
EFFECT OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION ON THE ATTITUDE OF LOWER BASIC PUPILS TOWARDS ENGLISH GRAMMAR USAGE IN SELECTED LOCAL DISTRICT EDUCATION IN LAGOS STATE

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***Abstract:** Fluency is one of the skills necessary in studying second language. There is need to expose pupils to teaching strategy for effective communication in which students need to pay attention to relevant elements in the learning environment; to be able to translate mental conceptions into actions and be motivated to do so. But the strategy has not been adopted in the teaching Usage of English Grammar. This study, determined the effects of Explicit strategy on pupils' attitude towards Usage of English Grammar in basic Schools in Lagos state. The pretest, posttest, control group, quasi-experimental design with 2x2x2 factorial matrix was adopted. 183 Basic 5 pupils from nine Basic schools in three randomly selected educational district of Lagos State were used for the study. Five instruments used were: Teachers Instructional Guides for the treatment and control groups; Pupils Attitude Scale ($r = 0.81$), and Assessment Sheet for research assistants. Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analysed using ANCOVA. Treatment had significant main effect on Pupils' attitude towards Usage of English Grammar ($F_{(1,168)} = 25.83$; $p < 0.05$). Explicit group had higher adjusted posttest attitude ($\bar{x} = 52.44$), with the control group trailing behind ($\bar{x} = 36.18$). Explicit strategy effectively disseminated the attitude of learners exposed to it than those exposed to conventional strategy. The Explicit strategy inculcates right attitude towards Usage of English Grammar through improved initial performance level and higher pupils' thinking activities during and after observation.*

Introduction

The status of the English language in Nigeria has evolved over a long period of time from the language of the colonial masters (pre-independence) to the official language and lingua franca (post-independence). The English language is a language of convenience which has helped to weld together the various ethno-linguistic groups in the country. It is the first official language, the language of education from the upper primary schools to the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria and one of the core subjects in the Nigerian educational system (National Policy on Education, 2004).

The need to achieve the aims of teaching and learning has been addressed by quite a number of researchers from different locations all over the universe. Efforts have been geared towards arranging the concepts which the learners need to know spirally in the curriculum. Teaching can only be result oriented when students are willing and the teachers are favorably disposed to using appropriate methods and resources in teaching

the students. Learning depends on the way it is presented to the learners and the way the learners actively interact with the learning activities they are expected to participate in, in order to acquire learning experiences.

The Federal Ministry of Education (2004) stated the specific objectives of the UBE programme as:

- Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- The provision for free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian Child of school age;
- Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system (through relevance, quality and efficiency);
- Catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or the other have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education; and
- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

The UBE Consists of:

- Formal Basic education which covers the first nine years of schooling that is, six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school (JSSI-III) for all children.
- Nomadic education for school age children of pastoral nomads and migrant fishermen.
- Literary and non-formal education for dropout children and illiterate adults.

The Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (2010) identified the basics of effective teaching in five domains of planning, management, instruction, reflection and continuous professional development and commitment to school community (Louisiana Department of Education, 2010). The first three domains are of main concern to this study. These are planning, management and instruction. Regarding these three areas, every teacher is expected to develop measurable pupil attitudinal goal for the class and specify learner outcomes in clear, concise, measurable objectives. They are also expected to line up appropriate activities and select materials and media that will facilitate students' mastery of the lesson while accommodating individual differences. It is also important for

them to have appropriate time for pupils' work, reflection, and closure as well as select appropriate methods of evaluation to measure learner progress.

During the past twenty years, the role of the teacher has gradually changed from a traditional disseminator of information to that of a mentor or tutor. In this role, the teacher assists pupils with sources of information and provides them with guidance on analysis, interpretations and reporting of findings. The teacher becomes, rather a facilitator of learning than a sage-on-the-stage (possessor and communicator of ultimate scientific wisdom). However, the important role of the teacher in shaping the learning process should not be underestimated. Children usually need adult support to find the means and the confidence to produce and test their ideas (Popov, 2002).

