

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR TO FORM-TWO LEARNERS AT
KWASHIEMAN 2 BASIC SCHOOL, ACCRA**



MASTER OF EDUCATION

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KWASHIEMAN 2 BASIC SCHOOL, ACCRA**



**A dissertation in the Department of English Language Education,
Faculty of Foreign Languages, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
(TESL)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

SEPTEMBER, 2023

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

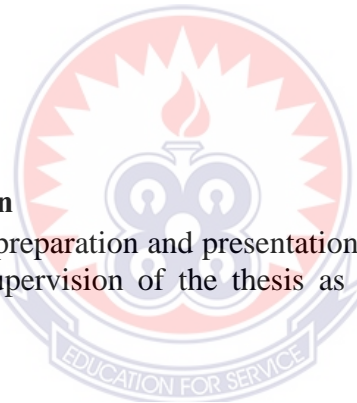
I, Esther Effah, declare that this thesis, except quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work and that it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised by the guidelines for the supervision of the thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



Name of Supervisor: Prof. Rebecca Akpanglo-Nartey

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my entire family, especially to my children.



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The most significant appreciation and thanksgiving are to God Almighty for His enabling grace that has seen me through this project successfully. To, Prof. Rebecca Akpanglo-Nartey, my supervisor at the Faculty of Foreign Languages Studies Education Department of Applied Linguistics for her assistance, guidance, and suggestions to give the final shape to this work. My sincere appreciation also goes to Mr Isaac Asare Odei, Mr Charles Obeel, Mr Gilbert Dadzie, Mrs Esther Enyonam Ametepe Narh, Mr Stephen Atandji Tettey, and Mr Obeng Vincent for your immense support and encouragement. Additionally, I wish to thank the headteacher, teachers and Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School, Accra who helped me during data collection for this study.



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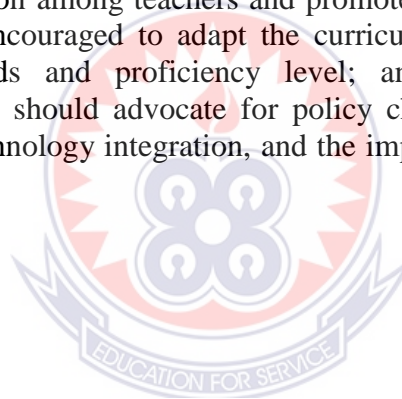
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ABSTRACT

This study explored teaching English grammar to Form Two Learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. A descriptive case study design together with a qualitative approach was used in this study. Ten English language teachers were sampled using a maximum variation purposive sampling technique. A semi-structured interview guide was used to gather data in this study. Themes and direct quotes were used to analyse the data. Among other difficulties, it was found that complex grammar structures, irregular verbs and verb tenses, ambiguity and homophones, pronunciation and stress patterns, and articles and word order were other difficulties JHS 2 pupils faced. Also, cultural and linguistic differences, cognitive factors, lack of motivation, limited access to resources, and teacher competence were possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face. Additionally, strategies that can be used to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face include: technology integration, differentiated instruction, formative assessment and timely feedback, collaborative learning and peer support. In conclusion, this study highlighted the significance of adopting student-centred and interactive teaching methods for English grammar instruction at Kwashieman 2 Basic School. Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study; School administrators should foster a supportive learning environment that encourages collaboration among teachers and promotes the sharing of best practices; Teachers should be encouraged to adapt the curriculum to accommodate students' diverse learning needs and proficiency level; and school administrators and educational authorities should advocate for policy changes that support innovative teaching practices, technology integration, and the implementation of a more flexible curriculum.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The process involved in Teaching and Learning English as a foreign language is challenging, not only for learners but also for educators. Akbari (2015) emphasised that “teaching English as a foreign language was a challenging task in developing countries in general and in our country in particular” (p. 78). In today’s competitive global society, the English language has become an indispensable aspect of our lives that must be mastered by people, especially those in academia and their counterparts in the world of work. English is the most commonly used language by most people around the world apart from the use of their local languages. This statement supports the argument made by Basri (2015), that of the 4,000-5,000 languages considered, English was far the most widely used.

