**Essex County College**

**Division of Bilingual Studies**

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Team (SLOAT)

Spring 2011 Final Report

submitted by Milena Rubinstein & John Hills

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During the Spring 2011 semester, four sections of ESL 080 were assessed for two primary Student Learning Outcomes. The first assessments included 84 students in the four sections. By the end of the semester, the number had decreased to 81. To assess SLO #1, two quizzes were used to collect data. One was administered in the fourth week of the semester and the second at week thirteen. The first quiz evaluated the use of the simple present tense, and the second quiz evaluated the use of the simple present, present progressive, and the future tenses. To assess SLO #2, two revision exercises were completed by students in weeks eight and thirteen of the semester. Details of the student learning outcomes and the assessment instruments and findings are given below.

**SLO #1: (Course Goal 2) Recognize the correct use of the rules of grammar in speaking and writing.**

Subject: English as a Second Language Course Number: ESL080

Section Number: (001, 002, 003, 004) Testing Date: Week 4

Assignment Topic: Grammar Quiz 1 – Simple Present Tense

Instructions: Circle the correct choice in each sentence below.

1. [Person A] We’re late. Let’s go. The train ***is / are*** ready to leave.
2. [Person B] I ***am / have*** surprised to see that dog on the train. What kind of dog is that? [Person A] That’s a guide dog.
3. [Person B] I ***aren’t / don’t*** know what a guide dog is.
4. [Person A] Guide dogs ***help / helps*** people with disabilities.
5. [Person B] How ***does a guide dog / do a guide dog*** help people? [Person A] A guide dog helps a blind person go from place to place.
6. [Person B] How ***dogs learn / do dogs learn*** to do that? [Person A] They get training at special schools.
7. [Person B] How ***l****ong* ***does the training takes / does the training take***?
8. [Person A] It ***takes / take*** about 5 months.
9. [Person B] ***Does / Is*** it cost a lot of money?
10. [Person A] I ***am not / don’t*** sure how much it costs, but I imagine it isn’t cheap.

**Student Results on Grammar Quiz 1 – Simple Present Tense**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question #** | **# of Correct Responses** | **% Correct** | **# of Incorrect Responses** | **% Incorrect** |
| 1 | 80 | 95% | 4 | 5% |
| 2 | 77 | 92% | 7 | 8% |
| 3 | 82 | 98% | 2 | 2% |
| 4 | **66** | **71%** | **18** | **29%** |
| 5 | 78 | 93% | 6 | 7% |
| 6 | 74 | 88% | 10 | 12% |
| 7 | 72 | 86% | 12 | 14% |
| 8 | 75 | 89% | 9 | 11% |
| 9 | **65** | **77%** | **19** | **23%** |
| 10 | 79 | 94% | 5 | 6% |

Note: The total number of students who took Grammar Quiz 1 was 84.

Analysis: Students scored the lowest on questions #4 and 9, though 77% of the students did answer those questions correctly. The other eight questions were answered correctly between 86 and 98% of the time. Question #4 shows that students had difficulty identifying the true subject. Question #9 shows that students had difficulty when the main verb was the verb “to be”.

Subject: English as a Second Language Course Number: ESL 080

Section Number: (001, 002, 003, 004) Testing Date: Week 13.

Assignment Topic: Grammar Quiz 4 – Simple Present, Present Progressive, and Future Tenses.

Instructions: Read the letter below. Fill in each blank with the simple present, present progressive or future tense.

Dear Barbara,

Please excuse me for not writing sooner. I rarely have time to sit and write to anybody. My husband (1. work) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on his car now, and the baby (2. sleep) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. So now I (3. have) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a few moments.

I (4. be) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a student now. I (5. go) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Kennedy College twice a week. The school (6. be) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a few blocks from my house. I usually (7. walk) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to school, but sometimes I (8. drive) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. My mother usually (9. watch) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the baby when I (10. go) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to school. This semester I (11. study) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ English and math. Next semester I (12. take) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a computer course. I (13. think) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ knowledge about computers (14. help) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ me find a good job in the future. When the semester (15. be) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ over, we (16. go) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for a vacation.

