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ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS FOR
BEGINNING ENGLISH LEARNERS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

For this project, I am studying the qualities and attributes of three beginning-level English language textbooks for middle schoolers. This topic was chosen because I want to find out what characteristics they have in common and in what aspects they seem to be lacking. This project hopes to increase the understanding of educators when choosing appropriate materials to guide their own scope and sequence for their middle-school newcomer classes. My research question is as follows: *Which textbook or textbooks can be recommended as a solid textbook for grammar instruction for beginning English learners in a middle school?*

In this chapter, I will reflect on my own professional and personal experiences that have led me to pursue this investigation. I will also explain the context of curriculum choices for beginning-level English learners in middle school, and delineate how these choices are significantly different for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers than teachers of other subjects. I will explain my rationale for how essential this work is, not only for myself but for all stakeholders involved. While analyzing the textbooks, I will evaluate and measure the textbook authors' approaches to teaching grammar, as well as how closely the textbooks follow the developmental stages of second language acquisition. I will conclude the chapter with a preview of the next three chapters.

Personal and Professional Experiences

In all of my experiences in the United States as a volunteer, paraprofessional, student teacher and as a licensed teacher, I have been working with a focus on students who are new to the country with a beginning level of English proficiency. Throughout these experiences, I have witnessed first-hand a lack of curriculum resources for this student population. My first experience was as an observer and a volunteer at a middle school in Lincoln, Nebraska in two classes for beginning level English learners. In one class, the teacher used an overhead projector to display materials that were at least 20 years old. In the other classroom, the teacher handed out stacks of yellowing flash cards for students to memorize.

My second experience was years later as a volunteer in a charter school in Minneapolis working with three students who were classified as SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education). At this school, I sat in a small classroom that was converted to a “library” with donated books that had been discarded by the public library. We read tattered children’s books together as the students learned to read, and also used some newer flashcards and random materials printed from the internet.

After this, I became a bilingual paraprofessional in a public school in one of the first-ring suburbs of the Twin Cities. In this role, I worked with small groups of students in the mainstream classroom, helping to make content accessible. I also spent time in their ESL class once a day. For this class, the materials were much newer than those in the previous schools where I had worked. However, students would read one storybook after the next randomly. The lack of structure was disjointed and lacked the cohesion

needed to support targeted language development. My second year as a paraprofessional, they decided not to have a class exclusively for newcomers because there were so few of them. Instead, I was working with a small group for 30 minutes a day in the media center, using materials that I created or could find online. By the middle of the year, it became apparent that these students needed their own class, so one of the teachers had to change her schedule and their schedule to make a class for these students. Again, they used the storybooks as the main text for this class.

In my student-teaching experience, I was at a charter high school specifically catered to students who were new to the country. In the reading class, they used a mix of outdated yellowing books with study guides, and an online interactive reading program. In the public elementary school where I did my other student teaching placement, the new-to-country students used an online interactive program while other students worked in small groups with the teacher.

Overall, in every school where I worked, the curriculum for newcomers has always been piecemealed together with various materials from whatever was available at the school at the time. Many of the teachers felt that they were at a loss about what to teach and where to begin with these particular students. I began to feel the same frustrations after receiving my own teaching license.

In my first year as a licensed teacher, I created my own curriculum from scratch for my newcomers. This was only for two sections out of the five that I taught that year. On most days, I would work from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm trying to decide what to teach and how to teach to this group's unique needs. The scope and sequence of the class turned

out to be more cohesive than other models I had seen, but even with all of that time and effort, there were many things that could have gone better. I simply did not know what I should be teaching, and no one else had the answers for me either. I reached out to my director, other ESL teachers that had taught the course in the past, and my school's literacy coach. No one could tell me what to do though they have tried. This highlights the lack of resources in print for the middle school age group, and the confusion on how to best work with newcomers.

This past year, I was luckily able to use some of the materials that I had created in the prior year for students with a Level 2 English proficiency. About half of the materials were from the previous year, and the other half were modified and adapted. Then, I chose to use a set curriculum for students with a Level 1 English proficiency. It was a program that was originally for elementary aged students, but adapted to middle school. To my dismay, the students in the Level 1 class did not make as much progress in their English proficiency as I would have liked. Even though I spent countless hours supplementing and enhancing the set curriculum, it did not have enough grammar practice or literacy, and it was too elementary for their developmental stage. This got me thinking that I might have chosen the wrong curriculum and that there might be a better one out there for all of us.

In the forthcoming year, I will have the great opportunity to spend the majority of my day teaching newcomers. I will teach newcomers during three out of five sections, rather than two out of five as in past years. This year, I can focus more of my time and

energy on them, a luxury that most newcomer teachers do not have. I want to take advantage of the opportunity and do the work better and better than before.

My past experiences with using random materials, or using a curriculum that was unsatisfactory have led me to see the great need for my research. I am going to examine current core textbooks that exist for this unique group in order to find out which one can be recommended as a solid choice for my students. I hope that my work can also inform other teachers who do not have the time to do the research for themselves around the city, state and country.

Context and Rationale

In the United States, the vast majority of our English learners were born in the United States or came to the United States before they began schooling (Sanchez, 2017). For students that enter the U.S. after school age, many of them are in elementary or high school. Therefore, new-to-country students in middle school are low incidence in the United States.

However, we still must find appropriate ways to instruct students at all levels. Since these students are low incidence, they are often an additional responsibility on teachers, separate from that teacher's main duties, and sometimes they do not even have their own language development classes. We often say in education, "There is no reason to reinvent the wheel." Meaning that if someone has already found a best practice or created solid curriculum to teach, we should emulate them, rather than trying to create something completely different.

Students who are entering school in the middle grades have a unique opportunity. Research shows that it takes between 5-7 years on average to acquire academic English (Demie, 2013). For students that enter in the middle grades, that leaves them only between 5 and 7 years of schooling remaining before the end of high school. If they are able to acquire English as fast or faster than research suggests, they could have the opportunity to graduate on time from high school with a diploma. Time is a luxury our students do not have, and there is a critical sense of urgency for their education because if we do not give students comprehensible, high-quality instruction in middle school, they will not be able to achieve proficiency as predicted, and they may not be able to graduate on time with their peers.

Students need solid materials to quickly gain enough proficiency to understand their content classes. Teachers need solid materials to maximize their time differentiating and customizing materials rather than creating them from scratch and reinventing the wheel. This is especially essential for ESL teachers who have multiple responsibilities in a school, and do not have the opportunity to focus solely on newcomer materials. Families need their children to have access to the best possible education, to give their children the greatest possible opportunities to graduate from high school on time, and to be prepared for high school where the stakes are extremely high. Minnesota has recently passed the Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act of 2014, demanding appropriate instruction for SLIFE (Minnesota Department of Education, 2018). Many of the students coming to the country in middle school fall into that category. However, as the LEAPS Act shows, it is legally required to provide an

appropriate education based on students' language proficiencies. District coordinators and leaders would benefit from selecting solid instructional materials for this vulnerable population in order to avoid lawsuits, and also to help boost their own district tests scores and measures of adequate progress. We cannot expect the same high level of progress from piecemealed, outdated, or disjointed curricula that are not appropriate for the students' ability and developmental stage.

Over the past year, my district was shopping for a new and updated math curriculum. The school's math department held multiple meetings for hours all together, looking at the different levels provided, technology tools and manipulatives that came with each of the newest and most popular options. There was a committee, including the director of math, which met even more frequently to compare and contrast the different materials that are available and make their recommendations to the department. Experienced experts came together to debate the benefits and flaws of each curriculum, and they decided as a team what would be best for student achievement. Over the summer, the department will spend multiple days training every teacher on how to use the curriculum, and they will dive deeply into each unit to plan a scope and sequence for the year.

