



Verbal Phrase Usage among PSU College Students

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Abstract - The study aimed to determine the ability level of junior AB English students in verbal phrase usage. The level of ability in using verbal phrase was measured by an instrument which was lifted from books. Findings showed that the ABEL students had a very poor level of ability in identifying the uses of verbal phrases. The result also revealed that the respondents' level of ability in identifying the uses of gerund was very good, very poor in participial phrase and good in infinitive phrase. Moreover, the respondents are either poor or very poor in their level of ability in identifying the uses of verbal phrases when grouped according to their profile variables. Therefore, mastery on the use of participial phrase in order to improve their ability level in identifying the functions of verbal phrase.

Keywords – Usage, Verbal Phrase, Phrase

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the importance of English cannot be denied since English is the most common language spoken everywhere. Studying English requires a lot of understanding of its nature. Thus, the students need to have open minds, ready to achieve linguistic learning by current examples of good English. They should be properly equipped with written skills to enable them to attain better performance in different areas of learning.

According to Sri Widiati (1998:7) as cited by Ratih Damayanti (2009), one of the essential parts of learning English is grammar. Grammar refers to the study of words and the ways words work together. Any person who communicates using a particular language is consciously or unconsciously aware of the grammar of that language. A person who has unconscious knowledge of grammar may be sufficient for simple language use, but the ones who wish to communicate in an artful manner will seek greater depth of understanding and proficiency that the study of grammar provides (Kleiser, 2012).

Grammar is the system of rules governing the structure of phrases, clauses, and sentences consisting of words contained in the lexicon. A phrase is a group of words that forms a unit simpler than a sentence. Unlike a sentence, or clause, a phrase does not contain both a subject and a finite verb. When building

sentences, we use many types of phrases. These phrases are the noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase and the verbal phrases: gerund phrase, participial phrase and infinitive phrase.

Students make mistakes in using phrases especially verbal phrases in formal writing. They are confused in the uses of different types of verbal phrases, such as gerund phrase which is use as a noun, object, object of the preposition and appositive, the infinitive phrase which also acts as noun, an adjective and an adverb and participial phrase which is used as an adjective.

This study speaks about the level of ability of the respondents in using verbal phrase with following formulated objectives: (1) To determine the profile of the respondents in terms of type of high school graduated from, most preferred English reading material, and final grade in Structure of the English Language; (2) To determine the level of ability of the students in identifying the uses of verbal phrases; and (3) To determine the frequency distribution of score in identifying the uses of verbal phrases when grouped according to their profile variables.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method was used in this study. It is concerned with the description of

data and characteristics about the population of the study (Valdez, 2011). The respondents of this study were the 25 students who were selected through complete enumeration. This study used a questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument which was lifted from books. The data were tallied, categorized, analyzed and subjected to normative measures by the use of frequency counts and percentage distribution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Respondents

There are 22 (28%) respondents came from public high schools while the remaining 3 (12%) respondents came from private high schools. Thus, most of the respondents graduated from public high schools. The recent is similar in the studies of Torres and Pillos (2012) and Garjas and Tan (2012) which was found that 86% of the respondents graduated from public high schools.

Further, it also shows that out of the 25 respondents, magazine and dictionary were the most preferred English reading materials with 8 (32%) respondents. Thus, majority of the respondents preferred magazine and dictionary as the most preferred English reading material. However, in the studies of Dela Cruz and Diso (2012) and Arenas et. al. (2014), majority of the respondents preferred fictions and journals as the most preferred English reading materials.

With regard to their final grade, only 1 or 4% respondent obtained a final grade of 1.5 with a descriptive rating of “**very good.**” On the other hand, 10 or 40% obtained a final grade of 2.25 with a descriptive rating of “**good,**” 2 or 8% obtained 1.75 with a descriptive rating of “**good,**” and 1 or 4% obtained 2.0 with the descriptive rating of “**good**” while 5 or 20% obtained a final grade of 2.75 with descriptive rating of “**fair**” and 5 or 20% obtained 2.5 with the descriptive rating of “**fair.**” However, only one respondent obtained a final grade of 3.0 with the descriptive rating of “**passed**” while none of the respondents obtained final grades of 1.0 and 1.25. Therefore, majority of the respondents obtained 2.25 with the descriptive rating of “**good.**”

