Two Modes of Explicit Grammar Instruction and Senior Secondary Students' Achievement in English Grammar in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study examined the differential effect of direct and indirect explicit instructional strategies on students' achievement in English grammar in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo state. The moderating effects of family background was also determined. The research design adopted was pre- test, post-test quasi experimental design using 2x2 factorial matrix. Four secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area were randomly selected. Two of the schools were randomised to use Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy (DEGIS) while the other two schools used Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy (IEGIS). Six intact classes of 98 senior secondary school II students were used for the study. Treatment for both groups lasted for four weeks. The instruments used were English Grammar Achievement Test (r= .947), Students' Family Background Questionnaire (r=.864) and Teachers Instructional Guides. Data were analysed using t-test at 0.05 levels of significances. Findings revealed that students exposed to Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy ($\bar{x}$= 23.05) performed better than those in Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy ($\bar{x}$ = 18.88).However, there was no significant difference in the performance of students from favourable and unfavourable background. It was recommended that teachers should adopt Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy to enhance students' achievement and effective teaching of English grammar.

Keywords: Explicit grammar instruction, Direct EGI, Indirect EGI, Achievement in English grammar

Introduction

The importance of English language in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. It functions as a means of interaction and a tool for communication. Oribabor (2014) stated that English language is an official language in Nigeria and whatever you want to do, you have to communicate in English. English language plays a very crucial role in the social, political and economic system of Nigeria. It is an irresistible language as far as development in Nigeria is concerned. English language is a medium of instruction in Nigerian schools especially in the upper level of primary school, secondary school and tertiary institution. It is a compulsory subject offered in Nigerian schools and a pre-requisite to gain admission into any higher institution in the country. Furthermore, the understanding of English language will result to the effective learning of any other subjects that are been taught in the language

The constant debilitating performance of students in aspects of English that deal with writing has been identified as the major cause of the poor results they obtained in English Language, and this has been traced to their ignorance of the grammatical rules of English language and inability to use same to write effectively (WAEC Chief Examiner's Report, 2011). This trend is further confirmed in 2019 where the Chief Examiners' Report (2019) re-sounded candidates' weaknesses as including weak language use resulting from poor grammar and expressions among others.

Considering the problems faced by students annually, it is right to say that students are not able to use English grammar correctly in both spoken and written form. Their inability to express ideas in good sentences in writing is what is responsible for the constant decline in their performances. Aside the fact that students fail examinations as a result of their inability to understand the grammatical rules of English language, it also hinders their ability to communicate effectively in public. This is often the reason why such people are usually looked down upon in the society. A good command of English language is very paramount to gaining respect in the society. In line with this, Ogunyemi (2014) opines that proficiency in oral and written expressions confers on the individual the privilege of securing gainful employment. As a result of this, there is need to proffer an immediate and long lasting solution to help students understand and improve their mastery of English grammar which will help to improve their proficiency in English language especially their writing and speaking skills.

The manner in which English grammar is taught by the teachers has been the cause of the students' failure. The teaching of grammar has always been controversial especially under the influence of communicative approach to language teaching. Tarone (1996) argued that grammar should be taught effectively because without a good understanding of grammar students would not be efficient in their use of English language. In order for students to gain a mastery of English language grammar, teachers must use the right strategy to teach grammar, for this is central to language use. An observation of English classroom in Ibadan North local government has revealed that teachers are not using the right strategies to teach English grammar. Teachers do not take time to teach grammar the way it should be taught. What they do is write the concept on the board, give one or two definitions of the concept with very few examples and then give the students class activity that will keep them busy till the end of the class. Students who are taught this way, cannot attain the mastery of English grammar unless the right strategy is used to teach them.

The teaching of grammar has become a major problem for teachers who do not take into consideration the importance of using the right strategy for teaching grammar. Hughes (1996) opines that the use of various language learning strategies can be helpful in teaching grammar more effectively. Oxford (1990) defines grammar instructional strategies as the behaviours or actions which teachers use to make grammar learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable. By adopting the right strategy teachers can help make grammar more accessible and easy for the students. Also, the teaching of grammar is a complex task and therefore, teachers need to focus on the various types of strategies which can help improve the grammatical understanding of students. The grammatical rules to be taught are so complex and they varied in their nature and usage that different strategies have to be used to teach the learners so as to improve the students' understanding and help them to use grammar effectively.

