

Improving Serial Verb Construction of Grade 7 in English Essays Through Error Correction, Feedback, and Scaffolding

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Abstract

Mastering serial verb constructions, where several verbs share one subject without conjunctions – vital to strengthening learners' writing under MATATAG Curriculum. The study aimed to improve SVC use of Grade 7 students at Rosalio Eduarte National High School, school year 2025-2026 using scaffolding, error correction, and feedback strategies. Employing descriptive-experimental, with comparative analysis, it focused on SVCs: symmetrical vs. asymmetrical, contiguous vs. non-contiguous, and optional vs. obligatory. Data gathered from 33 students after utilizing validated teacher-made assessments were analyzed using mean scores and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings revealed that students excelled in optional/obligatory with mean score 80.12, rated "Satisfactory", followed by symmetrical/asymmetrical (79.01) and contiguous/non-contiguous (78.67), both "Fairly Satisfactory". ANOVA revealed statistically significant performance differences in errors committed by students across modalities ($F=3.792$, $p<0.05$). Most dominant error included excessive use of verb (36.16), then misuse of verb form (29.38), SVC confusion (9.82), inappropriate combinations (10.44), and verb spelling (14.20), stemming from language interference and limited exposure. The study concluded that Grade 7 students were competent in optional/obligatory SVCs but struggled with symmetrical/asymmetrical and contiguous/non-contiguous, needing greater syntactic awareness and control. Common errors involved excessive verb usage and incorrect form, while issues with spelling and combinations were less frequent, suggesting overall difficulty with verb control than recognizing SVC types and necessitating for targeted instruction on verb combinations and forms. Educators may train students on SV forms and control, starting with simple optional/obligatory before complex symmetrical/asymmetrical and contiguous/non-contiguous through guided practice. Target overuse and incorrect forms with feedback, self-analysis, scaffolding, and balanced curriculum integration.

Keywords: *erial Verb Construction, Modalities, Validated, Teacher-Made, MATATAG*

Introduction

Verbs are the sentence structure building blocks because they explain the action, state, or event, and are the most important part of speech and writing. During listening and reading, it is necessary to understand the verbs we use in speech or reading, to be able to comprehend the general meaning. Serial Verb Construction (SVC) entails two or more verbs within a clause, in which the verbs all have a common subject and tend to interact with each other to describe a sequence of actions, purposes, causations, or states. Verbs may radically alter the meaning and clarity behind a sentence, strong and effective verbs make the message more significant, and poor and weak verbs may be indiscriminate. The introduction of the MATATAG Curriculum, as part of the Department of Education (2023) initiatives to restructure the Philippine basic education system, brought a new focus on core skills and language abilities, such as grammar and sentence structure. This curriculum assisted Grade 7 students particularly in the learning areas of Filipino and English to attain competencies in the building of coherent, correct, and meaningful sentences including those with more complex grammar forms such as serial verb constructions (SVCs). Serial verb constructions are structures that use more than one verb in a clause in order to explain a sequence of actions or cause-effect relationships or parallel processes. Students in Grade 7 are expected to apply such grammatical constructs in Filipino and English as part of language development in accordance with the MATATAG Curriculum. However, serial verb constructions (SVCs) are a serious problem among Grade 7 students in the Philippines, especially when subject-verb agreement is to be made. A study carried out in the Sorsogon province in the 2023-2024 academic year found that 66 per cent of grammatical mistakes in narrative essays by students were verb tense mistakes and 42 per cent were subject-verb agreement mistakes. These scores show that they have not learned how to construct SVCs and what verbs to use that are suitable to the subject of verbs, and they are struggling to express complex thought in the English language. Among these causes, one of the most important factors is the influence of the first language (L1) of the learner when the syntactic rules in English (L2) and the first language are too different. When translating into English, the grammar of Filipino may cause confusion because auxiliary markers and particles are often employed, in lieu of serial constructions. Moreover, they are also caused by the unstable vocabulary and irregular exposure to the adequate use of the English language. These problems are also exacerbated by externalities, including the lack of resources in classrooms and the lack of family support at home (Gruta & Astillero, 2024). The formalization theory would be handy in this research paper in examining the errors made by the Grade 7 students when writing SVCs particularly in the subject-verb agreement. The strategies of teaching can be designed using formalized rules in such a way that it simplifies the complex relations between the verbs in such a way that it could be easier to learn how to use the complex verb properly.