Nowadays in our world of communication, the situations in which we find ourselves force us to be able to speak English fluently. Because of this, the English language has become an important commodity that must be learnt to go along with the rest of the world and to also get around circumstances with much ease. Some aspects should be learnt not only about major skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading) but also vocabulary, structure and grammar became more important aspects to be mastered.

English Language plays a significant role in Ghanaian society. For now, it is the only official language of communication and, to a large extent, the official medium of instruction in school. It plays a unifying role in the country by facilitating contact between Ghanaians of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Knowledge needed for the social, economic and technical advancement of the country is found in books written

in English. Even warnings designed to keep us safe from danger are written in English. All competitive examinations, whether for entry into educational institutions or occupation include tests of one's competence in the use of the English language.

In effect, English is the language of education, administration, law, communication and business. Consequently, it has a distinct role to play in the socio-economic life of the Ghanaian. It is the mark of elitism in the Ghanaian society. Once one chooses to educate one's self, one has no good reason not to speak English well. Moreover, one's deficiency in the use of English can easily be exposed in an interaction with another person.

Grammar in English has become one of the most important aspects in learning that language. This statement is supported by the postulation of Dewi (2014), that "grammar becomes one of the parts that is important when we study English; it cannot be separated from English itself" (p. 96). Some people are of the view that knowledge of grammar is not truly important to be mastered when we want to speak English. They explain that without knowing the grammar of the language we still might be able to speak English and that it is alright with our lack of grammar knowledge as long as we can speak and the listener can decode what we are talking about after all, communication is all about encoding and decoding. That may be true to some extent, but being able to speak English fluently by using grammar accurately sounds better and more appreciated.

In teaching and learning grammar, there are some rules that much attention should be paid to and because of that, learning grammar becomes more challenging, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Al-makhani and Nagaratnam (2014) found that some students argued that the most boring class they had found

themselves in was during the teaching and learning process of grammar. This was because there were too many rules such as the formulation of many kinds of tenses that should be known well before going to make a good sentence. Therefore, Al-mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2014) concluded that it became more challenging for EFL students to learn grammar properly in the classroom.

Al-mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2014) found that English language teachers employed theoretically recommended methods without necessarily taking into account their own and learners' potential difficulties. In that sense, English language teachers may not realise the difficulties their learners may face and this situation may prevent their learners from having a better understanding of the lessons taught. From personal experience as an English language teacher, English sometimes becomes very difficult to learn because there are too many rules that should be followed when one intends to learn English. According to Mishra (2015), many factors contribute to students' difficulties in learning English grammar. One of those factors is the teaching method used for grammar. Thus, some students find it difficult to understand grammar because of the teaching methods adopted by the teacher. The other factor is how students learn grammar itself. Meanwhile, Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2014) found that how students learn grammar has become one of the problems students face in communicating fluently.

For many people, grammar is synonymous with learning the grammatical forms, and it is often associated with rules, drills, red ink, and boredom (Larsen-Freeman, 2013; Summer, 2014). It is observed that teachers have difficulties in arriving at what appropriate and effective approaches to use in teaching grammar. Apart from the fairly traditional approaches of presenting the grammar on the board and letting the

pupils perform a few grammar tasks, teachers have not used innovative approaches to the teaching of English grammar at schools. Grammar is observed to be taught in separate sessions, and the pupils tend to enjoy the other aspects of English teaching more than the grammar parts. Nevertheless, grammar is significant to learn to use English not only correctly, but also appropriately and meaningfully.

Based on the discussions so far, the researcher perceived that grammar is still perceived by most students to be a big problem in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language. Some students found difficult in English because they lack knowledge of grammar. This raises some questions such as: “Why is learning grammar becoming challenging for most students? Is it the students’ fault or is there something wrong with how the teacher teaches grammar? Because of these questions, the researcher intends to explore more about the teaching of English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana.

This is because in learning English as a foreign language is very important to know what kinds of obstacles that mostly found in the process of teaching and learning especially in learning grammar, so that the problems would be easier to solve or to face. Therefore, to get more information, the study intends to explore teaching English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Anecdotal evidence at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra suggests that some of the learners had made up their position in grammar before they entered Senior High School. The root of this negative attitude towards grammar and what can be done about it constitute the core of this study. Informal interactions between the researcher

and some of the pupils at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra who detest grammar reveal that these pupils were taught grammar using a systematic approach.