In order to improve the performance of students

in aspects of English language that deal with grammar, researchers have ventured into the application of various strategies. Ogunyemi (2014) in his study examined the effects of two modes of error correction and feedback strategies (Explicit and implicit) on students' achievement in English language. Like the previous cited studies, this study did not include conscious teaching of English grammar in its plan. Ellis (2004), explained that explicit knowledge is conscious knowledge of grammatical rules learned through formal classroom instruction, and is related to the conscious uses to language. Explicit knowledge helps the intake and expansion of implicit language, as well as monitor output (Krashen, 1987). This study was able explain the importance of explicit grammar strategy but it has failed to identify the differential effects of direct and indirect explicit grammar strategies. A judicious combination of both the explicit and the implicit grammar teaching techniques can be utilized to teach English language grammar forms. With the use of this strategies, the teacher allows the students discover the rules for themselves implicitly. Also, Adedigba (2015) in his study, examined the effect of direct and indirect explicit grammar instructional strategies on students' achievement in English grammar and composition among senior secondary school. This study made a conscious effort to indicate grammar teaching strategies which is direct and indirect explicit grammar instructional strategy but it also failed to examine the differential effects of the two types of explicit instructional strategy.

Explicit grammar instruction over the years continues to be a contentious issue in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and much attention has been dedicated to understanding its effectiveness and efficiency in developing learners' grammatical competence and performance. The attention explicit grammar instruction continues to receive, despite its prevalence in many English for Academic Purposes (EAP) settings, can be attributed in part to the lingering influence of strong versions of communication-based approaches to grammar instruction, which have emphasised attention to communication with little or no attention to grammatical forms (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). On the other hand, some researchers and practitioners contend that explicit instruction of grammar, which is concerned with raising awareness of the grammatical rules of the language, is necessary for learners' linguistic development because it leads to learners' awareness of their own errors. Explicit instructional strategy helps learners to benefit from learning at their own pace and having more autonomous control over their learning. It can also contribute to the development of both implicit and explicit knowledge in certain settings.

Despite the questioning of its effectiveness in the late-nineteenth century, explicit grammar teaching survived in multiple forms during the twentieth century (Richards and Rogers, 1986). In explicit grammar teaching, the teacher provides learners with direct spelt out explanations of grammatical rules, and then gives exercises for them to manipulate the language forms (Shrum 2005). Moreover, textbooks informed by explicit grammar teaching approach are supplemented with, manipulative drills, explanations of rules and grammar exercises. Little emphasis is put on context though, since exercises mainly consist of disconnected and unrelated sentences. Rothstein and Rothstein (2009) opines that language teachers need to consider the way they can make grammar fun, memorable and meaningful to learn. The steps to explicit grammar instruction includes but not limited to the following:

1. The teacher indicates the learning intension for the class and sets specific, transparent and workable success criteria which are shared and explained in details to the students.
2. The teacher clearly shows the students what to do and how to do it through the use of numerous examples.
3. The teacher checks for the understanding and progress of the students periodically. At the end of the lesson the teacher is expected to summarise what has been taught in order to enhance the understanding and learning of the students.
4. In the case of a class activity or assessment, the teacher provides the students with all the information they need to complete the task independently.

Explicit Grammar Instruction is very effective in determining or fast-tracking students' performance. It aims and moves beyond rote learning and attempt to outline learning for students. Also, explicit teaching is always sequential and systematic by directly outlining guided practice using a series of steps for the teaching process.

There are two types of Explicit Grammar Instruction (EGI) as identified by Stathis and Gotsch (2008). According to them, the two types are Direct Explicit Grammar Instruction (DEI) and Indirect Explicit Grammar Instruction (IEI). Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy (DEI), according to Stathis and Gotsch (2008), is a teacher-directed instruction which involves a sequence of supports that are highly structured and practice-oriented. Explicit instruction here involves modelling, observation, imitation or practice and corrective feedback during the course of instruction. Paesani (2005) stated that Direct Explicit Grammar Instruction encourages students to view grammar not just as isolated letters, words and phrases but also as a meaningful component of contextual language use. Paesani also opines that Direct Explicit Grammar Instruction draws students' attention to grammatical rules and forms which provide comprehensive and meaning bearing input. In Direct Explicit Grammar strategy, instruction process moves systematically from extensive teacher input and little student responsibility and maximum teacher involvement at the conclusion of the learning cycle. This type of Explicit Grammar Instruction is also called Deductive Grammar Instruction by Erlam (2003) and Adedigba (2016). Erlam (2003) stated that in a Deductive Grammar Instruction, analysis of the targeted grammar structure precedes practice exercises and activities. Direct Explicit Grammar Instruction is an effective grammar teaching which entails that students should be taught to focus on the rules of the targeted language before the structural form. Komolafe (2010), in his study examined the effects of explicit grammar and sentence combining instructional strategies on primary school pupils' achievement and attitude to essay writing and found that pupils exposed to composition instruction

