



Enhancing Article Usage through Multimedia: A Communicative Language Approach

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Abstract

The present study aims to enhance the understanding and correct usage of articles among the middle-grade students using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach through Multimedia Strategies. By incorporating interactive tools such as cartoons, animation videos and picture descriptions, the study seeks to improve students' ability to apply articles accurately in both spoken and written English.

Keywords: Communicative language teaching, articles, cartoons, animation videos, grammar teaching, english language teaching, information and communication technology.

1. Introduction

The present study aims to enhance the understanding and correct usage of articles among the middle-grade students using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach through multimedia strategies. By incorporating interactive tools such as cartoons, animation videos and picture descriptions, the study seeks to improve students' ability to apply articles accurately in both spoken and written English. According to cognitive theory, more effective learning occurs when a learner experiences reduced cognitive load during a video viewing, because of the constraint on human working memory capacity (Mayer 1999).

A study on 'Cartoons as a tool for developing speaking skills among students of non-linguistic specialties' by Dorskovskaia and Nenasheva (2024), dives into the importance of finding innovative and effective tools to boost speaking skills for students in non-linguistic fields. This is especially important in the realm of foreign language education, where conventional methods often fall short in truly engaging students. It emphasizes the potential of using authentic audiovisual materials, like cartoons, as a fresh approach to teaching. The idea here is that cartoons can make the learning experience more enjoyable and relatable for students, which in turn can enhance their motivation and interest in the subject.

To improve students' grammatical accuracy by enabling them to correctly identify and use definite and indefinite articles in various contexts. To enhance comprehension and retention of

article usage by integrating visual aids with communicative tasks and real-life scenarios.

Articles in English are one of the key indicators of native speaker competence, and the ease with which native speakers use articles can lead them to ignore the complexities of the system and often be unaware of their importance to English syntax (Lipski, 1978, p.13). According to Hewson (1972, p.131), "the definite and the indefinite article are among the ten most frequent words of English discourse". Sinclair (1991) lists 'the' as the most frequent word and 'a' as the fifth most frequent. This frequency means that these two small words have a wide-ranging effect on speech styles and expression, and that proficiency in this system will provide non-native speakers with a perceptibly increased level of accuracy.

This study, restricted the results to this particular age range (12-13 years), and educational setting. The present study concentrated exclusively on teaching articles using communicative language teaching (CLT) techniques. The study limited the investigation of other possible interactive teaching techniques by relying mostly on visual aids including cartoons, animation videos, and picture descriptions.

2. Materials and Methods

A communicative and student-focused approach in language teaching, often called "Communicative Language Teaching" (CLT), and "Communicative approach", emphasizes interaction and communication as both means and goal of

language learning, shifting the focus from the teacher to the student as an active participant.

The present study uses Canale's Model of communicative competence consisting of four main elements such as Grammatical competence, Discourse competence, Sociolinguistic competence, and Strategic competence.

The instructional materials play a dynamic role in grasping the attention and interest of students. The instructional aids used for the present study are text-based, task-based, realia-based, and technology-supported, influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use.

i). **Text - Based Materials:** Text-based materials form the foundation for introducing and reinforcing correct usage of articles. The present study ensures step-by-step understanding of the definite, indefinite, and zero articles. The primary resource for this study is from a book titled 'A Remedial English Grammar for Foreign Students'. Using selected sections that clarify the use of articles, exercises are carefully sequenced from basic identification to contextual application.

ii). **Task- Based Materials:** Task-based materials encourage active learning through problem-solving and real-life communication. In the present study, learners engage in various tasks like role plays, dialogue completion and other task-based communication activities which help them to apply their understanding of articles in practical contexts.

iii). **Realia-Based Materials:** In the present study, realia-based materials advocate the use of real-life objects in the classroom, using appropriate articles. These materials create authentic learning experiences and help bridge the gap between grammar rules and practical communication.

iv). **Technology-Supported Materials:** The use of cartoons, animation videos and interactive games are the technological aids used in the present study. Technology-supported materials provide an interactive and visual learning environment that enhances student learning engagement. These multimedia resources cater to diverse learning style and help reinforce article usage in an enjoyable manner.

Procedure

The steps taken to conduct the present study are as follows:

STEP 1: After a short self-introduction session, the researcher gave a brief explanation on the importance of learning articles, to improve grammatical accuracy and communicate effectively.

STEP 2: The researcher provided an overview of the three main types of articles:

- Indefinite Articles (a, an)
- Definite Article (the)
- Zero Article (when no article is required)

A pre-test was conducted to assess the learners prior knowledge of using articles in sentences.