Though grammar can be taught traditionally or contextually, pupils' perceptions should be considered by teachers in the decision-making process. Pupils need to feel confident that educators have met their needs and educators should be willing to consider the attitudes and perceptions of students when making decisions about how to teach grammar.

In Indonesia, Nawira (2019) analysed challenges in grammatical knowledge for EFL students at the English department of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar. The result showed that challenges were mostly found by the students in developing their grammatical knowledge of speaking and writing. However, the current study was carried out in Ghana whereas Nawira's (2019) study was done in Indonesia. Furthermore, Nawira's (2019) study used a quantitative approach instead of a qualitative approach within the case study design in the current study. Again, Nawira's (2019) study used English language students in higher institutions for data collection as compared to public basic school pupils in the current study.

Also, Tuomas (2015) examined teaching grammar: Errors and grammar teaching methods that can be relevant for Swedish upper secondary schools. The result shows that scientists' publications name different grammar areas that are perceived as problematic for learners all over the world. However, Tuomas' (2015) study was done in Sweden. Also, it was carried out in upper secondary schools as related to basic school in the current study. Again, Tuomas' (2015) study used only secondary sources of data but the current study used both primary and secondary sources of data.

Again, Al-Mekhlafi (2014) surveyed difficulties in teaching and learning grammar in an EFL context. It was found that there are difficulties faced by teachers as well as students about grammar instruction in an EFL context. Also, it was discovered that students experienced difficulties to a greater extent than teachers. But Al-Mekhlafi's (2014) study was done in Oman. Also, this study used a qualitative research approach as a replacement for a quantitative research approach. The current study used JHS pupils for data collection as compared to English language teachers and students in Al-Mekhlafi's (2014) study.

In Africa, an approach to teaching grammar in context to English language learners was investigated by Eldoumi (2012). The results indicated considerable improvement in four out of five participants' skill usage and writing quality using the contextualised grammar method of instruction. However, Eldoumi's (2012) study was conducted in Libya, the current study was done in Ghana. More so, a quantitative approach using an action research design was adopted in Eldoumi's (2012) study instead of a qualitative approach within the case study design in the current study. Again, as an alternative to adult ELL students in Eldoumi's (2012) study, the current study used adolescents in JHS for data collection.

In Ghana, Atta-Asamoah, Doe, Tekpetey and Boham (2014) assessed the teaching effectiveness of the English grammar teacher in public Senior High Schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis using the quality teaching model. It came to light that to a very large extent, English Grammar teachers appropriately teach to produce a deep understanding of important concepts and ideas. It was also realised that they create a supportive learning environment for their students. Largely, learning is made more meaningful and important to students. Doe, Tekpetey and Boham's (2014) study

focused on the teaching effectiveness of the English grammar teacher adopting a quantitative approach using descriptive design.

The current study, on the other hand, used public basic school pupils for data collection. Additionally, Gyasi, Nartey and Coker (2011) conducted preliminary research on first-year university students' knowledge of basic grammar in Cape Coast, Ghana. Key results showed that students who offered Communicative Skills had an abysmal knowledge of parts of speech and that there was no significant difference between students' programmes of study and their performance in identifying parts of speech. It was also found that there was no statistically significant difference between students' gender and their performance on the test. Further, whereas their study focused on first-year university students' knowledge of basic grammar, the current study gave much attention to teaching English grammar to JHS 2 learners.

Much as the systematic method could be said to be contributory to the problem, there is a fundamental phenomenon that has eluded all solution seekers to the problem. Just as attitude and perception can determine the level of success of a person in a particular endeavour, they equally can be seen to be key to competence in the use of English as a medium of communication. Paradoxically, this has been ignored. A close examination of the perceptual and attitudinal disposition of pupils at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra and even English language teachers, particularly towards English grammar, would explain to a great extent the underlying cause of the falling standard of English in Ghana.

