

Prevalence of Conversational Language in Students' Description of Graphical Representations in the Economic and Business Studies Classes

CALEB GWAINDEPI AND THEMBINKOSI MABILA

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO



Introduction

MRTEQ

The Roles of teachers in a school:

□ First 3 roles –

- Specialist – in a subject discipline or practice
- Learning mediator
- Interpreter and designer of learning programmes

Introduction

- ❑ No information is more important in the EMS field than quantitative information (Few, 2005).
- ❑ For instance, the numbers that measure performance, identify opportunities, and forecast the future and more importantly this kind of information is best presented graphically and in charts.
- ❑ Failure to develop and/or comprehend graphical information can have deadly implications of misinformation where a single piece of information misinterpreted can have serious consequences on the wellbeing of the entire economy

Objective

To investigate the appropriate use of language in writing descriptions of graphical representations amongst B.Ed. EMS students

Method

Mixed Methods

Participants

- Purposive sampling
- 47 Final year B.Ed. students majoring in Business Studies and Economics
- Graphs are foundational in the field of Economics and Business Studies.

Research Tool

- ❑ Source - High school economics text
- ❑ Two graphical representations – 1 of Price ceiling, the other is of Price floor

What we expected the students to do

- Identify and describe – Equilibrium, shortage & Excess supply,
- Interpret – price ceiling & floor, describe the illustrated effect thereof

Analysis

- ☐ Quant

 - ☐ Correlation analysis – Spearman rank correlation

- ☐ Quali

 - ☐ Thematic Analysis

Findings & Discussion

	High proficiency	Low proficiency
rural school	-.203 .218	.674 .371
Semi urban	.582 .161	-.155 .295
English HL	.852 .002	-.126 .072
English SL	-.371 .001	.659 .053
Sig = 0.05 N = 47		

Findings & Discussion

School background has an effect, though not significant

HL and SL students start from different levels

SL students seem to be battling with the Lang and content, whilst HL students are concerned with the content only.

Thematic Analysis

Terminology and semantics

- change in demand vs change in quantity demanded

Word Substitution

- ❑ graphs meet(s) – instead of intersects
- ❑ Constant – instead of equilibrium
- ❑ Stable – instead of equilibrium
- ❑ Combined – instead of intersect

Home language interference

□ prices go down

Incorrect interpretation

- ❑ disequilibrium instead of equilibrium

Concluding remarks

- ❑ Use of general conversational English may distort communication in the field (Few 2005).
- ❑ Statements (both oral and written) that are meant to convey a discipline specific meaning and message may be expressed and interpreted wrongly if general English terms are used (Harabi 2010)

Conclusion

“I don't wanna lie! When it comes to graphs my brain freezes”