Studies on various teaching strategies as Baylon (2023) noted that combination of specific activities like sentence construction games, peer reviews, and scaffolded writing tasks proved promising in literacy development in grammatical accuracy in students. The latter are accompanied by the clear teaching of English verb usage, which is supported by pictorial means and practical examples. Also, effective language teaching must include feedback and correction of errors, which can be achieved through assisting the students to pinpoint and rectify their grammar and syntax mistakes. The goals were to address language gap differences and to improve the general language proficiency of Grade 7 students. Being one of the teaching

strategies founded on the sociocultural theory formulated by Vygotsky, scaffolding plays an essential role in helping students to learn the complex grammar patterns. Liu (2024) defined scaffolding as multi-modal tutoring prompts that gradually fade support for image-description tasks, like SVCs into verb sequencing and integration emphasizing zone-of-proximal-development alignment, where initial heavy guidance, for example, verb prompts transition to independence, tested in L2 contexts with measurable gains. Hasan and Arab (2023) showed scaffolding boosts ESL self-efficacy more in lower-ability learners, with post-test gains from structured fading, aligning with Mercer-Howe's skill-mastery endpoint. Another critical component in addressing the challenges facing students with SVCs is feedback and correction of errors. Yilmaz (2026) reviewed timing in communicative tasks, confirming immediate corrective feedback while speaking supports form-focused understanding, while delayed suits writing revisions. Feedback can be in the form of pointing out the error in teaching SVCs directly, indirectly through cues of self-correction and metalinguistically explaining why this or that construction is wrong. Gan et al. (2021) described feedback as a formative bridge in assessment, facilitating knowledge construction through teacher practices that boost motivation, behavior, and outcomes like course satisfaction. Mahmood & Aziz (2023) showed that explicit written corrective feedback on subject-verb agreement led an experimental group to outperform a control group in post-test writing accuracy, arguing that detailed explanations helped learners notice and internalize grammar features. Teachers can use direct feedback, where students are corrected directly, and indirect feedback, where students are encouraged to think about their errors and correct themselves. Carless (2021) additionally noted that dialogic feedback, when students are advised to discuss and reflect on what they have learned, may be especially useful in correcting SVCs errors. Most of the research, according to Reyes (2020), is theoretical regarding SVCs and not practically applied in language education. The gap represents the need to research the instructional techniques that address the language backgrounds of Filipino students. As Santos (2021) noted, the range of literature exploring the impact of scaffolding and feedback on the performance of a particular type of SVC is also inadequate. Studies on these strategies may prove useful in illuminating on effective teaching measures to help students with problem in SVCs.

Guided by these theoretical perspectives, the study aimed to address a dire need in the area of language teaching by assessing the competencies of verb-building and verbs development among Grade 7 learners. The purpose of the research was to determine the effective means of developing grammatical skills in students through a comparative study of the scaffolding and error correction and feedback strategies. Students of the Rosalio Eduarte National High School were still unable to correctly use verbs in their writing. Poor use of verbs, mixed tenses of verbs, and confusion of one tense with another are the common problems. Not only do these challenges affect their written work, but these also affect their overall confidence and their effectiveness to communicate in English. Students lack confidence in the use of verbs during classroom recitations, which is another area of concern that justifies specific interventions. The results were not just useful to students at the Rosalio Eduarte National High School but also offer useful suggestions on how to enhance language teaching in the same learning environments.

This study evaluated how the Grade 7 Students at the Rosalio Eduarte National High School constructed their Serial Verb using Scaffolding and Error Correction and Feedback. Specifically, it sought to answer the serial verb construction performance across modalities of the

students in terms of Symmetrical vs asymmetrical; Contiguous vs non-contiguous, and Optional vs obligatory. Also, it aimed to determine the common errors committed by the students in constructing serial verbs across these modalities. The study is guided by the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the students' performance across the different types of serial verb constructions as well as the types of errors committed by students across the modalities of serial verb construction.