Moreover, the attitude of policymakers in general towards improving English is worth examining and this would be a major step towards finding solutions to the problem that confronts most learners of English Language in Ghana. Suppose no research is

conducted to ascertain the teaching of English Grammar to basic learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra. In that case, it can go a long way to affect the performance of these pupils in the English language in particular and other subjects in general during their final examination (Basic Education Certificate Examination [BECE]). Therefore, this study sought to explore teaching English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

English grammar, despite its importance in language learning, seems to be associated with boring rules and red ink by many. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore challenges and strategies related to teaching English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.
2. Ascertain possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.
3. identify strategies to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. What difficulties do JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra?
2. What are the possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra?
3. What strategies can be used to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra?

1.6 Significance of the Study

For English language teachers at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, the findings of the study provide more information and input material to the teachers to increase their knowledge about what the challenges in grammatical knowledge are, especially for the EFL learners. For the pupils, results from the study provide strategies to help them understand their challenges in grammatical knowledge.

The findings of the study provide the needed information and knowledge about the main challenge in developing grammatical knowledge for JHS 2 pupils at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra. Future researchers are provided with knowledge about the main problems or challenges faced by pupils in developing grammatical knowledge. Similarly, the findings of the study can be used as a reference for their research proposal/project/dissertation/thesis.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to the teaching of English grammar to learners. Also, it was delimited to public basic school learners in JHS 2 at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. Subheadings covered included: difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in

learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra and strategies to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra. Again, a qualitative approach was used for the study. Furthermore, the study used a descriptive case study design.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms

English Grammar: For this study, “English grammar” refers to the set of rules and principles governing the structure and use of the English language, including syntax, morphology, and punctuation.

Exploration: In this research context, it refers to the investigation and analysis of the current state of English grammar teaching practices at Kwashieman 2 Basic School, including observing classroom instruction, reviewing teaching materials, and gathering feedback from teachers and students.

Form Two Learners: Form Two learners are students attending the second year of Junior High School at Kwashieman 2 Basic School, aged between 12-and above years.

Junior High School: This study pertains to the educational level that follows primary education, typically consisting of three years, and corresponds to the ages of 12 and above years.

Teaching of English Grammar: This study, refers to the instructional methods, techniques, and strategies employed by teachers at Kwashieman 2 Basic School to

impart knowledge and understanding of English grammar rules and concepts to Form Two learners.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The study involved a relatively small sample size, which limited the generalisability of the findings to a larger population. Thus, Kwashieman 2 Basic School did not fully represent all schools in the study area and the results may not apply to other educational settings. Also, the study relied on self-reporting from English language teachers, which can be subject to social desirability bias. Participants may have provided answers they believe the researcher wants to hear instead of their true experiences or opinions. Again, the study might not account for external factors that could influence grammar learning, such as students' motivation, home environment, or previous English language exposure.

1.10 Organisation of the Study

The study consists of five chapters which are as follows: Chapter one deals with the introduction which captures the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, operational definitions of terms and organisation of the study. Chapter two deals with the review of related literature. Subheadings to be discussed include theoretical framework, difficulties pupils face in learning English grammar, sources of difficulties pupils face in learning English grammar and how pupils can be helped in dealing with the difficulties they face in learning English grammar.

Chapter three deals with the methodology of the study. This includes the research approach, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique,

data collection instrument, trustworthiness of the interviews, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations. Chapter four deals with results and a discussion of results. Chapter five of the study covers a summary of the main findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for future studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore teaching English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. This chapter presents the review of literature related to the study. The discussion is done under the following subheadings:

1. Theoretical Framework
2. The Concept of Teaching
3. The Concept of English Grammar
4. Concepts in Grammar Teaching
5. Difficulties Pupils face in Learning English Grammar
6. Sources of Difficulties Pupils Face in Learning English Grammar
7. Strategies in dealing with Difficulties Pupils face in Learning English Grammar
8. Chapter Summary

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Constructivist Theory was used to underpin this study. Constructivist theory is an educational theory that suggests learners actively construct their knowledge and understanding of the world through their experiences, interactions, and reflections (Piaget, 1970). According to this theory, learning is an active process where learners build upon their existing knowledge and mental models to construct new meanings and concepts (Piaget, 1970).

