ABDUL RASHID MOHAMED

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA, MALAYSIA

SHAIK ABDUL MALIK MOHAMED ISMAIL

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA, MALAYSIA

LIN SIEW ENG

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA, MALAYSIA

NOW EVERYONE CAN MEASURE GRAMMAR ABILITY THROUGH THE USE OF GRAMMAR ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Abstract:

This paper describes an initiative to systematically gauge English as Second Language (ESL) learners' grammar proficiency. Grammar Assessment System was developed with the goal to determine learners' grammar proficiency and placing learners in their respective grammar proficiency levels. The novelty of the Grammar Assessment System is in the three notable elements; Grammar Test, Grammar Matrix and Grammar Descriptor. The purpose of the Grammar Test is to measure learners' grammar proficiency levels while the Grammar Matrix is used to categorise and place learners in the precise grammar proficiency levels. Subsequently, the Grammar Descriptors provides descriptions of learners' grammar proficiency. ESL teachers can make use of the information generated by the Grammar Assessment System to systematically plan remedial and enrichment activities for learners. The main objective of this study is to construct a generic grammar proficiency test instrument (that transcends from Year 7 to Year 11) which is valid, reliable and practical that can discriminate and sort students into specific grammar proficiency categories. After developing, piloting and calibrating a prototype grammar proficiency test in a school (where respondents consisted of Year 7 to Year 11 students aged between 13 to 17 years old) the researcher proceeded to develop the 'cut-score' to establish the 'Bands' of performers. The tested instrument was then administered on Year 10 students in Penang and the data gathered was analysed and benchmarked to set indicators (Exceed Standard, Meet Standard, Below Standard and Academic Warning). These indicators point to the students' grammar proficiency.118 Year 10 students in a sub-urban secondary school participated in this study.The findings of this study however, showed that the majority of the students are in Band 2 (28.6%) (Academic Warning), 31.9% are in Band 3 (Academic Warning) while 26.4% are in Band 4 (Below Standard). Only 7.7% of the Year 10 students are in Band 5 (Meet Standard) whereas 5.5% are in Band 6 (Exceed Standard). The study's value lies in its capacity to provide practising teachers with a set of indicators to gain accurate information with regards to their students' grammar proficiency and consequently plan grammar lessons tailored to the needs of the students.