STEP 3: The pre-test results indicated that learners struggled with the usage of articles. So the researcher employed cartoons and animation videos to teach articles. The cartoons and animation videos were presented through smart board.

STEP 4: The researcher began by teaching the indefinite articles using cartoons and animation videos that depicted real-life situations.

For example: A cat is sitting on a mat.



Fig 1: Indefinite Article

After the explanation, students were given exercises to identify and use a and an correctly in sentences.

STEP 5: The researcher introduced the definite article using animated scenarios and cartoons strips.

For example: The sun is shining brightly.



Fig 2: Definite Article

Students were encouraged to identify why "the" is used for specific nouns. Practice exercises based on cartoons and animated clips followed the explanation.

STEP 6: The zero article was introduced using contextual examples from animation clips where no article is needed.

For example: Apples are rich in vitamins.

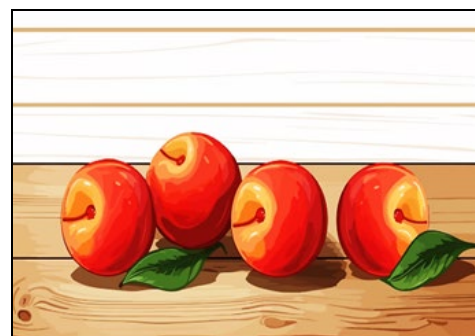


Fig 3: Zero Article

STEP 7: The researcher incorporated activities such as picture description, real-life scenario role play, and article sorting challenge.

STEP 8: After completing each type of article, post-lesson exercises were administered to reinforce learning. The book, 'A Remedial English Grammar for Foreign Students' was also used to supplement the teaching of articles in familiar contexts.

STEP 9: The researcher designed the post-test question different from the pre-test one to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching method. The post-test questions were designed based on the levels of Bloom's taxonomy, a frame work for classifying educational goals.

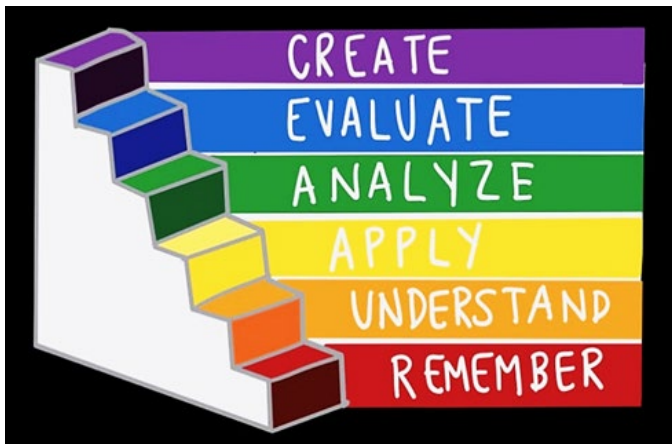


Fig 4: Levels of Bloom's taxonomy frame work.

3. Results and Discussion

The collected and evaluated data of the students are organized and analysed using two statistical methods. Firstly the total marks of 35 students are summed and an average is calculated and presented. The following Table 1 presents the total sum and average of the tests conducted.

Table 1: The sum and Average of 35 students.

No. of Students	Test	Total Marks	Average
35	Pre-test	336	9.6
35	Post-test	648	18.5
Difference		312	8.9

The first column of the above table represents the total number of the sample students which is 35, whereas the second column contains the tests conducted to them as pre and post-tests. The third column intended the total marks secured by students in the respective tests. The last row of the table is a representation of the differences obtained in both the tests. The difference between the sum total of pre and post-test is 312 and the average difference is 8.9 respectively. Secondly, the individual scores of students are also accounted and calculated to find the mean difference of pre-test and post-test using the formula,

$$\text{Arithmetic mean } M = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where

M = Mean

$\sum$ = the sum of the scores

x = Mid point or central point

f = frequency

N = Total number of students

The midpoint x in the formula is calculated using

$$x = \frac{\text{lower class interval} + \text{upper class interval}}{2}$$

The scores of each student in the pre-test and post-test are calculated using the above formula and the results are used for

analysing and interpreting the data. The following table shows the mean difference of the pre-test. The class interval stated, categorize the scores of the students between 0-5, 5-10, 10-15, 15-20 and 20-25 marks respectively. The frequency (f) is the number of students securing the marks in the respective class interval; Midpoint is the central mark in the class interval. Finally, frequency and midpoint are multiplied to get the value of in the formula divided by total number of students.

