023) indicated that several studies highlighted that the students with low performance in the pretest can achieve substantial increases in understanding concepts through guided inquiry and simulations.

Posttest Scores of Grade 7 Students in Filipino Language Acquisition

The posttest scores of the students after independent learning was employed showed an improvement in their performance from the pretest. The mean score increased to 11.65 from the pretest mean of 7.95, showing a positive effect of independent learning.

Table 2
Posttest Scores of Grade 7 Students in Filipino Language Acquisition After Independent and Guided Learning were Employed

Score	Description	Independent Learning		Guided Learning	
		F	%	F	%
17 to 20	Very Satisfactory Performance	2	10	5	25
13 to 16	Satisfactory Performance	8	40	10	50
9 to 12	Fairly Satisfactory Performance	5	25	4	20
5 to 8	Poor Performance	4	20	1	5
1 to 4	Very Poor Performance	1	5	0	0
Total		23	100	23	100
Mean		11.65		15.25	
Standard Deviation		1.84		2.15	

A large portion of the students (40%) have satisfactory performance scoring 13-16 points range, and 10% performed very satisfactory scoring 17-20 points range. However, 5% of students still scored within the very poor performance category scoring 1-4 points only, indicating that independent learning alone may not be effective for all students. The standard deviation of 1.84 shows moderate variability, suggesting that while most students improved, there were still considerable differences in the learning outcomes of the students. According to Salpocial and Palma (2023), while teachers play a vital role in modeling efficient learning and self-control, students' strong study habits



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contribute to successful language acquisition. This case may be achieved through the use of independent learning effective for some students. Independent learning, while offering advantages over traditional methods, faces several limitations. According to Nagauleng and Waris (2022), students often struggle to understand materials independently, leading to ineffective learning outcomes. They may be confined to specific information provided by teachers, lacking initiative to ask questions or explore beyond given instructions (Zokirova, 2021).

Meanwhile, the posttest scores of the students after guided learning was employed demonstrate a higher improvement in performance compared to independent learning. The mean score significantly increased to 15.25, with 50% of the students achieving satisfactory performance scoring 13-16 points and 25% performed very satisfactory scoring 17-20 points. In addition, no students fell in the category of very poor performance (1-4), and only 5% scored have poor performance scoring 5-8 points. This indicates that guided learning was more effective in improving student performance in Filipino language acquisition. The standard deviation of 2.15 shows slightly more variability in scores than in independent learning but still indicates that the majority of students performed well under guided learning. Research on language acquisition approaches for teaching Filipino emphasizes the importance of immersive experiences and authentic language use (Tubao et al., 2023). According to Hutasuht et al. (2023), guided learning approaches have shown positive effects on students' self-directedness and language learning attitudes.

Difference Between Posttest Mean Scores of Grade 7 Students Using Independent Learning and Guided Learning

Table 3 shows the result of the paired samples t-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the posttest scores of students who underwent independent learning and guided learning.

Table 3

Difference Between Posttest Mean Scores of Grade 7 Students Using Independent Learning and Guided Learning

Learning Approaches	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Independent Learning vs. Guided Learning	3.60	-4.89	0.003	Significant	Reject the Null Hypothesis

The mean difference between the two posttest scores was 3.60 showing that guided learning resulted with higher scores, and the test resulted to a t-value of -4.89 and a p-value of 0.003, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This suggests that guided learning had a significantly greater positive effect on the students' performance compared to independent learning. This further indicates that the interaction of the teacher and students in the classroom is an important aspect of an effective language acquisition. Moreover, Vygotsky's interactionist theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction in language development, highlighting the potential of learner-centered approaches in the curriculum (Alharbi, 2023).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that guided learning significantly enhances the academic performance of Grade 7 students in Filipino language acquisition compared to independent learning, as evidenced by a statistically significant increase in posttest scores. The structured support, immediate feedback, and interactive nature of guided learning effectively address students' linguistic challenges, particularly in grammar and verb tenses.

Therefore, it is recommended that Filipino language teachers integrate guided learning strategies into their instructional practices, especially for complex grammar topics, to scaffold student understanding and engagement. In addition, educational institutions should provide regular professional development for teachers focused on effective guided practice techniques, and curriculum developers should design learning modules that incorporate collaborative, teacher-led activities. Moreover, policymakers may consider reinforcing guided instructional models within the basic education framework, especially for junior high school learners whose cognitive and linguistic skills are still developing.

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