My sister-in-law (17. live) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Montreal. We (18. spend) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Christmas with her this year. When we (19. get) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Montreal, I (20. send) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you a postcard.

Please write and tell me what is happening in your life.

**Student Results on Grammar Quiz 4 – Simple Present, Present Progressive, and Future Tenses**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Blank #** | **# of Correct Responses** | **% Correct** | **# of Incorrect Responses** | **% Incorrect** |
| 1 | 71 | 88% | 10 | 12% |
| 2 | 71 | 88% | 10 | 12% |
| 3 | 74 | 91% | 7 | 9% |
| 4 | 74 | 91% | 7 | 9% |
| 5 | 65 | 80% | 16 | 20% |
| 6 | 72 | 89% | 9 | 11% |
| 7 | 67 | 83% | 14 | 17% |
| 8 | 61 | 75% | 20 | 25% |
| 9 | **56** | **69%** | **25** | **31%** |
| 10 | 59 | 73% | 22 | 27% |
| 11 | 68 | 84% | 13 | 16% |
| 12 | 78 | 96% | 3 | 4% |
| 13 | 67 | 83% | 14 | 17% |
| 14 | **57** | **70%** | **24** | **30%** |
| 15 | 67 | 83% | 14 | 17% |
| 16 | 75 | 92% | 6 | 8% |
| 17 | 68 | 84% | 13 | 16% |
| 18 | 72 | 92% | 9 | 8% |
| 19 | 65 | 80% | 16 | 20% |
| 20 | 71 | 88% | 10 | 12% |

Note: The total number of students who took Grammar Quiz 4 was 81.

Analysis: Students scored the lowest on questions #9 and 14. In question #9, students either used the wrong tense (the future instead of the simple present) or they used the incorrect form of the simple present. In question #14, students had difficulty recognizing the need for the future tense. Overall, students had most difficulty using the future tense, especially in sentences with more than one clause. The second most common error was using the correct form of the simple present in the third person singular. The students who did well were able to successfully identify context clues in choosing the correct tense.

**SLO # 2: (Course Goal 3) Apply the rules of grammar for error analysis and correction.**

**Present/Future Tense Revision Exercise**

Instructions: Some of the underlined words or phrases have mistakes. Find the mistakes and correct them. If the underlined words are correct, write C.

Dear Mom,

Next week I am going to start a new job. I’m so excited. My pay will be higher. I 1.**going to make** $10,000 a year more than I do now. Isn’t that great? And I 2. **will having** a company car. When 3. **I’ll get** the car, 4. **I’m going send** you a picture of it.

When you 5. **will come** and visit me? Soon, I hope. I 6. **send** you money for a ticket. If 7. **I’ll have** time, 8. **I’ll take** you to visit many places. But that depends on my job. Anyway, it 9. **will nice** to see you again.

I 10.**write** you more soon.

Love, Ana

**Student Results on Present/Future Tense Revision Exercise**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item #** | **# of Correct Responses** | **% Correct** | **# of Incorrect Responses** | **% Incorrect** |
| 1 | 68 | 87% | 10 | 13% |
| 2 | 62 | 79% | 16 | 21% |
| 3 | **50** | **64%** | **28** | **36%** |
| 4 | 72 | 92% | 6 | 8% |
| 5 | **54** | **69%** | **24** | **32%** |
| 6 | 69 | 88% | 9 | 12% |
| 7 | **52** | **66%** | **28** | **34%** |
| 8 | 64 | 95% | 4 | 5% |
| 9 | 60 | 77% | 18 | 23% |
| 10 | 65 | 83% | 13 | 17% |

Note: The total number of students who completed the Present/Future Tense Revision Exercise was 78.