In contrast, I am a committee of one, and my district's director has so many responsibilities that she is largely unavailable to meet. She has entrusted me to choose the curriculum that is best for my ESL students, since I am the one who knows their needs best, having taught them for the past two years. I imagine that this scenario plays out in districts all around the country. I know that I am even lucky to have a choice, a

budget, and a little time to examine the options. I want to make sure that I am making the right choice for my students, their families, myself and all of the teachers that may one day benefit from this text analysis. Therefore, this capstone project seeks to find a textbook or textbooks that can be recommended as a solid textbook for grammar instruction for beginning English learners in a middle school.

Personal and Professional Significance

My own professional experiences have led me to believe that many newcomer teachers do not know what is the right curriculum to use with their students, and they do not have the time or resources to answer that question. This is a significant problem because beginning English learner middle school students need the best materials and instruction urgently to achieve English proficiency. They are often overlooked as a low incidence population, but the law requires that we provide them with an equitable education including adequate support for language acquisition. This research is needed in the field to help other newcomer teachers, and to help my own students and their families for years to come. Middle school beginning English learners deserve the best materials to maximize their opportunities for success, and I intend to find out what the very best materials are in 2019.

Summary

This chapter has outlined my multiple experiences searching for appropriate teaching materials, and the context and rationale for doing textbook analysis as part of my capstone.

In the next chapter, I will review the literature to provide the background on how grammar instruction has changed and grown over time. I will also examine literature related to textbook analyses that other researchers have done in the past. The review of the literature shows a gap in the research of textbooks for beginning English learners in middle school.

In the third chapter, I will explain the methods I have chosen to do this research systematically and accurately. I will describe the tools I used to analyze the approaches to grammar as well as how I measured a given textbook's adherence to the stages of development of second language acquisition. I will also talk about the final project that came from this analysis.

The fourth chapter will share the results of the investigation, and detail the learning that came out of the project. In that chapter, I will also reflect upon my findings, and share the limitations of the study or possible implications coming from the study. In addition, I will outline needs for future research to answer my research question: *Which textbook or textbooks can be recommended as a solid textbook for grammar instruction for beginning English learners in a middle school?*

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The purpose of the capstone is to analyze current core textbooks marketed for beginning English learners in middle school to determine their appropriateness for adoption. Four guiding questions will inform and frame this investigation: (1) How well do current core textbooks for beginning English learners follow the order of acquisition for English as a second language? (2) How do current core textbooks for beginning English learners approach grammar teaching? (3) Are they based on solid theoretical foundations? (4) Which textbook or textbooks can be recommended as a solid textbook for grammar instruction for beginning English learners in a middle school?

In this chapter, the literature related to grammar textbook analysis will be reviewed. Several themes will be discussed, including the audience for the textbooks, the history of instructional approaches to grammar and their theoretical underpinnings, along with the stages of development for grammar concepts in English as a second language. In addition, connections will be made to other research where textbooks have been analyzed. The review of the literature makes it apparent that there is a need for further analysis of core textbooks for middle-school English learners, which the current project aims to address.

The Audience for The Textbooks and Their Needs

The textbooks I analyzed are marketed for beginning English learners in secondary schools. The majority of English learners in secondary schools were born in the United States, meaning that they have had six or more years of exposure to English in schools (62% native born, 38% foreign born), according to an NPR report from Sanchez on English Learners across the United States (2017). Of the 38% of secondary school English learners who were foreign born, many of them arrived in the United States at a young age. There are relatively fewer foreign-born English learners that are coming to the United States for the first time as secondary school students. It is these low-incidence beginning English learners in secondary schools that this study will be addressing. Even though beginning English learners in middle school make up a smaller percentage of the total English learners, they have unique needs that must be met.

Demie (2013), among others, explains that becoming proficient in English takes about 5-7 years, depending on various factors, including but not limited to motivation, quality of instruction and natural aptitude for language learning. Language teachers only have control over the quality of instruction that is provided, but it is a significant factor in language acquisition. Since 5-7 years is all of the time that remains for students entering U.S. schools in middle school, it is essential that educators provide the best quality of instruction possible for many reasons, including the following.

First of all, education is one of the largest determining factors of economic success in the United States. According to Jie Zong (2015), 46% of people who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) over the age of 25 do not have high school diplomas,

compared to only 10% of their English-proficient counterparts. Nearly half of the adult English learners in the country do not have a high school diploma. It is apparent that more needs to be done to ensure English learners graduate from high school, considering that employment opportunities are scarce for adults without a high school diploma. Jobs that do not require a high school diploma typically demand more physical labor, and more importantly, those jobs typically pay less than the jobs one can obtain with more education (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

It is not surprising that the same study showed about 25% of people and families who have limited English proficiency in the United States are living in poverty, compared to only 14% for English-proficient households (Jie Zong, 2015). Nearly a quarter of children growing up in homes where the parents are not proficient in English are living in poverty, which is almost double compared to the English proficient households. Not only do these students have to learn the language, but their challenge is compounded by the stress of financial instability. For these reasons, it is clear that teachers and schools must do more for older English learners. The work is urgent, as their education will be a large determining factor in their future economic opportunities. While these statistics are dire, foreign born English learners arriving in middle school have exactly 5-7 years to spend in the public education system. They have the opportunity to graduate from high school proficient in English, and the chance to surpass the statistical odds.

In addition, the 1974 Supreme Court case of *Lau v. Nichols* determined that by law, all students must be provided English language instruction in order to be able to meaningfully participate in public school. That court case was pertaining to 1,800

students of Chinese ancestry in San Francisco. Lau claimed that it was a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to deny these students the opportunity to participate in education because that would be discrimination based on race, color or national origin by an institution receiving federal funding. The Court sided with Lau and the 1,800 students that English language instruction is an obligation of public schools in the United States. Not only do they have the right to English language instruction, but also high quality instruction.

In their ruling, the Supreme Court referenced some of the guidelines put forth by the Department of Health, Education and Wellness, which stated, “Any... system employed by the school system to deal with the special language skill needs of national origin minority group children must be designed to meet such language skill needs as soon as possible, and must not operate as an educational dead-end or permanent track” (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1970, p. 414 U.S. 569). Therefore, it is not only required to provide English language instruction, but also, it is necessary to provide the type of language services that will meet students’ needs as soon as possible. Not only is it a moral and ethical necessity to provide quality instruction, but it is also the law (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1970). The statistics and the law lead us to pose the following question: what is quality instruction that will expedite language proficiency for our students? This question, as it relates to grammar instruction is investigated in the next section.

The History of Instructional Approaches to Grammar and Their Theoretical Underpinnings and Current Best Practices

Grammar instruction has grown and changed significantly over the years. Knowledge of the history of language instruction helps us to see how we have come to where we are now. While no approach is perfect for every learner, it is important to note that researchers have built on ideas from the past to construct current approaches that are more effective.