Emphasis should also be placed on pupils' effective use of instructional/learning materials. Among the generally accepted modes of teaching are:

- i. Problem-based Learning Method
- ii. Practical, Excursion/field trips
- iii. Seminars, Tutorials and Group Discussion
- iv. Correspondence Approach, distance Education/Distance Learning System (DLS)
- v. Micro-Teaching
- vi. Team Teaching
- vii. Folklore and the Play Methods
- viii. Unit teaching and Modular Instruction
- ix. Group and Individual Projects, Method community Service/Work Experience/Inquiry Method.
- x. Discovery/Inquiry Method
- xi. Individualized Instruction (e.g. programmed instruction, computer-assisted instruction/learning, integrated day/open day/workday) and or any other professionally recognized teaching procedure.

It now rests on the teacher to select the best strategy for the particular pupil population being handled in instruction and more importantly, the objectives of the stated topics, the latter would determine the content of the instruction.

Various strategies have been identified as useful for classroom instruction especially for Basic schools. These include direct instruction otherwise known as conventional or traditional method, video instruction, cooperative learning strategy, Role-play technique and Moral Dilemma Technique. Others include Field trip/ Educational trips strategy, Service Learning strategy, Value Analysis Strategy, Value Clarification Strategy and Action Learning Strategy (Gbadamosi, 2010 and Ogunbiyi, 2011).

The Explicit Instructional Strategy (EIS) is a teacher-directed instruction which involves a sequence of supports that are highly structured and practice-oriented. Explicit instruction involves modelling, observation, imitation or practice and corrective feedback during the

course of instruction. Explicit instruction process moves systematically from extensive teacher input and little pupils' responsibility at the initial stage to total pupil responsibility and minimal teacher involvement at the conclusion of the learning cycle.

Hinkle and Fotos (2008) in their opinion on skills acquired in English grammar indicated that the dividing attitudes of those learners who have negative ideas (i.e. those who disliked the method) towards the instruction because they thought that it did not enhance their analytical skills, remained agreeable to the features of consciousness-raising tasks.

Ellis (2008) in his research findings in all these years on Attitude of Students Towards Explicit Instruction on English Grammar indicated that around 65 percent of the learners in the 'negative' attitude group did agree that the tasks involved in the instruction improved their active work, attention, and memory of the targeted structures and interaction in pairs work and group work. This confirms what Harmer (2007, p.43) reports as the advantages of these cooperative activities, which enable students to have more chances for greater independence. Not to mention the positive attitudes of the 'positive' group, the fact found in the 'negative' group does support what has been claimed about the positive effects of the instruction tasks.

Ellis (2008), concluded that, the frequency of input (i.e. noticing, interacting, associating, and pair/group work) is quite high, as compared with the only input resulting from the single channel from the teacher, in which the students just act as a receptacle of what the teacher conveys. Thus, the highly frequent input does create a large number of opportunities to be impressed more deeply into the long-term memory of the students.

Adeyemi (2008) in the study of the students to learning English, it was revealed that negative attitude towards English was one of the factors that affected academic achievement. Stephen and Sundra (2006) investigated on the relationship of foreign language attitude and perception to reading and spelling skills for English speaking college students using the foreign language attitude and perception survey. The result confirmed that spelling, silent reading fluency, orthography and listening vocabulary correlated modestly but significantly with foreign language attitudes and perceptions; that is, students with weaker reading and spelling scores exhibited more negative attitudes and perception towards foreign language.

Odebode (2001) reporting that, no gender roles that, girls performed better in verbal tests and obtain higher grades than boys while boys excel in mathematics and all science related subjects. She observed that, girls are heroines and fearful, while the boys show greater courage, achievements. Throughout the world, women are higher in verbal ability than men, but are lower in mathematics and spatial ability, men are superior to women, in problem-solving tasks and specific abilities related to problem solving (Asoegwu, 2008).