Methodology

The study used descriptive - experimental research design accompanied with comparative methodology. It is descriptive because it described the serial verb construction performance of Grade 7 in making English essays along the modalities. It is experimental research, particularly utilizing the multi-group experimental design which assessed the effectiveness of the error correction and feedback, and scaffolding strategies in enhancing the serial verb construction performance of Grade 7 in making English essays along the SVC modalities. Specifically, a test was administered to determine the student's verb usage skill after implementing the strategies. Moreover, comparative analysis was also employed to determine significant differences between and among the level of serial verb construction performance of grade 7 students of the Rosalio Eduarte National High School along the three modalities after using feedback, error correction, and scaffolding strategies.

The respondent of the study was the total enumeration of the 33 Grade 7 students at Rosalio Eduarte National High School for the school year 2025-2026.

This study used a validated teacher-made tool to assess the serial verb construction performance of the respondents after using the feedback, error correction, and scaffolding strategies. The assessments were developed to measure the verb usage skills of grade 7 along symmetrical vs asymmetrical, contiguous vs non-contiguous, and optional vs obligatory. These assessments contained each for a total of 20 points. DepEd Order No.08 s. 2015 was used to evaluate the results of the tests.

The researcher requested formal permission from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of the Division of Abra, as well as the permission from the school principal of Rosalio Eduarte National High School in conducting the study on improving serial verb construction performance of the grade 7 through Feedback, Error Correction, and Scaffolding. Approval from them was essential to ensure compliance with institutional and educational policies and to facilitate the smooth implementation of the study. The researcher developed three lesson plans, that integrated Feedback, Error Correction, and Scaffolding strategies with one lesson plan for each type of serial verb construction. These lesson plans were checked and reviewed by the school's master teacher and approved or noted by the school head. After being signed by the master teacher and school head, the researcher prepared learning materials according to what's being reflected in the lesson plan. After which, researcher implemented the strategies and utilized the materials prepared. A validated teacher-made assessment tool was used to measure the learning of the students and to determine the effectivity of the strategies employed.

The scores were statistically analyzed using mean scores and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to identify significant differences and measure the impact of feedback, error

correction, and scaffolding strategies on their performances. The findings were compiled and interpreted to offer actionable recommendations for improving serial verb usage in Grade 7 English essays, contributing valuable insights for broader educational practice and policy.

Results and Discussion

The findings are analyzed relative to the effectiveness of scaffolding, error correction, as well as feedback strategies to enhance grammatical competence of students, especially in the construction of serial verb in writing English essays.

Table 1. Serial Verb Construction Performance of Grade 7 Across Modalities of the Students in terms of Symmetrical vs Asymmetrical, Contiguous vs Non-Contiguous, and Optional vs Obligatory

Serial Verb Construction	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Symmetrical vs asymmetrical	79.01	Fairly Satisfactory
Contiguous vs non-contiguous	78.67	Fairly Satisfactory
Optional vs obligatory	80.12	Satisfactory
Overall	79.27	Fairly Satisfactory

Norm:

Grading Scale Descriptors

90 – 100	Outstanding
85 – 89	Very Satisfactory
80 – 84	Satisfactory
75 – 79	Fairly Satisfactory
Below 75	Did Not Meet Expectation

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that the total performance of the students in the serial verb construction gave the grand mean of 79.27 that can be interpreted as fairly satisfactory. This means that although learners showed that they were gaining knowledge in serial verb constructions, they were not at the point of mastering them yet, when their grammatical accuracy was consistently high. After implementing the strategies – error correction, feedback, and scaffolding across all the three modalities, optional versus obligatory serial verb constructions were the highest performance with a mean score of 80.12 that was interpreted as satisfactory.

On the other hand, symmetrical versus asymmetrical constructions had a mean score of 79.01 rated as fairly satisfactory, upon the application of the strategies – error correction, feedback, and scaffolding wherein students' common error is the misuse of verb form. Meanwhile, contiguous versus non-contiguous serial verb constructions had a mean score 78.67 that was interpreted as fairly satisfactory.

The fact that the learners' performance on optional vs. obligatory SVC was higher than symmetrical vs. asymmetrical and contiguous vs. non-contiguous SVCs, implied that students can better comprehend the grammatical structure that was regulated by more explicit and clearer rules.