Jean Piaget and John Dewey are two of the pioneer sages whose names are associated with the Constructivist theory (Morphew, 2000). The Constructivist theory is initially based on inquiry teaching and learning. In this theory, learning is believed to occur through discovery and experimentation with facts (Leonard, 2002). Constructivists advocate the notion that learners build knowledge of new things by relating it to their own experiences. Thus, this theory accounts for the prior knowledge of the learner and it differentiates between students' needs (Morphew, 2000; Semple, 2000). In this theory, teachers are coaches or facilitators who guide the students to acquire knowledge (Hanley, 1994).

The Constructivist theory is based on a student-centred method and focuses on the process, not the product, of learning (Leonard, 2002). Further, the Constructivist theory stresses the role of the learner's brain and how it affects the learning process (Leonard, 2002). Thus, it takes into consideration the mental role and learners' activation of prior knowledge. Further, this theory can be linked to Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory in terms of providing comprehensible input that students can relate to to learn a language.

This theory was adopted because according to constructivism, learners' prior knowledge and experiences play a significant role in their learning process. When teaching English grammar to Form Two students, teachers may encounter difficulties if students have misconceptions or gaps in their existing language knowledge. Some students may struggle with grammar concepts because they have not fully grasped the foundational grammar rules taught in earlier grades (Brooks & Brooks, 1999).

Constructivism emphasizes the importance of active engagement in the learning process. Difficulties in teaching English grammar to Form Two students may arise if

the instruction is primarily passive and does not encourage students to actively participate in constructing their understanding of grammar rules. Learners need opportunities to practice grammar exercises, engage in discussions, and apply grammar rules in meaningful contexts to foster deeper comprehension (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996).

Further, Constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Collaborative learning and peer support can positively impact the understanding of grammar concepts. Difficulties in English grammar instruction may arise when learners are not given opportunities to discuss grammar rules, share ideas, and learn from one another (Vygotsky, 1978).

Moreover, Constructivist theory advocates for learning experiences that have real-world relevance and application. Difficulties in teaching English grammar may occur when grammar lessons lack authentic contexts that demonstrate the practical use of grammar rules in everyday communication. Connecting grammar instruction to real-life situations can enhance learners' motivation and understanding (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

Again, this theory was adopted because the researcher conceptualised that if English language teachers provide the learning materials to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, it would help them manipulate the learning materials. Through the manipulation, the researcher believes that these pupils would be able to discover new things about English grammar. In this sense, the researcher believes that the English language teachers would serve as coaches and guide these pupils to learn English grammar. The researcher is also of the opinion that when these pupils are allowed by the English language teachers to manipulate the learning

materials, lessons that would be learnt can be retained for a long. Moreover, the researcher is of the view that when these pupils are placed in the middle of the teaching and learning process, it would assist these learners in building knowledge of new things by relating it to their own experiences.

In brief, Constructivist theory helped explain difficulties learners face in the teaching of English grammar to Form Two students by emphasizing the role of prior knowledge, active engagement, social interaction, and real-world application in the learning process. By understanding these principles, educators can design more effective and meaningful grammar instruction that addresses learners' needs and enhances their grammar learning experiences.

2.2 The Concept of Teaching

Teaching is a process of imparting knowledge, skills, and attitudes to people. It can be formal or informal. Teaching involves various procedures through which teachers guide students. Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta (2015 as cited in Sekyi-Acquah, 2009) also explain teaching as an activity of imparting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to learners. The teacher is the one who is charged with the duty of imparting knowledge to the students. The whole process of teaching involves creating a suitable environment which will favour learning and the teaching process.

All the definitions of teaching suggest that teaching is a complex process which encompasses various components. These are the teacher, students and the subject matter; which is the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are being imparted. These components play very important roles as they interact continuously, making it possible for an effective teaching and learning process. These components in teaching are closely interrelated and each works hand-in-hand.

2.2.1 The teaching and learning process

Teaching is a process which encompasses various stages and components. This process is carried out in a context where the principal agents are the subject matter, the teacher and the students. According to Tamakloe et al. (2015 as cited in Sekyi-Acquah, 2009), these three components or focal points form a triadic relationship which has been depicted in Figure 2.1.

