

Bridging Learning Gaps in English Tenses Through the Use of Strategic Intervention Material (SIM)

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Abstract

This action research determined the effectiveness of a Strategic Intervention Material in improving the mastery of English tenses among Grade 6 pupils of Cupang Elementary School during School Year 2024-2025. It addressed learning gaps in identifying correct verb forms, constructing sentences with appropriate tenses, and applying these tenses in written and oral communication. The study employed an action research design with an intervention approach. Fifty-two Grade 6 pupils were selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through a pre-test and post-test measuring mastery levels before and after the intervention, supplemented by classroom observations and pupil reflection sheets. Quantitative data were analyzed using mean and percentage scores, while qualitative responses provided supporting insights. Results showed that the Strategic Intervention Material significantly improved pupils' understanding and application of English tenses. Pupils demonstrated higher engagement, improved accuracy in verb usage, better sentence construction, greater confidence, and increased motivation. The study concludes that Strategic Intervention Material is an effective instructional tool for addressing learning gaps in English grammar and recommends that teachers integrate it into English instruction while developing similar materials for struggling learners. The research aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education by strengthening foundational literacy and communication skills. It contributes to educational sustainability by offering a practical, replicable approach that supports continuous improvement of learner competencies and instructional practices within the school system.

Keywords: Strategic Intervention Material; English Tenses; Grammar Instruction; Learning Gaps; Mastery

1. Introduction

English remains the universal language of communication and a core subject in the Philippine basic education curriculum. Proper use of verb tenses is fundamental to expressing ideas clearly and coherently. Despite ongoing language programs, many elementary pupils still face challenges in applying correct tense forms in oral and written communication. Inadequate mastery often produces fragmented sentences, misinterpretation of meaning, and reduced fluency, which in turn affects academic performance (Santos, 2019). These gaps also limit learners' confidence and participation in other subjects that require effective communication (Rivera, 2020). Addressing the issue is therefore necessary to equip pupils with foundational competencies required for higher grade levels. Recent educational literature underscores the value of instructional innovations and learner-centered strategies in bridging learning gaps. Strategic Intervention Materials (SIMs) have been recognized as effective tools for simplifying complex concepts, providing guided practice, and offering enrichment activities that respond to diverse learner needs (Delos Reyes, 2021). Well-designed intervention materials improve retention, test performance, and learner motivation (Lopez, 2022). In language learning, structured and engaging SIMs are

especially beneficial because they supply contextualized examples and interactive tasks that render grammar concepts more meaningful. This approach aligns with the Department of Education's MATATAG curriculum, which prioritizes strengthening foundational literacy and communication competencies (Garcia, 2023). When learners receive appropriate and innovative instructional support, they can overcome language barriers, attain higher mastery, and become more confident communicators (Fernandez, 2024).

At the local level, classroom observations and diagnostic tests at Cupang Elementary School have shown that several Grade 6 pupils struggle to distinguish past, present, and future tenses. These difficulties appear in written compositions and oral recitations, where frequent errors prevent learners from fully conveying intended thoughts. Nationally, the challenge reflects broader concerns within the Philippine basic education system regarding grammar mastery and communication skills. Globally, English proficiency remains a critical competency for academic and professional participation, making the remediation of tense-related gaps relevant beyond the immediate school context.

The study is grounded in the principle that learner-centered, structured intervention materials promote independent and mastery-based learning. By combining guided drills, contextualized activities, visual aids, formative assessment, and reflective tasks, the SIM enables pupils to move beyond rote memorization toward meaningful application of tense rules in both spoken and written communication. This conceptual orientation emphasizes active learning, continuous practice, and gradual mastery of tense consistency.

Although language programs are continuously implemented, many elementary pupils still exhibit difficulties in identifying correct verb forms, constructing sentences with appropriate tenses, and applying these tenses in authentic communication. Existing instruction often lacks sufficient contextualized and repetitive practice opportunities. The present study responds to this gap by developing and implementing a Strategic Intervention Material specifically designed to address Grade 6 pupils' difficulties with English tenses at Cupang Elementary School. The rationale rests on the belief that appropriate instructional support can close learning gaps, raise mastery levels, and foster greater confidence in communication (Fernandez, 2024).