Research (Johnson 2003 and Ezenanđu 2011) have examined the role of gender in academic achievement and arrived at different findings. In a comparative study of gender differences and performances in English, Johnson (2003) revealed that female students in Canada scored higher than male counterparts, while in Nigeria, females score higher than males. Ezenanđu (2011) found no significant effect of gender on students' attitude to and achievement in prose literature.

In view of the disparity in findings, this study will also examine the effects of explicit instruction on the attitude towards usage of students in English grammar using gender as moderator variable.

Statement of the Problem

The negative attitude shown by pupils in public examination has been traced to their poor knowledge and usage of the grammar of English. Previous studies aimed at improving conscious teaching of the rudiments of English grammar to help learners overcome their perceived weaknesses had proved abortive. Scholars have therefore advocated the adoption of Explicit Grammar Instructional (EGI) strategy that allows for conscious teaching of English grammar by correcting the ways students use the language with the form they need to use in the communication process.

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant main effect of treatment on pupils' attitude towards usage of English grammar

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant main effect of gender pupils' attitude towards usage of English grammar

Methodology

This study adopts pretest, posttest, control group, quasi-experimental design. It examined possible effect of Explicit grammar instructional strategy on students' attitude towards Usage of grammar in English language. The study population will consist of Basic School two pupils which will be purposively selected from nine different schools in Educational District I, Educational District II and Educational District VI Areas which are randomly selected from the six educational districts of Lagos state. The sampled participants will consist of an intact class in each school.

Research Instruments

Four instruments constructed by the researcher were used in this study to collect data.

- i. Attitude towards English grammar Questionnaire.(AEGQ)
- ii. Teachers Instructional Guide on Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy (TIGES)
- iii. Teachers Instructional Guide on Modified Conventional Strategy (TIGMCS)

- iv. Evaluation sheet for Assessing Teachers Performance on the use of the Strategies (ESAT)

Attitude to English Grammar Questionnaire (AEGQ)

AEGQ was designed by the researcher to measure pupils' attitude to English Grammar Questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two sections, namely sections A and B. Section A has to do with the personal data of the respondent, it includes gender, name of school and class; Section B deals with students' view and attitude towards English Grammar. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items on a four Likert-type response. The items were rated on 4-Likert type ordinal scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree

Ten of the items are positively worded while ten are negatively worded. The positive ones will be scored 1,2,3,4, while the negative ones will be scored 4,3,2,1.

Validation of Student Attitude to English Grammar Questionnaire (ATEGQ)

The face and content validity of ATEGQ was done by showing the 30 items to three (3) Childhood Education lecturers with bias in English Language to determine its suitability in terms of clarity of ideas, language of presentation, class level, coverage, relevance, and application to the study. Their comments and inputs were factored into the production of the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of ATEGQ

The test was administered on sampled 50 Basic 5 pupils in a school outside the ones to be used for the experiment. Using Cronbach Alpha, a value of 0.79 was obtained.

Teachers Instructional Guide on Direct Explicit instruction Strategy in English Grammar Instructional Strategy (TIGDES)

Step 1: Define/ Explain the Concept

Step 2: State the rules

Step 3: Generate sample sentences.

Step 4: Students use teachers' model to generate their own sentences

Step 5: Teachers provide correct feedback

Step 6: Teacher recaps the rules to bring them into focus

Teacher's Instructional Guide on Modified Conventional Strategy in English Grammar. (TIGMCS)

Step 1: Teacher the topic on the chalkboard.

Step 2: She/he takes the students through the examples given in their reading text.

Step 3: She/ he sets them to do the exercises in their notebooks.

Step 4: Teacher goes round to mark their work.

Step 5: She/he does correction for them.