Table 2. Common Errors committed by the Grade 7 Students in Constructing Serial Verbs across Modalities

Error	Mean	F-value	F-probability
Confusion of SVC type	9.82a	3.792	P<0.05
Inappropriate verb combination	10.44a		
Excessive use of verb	36.16c		
Incorrect spelling of verbs	14.20a		
Misuse of verb form	29.38b		

Table 2 shows the common errors students made when constructing serial verb constructions (SVCs) across different modalities after the implementation of the three teaching strategies – error correction, feedback, and scaffolding, along with the mean frequency of each error type. Excessive use of verb had the highest mean 36.16, indicating that students most frequently overused verbs when constructing serial verbs for example, stringing too many verbs together even when not needed. This suggests limited knowledge of lexical collocations and semantic compatibility between verbs in an SVC.

Misuse of verb form showed the second-highest mean 29.38, showing that students struggled with selecting the correct verb form particularly tense, base form vs. participle in SVCs. This points to incomplete mastery of verb morphology and syntactic rules governing how verbs can be combined in a serial construction. Inappropriate verb combination (10.44) indicated that students often paired verbs that did not semantically or grammatically go together. This suggests that learners may be using repeated or extra verbs as a compensatory strategy to convey meaning, which often leads to awkward or ungrammatical serial constructions. Incorrect spelling of verbs (14.20) was more frequent than confusion of SVC type errors (9.82), implying that students also have orthographic and lexical issues, not just grammatical ones. Confusion of SVC type had the lowest mean, meaning students were relatively better at distinguishing among SVC types: symmetrical vs asymmetrical, contiguous vs. noncontiguous, and optional vs. obligatory SVCs, than at controlling verb form or frequency.

The $F=3.792$ with $p < 0.05$ indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the pattern of error types across the modalities after implementing the three strategies – error correction, feedback, and scaffolding. In other words, the way students committed these errors: confusion of SVC type, inappropriate verb combination, excessive use of verbs, incorrect spelling of verbs, and misuse of verb form, was not uniform. It was shown that some error types occurred more frequently than others depending on the modality.

Table 3. Significant Difference in the Grade 7 Students' Performance across the Different Types of Serial Verb Constructions

Serial Verb Construction	Mean	F-value	F-probability
Symmetrical vs asymmetrical	79.01a	0.581	0.561 (p>0.01)
Contiguous vs non-contiguous	78.67b		
Optional vs obligatory	80.12c		
Overall	79.27		

Norm:

Grading Scale Descriptors

90 – 100	Outstanding
85 – 89	Very Satisfactory
80 – 84	Satisfactory
75 – 79	Fairly Satisfactory
Below 75	Did Not Meet Expectation

As shown in Table 3, the differences were in mean scores, after the implementation of the three strategies – error correction, feedback, and scaffolding, the analysis of variance presented that there was no statistically significant difference in the performance of students in the three modalities, $F = 0.581$, $p = 0.561$. This showed that the differences observed are not statistically significant and that the performance of students in all the forms of serial verb constructions was more or less similar.

Table 4. Significant difference in the types of errors on serial verb construction committed by Grade 7 students along Symmetrical and Asymmetrical modality

Error	Mean	F-value	F-probability
Confusion of SVC type	8.82a	4.007	$p < 0.05$
Inappropriate verb combination	9.26a		
Excessive use of verb	42.07b		
Incorrect spelling of verbs	11.05a		
Misuse of verb form	28.80c		

A further examination of types of errors as presented in Table 4 gave a more in-depth insight on the performance of students. Statistically significant difference in types of errors was found in the symmetrical and asymmetrical modality, $F = 4.007$, $p < 0.05$. Among the errors identified, the highest mean was on excessive use of verbs then the misuse of verb form. This showed that students were more inclined to over produce verbs, which was probably a compensatory measure to convey a meaning. This however led to repetition and grammatic errors.