From the 1940s to the 1970s, Behaviorist theory was one of the leading theories in the way that people and animals learned. Behaviorist theory proposed that people and animals learn by imitating the behaviors of others. In language instruction, this led to the audiolingual approach, where students would mimic and memorize a new language by listening and repeating phrases and dialogues. However, it was apparent that the audiolingual method did not work well for real communication because real people do not often follow a script when they communicate (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Linguists of the time blamed some errors on negative transfer from learners' native languages, and instructors began to use the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis to determine instruction. In this approach, using contrastive analysis as a guide, instructors would only teach elements of a language that differed from learners first language. Unfortunately, negative language transfer could not explain all of the errors that learners made, and this type of instruction was not adequate for language learning either (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Noam Chomsky put forth the theory that all humans possess a Universal Grammar, and input is the only thing that humans need in order to learn a new language because the grammar mechanisms are programmed into our brain (1976). While Universal Grammar is able to explain first language acquisition, since young children learn their native language without any explicit instruction, Schachter (1990), among others, contended that the theory of a Universal Grammar is not sufficient to explain learning a second or additional languages (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013). If input was the only thing that a learner needed, why is it so difficult to learn a second language, and why do learners make errors that can fossilize?

Stephen Krashen expanded upon Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar to create the Monitor Model (1983) to explain second language acquisition. His model was based on five hypotheses for how languages are learned, including the natural order hypothesis, which confirms the developmental stages of grammar acquisition we will examine in the following section. Krashen also proposed that the major item learners need to learn a language is comprehensible input. This is a shift from Chomsky's proposal that any input was sufficient. One of the significant points that Krashen proposed in his Monitor Model was the contrast he drew between acquisition vs. learning. Krashen claimed that acquisition happens naturally in a second language in the same way that it happens in a first language. On the other hand, learning is what happens when a student is explicitly taught, and according to Krashen, learning is less important than acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Krashen's model has been influential in the field of second language learning, and it has provided further support for a natural approach to learning languages. Instructors provide the context and comprehensible input, and they leave space for natural acquisition in this approach. In the natural approach, there is little focus on explicit teaching of grammar rules (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The Monitor Model has also received much criticism because it is minimalistic. Krashen believes only a few simple and portable rules should be explicitly taught, such as third person -s or past tense -ed (Ellis, 2006). However, it has been found that explicit instruction is indeed necessary in several areas of language learning (Baugher, 2012; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Scheffler & Cinciala, 2010; Wang, 2010).

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Walter and Swan (1990) and others took a comprehensive position wherein language instruction should teach the whole of grammar of a target language. Walter and Swan's grammar textbook was over 1,000 pages long, and still did not include every possible topic in the English language. This comprehensive curriculum would be impossible to teach, and secondly, learners are not always ready for certain grammar concepts right away (Ellis, 2006). This approach has not gained much traction, but it is reminiscent of the days of Grammar Translation, when students were expected to memorize each part of speech and directly translated samples from Latin to English. It was believed that learning all of the rules in Latin would allow students to easily learn any other language (Milne, 2017). This is one example of how theories cycle back throughout the years about how to approach grammar instruction.

In the 1990s, the cognitive perspective came to the forefront of research, as scientists began to regard the brain as a computer (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). For example, DeKeyser (1998) and Schmidt (2001) formed the Information-Processing Model, wherein knowledge can be declarative or procedural. Declarative knowledge is what a person knows, but procedural knowledge is what a person is able to actually use. The new goal of language learning was to move knowledge from declarative to procedural so that learners could speak with automaticity. Once information had moved into the procedural sphere, that would free up working brain space for learners to pay attention to new things, so that they can learn more, as the brain has a limited capacity for what it can pay attention to at one time. This perspective is still widely accepted as valid about the way that people learn. Automaticity is a goal of language instruction, and it explains why reading fluency can predict comprehension when students are reading in their first language. Once someone is able to decode automatically, it frees space in their brain for them to comprehend what they are reading (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

In the past decade, the main shift in grammar instruction has been a focus on both function and form, rather than simply memorizing a rule. Long (2000) coined this new approach as a Focus on Forms (as reported in Milne, 2017). In this approach, the instructor creates a communicative task where one grammatical form becomes salient. Then, student activities are directed intensively at one structure to use in a communicative activity. This approach allows students to see how meaningful a grammatical structure can be and also to see how and when they can use that form in a

real way. It also allows for explicit teaching and practice. Systemic Functional Linguistics also follows the same tenets because a student must focus more on the function of what the grammar is doing, rather than memorizing a rule for the sake of memorizing a rule (Derewianka, 2011). In both approaches, the grammar is taught in the context of discourse, not in isolation, and the lessons end with using the grammar in meaningful communication (Milne, 2017).

Norris and Ortega (2000) did a meta-analysis of 49 studies to show that explicit grammar teaching is more effective than a more “naturalistic” approach. They found that with explicit grammar instruction, English learners progress more rapidly and achieve higher levels of proficiency as well as higher levels of grammatical competence.

The preceding summary suggests that while there is much debate around how grammar should be taught, one point of agreement is that instruction must connect grammatical forms to their meanings in communication (Ellis, 2006). Thus, this study will look for textbooks that are bridging grammatical form to its function, while providing space for meaningful communication.

The Order of Acquisition of Grammar in English as a Second Language

In one’s first language, there is a particular order of acquisition of grammar concepts, which is well documented. Young children learning a language develop the same features in the same order regardless of the language they are acquiring, which makes sense when considering that language learning is determined, in part, by cognitive development. For example, in language acquisition, one-word utterances that have propositional meanings precede full sentences, in that “gone,” which may mean, “I’m

done eating,” or “Daddy has gone to work,” among other possibilities, is acquired before a full sentence with the same meaning (Mihalicek & Wilson, 2011).

Similarly, there is also an order of acquisition for grammar in English as a second language, which may differ slightly from that of first language (L1) acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The fact that English learners also progress through similar stages is remarkable, because as older learners, their brain is more developed in its cognitive processing than a young child’s. Many aspects of the developmental stages are the same, even for learners who have different first language backgrounds. In addition, whether a language learner has had formal instruction or not, learners seem to follow a similar pattern of developmental stages (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Lightbown and Spada (2013) recommend that second language teachers, “teach what is teachable,” referring to these developmental stages of language development (p. 184). Further studies, such as Pienemann (1988), explain why certain concepts are teachable and other concepts are not yet teachable depending upon a student’s current language development stage.

Manfred Pienemann (1988) was one of the first researchers to study the developmental stages of second language learners. Pienemann’s Processability Theory suggests that learners must be able to notice and remember elements that they hear in speech, and they are only able to notice more elements once they have mastered previous developmental stages (1988). Additionally, Pienemann’s Teachability Theory explains that students will not learn a grammar concept unless they are ready, since they can only notice a limited number of things at once (2015). A learner must internalize rules from one stage before they are able to notice and integrate grammar concepts from a

subsequent stage. While this pattern is fascinating in its own right, it also holds implications for language instruction.

Studies by Mackey and Philp (1998) and Pienmann (1988) both showed that students who are explicitly taught grammar that is one stage higher than their current ability are able to move more quickly to the next stage in their development. This is consistent with Norris and Ortega's meta-analysis of 49 separate grammar studies, where they found that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit teaching (2000). Students who had explicit instruction in grammar concepts progressed more rapidly, achieved higher levels of proficiency and higher levels of grammatical competence overall. The literature makes it clear that explicit teaching of grammar concepts may be the best way to help learners attain proficiency.

However, if instruction is given on a concept that is more than one stage higher than a student's current ability, often they are not able to acquire that concept, even after intensive or extensive teaching (Lightbrown and Spada, 2013). Students must master the concepts in each stage in order before moving onto the next stage, which explains why even the best explicit instruction will not be successful if students are not ready to learn the given concept. Therefore, it would be ill advised to spend instructional time on grammatical concepts that students are not ready to learn. On the other hand, when students are ready to move to the next stage, explicit teaching will benefit them in moving them faster along the path to acquisition. For these reasons, it is important for teachers to be cognizant of the order of acquisition in order to ensure they are teaching concepts that their students are ready to learn (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Dutro, Prestridge and Herrick (2005) created a matrix to outline the majority of grammatical concepts in English according to the order of acquisition for English as a second language. The matrix breaks grammar concepts down into five stages of acquisition, ranging from beginning to advanced. In the core textbook analysis to be completed in this project, Dutro's Matrix of Grammatical Forms will be a guide to evaluate if the textbook authors are following a sequential order of acquisition aligned with student needs.