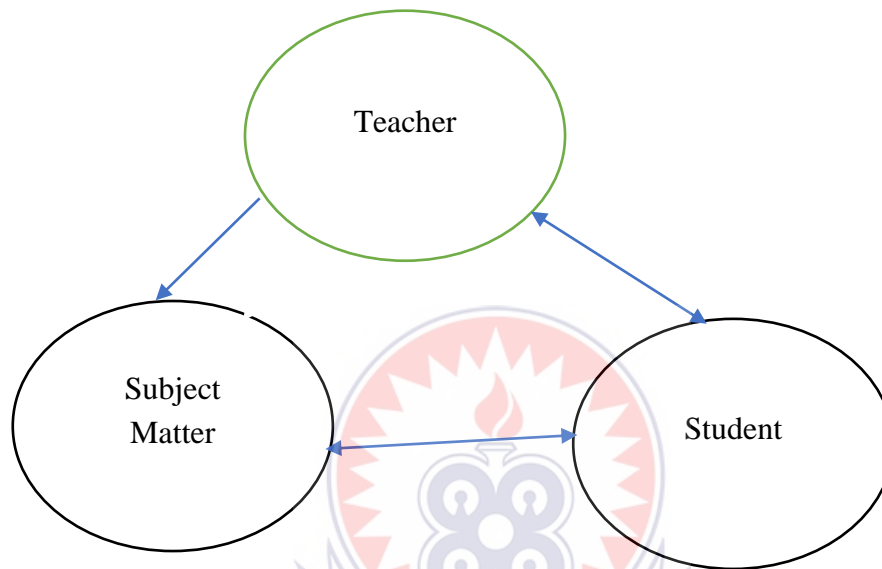


Figure 2.1: The triadic relationship of teaching

Source: Adopted from Sekyi-Acquah (2009)

The triadic relationship of teaching as opined by Tamakloe et al. (2015) gives a pictorial representation of the various components of teaching and how each relates to bringing about effective teaching and learning. At the top is the teacher, whose core business is teaching. The teacher must always be abreast with the subject matter he is teaching. This, Arends (1988) together with others points out as the baseline for effective teaching. The subject matter is the knowledge and skills that are being imparted to the students. There is also the student, the final consumer in the teaching process. The student receives the knowledge and skills; the subject matter, which the teacher is imparting.

As indicated by Tamakloe et al (2015 as cited in Sekyi-Acquah, 2009), “A mastery of the subject matter and its methodology instil confidence in the teacher and this reflects on the learner” (p. 75). The teacher is thus supposed to be abreast with his subject matter. Arends (1988) emphatically states that the baseline for effective teaching is mastery over the subject matter. He must have prior knowledge of what he is about to teach. This requires vigorous and extensive preparation towards teaching. When a teacher is adequately prepared and has mastery of the subject matter, he demonstrates confidence in teaching. This gives the learners some sort of trust in what the teacher is teaching and makes learning understandable. The teacher employs numerous teaching methodologies in the process of imparting the subject matter to students. Apart from the teacher being abreast with his content, he must employ various teaching methodologies to ensure that what he is teaching has been perfectly absorbed by the learner.

The learner or student acquires knowledge after being taught. The learner is expected to exhibit a change in attitude after the teacher has taken him through the teaching and learning process. The only means that the teacher will know that the learner has acquired a change in attitude is through evaluation. The teacher organises various evaluations to ascertain whether students have understood what they were taught. If a student demonstrates a low level of subject matter acquisition, a teacher must then reconstruct how that subject matter was taught for better understanding to students.

Tamakloe et al. (2015 as cited in Sekyi-Acquah, 2009), summarize the teaching and learning interaction thus: The teacher exerts some influence on the taught (learner) and the taught in turn exerts some influence on the teacher. So, it is with the teacher and the discipline as well as the taught and the discipline. The influence that the

teacher and the teacher exert on the discipline may eventually lead to its transformation. The influence that the discipline exerts on the teacher and the taught may help to transform their behaviour or their total lifestyle; and so, would the relationship between the teacher and the taught.

2.2.2 Effective teaching

Teacher effectiveness is a concept, which is very broad and defies a clear-cut definition. This is because different researchers approach the subject from their perspectives. For instance, Goe, Bell and Little (2008) posit that the evaluation of teachers in general can be approached from three different but related angles: measurements of inputs, processes and outputs.