Analysis: The items that presented the most difficulty for students were numbers 3, 5, and 7, which represented time-and-if clauses and question form. The time-and-if clauses are a difficult concept for the students to grasp when the sentence involves future time. In these types of sentences the dependent clause requires the simple present tense even though the idea is in the future. Question formation is also always one of the most challenging structures for students at this level because of the change in sentence order.

**Past/Past Progressive Tense Revision Exercise**

Instructions: The highlighted verbs in the essay below have mistakes. Find the mistakes and correct them.

**The Mystery of the Titanic**

When the White Star Line built the Titanic, the owners felt very confident. This was the biggest and strongest ship in the world. But on April 15, 1912, the Titanic hit a huge iceberg while it 1. **went** to America.

Why the Titanic 2. **went** down? The iceberg was very big. The ship was 3. **travel** fast when the accident happened. But perhaps the “accident” was really something else – a curse!

Nearly 3,000 years ago, a woman 4. **dies** in ancient Egypt. She was a priestess (a female priest) for the sun god, Amon Ra. Priests and priestesses 5. **use** to very important in ancient times. So when she died, the Egyptians 6. **cover** her body with special bandages. In the twentieth century, people 7. **taked** the mummy to the British Museum in London. While the museum was showing the mummy, many terrible things happened in the building. After that, the British Museum 8. **was giving** the mummy to a museum in New York.

On April 15, 1912, the Titanic carried this mysterious mummy passenger to New York. She 9. **was disappearing** forever in the Atlantic Ocean with 1,500 other passengers. Did she 10. **destroyed** them? The answer is a mystery.

**Student Results on Past/Past Progressive Tense Revision Exercise**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item #** | **# of Correct Responses** | **% Correct** | **# of Incorrect Responses** | **% Incorrect** |
| 1 | 71 | 93% | 5 | 7% |
| 2 | **57** | **75%** | **19** | **25%** |
| 3 | 74 | 97% | 2 | 3% |
| 4 | 76 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| 5 | 74 | 97% | 2 | 3% |
| 6 | 73 | 96% | 3 | 4% |
| 7 | 72 | 95% | 4 | 5% |
| 8 | 75 | 98% | 1 | 2% |
| 9 | 73 | 96% | 3 | 4% |
| 10 | **57** | **75%** | **19** | **25%** |

Note: The total number of students who completed the Past/Past Progressive Tense Revision Exercise was 76.

Analysis: Students did extremely well on this late semester Past/Past Progressive Tense Revision Exercise. They were able to recognize when they needed to use simple past or past progressive tenses. The items that presented the most difficulty were numbers 2 and 10, both of which required the skill of question formation – apparently a lingering problem for 25% of the students.

# Conclusion

At this course level, the student learning outcomes data presented above demonstrate a good rate of success for students in these four sections. After one semester of grammar instruction, some students have difficulty in the areas of question formation and subject-verb agreement in the present tense. In addition, the more advanced element of this course which deals with the use of subordinate clauses also presented difficulty. This concept is dealt with in more depth in the two more advanced ESL grammar courses.

Looking at this data, we can conclude that as instructors, we need to give students more practice with these concepts. We need to employ multiple strategies such as game playing, role-play activities in which students can produce language in more real world settings. Because many of our students are attuned to 21st century technology, they seem to benefit from computed assisted instruction and practice. Unfortunately, our present computer lab is inadequate to meet the needs of our students. There is insufficient number of computers, and the ones that are in the lab have not been properly maintained. Oftentimes a class of 24 or more students must make due with 16 or 17 operating computers and, therefore, do not have the opportunity to work independently on assignments. Finally, it is essential to understand that second language acquisition is affected by many aspects. One of them is the aspect of time. Learning a language is a lengthy process which takes time and practice. Therefore, even though students may receive instruction in a particular grammatical concept and they may show understanding of the concept, this may not automatically translate into production. Using the concept in real language situations (speaking and writing) takes time and much trial and error.