The research aligns primarily with SDG 4 – Quality Education. By targeting foundational literacy skills—specifically accurate use of English tenses—and providing an accessible, structured intervention for struggling learners, the study contributes to inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities. It also supports the broader aim of ensuring that all learners acquire the communication competencies necessary for further education and meaningful participation in society.

The study advances educational sustainability by demonstrating a practical, low-cost, and replicable approach to remediating grammar gaps that can be integrated into regular classroom practice and shared through professional learning communities. Strengthening pupils' English tense mastery supports long-term academic success, reduces the need for repeated remediation, and builds communication competence that underpins learning across subject areas. In this way, the research contributes to institutional sustainability within the education system by equipping teachers with an effective instructional tool and fostering continuous improvement in foundational language skills.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study used an action research design with an intervention approach. It focused on identifying learning gaps in English tenses, implementing the Strategic Intervention Material as a remedial tool, and evaluating changes in pupils' performance and engagement before and after the intervention.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The research was conducted at Cupang Elementary School during the School Year 2024–2025. The school is under the Bauan Sub-Office in the Division of Batangas.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were Grade 6 pupils of Cupang Elementary School who experienced difficulties in mastering English tenses, particularly in constructing sentences using past, present, and future forms. These pupils were selected because classroom performance and teacher observation indicated they would benefit most from the intervention.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Fifty-two Grade 6 pupils participated in the study. Purposive sampling was applied to select those identified as having difficulties in English tenses based on classroom performance and teacher observation. This ensured the sample consisted of learners who needed targeted support through the Strategic Intervention Material.

2.5 Research Instrument

A pre-test and a post-test of comparable difficulty served as the primary instruments. Both tests included sentence completion, identification, and writing tasks that assessed understanding and application of past, present, and future tenses. Responses were scored and interpreted using a four-level scale: Highly Proficient, Proficient,

Developing, and Beginning. Additional qualitative data were obtained through teacher classroom observations, pupils' written outputs, and feedback gathered during discussions and reflection activities.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

A pre-test was first administered to determine pupils' initial mastery of sentence construction and tense usage. The Strategic Intervention Material was then introduced and integrated into regular English lessons over a three-week period. During this time pupils completed guided drills, contextualized exercises, and interactive activities designed to promote correct tense application. After the intervention a post-test was given to measure improvement. Teacher observations, written outputs, and pupil feedback were collected throughout the process. All data-collection activities—from pre-test to post-test—took place within the three-week period that covered preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the intervention. Parental consent was secured before any data collection, participation was voluntary, and pupils were free to withdraw without academic consequence. Personal information was protected by assigning code numbers instead of real names, and all data were used solely for research purposes and stored securely.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using the Mean Percentage Score, calculated as total score obtained divided by the highest possible score and multiplied by 100. The difference between pre-test and post-test Mean Percentage Scores indicated the effectiveness of the Strategic Intervention Material. Results were interpreted according to the following scale: 90–100 percent Highly Proficient, 75–89 percent Proficient, 50–74 percent Developing, and below 50 percent Beginning. Qualitative data drawn from observations, pupil feedback, and written outputs were reviewed, grouped by recurring patterns, and categorized into themes that reflected learning experiences, difficulties, and reflections. Triangulation of pre-test, post-test, observation, and feedback results was employed to strengthen the reliability of the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Pupils' Mastery of English Tenses Before the Use of the Strategic Intervention Material

The pre-test results indicated that pupils obtained an overall Mean Percentage Score of 61.25 percent, interpreted as Developing. Specific indicators showed scores of 65 percent for identifying the correct verb form in a sentence, 59 percent for constructing simple sentences using the correct tense, 64 percent for differentiating between past, present, and future tenses, 57 percent for using the appropriate tense in short paragraph writing, and 61 percent for applying the correct tense in daily communication.