Connecting to Other Textbook Analyses

This project is not the first study comparing textbooks on their qualities, and it will use others' work as guides to measure and compare grammar in textbooks, along with the matrix outlined above. One model to be adopted in the current study is that of Fernandez (2011) which compared the approaches used in beginning-level Spanish textbooks to teach the preterit past tense, i.e., a tense that expresses a completed past event. She analyzed how current authors are integrating new grammatical approaches into core textbooks. She found that all of the textbooks were primarily using a Presentation-Practice-Production approach, wherein the textbooks would present a grammar topic, then have students practice with it, finally having them producing language with that grammatical form on their own. However, current research shows us that focusing on form and function is more beneficial to students. Not only do students need to understand the grammatical form that they are learning, they also need to see how it functions, or how and when they would actually use it. For example, with the present progressive verb tense, students should learn both the form and the function. Learning

the form would be knowing how to conjugate the verbs properly (to be verb + infinitive verb + -ing). In addition, they need to learn about its function or when it is appropriate to use that form. Present progressive tense is used to express an event happening right now as opposed to the past, future or everyday habits in the present.

This study will adopt Fernandez' method for quantifying the different types of grammar activities included in the textbooks. Quantifying the types of activities textbooks provide makes the comparisons between textbooks clearer and more evident. Patterns emerge in the approaches used, clarifying the data.

Another researcher, Tschirner (1996), questioned the amount of grammatical material included in a beginning level second language textbook. Tschirner analyzed the scope and sequence of various beginning level German textbooks to see how much material was covered in a first-year college course. He found that the textbooks attempted to cover the entirety of the German language in one year, and then repeated the same process each year. Tschirner (1996) makes the point for carefully selecting a scope and sequence for language classes, as not everything can be taught in the first year. He proposed that it is more beneficial to teach fewer concepts well than to try to teach everything at a shallow level. Ellis also advised against an extensive approach of teaching multiple grammar topics all at once, since learners will not know what to focus on (2006). This project will keep his perspective in mind when comparing how many grammar concepts are taught in the beginning level textbooks. Knowing that learners must fully acquire a lower developmental stage before moving into higher stages, it is

important to avoid moving too quickly into more advanced stages before a learner is ready.

Fernandez's and Tschirner's research, along with Dutro's matrix, have been a major contribution to understand what methods and approaches to take in this core textbook analysis.

The Gap

To this researcher's knowledge, there has not yet been a study analyzing beginning level core textbooks for middle school English learners. Much work has been done at the university level to research beginning level coursework in German and Spanish, but I have not found any research done at the middle school level. Learning a foreign language at the university level is very different from learning English in an English speaking country at the middle school level. Learning a foreign language and attending a university are privileges. On the other hand, learning English in an English speaking country is a necessity for immigrant students, and quintessential for their success in the future. There is extensive research on approaches and strategies that instructors could use for vocabulary instruction or reading and writing instruction, yet we have not analyzed the materials that are most widely used.

According to Carmody (2012), textbook publishing companies make millions and sometimes billions of dollars selling their products, promising that their core textbooks are the best to help English learners obtain proficiency. How can educators know that their claims are valid without analyzing their approaches to teaching and sequencing topics? It is absolutely necessary to investigate if the core textbooks students are using

are in fact following the stages of development of English as a second language in the way that they need.

Educators must also closely examine if the core materials they choose to use are truly encouraging the use of research-based best approaches to instruction, rather than outdated approaches that have been proven to be insufficient. Since many ESL teachers do not have the time or resources to closely analyze the materials they will use, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis and comparison in a way that is useful for newcomer teachers around the world in making the decision about which materials to spend their money on.

Summary

In summary, the field of second language acquisition has developed significantly over the past decades. In addition, ESL educators can now accurately predict what grammatical concepts English learners are ready to learn and will learn with explicit instruction (Dutro et al. 2005; Norris & Ortega, 2000). Middle school beginning English learners are a vulnerable population that have an urgent need to acquire English quickly (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1970). The core textbooks that teachers use for instruction have not yet been analyzed or compared on their approaches to grammar. This study seeks to compare and analyze both their approach to teaching grammar, and their adherence to the known stages of development of English as a second language, according to Dutro et al. (2005).

Chapter three will provide an overview of the project, a description of the capstone, audience, timeline for completion, and an explanation of the methods used to

analyze and compare the core textbooks. The research question this capstone project hopes to answer is: *Which textbook or textbooks can be recommended as a solid textbook for grammar instruction for beginning English learners in a middle school?*

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Introduction

Chapter three includes a description of the scope of my textbook analysis project. Then, it details the methods used to analyze the textbooks, and provides a rationale for my choices. There is also a discussion of the intended audience for my project, followed by a timeline for project completion. This project seeks to answer the following main research question: *Which textbook can be recommended as a solid textbook for grammar instruction for beginning English learners in a middle school?* Further questions to guide the analysis are as follows: How do current core textbooks for beginning English learners approach grammar teaching? Are they based on solid theoretical foundations? How well do current core textbooks for beginning English learners follow the order of acquisition for English as a second language?

The Textbooks

The latest editions of three core textbook sets for beginning English learners in middle school that were analyzed are as follows:

- 1) INSIDE Fundamentals Volumes 1 and 2 (National Geographic Learning: Cengage Learning, 2014)
- 2) Connect 1 and 2 (Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- 3) ACCESS Newcomers (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Great Source Education Group, 2005)

These textbooks have been chosen for analysis because they are among the most commonly used. In addition, as delineated in Chapters One and Two, there is a real need to address; namely, many teachers have expressed that they are not always sure which grammar textbook is a good fit for the needs of their beginning English learners in middle school.

Criteria for Analysis

In comparing the above texts, two sets of criteria were applied: 1) the textbook's approach to grammar instruction; and 2) the textbook's adherence to developmental stages of English grammar.

Determining the Approaches to Grammar Instruction

This study utilized the model created by Fernandez (2011) to determine the approaches used towards grammar instruction—namely, the number and types of activities included in the textbook to teach present progressive tense (ex: *she is running*). The characteristics I have identified in the textbooks are explicit information, samples of language, and activities, as depicted in Figure 1:

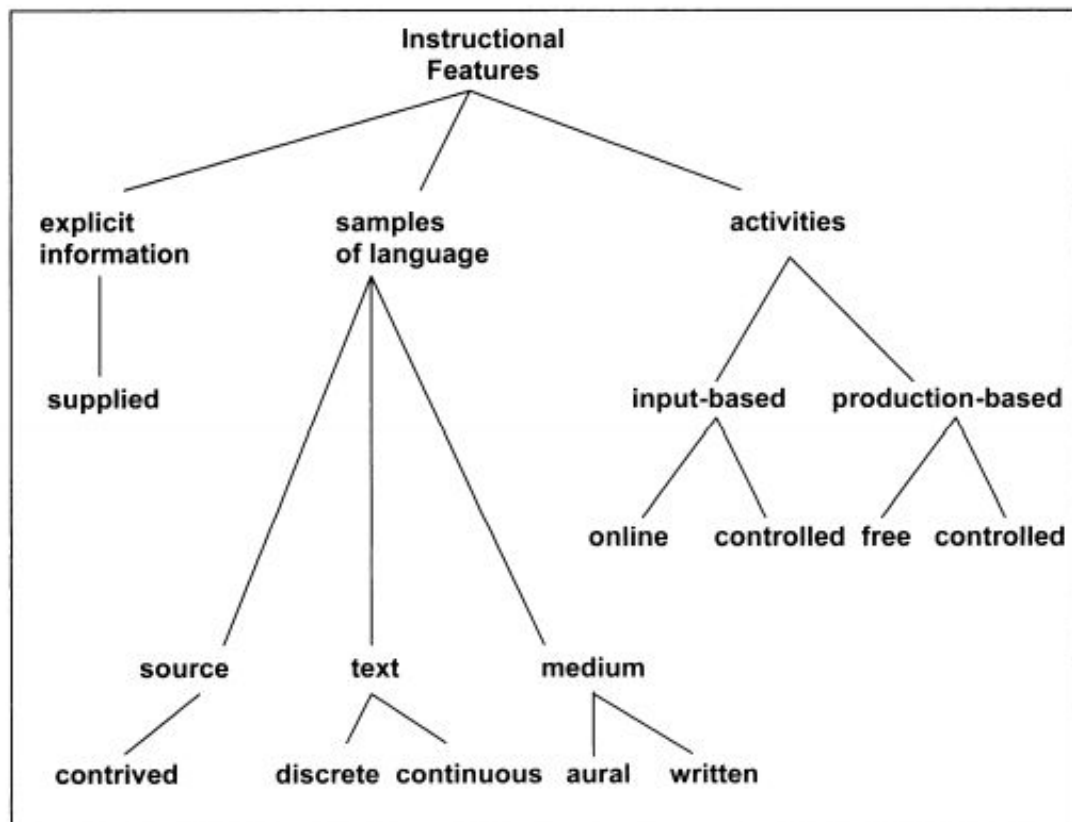


Figure 1. Instructional Features Utilized to Teach Grammar (Fernandez, 2011, p. 161)

Let me first define what each of these categories means for the textbook analysis. *Explicit information* refers to any explicit description of the grammar feature and how it works. *Samples of language* are the examples that are given of the grammar feature. These samples would not include an accompanying activity, meaning that students would not be asked to do anything with the sample. The language samples are classified as discrete or continuous, and aural or written. *Discrete* refers to language samples of one sentence or less, and *continuous* refers to any sample longer than one sentence. *Aural*

samples of language could come from a CD or digital audio file, and *written* samples would be printed in the textbook itself.

Finally, this text analysis classified the types of activities included to teach and reinforce present progressive tense. This category is subdivided into input-based and production-based activities. According to Fernandez (2011), input-based activities are ones where “learners have to attend to the instances of language with the target form and do something that reflects they have noticed it and comprehended it without having to produce such a form” (p. 162). Input-based activities can either be online or controlled in nature. An *online* activity, in this context, has nothing to do with the internet. An input-based *online* linguistic activity, would be one where the learner must attend to the grammar feature and process it at the same time. For example, a listening activity would be online because the student must listen and answer the question at the same time. In contrast, an input-based *controlled* linguistic activity allows the learner time to process the feature. For instance, a reading activity would be classified as controlled since a student can read, process, then answer or read the prompt again if needed.

The production-based activities require the learner to say or write something using the grammar feature in question. In this project’s case, students would be asked to use present progressive tense. These types of activities can be controlled or free. A controlled production-based activity is one where the learner is provided with the grammar feature. For example, a word bank may be provided to choose from. Free production-based activities leave the learner to independently use the grammar feature in the activity, like writing a paragraph.

When any of the textbooks used multiple types of activities or types of samples of language, the activity or sample was quantified in both categories for this text analysis. By categorizing and quantifying the samples of language, explicit instruction, and types of activities included in different textbooks, it illuminates the approaches to grammar that the authors of a textbook have ascribed to.

Measuring the Adherence to the Developmental Stages

This study also measured the adherence to the developmental stages by charting how many concepts from each stage of Dutro's Matrix of Grammatical Forms for verbs are taught in the whole of the textbook (Dutro et al., 2005). I analyzed every unit of the textbooks to see which verb topics were covered throughout the whole book. If a verb topic was introduced, I highlighted it on the matrix, and tallied up how many of the topics were covered overall. This study also measured how far along the matrix the textbooks expect a student to move in one year. Students in the beginning stages of language acquisition typically move faster along the scope than those at the intermediate and early advanced levels (Demie, 2013). Therefore, a beginning level textbook could be expected to cover all of the verb topics from the Beginning and Early Intermediate stages, but should not be expected to cover every single topic in every single stage (Tshirner, 1996). The chart of verb forms is included below, in Figure 2:

ELD MATRIX OF GRAMMATICAL FORMS					
	Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced
DESCRIBING ACTIONS & STATES OF BEING: VERBS	Understand and begin to produce the following verbs for observable actions and descriptions: Present tense • be • have • like • need • want Respond to routine can and do questions with an action or orally (yes/no, single word) Can I help you? Do you need a ___? Can a bird fly? Does a square have three sides? Present progressive statements Ex: walking, is reading, She is running. Imperative (receptive) Ex: point to, pick up, stand up Auxiliary Uses can in simple statements with concrete verbs: She <u>can</u> read. Birds <u>can</u> fly.	Learn to understand and produce for observable actions and descriptions: Present tense Including: be, do, have, need, see, know, run, draw, make (I <u>like</u> my dog, She <u>likes</u> cats. He <u>is</u> a boy, I <u>have</u> two sisters.) Present progressive statements & questions Ex: play, read, work, eat, drink (She <u>is</u> laughing. <u>Is</u> she reading?) Past progressive statements & questions was, were (Ex: was walking, were walking) Routine statements & questions using who, what, where, when and how. (<u>What</u> is your name? <u>What</u> can a dog do? A dog can bark. <u>How</u> old are you? <u>How</u> are you? <u>Where</u> is ___? I like baseball. She is my sister.) Statements and questions with there is and there are Future tense statements and questions going to, will Imperatives such as: Please be quiet. Play soccer with me. Bring your book. Auxiliary do, and can in routine questions and statements. (<u>Do</u> you have/need a pencil? <u>How do</u> you spell your name? <u>Can</u> you see the board? Yes, I <u>can</u> . <u>Can</u> you help me? I <u>can</u> help you. <u>May</u> I go to the bathroom?)	Learn to understand and produce regular & irregular past tense verbs in: • Positive/negative statements Ex: lived, walked, went, did not live, did not go (He <u>talked</u> on the phone. She <u>saw</u> her friend yesterday.) • Positive/negative question Ex: were/weren't, did/didn't, could/couldn't, was/wasn't Negative present and past progressive Ex: was/were not, were not walking Contractions Ex: I'm, she's, it's, we'll, can't, wasn't, weren't, isn't Present perfect tense with routine statements and questions have/ has + past participle: (She <u>has been</u> in my group since November.) Formulating Questions (past, present, future) with who, what, where, when, how many, how much, why (<u>How</u> much is it?) Formulating above questions with do and does (<u>How</u> much does it cost?) Statements and questions with there was and there were Imperatives such as: Stop doing that, please. Let's play soccer now. Auxiliary verbs may, might, must, should, could, would (You <u>should</u> study. I <u>might</u> be late. We <u>could</u> divide by 5. <u>Would</u> you...?) Exclamations such as: What a great idea! That's not fair. Simple idioms such as: Give me a break. It's raining cats and dogs.	Learn to understand and produce verb tenses appropriate to the situation: Present & past perfect have/has/had + past participle Positive/negative statements: I <u>have</u> studied ballet since I was six. Kennedy <u>hadn't been</u> president long. Questions How long <u>have</u> you ___? Phrasal verbs Turn <u>on</u> the light. Turn the light <u>on</u> . Clear your desks <u>off</u> . Clear off your desks. Statements and questions with there will be/there has been Conditional statements and questions using if and auxiliary verbs would, will, may, might, must, can/could, should (If we see a brown bear, we <u>will</u> not feed him. We <u>can</u> make it to the show if we leave now. If we left now, we <u>would</u> be on time. If you <u>don't</u> ...) Synonyms Ex: responded/cried, strove/marched Exclamations such as: You have got to be kidding! That's unbelievable! Less obvious idioms such as: Hit the ceiling, scared silly, lend me a hand	Learn to understand and produce verb tenses appropriate to the situation: Progressive, future and conditional perfect tenses She <u>has been</u> studying. She <u>will have been</u> studying. If she <u>had</u> studied, she <u>would have</u> done better. Phrasal verbs with multiple meanings (often idiomatic) Ex: make up (your mind, a story, the class, your face, with a friend). Passive voice It <u>was written</u> by... This picture of a grizzly bear <u>was taken</u> by my grandfather. Conditional statements using unless: <u>Unless</u> I turn in my essay, I <u>won't</u> be able to go to recess. Auxiliary: ought, will/shall (We <u>ought</u> to check in the book.) Prefer to/would rather Exclamation such as: That's beyond belief!
	© 1999, 2001, 2005 Dutro, Prestridge & Herrick	ALL RIGHTS RESERVED	With thanks to Adams, Ames, Marandula and Larsen	2 OF 4	