Evaluation Sheet for Assessing Teachers' Performance on the Use of the Strategies (ESAT)

This is the guidelines for evaluating performance of the trained research assistants on the effective implementation of the instructional guides. Any research assistant that scores 60marks and above in any of these strategies will be adjudge to have mastered the content of the instructional guides.

Reliability of ESAT

The instrument will be trial tested to ensure its reliability. It was administered on teachers outside the sampled schools. Inter-rater reliability was determined using scott pie yielding a value of 0.83 was obtained.

Research Procedure for the Study

The following time schedule will be adopted;

The first week for visitation to schools to be used for the treatment

The next two (2) weeks for training of research assistants

One (1) week for scrutiny of research assistants to ensure that they are ready to do what they are supposed to do. (During demonstration lesson).

One (1) week for pretest (Administration of ATEGO)

Six (6) weeks for treatment using the trained research assistants on the listed strategies.

These take place simultaneously in all the schools selected.

One (1) week Posttest (Administration of ATEGO)

This makes a total of fourteen (14) weeks.

Training of Research Assistants

Training will be done step by step through the explanation on the teaching guides on Explicit Grammar Instructional strategy and Modified Conventional strategy.

Administration of Pretest

All the pupils in the nine representative schools used for the experimental and control groups will be given pretest on all the evaluative instrument. The pre-test lasted for one week.

Treatment Procedure

The treatments were carried out on all the pupils in all the nine schools used as experimental and control groups. During this period, pupils were taught various aspects of English grammar concepts by the research assistants using the two strategies. The aspect of English grammar concepts to be taught are; Direct and Indirect speech, Question tags and Tenses.

Explicit Grammar Instructional Strategy

The steps include

Step 1: Define/ Explain the Concept

Step 2: State the rules

Step 3: Generate sample sentences.

Step 4: Students use teachers' model to generate their own sentences

Step 5: Teachers provide correct feedback

Step 6: Teacher recaps the rules to bring them into focus

Modified Conventional Strategy

The steps include

Step 1: Teacher the topic on the chalkboard.

Step 2: She/he takes the students through the examples given in their reading text.

Step 3: She/ he sets them to do the exercises in their notebooks.

Step 4: Teacher goes round to mark their work.

Step 5: She/he does correction for them.

The students were taken through the four lessons of forty minutes duration each and this lasted for six weeks.

Administration of Posttest

All the pupils in the nine representative schools used for the experimental and control groups were given posttests on all the evaluative instrument.

Procedure for Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using inferential statistics of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of the posttest scores, with the pretest scores as the covariates. Multiple classification analysis was to determine estimated marginal means of different groups.

Results

HO₁: There is no significant main effect of treatment on Pupils' attitude to Usage of English Grammar.

Table 1: Summary of ANCOVA of Posttest Attitude Scores by Treatment, Gender and Parent Educational Background

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Hypothesis	63177.31	1	63177.31	40.05	.09	.97
	Error	1724.59	1.10	1567.61			
Pre attitude	Hypothesis	53.44	1	53.44	.66	.42	.00
	Error	13673.65	168	81.39			
Treatment	Hypothesis	8000.00	2	4000.00	25.83	.04*	.96
	Error	315.27	2.04	154.84			
Gender	Hypothesis	43.38	1	43.38	.66	.53	.32
	Error	156.71	1.39	112.57			

*Significant at $p < .05$

Table 1 shows that there is significant effect of treatment on Pupils' attitude to Usage of English Grammar ($F_{(1,168)} = 25.83$; $P < .05$). This implies that the posttest attitude scores for the experimental group and control are significantly different. Hypothesis 1 is therefore, rejected.

Table 2: Estimated Marginal Means for Posttest Attitude Scores by Treatment

Treatment	N	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Explicit Instruction	95	52.44	2.35	47.81	57.07
Modified Conventional	88	36.18	1.44	33.35	39.02

Table 2 shows that students in the observational group had higher adjusted posttest attitude ($\bar{x} = 52.44$), with the control group trailing behind ($\bar{x} = 36.18$).