Inputs, which are also known as “teacher quality”, are explained by Goe et al (2008) as what teachers bring to their positions, generally measured as teacher background, beliefs, expectations, experience, pedagogical content knowledge, certification and licensure, and educational attainment. The broad nature of the concept with its characteristic absence of a clear-cut definition is likely to make a study related to it very difficult to conceptualise. Goe et al. (2008), however, are of the view that there is a need to clarify the way teacher effectiveness is defined for two main reasons:

First what is measured is a reflection of what is valued, and as a corollary, what is measured is valued. Definitions nominate and shape what needs to be measured.... when policy conversations concern the interactions between teachers and students, the focus shifts to classrooms and documenting effective interactions among teachers and their students.... In addition, different definitions lead to different policy solutions.... When classroom processes are discussed, particular practices or approaches to teaching become the focus (p. 7).

It is therefore very important to define teacher effectiveness to limit the scope and also to provide direction for the study. Some scholars have attempted to give various definitions of teacher effectiveness depending on the context within which the concept is being used. For instance, Anderson (2004) is of the view that effective teachers are those who achieve goals which they set for themselves or that others have set for them. This definition limits teacher effectiveness to only the output or product conception. This conception places more emphasis on product variables, which Kyriacou (1995) has described as “all those educational outcomes which are desired by teachers and which have formed the basis of either teacher’s planning of the learning activities and/or of objectives or criteria which can be used to consider and monitor effectiveness” (p. 11). Thus, an effective teacher is measured by the educational achievements of his or her learners (usually attainments on standardized tests).

It is most likely that most people, especially, parents and other stakeholders in education may readily agree to the idea that an effective teacher should help students learn more than expected. It is also agreeable that students’ achievement on standardized tests can easily be measured and used as a criterion for measuring teacher effectiveness. Thus, it is important to note that this definition of teacher effectiveness has a serious limitation.

The cause-and-effect relationship implied between teacher effectiveness and student attainment requires the establishment of what part of effectiveness to attribute solely to the teacher. This may be difficult to determine for both practical and logical reasons. Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) explain this problem by pointing out the fact that “success at learning requires a combination of circumstances well beyond

the actions of a teacher” (p. 191). This is because learning does not arise solely based on teacher activity, but also from other sources such as other teachers, peers, school resources, school climate, etc. They also explain that learners are not passive receptors of information directed at them but rather active participants in the teaching and learning process.

There is, however, more to the concept - “teacher effectiveness” than only the product of teaching. Perhaps, a look at the following two definitions will give us a better idea of teacher effectiveness: The first definition is that given by Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs and Robinson (2005) which states: “Teacher effectiveness is the impact that classroom factors, such as teaching methods, teacher expectations, classroom organisations and use of classroom resources, have on students’ performance” (p. 3). The second definition of teacher effectiveness is that implied by Kyriacou (1995) in his definition of effective teaching. According to him, “effective teaching is essentially concerned with how best to bring about the desired pupil learning through some educational activity” (p. 9).

Both definitions stretch teacher effectiveness to include what Kyriacou (1995) describes as “all those characteristics of teacher and pupil behaviour and of the learning task and activities which take place in the classroom and which may have some bearing on the success of the learning activity” (p. 11). It is refreshing to note that whatever desired and observed change in the behaviour of the learner is achieved at the end of the teaching and learning process, is a result of certain input and process variables employed by the teacher in the teaching and learning process (Sekye-Acquah, 2009). It is these input and process variables that make it possible for a teacher to be effective in the execution of his or her duties. These variables which

constitute attributes of teacher effectiveness will be considered in the discussion of the models of teacher effectiveness.

2.3 The Concept of English Grammar

Grammar is an important element of a language. Mastering the grammar of a language will affect the mastery of language skills. Therefore, in studying language formally, grammar is a subject that should be studied in depth. The students need to be given adequate provision of grammar so that they have good language skills (Effendi et al., 2017). Grammar is important in learning English as a foreign language. In this case, grammar guides the students in constructing English sentences to communicate with other people. Grammar is bound to other language skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Muhsin,2015).