Table 2: Arithmetic Mean of Pre-test.

Class Interval	Frequency	Mid-Point (x)	fx
0-5	8	2.5	20
5-10	10	7.5	75
10-15	17	12.5	212.5
15-20	0	17.5	0
20-25	0	22.5	0
	N=35		$\sum fx / N = 307.5$

Using the formula, the Mean (M) calculated for the pre-test is

$$M = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

$$M = \frac{307.5}{35}$$

$$M = 8.78$$

The Mean calculated for the pre-test is compared with the Mean calculated for the post-test. The following table 3 shows the arithmetic mean of students in the post-test.

Table 3: Arithmetic Mean of Post-test

Class Interval	Frequency	Mid-Point (x)	fx
0-5	0	2.5	0
5-10	1	7.5	7.5
10-15	6	12.5	75
15-20	12	17.5	210
20-25	16	22.5	360
	N = 35		$\sum fx / N = 652.5$

Using the formula, the Mean (M) calculated for the post-test is

$$M = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

$$M = \frac{652.5}{35}$$

$$M = 18.64$$

The mean of the pre-test is 8.78 and the Mean of the post-test is 18.64. The mean of both tests are calculated by taking into account of the individual scores of the learners.

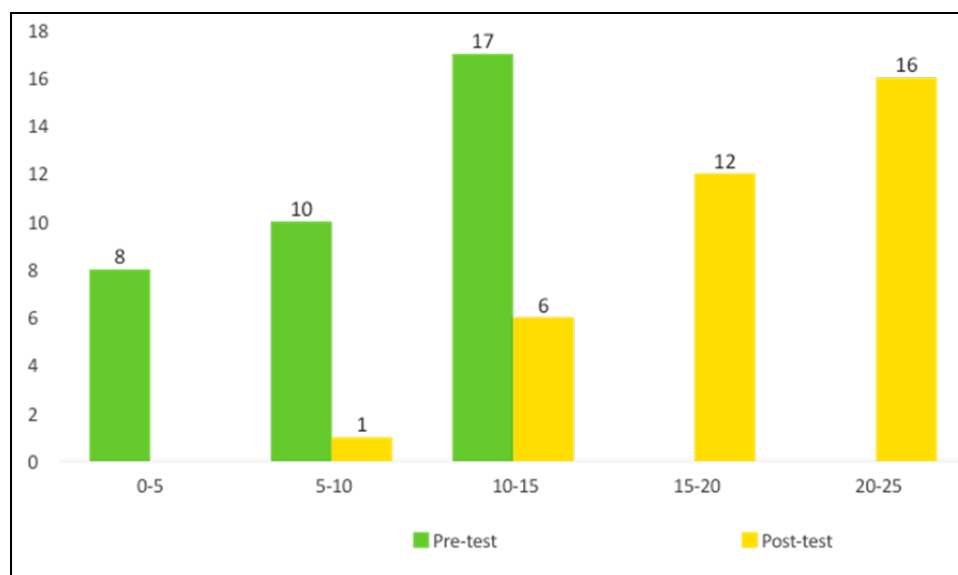


Fig 1: Graphical Representation of difference between Pre and Post-test.

Conclusion

The results of this research indicates that incorporating cartoons, animated videos, and picture descriptions as interactive pedagogical tools really enhances the grammatical accuracy of students in using articles. It appears that integrating ICT-based materials in grammar exercises assists students in understanding article usage more profoundly by providing active and situational learning experiences. This technique not only reinforces their use of articles in the right context but also maintains their interest and enthusiasm in language acquisition. Evidently, this interactive technique ensures active engagement, making lessons in grammar more transparent and efficient. The research focuses on how the use of visual aids and communicative activities enhances comprehension and recall, ultimately leading to improved performance in both verbal and written communication.

Acknowledgement

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans." (Proverbs 16:3). I express my deepest gratitude to God Almighty for His infinite wisdom, strength, and grace, which have guided me throughout this project.

I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Venum Cecilia P.A.A., M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Associate Professor and Head of the PG and Research Department of English, for her encouragement and invaluable support. I also express my warm thanks to all the faculty members of the department for their motivation and guidance.

My earnest thanks to Dr. (Sr.) Amala Valarmathy A., M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Associate Professor and Head-in-Charge of the PG Department of English, for her assistance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am deeply indebted to my guide, Dr. Latha E., M.A., Ph.D., for her unwavering support, insightful feedback, and valuable time. Her guidance and motivation have been instrumental in shaping this research.

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