Figure 2. ELD Matrix of Grammatical Forms for Verbs (Dutro et al., 2005, p. 2)

Project Audience

This project is intended to benefit other teachers of beginning English learners in middle school. Since most teachers of these beginning-level English learners instruct multiple levels throughout the school day, this project can help teachers to decide on which curriculum to use with their students. Then, the teachers can confidently use the textbook they chose as the core for their scope and sequence, and spend limited time modifying and supplementing the textbook, rather than creating materials from scratch.

Timeline for Project Completion

The textbook analysis, collecting qualitative and quantitative data occurred during the spring of 2019 during the Capstone Project class. In that course, I searched for textbooks marketed to the population of middle school beginning English learners. Next, I purchased the textbooks and read through them. I collected data contrasting the textbooks using the criteria outlined above, and included the results in an appendix. Finally, I created charts to compare and contrast the differing qualities of the textbooks, and put the charts into a Google Slides presentation to share with other educators.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methods that I used to analyze the textbooks for middle school beginning English learners, along with the theoretical underpinnings of these methods. In addition, the chapter outlined how the information from the textbook analysis will be shared with the community through the MinneTESOL Journal. In Chapter four, I will share the results of the text analysis and reflect on the project as a whole.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Reflection on Learning

This project was conducted in order to answer the following research question: *Which textbook or textbooks can be recommended as a solid textbook for grammar instruction for beginning English learners in a middle school?* Through the process of analyzing three middle school newcomer textbooks, many insights have come to light, including the grammatical approaches of the authors, and the scopes included in beginning middle school English as a Second Language textbooks. I also learned that there are limited resources available for beginning English learners at the middle school level, and none of them are perfect, yet they all have positive and negative aspects. Each of the textbooks took a different approach to teach grammar, and they also had different scopes in the number of grammatical topics that they intended to cover in a set amount of time. The following sections will break down and analyze the data collected during this project. In addition, the chapter includes implications of the project, limitations to the scope of the project, suggestions for future research and a reflection of the author's personal growth.

ACCESS Newcomers

The textbook from Great Source Education Group, a division of the Houghton Mifflin Company, created the book *ACCESS Newcomers* in 2005. The textbook is comprised of 36 units with three lessons per unit and two pages for each lesson. The

number of units aligns with the number of weeks in a school year, which leads me to conclude that the book is intended to be used during a student's first complete year learning English in middle school. Every unit covers a different theme with vocabulary and grammar activities specific to that theme. Two examples of themes in the book are *Around School* and *Shopping and Eating*. One lesson from *Shopping and Eating* is pictured below in Figure 3.

18 Clothes Shopping

Big Idea We shop for clothes to wear.

1. Look and Explore

I need to buy new jeans.

2. Listen and Talk

WORDS 1-10

- I like to wear pretty clothes.
- Do you like this blue shirt?
- I am looking for a black skirt.
- She is wearing pants.
- I always wear blue jeans.
- What color are your socks?
- He is wearing a black belt.
- I am going to buy a new dress.
- Let's look for some cool shoes.
- I think your sweater is nice.

WORDS 11-20

- What do you like to wear?
- I hate to wear baseball caps.
- She needs to try on that shirt.
- My shirt is too large for me.
- Yours is too small.
- I need a size small shirt.
- My jeans are old.
- I need to buy new jeans.
- What a pretty shirt!
- I think it is ugly.

3. Read and Write

WORDS 1-10

Write the word from the Word Bank that fits each clue.

- You wear these on your feet. _____
- This helps hold your pants up. _____
- You wear this when it is cold. _____
- Girls wear this. _____
- These are usually blue. _____

Word Bank

jeans
dress
sweater
socks
belt

WORDS 11-20

Use the Word Bank to complete the chart.

Antonyms	Synonyms
big \neq 6. _____	big = 9. _____
7. _____ \neq old	10. _____ = beautiful
pretty \neq 8. _____	

Word Bank

large
new
ugly
pretty
small

4. Develop Language

PRESENT CONTINUOUS VERBS

Subject	Be	Verb - ing
I	am	
He		talk ing .
She	is	
It		
You		
We	are	
They		

Complete the sentences to show that the action is happening right now.

- Steve _____ a baseball cap. (wear)
- My parents _____ tea. (drink)
- Monica _____ shoes. (buy)
- We _____ at the mall. (shop)
- Luz _____ that sweater. (try on)

Unit 6 • SHOPPING AND EATING

Figure 3. ACCESS Newcomers (2005) Lesson 18 (p. 72-73)

The textbook analysis revealed that all samples of language provided were written and discrete, meaning that they were in one sentence chunks, as opposed to continuous language which is more than one sentence. Each unit also included three activities, two of which were focused on vocabulary. The third activity in each unit was always a grammar activity, where students would have to choose the correct word from a word bank. According to Fernandez' model, these activities are classified as controlled because the learner does not have to produce the form on their own. This textbook does not stray from the routine of these samples and activities, but it does spiral back to repeat the same grammar topics again and again. In the case of present progressive tense, *ACCESS Newcomers* covered the topic four times in units across the book.

ACCESS Newcomers also covered more grammatical topics for verbs than the other two textbooks. Using Dutro's Matrix of Grammatical Forms (2005), I was able to quantify the percentage of topics each textbook covered in each of the five developmental stages of acquisition. In the category of verbs, *ACCESS Newcomers* covered 100% of the topics in the Beginning stage, 87.5% of the topics in Early Intermediate stage, as well as 55% of the topics from the Intermediate stage, 11% of the topics from the Early Advanced, and 17% of the topics from the Advanced stage of acquisition. Similar patterns emerged in other parts of speech where *ACCESS Newcomers* covered nearly all topics for Beginning and Early Intermediate stages and some topics from Intermediate, Early Advanced and Advanced stages.

Overall, *ACCESS Newcomers* most closely fit with the approach of Presentation-Practice-Production, wherein the book presented a grammar topic explicitly,

then had students practice with that topic (Fernandez, 2011). However, the textbook did not have students produce the grammatical form freely. They always provided examples and a word bank for activities.