through these strategies performed better than those taught with the conventional grammar strategy. The loophole identified in the study is that Komolafe used only the Direct Grammar Instruction without considering its second variants. The two types of Explicit Grammar Instruction as documented in literatures are Direct Explicit Instructional strategy and Indirect Explicit Instructional strategy on students' learning outcomes in English grammar (Stathis and Gotsch, 2008).

Indirect Explicit Instructional Strategy is also a type of Explicit Instructional Strategy. Ellis (2008, p.159) explained that indirect explicit grammar instruction favours induction or the learners' discovery of the grammatical rules through tasks and therefore does not involve giving grammatical explanations. It implies a problem-solving approach in which "students are provided with data which illustrates the use of a specific grammatical structure which they analyse to arrive at some generalization that accounts for regularities in the data" (Ellis, 1997, p. 86). For instance, students may be given an activity which involve reading a passage containing some illustrations of the use of the simple present and the present continuous tenses and are required to 'identify' the verbs in both tenses and then build a 'rule' to explain their different functions. In order to do this, learners have to construct the grammar rules for themselves from the given inputs and activity.

In addition, Adedigba (2016) stated that Indirect Explicit Grammar Instruction strategy involves limited teacher direction, with emphasis on students co-creating their learning with the teacher as a facilitator of their learning. The strategy may use social instructional approaches (learning with other students) or students working independently. It is often based on constructivist principles where students create meaning through active engagement and investigation.

A lot of research has been carried out on Explicit Grammar instruction. For instance, Loyer (2010) conducted a separate study to examine the effects of Explicit Instructional Strategy on grammar and narrative writing respectively and discovered that the strategy had a significant effect on students' achievement in English language without looking at the differential effects two modes of Explicit Grammar Instruction on students' achievement which is the concern of this study. Also, Fakeye's (1991) study on differential effect of deductive and inductive strategies on students' achievement in written test of English grammar reported that inductive strategy was more facilitative of students' achievement in English grammar than deductive strategy. The gap in that study is that Fakeye examined the relative effectiveness of the two modes of Explicit Grammar Instruction without considering how they would fit in the conventional grammar strategy teachers often use.

In teaching and learning process, other variables can interact with instruction to influence students' academic achievement especially in English language classroom. These variables include class size, gender, family background, students' vocabulary knowledge, students' health and lots more. For the purpose of these study, students' family background will be considered as a moderator variable. The relationship between family background and educational achievements of students has become a critical indicator in evaluating educational (in) equality. (Zhonglu and Zegi, 2018). Parenting behaviour and educational support for their children could cultivate children's learning habits and affect their academic performance. In addition, the academic performance of students who live in urban areas are heavily affected by the socioeconomic status of their parents compared to students who live in rural areas. The educational achievement of students is often shaped by the different opportunities and capacities that families have in participation in the education of their wards.

The family background of students affects their learning behaviour and academic achievement greatly because the family is the primary and most significant environment that they are exposed to. Coleman (1996) opines that families play even more important roles in the students' academic achievement than schools and communities this is because the families' social economic statuses affects the students' academic achievements more than the impacts of the schools. In the same vein, Coleman's opinion has been supported by Fang and Feng (2008). Fang and Feng postulated that the families' social economic status affects students' academic performances significantly. Students who are from family backgrounds with high social economic statuses have the privileges of enjoying high educational investment decisions from their parents. The difference in students' educational achievement is mainly caused by the difference of the family educational investment. Because of the limitation of family resources, parents of poor families usually are not able to invest sufficiently in their children's education which invariably affects their children's academic achievements. Also, families with relatively high socio-economic status will strive to secure quality educational opportunities for their children such as those provided by standard schools, which in turn will affect their academic achievement. These standard schools have excellent teachers and students who will not only have direct impact on their differences in academic achievement but also affect their learning attitudes and behaviours through teachers and peers, thereby affecting their academic achievements and further educational opportunities In view of all of these assertions, there is the need for further studies to investigate the moderating effects of family background on students' achievements and usage of grammar in English language.