This pattern suggests that pupils possessed a basic grasp of English tenses yet had trouble with consistent application, particularly in extended writing. The finding supports the observations of Denioso et al. (2020), who noted that students often struggle with grammar because of limited opportunities for contextualized practice. Similarly, Sacal and Potane (2023) emphasized that mastery of grammar and tense usage requires authentic and repetitive exposure through meaningful writing activities rather than mere memorization.

3.2 Level of Pupils' Mastery of English Tenses After the Use of the Strategic Intervention Material

The post-test results revealed a substantial rise in performance, with an overall Mean Percentage Score of 83.27 percent, interpreted as Proficient. Indicator scores improved to 86 percent for identifying the correct verb form, 84 percent for constructing simple sentences using the correct tense, 89 percent for differentiating among the three tenses, 80 percent for using the appropriate tense in short paragraph writing, and 85 percent for applying the correct tense in daily communication.

The increase demonstrates that the Strategic Intervention Material effectively enhanced pupils' mastery of English tenses and their ability to apply them in meaningful contexts. According to Yusuf and Ali (2024), structured grammar interventions that combine explanation, guided practice, and self-assessment produce measurable gains in sentence construction and writing fluency. Sacal and Potane (2023) likewise observed that pupils exposed to innovative grammar tools develop greater confidence and accuracy in both oral and written communication.

3.3 Effectiveness of the Strategic Intervention Material

Comparison of pre-test and post-test scores showed consistent gains across all indicators: an increase of 21 percentage points in identifying correct verb forms, 25 points in constructing simple sentences, 25 points in differentiating tenses, 23 points in paragraph writing, and 24 points in daily communication. The overall Mean Percentage Score rose by 22.02 percentage points, indicating that the material was highly effective.

These gains confirm that the Strategic Intervention Material strengthened pupils' capacity to compose clear and coherent sentences with correct verb tenses. The result corroborates Yusuf and Ali (2024), who asserted that consistent exposure to guided grammar tasks fosters deeper learning and long-term retention. Sacal and Potane (2023) further found that scaffolded grammar instruction using contextualized materials promotes both linguistic accuracy and learner engagement.

3.4 Application of Findings to Further Enhance Pupils' Mastery of English Tenses

The results point to the need for sustained remedial activities, integration of Strategic Intervention Material exercises into regular English lessons, collaborative teacher development sessions, and engaging grammar challenges to maintain and extend the observed gains.

Continuous remediation and daily integration of the material are essential to prevent regression and to build lasting mastery. As recommended by Sacal and Potane (2023), consistent practice with contextualized tools solidifies skills. Yusuf and Ali (2024) also highlighted that teacher collaboration in developing instructional materials enhances innovation and improves learner outcomes.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The findings demonstrate that the Strategic Intervention Material (SIM) was highly effective in improving Grade 6 pupils' mastery of English tenses. The pupils' overall Mean Percentage Score (MPS) increased from 61.25% at the pre-test, interpreted as Developing, to 83.27% on the post-test, interpreted as Proficient, reflecting an overall improvement of 22.02%. Gains were observed in identifying correct verb forms, constructing sentences, differentiating past, present, and future tenses, paragraph writing, and applying appropriate tenses in daily communication. The results further showed improved learner engagement, confidence, and accuracy, supporting the value of structured and contextualized grammar practice in strengthening mastery and learner participation.

Based on the findings, teachers are encouraged to integrate the Strategic Intervention Material (SIM) into regular English instruction and conduct continuous remediation through SIM-based drills, writing activities, and contextualized exercises to sustain pupils' mastery of English tenses. The study also recommends continued development and refinement of SIMs based on learner feedback and classroom observations, collaboration among teachers through Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions for the development and utilization of instructional materials, and the sharing or adaptation of effective SIM strategies in English lessons to support sustained learner improvement.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The researcher strictly adhered to ethical standards throughout the study. Parental consent was obtained prior to data collection, and the purpose and procedures of the research were clearly explained to both parents and pupils. Participation was voluntary, and pupils were informed that they could withdraw at any time without academic consequence. Personal information was kept confidential using code numbers instead of real names in all records and reports. The research posed no harm or risk to participants, as all activities formed part of regular classroom instruction designed for academic enrichment. Data were used solely for research purposes and were stored securely to maintain integrity and confidentiality.

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