H_{O2} : There is no significant main effect of gender on students' attitude to Usage of English Grammar.

From Table 1, Gender has no significant effect on Pupils' attitude to Usage of English Grammar ($F_{(1,168)} = .66$; $P > .05$). Hence, hypothesis 2 is not rejected.

Table 3: Estimated Marginal Means for Posttest Attitude Scores by Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	76	47.15	1.46	44.27	50.03
Female	107	49.10	1.43	46.27	51.94

Table 3, shows that the female Pupils had slightly higher attitude score ($\bar{x} = 49.10$) than their male counterparts ($\bar{x} = 47.15$).

Discussion

This finding shows that explicit strategy enhanced pupils' attitude above the conventional strategy. This result suggests that the explicit strategies effectively disseminated the

attitude of learners exposed to it than those exposed to conventional strategy. This may be attributed to steps involved in which the learners were allowed to engage in various learning activity that enable them to find out and develop their own knowledge of the concepts individually or use their thinking skills for planning and evaluation. The belief that grammar is the basis for other kinds of skills to grow might be reconsidered. From Thornbury (2005), study on Explicit Instruction, the positive correlation found in the two groups between the grammatical knowledge and grammatical production confirms Celce-Murcia's ideas (1991) on the role of grammar teaching. She has stated that "grammar is a tool or resource to be used in the comprehension and creation of oral and written discourse rather than something to be learned as an end in itself" in this case, learning grammar may help boost acquisition.

Gender has no significant effect on pupils' attitude towards usage of English grammar. The reason was that both male and female were given the same opportunity to participate actively and their attitudes do not differ significantly.

Odebode (2001) reporting no gender roles and that girls performed better in verbal tests and obtain higher grades than boys while boys excel in mathematics and all science related subjects. She observed that, girls are heroines and fearful, while the boys show greater courage. Throughout the world, women are higher in verbal ability than men, but are lower in mathematics and spatial ability, men are superior to women, in problem-solving tasks and specific abilities related to problem solving (Asoegwu, 2008).

Educational Implications

The exposure of the learners to Explicit strategy have been found to positively affects the improvement of pupils' attitude towards Usage of English grammar concepts. The findings have showed the importance of using teaching strategies that are participatory and pupils' centre where they are trained to take control and direct their learning process for effective learning.

The study also revealed that there is need for total involvement in our educational system the explicit strategy that could help in providing quick and easy understanding and assimilation of English language grammar concepts.

Recommendations

Based on the results and discussion, the following recommendations are advanced

- (1) Explicit strategy should be adapted as viable strategy for studying concepts in lower basic science. This will enable pupils to improve on attitude of pupils towards usage of English grammar.
- (2) The teacher training curriculum at all levels of education should be upgraded to education relating to the real life situation by incorporating (i.e. activity

innovative pedagogical strategy base instructional strategy such as Explicit strategy).

- (3) Teaching strategy such as Explicit strategy learning that reduce the gender difference in English grammar usage attitude as recorded in this research work could be used to reduce learning anxiety for both sex (male and female) students.
- (4) English language teachers should be allowed to attend in-service training (e.g. workshops, conferences and seminars) in order to update their knowledge and skills in the use of this innovative teaching strategies.
- (5) Government and other employers of labour should ensure that qualified and competent teachers are engaged for teaching English language in basic schools. A successful use of the Explicit strategy requires that the teachers who will initiate the strategy should be flexible, sound and knowledgeable enough to guide the pupils.

Conclusion

The study shows that the explicit strategy is more effective for the dissemination of teaching/learning content during English language lessons in the basic schools, than the conventional method. The findings reveal that pupils can be adequately and deliberately exposed to English grammar using the observational strategy during the teaching of English Grammar topics.

Finally, the government and other stakeholders in education can help in enhancing pupils' attitude by encouraging teachers to use Explicit strategy and providing teaching/learning centres.

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