Statement of the problem

English language is very important because it is a language commonly used for communication. In Nigeria, English language is the medium of instruction in schools. As a result of these, the performance of secondary school students in English Language examinations over the years has worrisome. The poor performance is as a result of their poor knowledge of English Grammar. Despite the various conventional instructional strategy used by teachers the poor performance of students still persists in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Direct and Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional strategies are modern alternative instructional strategies which have been found to be more effective than the conventional instructional strategies. Hence, this study examined the differential effects of Direct and Indirect Explicit Grammar Instruction on students' achievement in English grammar

in selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State. The moderating variable used in the study is family background.

Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference between students exposed to direct explicit instructional strategy and those exposed to indirect explicit instructional strategy.

$H0_2$: There is no significant differences in the achievement in English grammar of students from favourable home background and students from unfavourable home background.

Significance of the Study

The study is beneficial because it helped to equip English Language teachers in Ibadan North Local Government Area on the most effective grammar-specific strategies that can be adopted to teach English Grammar to senior secondary school students to enhance their achievement in English Grammar. In addition, it would be of great value to curriculum developers who are constantly searching for appropriate teaching strategies for effective teaching and learning process of English grammar in secondary schools.

Scope of the Study

The study covered SS two students in four (4) intact classes from four (4) purposively selected public senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State. The study determined the differential effects of Direct and Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional strategies on secondary school students' achievement in English Grammar and the moderating effects of the family background of the students was used. Grammar topics taught include: concord, Direct and Indirect speech, Question tags and Tenses.

Methodology

This chapter deals with the methodology used in carrying out this research which includes research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, therapeutic procedure, control of extraneous variables and data analysis. This study adopted the pre-test- post-test control group quasi-experimental design with 3x2 factorial matrix. It consists of treatment and control at three levels and family background at two levels (favourable and unfavourable) to determine the differential effects of Direct and Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategies on students' achievement in English grammar. A total of ninety-eight (98) Senior Secondary Two (SS II) students from four schools participated in the study. The instruments used were: Students' English Grammar Achievement Test (r=0. 95), Students' Family Background Questionnaire (r= 0.86), Teachers' Instructional Guide on Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy and Teachers' Instructional Guide on Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy. At the end of the three weeks of the administration of treatment to the experimental and control groups, post-test of Students English Grammar Achievement Test (SEGAT) was administered to the participants. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean and standard deviation. Also, t-test was used to test all the hypotheses. In addition, estimated marginal means was computed to show differences in the mean scores of different groups. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Ho1: There is no significant difference between students exposed to Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy and those exposed to Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy

Table 2: t test summary showing difference in the post-achievement of students exposed to direct and indirect explicit grammar instructional strategies

Treatment	N	Mean	Std.d	df	t	P-value	Remark
Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy	42	23.05	9.14	96	2.184	0.031*	Sig.
Indirect Explicit Instructional Strategy	56	18.88	9.52				

* denotes significant at $p<0.05$

Table 2 shows that there is a significant difference in students' post-achievement mean scores between Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy and those exposed to Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy ($t = 2.18$; $df = 96$; $p<0.05$). Hence, hypothesis 1 was rejected. It is observed the Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy students ($\bar{x} = 23.05$) had improved mean of 4.17 more than the Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy students ($\bar{x} = 18.88$).

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the achievement in English grammar of students from favourable home background and students from unfavourable home background.

Table 2: t test summary showing difference in the post-achievement of favourable and unfavourable home background in English grammar

Home background	N	Mean	Std.d	Df	t	P-value	Remark
Unfavourable	55	20.04	8.98	96	-0.734	0.465	N.S.
Favourable	43	21.47	10.26				

N.S denotes not significant at $p<0.05$

Table 2 reveals that there is no significant difference in the achievement in English grammar of students from favourable home background and those from unfavourable home background (t = -0.73; df = 96; p>0.05). Hence, hypothesis 2 was rejected. Although, it is observed that students from favourable home background ($\bar{x}$ = 21.47) have better performance than their counterparts from unfavourable home background ($\bar{x}$ = 20.04) but this difference is not statistically significant.

