

Done with the Do's in a Venn

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Abstract

Taking the challenge to engage ESL (English as a Second Language) learners in settling a confusing language structure in English language teaching, the researcher applied the set theory in the Venn Diagram. With college students in two (2) ESL classes as participants in the study, the uses and correct usage of the *do-support* verbs in sentences were presented in standard and radial Venn diagrams. The visual scaffolding utilized in the week-long sessions yielded remarkable results to disambiguate the syntactic concerns on the grammatical issue in focus. Pre-tests and post-tests administered in the experimental research indicated comparatively significant scores showing the effectiveness of Venn diagrams in distinguishing the *do*, *does*, and *did* as do-support verbs in terms of uses and correct usage. In conclusion, using the Venn indeed had learning the do's done.

Keywords: Venn Diagram, visual scaffolding, do-support verbs

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Introduction

Addressing the recommendation presented in a previous study on “Verbals in a Venn” using the Venn Diagram in settling language issues that apply the set theory, the researcher used the same visual scaffold in handling the *do-support* verbs in teaching ESL classes in the tertiary level. In the same paper was stressed that simple and familiar visuals can be effective teaching-learning aids in confusing language structures in the target second language.

Though digital technology has eclipsed traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign language (EFL) teaching methodologies in terms of production of quality instructional materials and immediate access of the language learners to these, it may still be worthy to determine if optimum learning in the present educational setting can best be acquired only through the sophistication that online videos and clips, digital games, interactive software, social network simulations offer (Klopfer et al., 2009). In principled eclecticism (Freeman & Anderson, 2011), language teaching stresses meeting the needs of learners and the exigencies of their particular contexts for a ‘method in action.’

It is in the preceding reality to English language teachers and practitioners that partly the research veers its direction and that the Venn Diagram, a linear graphic organizer, may well still be as functional in teaching *do-support* verbs, a confusing grammatical structure to ESL/EFL learners in statements and questions.

Statement of the Problem

As an extension to the research undertaking on “Verbals in a Venn,” the research aimed to answer the following:

Does the Venn Diagram have a significant effect on the students’ comprehension on the uses and correct usage of the *do-support* verbs in statements and in yes-no questions?

Significance of the Study

The study, highlighting the use of a Venn Diagram as a linear graphic organizer in discussing a language dilemma to English language learners, is a leveling up for Venn diagram users exclusively for mathematics, logic, and statistics. Language courses are mostly confined to concept maps, tree diagrams, pictures, tables, charts, and graphs for visual or graphic organizers in print media and recently made available likewise in digital technology. The simplicity and clarity of explaining the application of the set theory in a problematic syntactical concern, the *do-support* verbs in verbal and written communication in English through the Venn, may well be both helpful to the language teacher and the ESL/EFL learners.

Literature Review

Krashen’s Comprehensible Input Hypothesis (1985) considering the comprehensible input as the primary goal of every language teacher in second language acquisition sets the need for comparisons and contrasts between two or more concepts which

exist in dealing with the *do-support* verbs in statements and questions. The *do*, *does*, and *did*, which commonly are termed auxiliary verbs take on a new dimension when their uses and correct usage are clarified to the second language learners. The complexity in distinguishing one from the other to attain grammatical correctness has to be fully explained taking into account the current level of competence of the learner and the next structure in the natural order of learning to prepare the learner.

VanPatten's Input Processing (IP) Model (2002), an innovation of Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, regards the fundamental role of the given input and processing it to better acquire the underlying grammar. The cognitive process is activated when input is understood and integrated into inter-languages. Lindsay and Knight (2006) in their CRISP Framework advocating Clear, Relevant, Interesting, Short, and Productive teaching of grammar seem to agree with VanPatten in facilitating successful second language acquisition and learning.

An ESL/EFL teacher who is open to accepting challenges of teaching probabilistic 'grammar rules' similarly realizes that there are many aspects of spoken grammar which are not yet well-enough understood to be taught systematically (Tilbury, 2011). The *do-support* verbs taken as a group can be categorized so and in addition not merely in verbal but as well as in the written mode.

The use of Venn Diagram to explore the possibility of teaching the *do*, *does*, and *did* as support or auxiliary in statements and in questions might be as effective as a visual scaffold (in untangling the infinitives, gerunds, and participles as verbals) in another research undertaking. Vygotsky's Scaffolding Theory (1983) where the teacher or an adult learner assists in the learning process is thus justified.

Methodology

Sixty-one (61) ESL learners in two (2) classes in the tertiary level, one consisting of freshmen, and the other comprising sophomores, participated in the study. The first class of thirty-five (35) students belongs to the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), while the second class of twenty-six (26) students comes from the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM)

The experimental design was used with a pretest and posttest administered for the two groups, the CAS group of thirty-five with the intervention, and the CITHM group of twenty-six without intervention, after thorough discussions. A couple of Venn diagrams had to be used as the visual scaffold for intervention. Both the ten-item teacher-designed pretest and posttest were parallel in content with the use of the *do*, *does*, and *did* as support verbs in statements and yes-no questions.

The Venn Diagram showed how the *do-support* verbs qualify in the application of the set theory used by John Venn (1880) in his math, logic, and statistics classes. Comparisons and contrasts were pinpointed with corresponding statements and yes-no questions for examples.

Prior to the pretest and posttest, the issue on the use of *do-support* verbs in sentences was resolved. How *do* as main verbs differ from *do* as auxiliary verbs was eventually settled, with the latter's role in statements and questions made clearer.

The researcher, as in her previous study, was a participant-observer, being the main discussant and lecturer in the process. Venn diagrams personally-constructed were based on the Venn diagrams used in her “Verbals in a Venn” which yielded significant results.

Presentation and Analysis of Results and Findings

The demonstration of the concept in finding the similarities and differences in the uses and correct usage of the *do-support* verbs in the Venn Diagram triggered in the participants familiarity with a visual scaffold to render ease in comprehension of the language structure presented. How *do*, *does*, and *did* are accompanied with main verbs and their respective positions in a statement or a question were shown supported by sample sentences. In addition, interest in the discussion was sustained from beginning to end.

On the other hand, a longer period of time was used for the discussion of the same structure in the class without the intervention. The teacher-researcher had to provide more sentences as examples to process the learning of the students. Eliciting sentences using the *do*, *does*, and *did* was quite a struggle.

Using the Fischer Test (z-test) for a sample greater than thirty (30) for the group with intervention, the Stepwise Method was used getting 8 as the highest score for the pretest, and 10 for the posttest. The lowest score obtained for the pretest and posttest was 1. With the Level of Significance set at 0.05, $N = 35$ and since computed $Z = 4.37$ is higher than $Z_{critical} 1.96$, the null hypothesis is then rejected. This means that the Venn Diagram has a significant effect on the students' comprehension on the uses and correct usage of *do-support* verbs in statements and in *yes-no* questions.

Conclusion

Subscribing to Lindsay and Knight's CRISP Framework, Puchta, Stranks and Jones (2013) stated that teenagers' impatience for complicated list of rules and exceptions would have them wanting what is short and sweet. The Venn Diagram seems to fit this need in learning and teaching grammar.

The ESL/EFL teacher serious in simplifying things to get things done in the classroom certainly knows that good teaching is being able to transmit information effectively as well as explain and clarify difficult concepts (Rogers, 2013).

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