Next, I analyzed the textbooks from Cambridge University Press (2009), *Connect 1* and *Connect 2*.

Connect 1 and Connect 2

Each *Connect* book consists of 8 units with four lessons and a review in each. Every *Connect* book also includes Theme Projects, Games and Quizzes. It is important to note that *Connect 3 and 4* are also part of the textbook series, but they were not a part of this text analysis. The entire *Connect* series includes 32 units along with the other components, which would fill an entire school year for beginning middle school English learners. In this project, *Connect 2* was used to look at the present progressive teaching strategies and activity types, since *Connect 1* does not include present progressive tense. Both *Connect 1* and *Connect 2* were used to analyze the scope of the number of topics covered.

In analyzing *Connect 2*, there were a large variety of samples of language and types of activities used to teach the present progressive verb tense. Seven of the samples of language were both aural and written, so that students could listen to the samples as they read. In addition, samples of language were both discrete and continuous; some were one sentence, while others were full dialogues or paragraph length chance.

Connect 2 also included a variety of activity types and had more activities than the other two textbooks in total. *Connect 1 and 2* included 11 input-Based activities,

where students were expected to recognize the present progressive form without being asked to produce it. In eight cases, this input-Based recognizing was online, meaning students were listening to audio from a CD and recognizing present progressive in real time. Three of the Input-Based activities were controlled. In the controlled activities, students could take their time with reading the text again and again if needed, but the task was still to recognize the present progressive without having to produce it independently. *Connect 1* and *Connect 2* also included 19 production-based activities. For the production-based activities, 15 were controlled, meaning that they included a word bank, and four were free. Free production-based activities ask students to produce the present progressive form on their own. One such activity was to write a postcard from an imaginary family trip pictured in Figure 4 below:

Your turn

Write

A Imagine you and your family are sightseeing on a trip. Answer the questions.
(Answers will vary)

1. Where are you? _____
2. What's the place like? _____
3. Where are you sitting and writing the postcard? _____
4. What are your family members doing? _____
5. Are you and your family enjoying the trip? _____

B Write a postcard to your friend about your trip. Use the answers in Part A to help you.

(Answers will vary)

Favorite Activities

Figure 4. Connect 2 (2009) Lesson: Get Connected (p. 69)

As far as the scope of teaching verbs, *Connect 1 and 2* covered 80% of the topics from the Beginning stage, 75% of the topics from the Early Intermediate stage, 18% of the topics from the Intermediate stage, 11% of the topics from the Early Advanced stage, and no topics from the Advanced stage (Dutro et al., 2005). While *Connect 1* and *Connect 2* do not go as far along in scope as *ACCESS Newcomers*, *Connect 1* and *Connect 2* seem to go deeper into each grammatical topic by providing more samples of language and activities than the other two textbooks. The authors pulled from all possible types of activities, perhaps believing that activities that work well for some learners do not work for everyone. The vast variety of samples of language and activity types was in stark contrast to the routine, unchanging predictability of *ACCESS Newcomers*.

Lastly, I analyzed the textbook *INSIDE Fundamentals* Volume 1 and Volume 2.

INSIDE Fundamentals Volume 1 and Volume 2





Finally, *INSIDE Fundamentals* is comprised of two volumes, each containing 9 units. The scope of this series is supposed to last 18 weeks, or the first half of the first school year for a middle school beginning English learner. The *INSIDE* series also contains textbooks for more advanced learners with A, B and C levels in this new 2014 edition from National Geographic Learning and Cengage Learning. The previous editions of *INSIDE* from 2009 had Levels A-E, and this new edition of *INSIDE* (2014) is the most recent of the three textbooks analyzed in this project.


As with the *Connect* series, the *INSIDE Fundamentals* series only had materials for present progressive tense in one of the volumes, *Volume 1*. For that reason, I analyzed *Volume 1* for instructional features, and used both volumes when analyzing the scope of instruction of grammatical forms for verbs.

INSIDE Fundamentals Volume 1 had more samples of language than *ACCESS Newcomers*, but fewer samples of language than *Connect 2*. In many ways, *INSIDE* textbooks exhibited many qualities that were in-between the other two textbooks, including samples of language. The *INSIDE* textbook had eight samples of language, four were discrete (one sentence or less), and four were continuous (more than one sentence). In addition, two of the samples of language were aural (audio recordings) as well as written, while all eight were written.

The textbook also included 10 activities, five of which were input-based and five were production-based. Of the input-based activities, one was online, and four were controlled. The online activity required students to recognize the present progressive forms while listening to an audio recording and make decisions in the moment, while the controlled activities had students recognize the form in-text, so they could look back again and again as needed. The production-based activities followed a similar pattern in that one was free and four were controlled. For the controlled activities, students had access to a word bank to help them produce the form, whereas the free activity did not provide a word bank. Figure 5 below shows an example of the free production-based activity:

They | marching.

1.  2.  3.  4. 

WRITE SENTENCES 

5.–8. Write 2 sentences for each picture. Tell how the people are moving. Use an adverb in each sentence. Take turns reading sentences to a partner.

EXAMPLE 5. The girl is turning around quickly.
She is dancing happily.

Adverbs

high	up
carefully	quickly
happily	slowly
loudly	wildly

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Figure 5. *INSIDE Fundamentals* (2014) Volume 1, Unit 9, Lesson 1 (p. 249)

Unlike the other two textbooks analyzed, *INSIDE Fundamentals* does not spiral back to review topics again later on in the book. Each chapter contains different grammatical forms, and they do not repeat later on in the text.

When looking at the scope of the *INSIDE Fundamentals* books, I found that the authors covered 100% of the topics from the Beginning stage, 75% of the topics from the Early Intermediate stage, 45% of the topics from the Intermediate Stage, and no topics from Early Advanced or Advanced stages of acquisition for verb forms (Dutro et al, 2005). In this sense, the authors approach aligned with Tschirner (1996) when he claimed that beginning level textbooks should not attempt to cover the whole scope of a language in the first year, rather textbooks should address only what a learner can expect

to acquire within one year. However, at the same time, the *INSIDE Fundamentals* textbooks are only supposed to be used for half of the first school year, so further analysis would need to be done on the Level A textbook to see exactly how far the authors' scope would go in one full school year.

In examining the data from these three varied approaches to grammar instruction and scope, some possible implications came to light.

Possible Implications of the Project

While searching for textbooks marketed to the unique population of middle school beginning English learners, I found that there were not many available, and some of them were outdated as well. As a case in point, *ACCESS Newcomers* was written in 2005. In Fernandez' research around beginning college-level Spanish textbooks, she chose six of the most popular books (2011). However, in my project, there were very few textbooks even marketed to this population. Even though middle school beginning English learners are a low incidence population, teachers and students should still have more than three choices about what to use for their curriculum.

In a personal communication with a district coordinator for ESL programming, she shared that many middle schools in the metro area are either using *INSIDE*, *ACCESS* or teachers' own personally created materials (K. Willhite, personal communication, July 9, 2018). In my area, these two textbooks have taken over the market, and while both have good aspects and bad, this project illuminates the need for more updated and relevant textbooks for this population.

Teachers may choose not to use *ACCESS Newcomers* due to its lack of variety and the fact that the two-page lesson spread is not much to go on for a whole day. This textbook would have to be heavily supplemented by the teacher as the activities are all Controlled, and it does not require students to freely produce language. In addition, the *ACCESS Newcomers* textbooks are consumable, meaning that they would need to be purchased again year after year.