Discussion of Findings

Differential effect of Direct and Indirect Explicit Instructional Strategy on students' achievements in English grammar

The result of this hypothesis reveals that there is a significant difference in the post scores of students that were exposed to Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy and those exposed to Indirect Explicit Instructional Strategy. It can be deduced from the results that the treatment given to the participants has a significant effect on the selected grammar concepts. Hence, the students exposed to Direct Explicit Instructional strategy performed better in the post-test than those exposed to Indirect Explicit Instructional strategy. Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy enables the teacher to teach grammar rules to students explicitly unlike Indirect Explicit Instructional Strategy that demands the ability of the students to reason properly before getting the rules. In addition, the use of Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy helps students to be aware of the target language rules and as a result of this, their language acquisition is easily facilitated.

Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy emphasizes learning grammatical rules purposely and consciously, so as to efficiently and accurately use language. Unlike Indirect Explicit Instructional Strategy in which students learn grammar through situational scene, that is students learn grammar rules from the examples provided by the teacher. Indirect Explicit Instructional Strategy mainly adopts the inductive thinking and inducing the grammar rules through communicative use of the language which might make grammar learning difficult for the students.

Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy helps students to work together with their teachers to generate grammatically and semantically correct sentences. It also involves learning English grammar through dominant means, such as memory, grammar analysis, and so on, which is a process that is conscious and controlled. In this process, the learners know the composition of the learning process and can fully express the knowledge that has been learnt. This finding is in line with Fakeye (1991) which revealed the significant effect of Deductive Approach (Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy) on students' achievement in written test in English grammar. Also, this finding supports the submission of Adedigba (2015) who also found out that senior secondary school students exposed to Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy had the highest post-test achievement mean score, followed by those exposed to Indirect Explicit Grammar instructional strategy and then those exposed to conventional strategy.

Furthermore, this finding is also in line with the findings of Philips and Matthews (2004) who found out that direct explicit grammar instruction acts as a protective factor that could decrease language problems such as academic stress among students. This finding is also supported by Rizwan and Akhtar (2016) who suggested that Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy is beneficial to develop grammatical accuracy in ESL learners. However, the results of this hypothesis negates the findings of Soleimani, Jahangiri, and Gohar (2015) who rejected the superiority of Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional strategy over Indirect Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy in promoting second language grammar knowledge.

Differential effect of students' achievements in English grammar according to family background

The result of this hypothesis reveals that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement in English grammar of students from favourable home background and those from unfavourable home background. This implies that the family background of a student has little or no significant effect on students' achievements in English grammar because students from favourable and unfavourable family background benefited equally from the treatment administered to them. This finding corresponds with the findings of Alika and Edosa (2012), they discovered that there is a very strong negative relationship between broken homes and academic achievements of students. In the same vein, Joseph (2009) in his study found out that family background in terms of family size and birth order has no significant influence on the academic achievement of students. In addition, Single Parent Kids (1999) which in a study presented in New York Times revealed that single parenthood has no significant effect on the academic achievement of children.

On the contrary, the finding of this hypothesis refutes the findings of McLeod, et al, (2008) who found out that children from two-parent homes do better in English grammar than children from single- parent homes on a variety of social indicators. Also, Kim (2002) maintained that, there is a direct relationship between parental financial and human capital and the successful learning experience of their children. In addition, Ryan et al (2003) reported that there was a significant effect of family background variables, parental support, and teacher support on a child's educational achievement. Also, Atta & Jamil (2012) said that parental involvement is highly relevant to the educational achievement of children, which means the influence of parents has a great influence on the academic success of students and helps students to further improve their foreign language learning.

Conclusion.

This study has revealed that Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy is more facilitative in enhancing students' achievement in English grammar than Indirect Explicit instructional strategy. Also, the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the English grammar achievements of students from favourable home background and unfavourable home background even though it was revealed in the study that more than average number of the students are from unfavourable home background. Hence, in order for students to be well grounded in English grammar and to put an end to the constant poor performances of students in English grammar especially in external examinations such as

WAEC, NECO, NATEB and others, teachers should adopt Direct Explicit Instructional Strategy to teach grammar in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategies should be adopted by teachers for the teaching and learning of rules and concepts in English grammar as it has been revealed to enhance understanding of grammar.
2. English language teachers should be trained regularly through seminars, workshops, and conferences for them to be kept abreast of innovative strategies such as Direct Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategies.

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