However, in the studies of Ores and Obina Jr. (2012) and Hidalgo and Javier (2014)

most of the respondents obtained 2.75 in Structure of the English Language. The result is different in the studies of Ores and Obina, Jr. (2012) and Hidalgo and Javier (2014) wherein most of the respondents obtained the grade of in Structure of the English Language with the descriptive rating of “**fair.**”

Level of Ability of the Respondents in Identifying the Uses of Verbal Phrase

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents’ Score in Identifying the Uses of Verbal Phrase

Score Range	Frequency (N=25)	Percentage (100%)	Level of Ability
28 – 30	0	0.0	Excellent
24 – 27	0	0.0	Very Good
20 – 23	3	12.0	Good
16 – 19	9	36.0	Poor
15 and below	13	52.0	Very Poor

It can be gleaned from the table that most of the respondents are described as **very poor** in identifying the uses of verbal phrases.

Table 2
Level of Ability in Identifying the Uses of Verbal Phrases

Kinds of Verbal Phrases	Average	Descriptive Rating
Gerund Phrase	7.68	Very Good
Participial Phrase	1.8	Very Poor
Infinitive Phrase	5.0	Good
Overall Ability	4.83	Very Poor

Table 2 shows that gerund phrase obtained the highest average score of 7.68 which categorized as **very good.**

Thus, the respondents are knowledgeable in identifying the uses of gerund phrase. They know how to identify the subject and object of the preposition in the sentence. However, they mistakenly identified the subject complement from predicate nominative. Also, the respondents are moderately knowledgeable in infinitive phrase. However, some respondents are confused in identifying the uses of infinitive phrase, especially adverb from adjective. On the other hand, majority of the respondents are not familiar in identifying the

use of participial phrase which is used only as an adjective. They mistakenly identified that a participial is a gerund, especially in *-ing* and phrase that was embedded by commas.

Score of the Respondents When grouped According to their Profile Variables

The results show that majority of the respondents or 11 (44%) who graduated from public high schools obtained a descriptive rating of **very poor** as their level of ability in identifying the uses of verbal phrases while 8 (32%) obtained a descriptive rating of **poor**.

In terms of most preferred reading material, 3 (12%) of the respondents preferred fiction as their most preferred English reading material with a descriptive rating of **poor** as their level of ability in identifying. It also revealed that 5 (20%) of the respondents preferred dictionary and obtained a descriptive rating of **very poor** while 3 (12%) obtained **poor**. However, 5 (20%) of the respondents preferred magazine and obtained a descriptive rating of **very poor**.

As for their final grade in Structure of the English Language, 5 (20%) of the respondents who got a final grade of 2.25 obtained a descriptive rating of **poor** and 5 (20%) of them obtained the descriptive rating **very poor**. However, there are 4 (16%) respondents who got a final grade of 2.75 that obtained a descriptive rating of **very poor**.

Therefore, the respondents are either “poor” or “very poor” in their ability to identify the uses of verbal phrases when grouped according to the type of high school graduated, most preferred English reading material, and final grade in Structure of English Language.

CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study, the researcher arrives the following conclusions:

1. The junior AB English students are mostly graduated from public high school. Their most preferred English reading material are dictionary and magazine. They perform “good” in their subject Structure of the English Language.

2. The junior AB English students are

very poor in identifying the uses of verbal phrase.

3. The junior AB English students are either “poor” or “very poor” in their ability to identify the uses of verbal phrases when grouped according to profile variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After the interpretation and analysis of data, the researcher proposes the following recommendations regarding the findings and conclusions drawn:

1. Students must establish the habit of reading English books because it provides the rules on how verbal phrases function in sentences. They should have the urge and eagerness to read materials that will provide their growth in learning English grammar.

2. Students should have master to use of participial phrase which is only used as an adjective. They should learn the distinction between and among the three verbal phrases and should be able to distinguish their different uses.

3. English instructors should provide more activities and exercises that will help students acquire deeper understanding on how verbal phrases function in sentences.

4. Similar study may be recommended for future researchers who would like to conduct the same study. They should not just focus on the uses of the verbal phrases but also in identifying their kinds.

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