Other teachers may not be interested in using *INSIDE Fundamentals* because they would need to purchase two sets of textbooks that would only last for half of the school year. *INSIDE* textbooks also have a consumable Student Practice Book to go along with the textbook. While *INSIDE Fundamentals* is a happy medium between *ACCESS Newcomers* and *Connect* in the variety of activities, the grammar topics never spiral back again in the textbook, so if a student is not ready to learn the concept the first time, they are out of luck.

Even though the *Connect* series has the largest variety of samples of language and input-based and production-based activities, districts in my area are not using it widely. I was not able to find out the reason for this, but it may be that the *Connect* series faces a familiar issue in that districts would have to purchase four separate, consumable textbooks per student for only one school year. If the budget were not an issue for a district, I would recommend the *Connect* series as a solid textbook for teaching grammar to beginning English learners in middle school, due to the variety in samples of language and activity types. However, there were also limitations to the project to consider.

Limitations of the Project

This project is limited in its scope due to many factors. First of all, research shows that textbooks are a good curricular choice for adults and older learners (Tomlinson, 2012). Adults feel that they are progressing by using a textbook to gauge progress. Using a textbook helps the teacher to stay organized as well. However, middle school learners are younger and may become disengaged when using a textbook over a long period of time. A given textbook may be too hefty for these younger learners, and intimidating to students who are beginning a new language at a young age. Other options for middle school materials include leveled and themed smaller books or consumable books instead of a full textbook. My text analysis did not include any of these other options. In addition, the cost can be a barrier to buying textbooks.

Secondly, my study is only measuring certain factors related to grammar that is taught in the textbooks. There are many other important factors that may impact choosing of a textbook, including vocabulary instruction, relevance and authenticity, visual appeal, multicultural stories, number of pages, weeks of material provided, cost, and other factors (Choi, 2013; Higueros, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Additionally, I only analyzed the first two books in the series for *Connect* and *INSIDE* because they included the present progressive tense and the beginning stages of acquisition for verbs. There would have been additional data to consider if I had also analyzed *Connect 3*, *Connect 4*, and *INSIDE Level A*. However, the additional textbooks were not part of this current project, and the analysis of two books from each series did illuminate the structure and instructional approaches that the authors employed.

I am cognizant of these additional considerations, but they are not in scope for the current project. The next section will describe further research that could be done to supplement the conclusions found in my research project.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could be conducted to explore why there are so few textbooks marketed for beginning level English learners in middle school, or even why publishers that previously published books for this population have now discontinued their textbooks.

In addition, I found research supporting the use of textbooks for older learners and adults because they can clearly mark their progress and plan for their courses (Tomlinson, 2012). However, I did not find any research supporting or opposing the use of textbooks with middle school-aged students. Future research could study the benefits and downfalls of using textbooks with students in middle school.

Further research is also needed to survey teachers who service beginning English learners in middle schools in my state or across the country to see how many courses they prepare for any given day. This could illuminate a disparity in workload, and possibly help administrators to recognize some of the work that ESL teachers do above and beyond many secondary content teachers.

Growth of the Author

At the beginning of this project, I was searching for the perfect curriculum to use with my beginning English learners. Through the investigation, I have learned that there is no “perfect” curriculum, but I also learned about what types of language samples and

activities are available and beneficial to use with students. In the fall of 2018, before completing the textbook analyses, I started using a curriculum with themed books from different content areas that changes each week. This curriculum exposes my students to a wide variety of vocabulary, and different types of text. However, the curriculum has no explicit instruction of grammar. I have found that I can supplement any materials with input-based activities that are online or controlled, and production-based activities that are controlled or free.

As *ACCESS Newcomers* proposes, both routine and predictability are good for language learners. When students can predict what is coming, they are able to lower their affective filter, and focus on the learning (Krashen, 1983). On the other hand, *Connect* and *INSIDE*'s variety of samples and activities keep the learning engaging and push students to use grammatical topics independently in Production-Based free activities, which is what educators ultimately want for their students. Since I have learned that no particular curriculum is “perfect” or could possibly include everything, my hope is to take the best parts from what I have learned and integrate them into my personal practice.

If given the opportunity to continue researching, I would love to study how much explicit instruction is just the right amount for beginning English learners to be able to independently produce grammatical forms over time. Norris and Ortega's synthesis of explicit instruction research (2000) clearly showed that explicit instruction is more effective than no explicit instruction, when students are ready to learn that topic. However, their synthesis did not reveal the best ways to deliver that instruction or the best amount of time to spend on a topic. Of course, the amount of time and approach

would depend on each individual student, but I would be very interested to find out what is the average amount of time needed in order to most effectively teach this population as quickly as possible.

Following the class, I could also write a journal article to be submitted in the spring of 2019 to the MinneTESOL Journal. Educators around the state have access to this journal, so they would be able to benefit from the findings of the project.

Summary

This chapter outlined the results of the project and the findings from each of the three text books that were analyzed. It also included possible implications and limitations of the project, recommendations for future research projects, and a reflection on the growth of the author. It is this author's hope that this project will be of use to beginning English as a second language teachers across the state and the country as they make choices about what curriculum to use in their own classrooms.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE APPROACHES TO GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

Instructional Features	ACCESS Newcomers	Connect 2	Inside Fundamentals Volume 1
Explicit Information: Supplied	5	6	7
Samples of Language			
Source: Contrived	4	16	8
Text			
Discrete	4	9	4
Continuous		7	4
Medium			
Aural		7	2
Written	4	16	8
Activities			
Input Based			
Online		8	1
Controlled	1	3	4
Production Based			
Free		4	1
Controlled	6	15	4

APPENDIX B

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF VERBS

Grammatical Features	ACCESS Newcomers	Connect 1 and 2	INSIDE Fundamentals Volumes 1 and 2
BEGINNING			
Present Tense: be, have, like, need, want	1	1	1
Can and Do Questions	1	1	1
Present Progressive Statements	1	1	1
Imperative (receptive)	1		1
Auxiliary Can in Simple Statements	1	1	1
Total	5	4	5
EARLY INTERMEDIATE			
Present Tense	1	1	1
Present Progressive Statements and Questions	1	1	1
Past Progressive Statements and Questions			1
Who, What, When, Where, How Questions	1	1	1
Statements and Questions with There is, There are	1	1	1
Future Tense Statements and Questions	1		1
Imperatives	1	1	
Auxiliary Do and Can in Statements and Questions	1	1	
Total	7	6	6

INTERMEDIATE			
Past Tense Positive and Negative Statements	1		1
Past Tense Positive and Negative Questions	1		1
Negative Present and Past Progressive			1
Contractions	1	1	1
Present Perfect			
Past Present and Future Questions with Who, What, When, Where How, Why, How many, How much	1	1	
Statements and Questions with There was, There were			
Imperatives	1		
Auxiliary Verbs: may might, must, should, could, would	1		
Exclamations (That's not fair!)			1
Simple Idioms			
Total	6	2	5

EARLY ADVANCED			
Present and Past Perfect			
Positive/Negative with Perfect Tenses			
Questions with Perfect Tenses			
Phrasal verbs			
Statements and Questions with There will be, There has been			
Conditional Statements and Questions using if and Auxiliary Verbs: would, will, may, might, must, can, could, should	1	1	
Synonyms			
Exclamations (You have got to be kidding!)			
Less obvious idioms			
Total	1	1	0
ADVANCED			
Progressive, future and conditional perfect tenses			
Phrasal Verbs with Multiple Meanings			
Passive voice	1		
Conditional Statements using unless			
Auxiliary: ought, will, shall, prefer to, would rather			
Exclamation (That's beyond belief!)			
Total	1	0	0