Table 5. Significant difference in the types of errors on serial verb construction committed by Grade 7 students along Contiguous and Non-Contiguous modality

Error	Mean	F-value	F-probability
Confusion of SVC type	11.52a	3.315	p<0.05
Inappropriate verb combination	11.10a		
Excessive use of verb	32.89c		
Incorrect spelling of verbs	18.76ab		
Misuse of verb form	25.73ab		

Table 5 shows the significant difference in the types of errors on SVC committed by students in the contiguous and non-contiguous modality. $F = 3.315$ and $p < 0.05$ indicated that there is a significant difference in the types of errors committed in serial verb construction by students along Contiguous and Non-Contiguous modality. Among the observed errors, excessive use of verb had the highest mean (32.89), while inappropriate verb combination had the lowest mean (11.10). This means that the frequency of error types was not the same across the two modalities, and the difference was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This trend helped to confirm the previous observation that students have a difficulty with the control of verb sequence in a sentence. The spelling mistakes also mean that the learners were experiencing a combination of linguistic issues.

Table 6. Significant difference in the types of errors on serial verb construction committed by Grade 7 students along Optional and Obligatory modality

Error	Mean	F-value	F-probability
confusion of SVC type	8.74a	2.02	p>0.05
inappropriate verb combination	11.31a		
excessive use of verb	32.00b		
Incorrect spelling of verbs	11.99a		
misuse of verb form	35.96b		

Contrarily, the error type analysis of the optional and obligatory modality revealed in Table 6 did not show any statistically significant difference, $F = 2.02$, $p > .05$. This meant that there was a higher spread of error in categories, which implied that there was a steadier interpretation of this kind of construction.

Table 7. Significant Difference in the Types of errors on Serial Verb Construction committed by Grade 7 Students as a Whole

Error	Mean	F-value	F-probability
Confusion of SVC type	9.82a	3.792	P<0.05
Inappropriate verb combination	10.44a		
Excessive use of verb	36.16c		
Incorrect spelling of verbs	14.20a		
Misuse of verb form	29.38b		

The general categorization of errors by all modalities in Table 7 indicated that there was statistically significant difference, $F = 3.792$, $p < 0.05$, and thus justified that some errors were more common than others. Overuse of verbs and wrong way of using verb forms became the most prevalent errors and the main difficulties of students were identified.

Conclusion

The study concluded students in Grade 7 at Rosalio Eduarte Eduarte National High School demonstrated a relatively good level of competence in serial verb forms. Their performance was stronger in optional and obligatory constructions than in symmetrical versus asymmetrical constructions and contiguous versus non-contiguous constructions, suggesting that learners find structures with clearer grammatical rules easier to understand and use correctly.

This tendency of performance also suggested that the students are yet to reach the stage of learning more complex grammatical constructions, especially those that need a more thorough cognition of the relationship between the verbs and the sentence structure. Lower performance in symmetrical and asymmetrical constructions, contiguous and non-contiguous constructions could be evidence of the fact that these forms require more cognitive processing and syntactic awareness. Thus, although they demonstrated an adequate understanding of less complicated or more rule-based constructions, students could be offered more specific training and practice in structurally complicated serial parts of speech constructions to gain a higher level of total ability.

The performance of students in terms of three kinds of serial verb constructions (symmetrical vs. asymmetrical, contiguous vs. non-contiguous, optional vs. obligatory) did not differ statistically. This meant that there was no notable difference in the level of performance of students in one or the other modality implying that the difficulty in SVC is universal and not local to a given type of construction.

However, excessive use of verbs was the dominant error, suggesting that students tend to over-serialize or add extra verbs as a strategy to express complex meaning or to compensate for limited grammatical control. Misuse of verb form was the second-most serious issue, showing that learners struggled with selecting the correct tense, aspect, or base form in serial-verb strings, reflecting incomplete mastery of verb morphology. The other three errors: confusion of SVC type, inappropriate verb combination, and incorrect spelling of verbs, clustered at lower mean

levels indicating that they occurred less frequently, but the fact that the overall is significant means that even these differences are meaningful and not due to chance.

Therefore, the primary linguistic difficulty for students in constructing SVCs lies in controlling the quantity and form of verbs, rather than simply recognizing SVC types. The significant differences further implied that instructional interventions could specifically target: reducing verb overproduction, clarifying appropriate verb combinations and collocations, and reinforcing correct verb-form selection and spelling within serial-verb constructions.

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