Coghill et al. (2003) stated that the grammar of a language is the set of rules that govern its structure. Grammar determines how words are arranged to form meaningful units. Similar to Coghill and Magendanz, (2003), stated that grammar is the rules that show how words are combined, arranged, or altered to show certain kinds of meaning. According to Ur (1988), grammar can be defined by manipulating and combining words so that longer units of meaning can be formed. She also mentions that knowledge of grammar is essential for learning any language. According to Fromkin et al. (1990) the sounds and sound patterns, the basic units of meaning such as words and the rules to combine them to form new sentences constitute the grammar of a language. In addition, Kolln and Funk (2010) point out three definitions of grammar. First, grammar is the system of rules in our heads. Second, grammar is the formal description of the rules. And the third, grammar is the social implication of usage.

Additionally, there are several ways one can use to define grammar, and many have written definitions of grammar, based on for example their language view. One definition, which is found in the Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar, says that grammar is “the entire system of a language, including its syntax, morphology, semantics and phonology” (Chalker & Weiner, 1994, p. 177). Other definitions, often popularly used, include the structural rules of a language but exclude vocabulary, semantics and phonology.

Whether a definition of grammar comprises structural aspects only, or whether it also covers semantics and functions, depends strongly on the current view on language and learning. This will be exemplified later in this chapter by looking at some of the various approaches to grammar teaching over the past century. The term grammar is also used in the sense of a book containing rules of grammar, or it can be used as an individual’s application of the rules. In this thesis, the researcher would not give attention to the two latter, but rather focus on grammar as a language system and how grammar is used for communication and to make meaning.

A characteristic of the field is that there have been shifting views on grammar teaching. These shifts are often described as pendulum swings between two main views, i.e., between teaching the function of grammar and the forms of grammar. At one extreme, grammar is a fundamental part of language teaching, with mastering grammar as the aim of the teaching. At the other extreme, grammar has little or no place at all in language teaching. Throughout the history of grammar teaching, one extreme often has replaced the other.

The two definitions of grammar presented next, both written by Ur, illustrate some differences between these two views. Although there are traces of the importance of

meaning and communication in both definitions, the first is more focused on the rules and forms of grammar, whereas the second has a clearer focus on grammar as a means to express meaning acceptably and appropriately.

Grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) to form longer units of meaning (...). There is a set of rules which govern how units of meaning may be constructed in any language: we may say that a learner who ‘knows grammar’ has mastered and can apply these rules to express him or herself in what would be acceptable language forms (Ur, 1988, p. 4).

Also, grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) to express certain kinds of meaning, some of which cannot be conveyed adequately by vocabulary alone. These include the way ideas are grouped and related, and the purposes of utterances (statement, question, request, and many others). Grammar may also serve to express time relations, singular/plural distinctions and many other aspects of meaning. There are rules which govern how words have to be manipulated and organized to express these meanings: A competent speaker of the language will be able to apply these rules to convey his or her chosen meaning effectively and acceptably (Ur, 2009, p. 3).

In the first definition, central words are “mastering” of the language, “rules” and “forms”, whereas significant phrases in the second definition are “express meanings”, “purposes of utterances” and “aspects of meaning”. Summer (2011) says that the second definition implies that “we are moving towards a perception of a meaning-oriented concept of pedagogical grammar that considers rules as an aid to expressing meaningful language” (p. 22).

Where linguistic grammar is concerned with what grammar is and how it works, pedagogical grammar is more specifically concerned with how grammar is described for learning purposes and how it should be taught in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom (Summer, 2011). In other words, pedagogical grammar is grammar developed for learners of a foreign language. According to Newby (2000), the main issues discussed in pedagogical grammar are:

1. The aims of grammar teaching (knowing about grammar or using grammar; manipulating sentences or free production)
2. the categorisation of grammar (form, meaning, use) into units which will form a syllabus or teaching objectives
3. the extent to which grammar should be dealt with separately from other aspects of language
4. the use of rules, in particular in how far a conscious focus on grammar rules assists acquisition
5. the type of grammatical exercises activities and tasks which will lead to automatisisation (p. 1).

An important, but often avoided, question when it comes to grammar teaching is: what are the aims of grammar teaching? How grammar is taught, influences how the pupils learn grammar. Newby (personal communication, February 1, 2013) formulates the aims of grammar learning in the following way: The overall aim of learning grammar is to be able to express your ideas in real situations in language that is as correct, meaningful and appropriate as possible. It is the teacher's task to facilitate this grammatical skill with maximum efficiency.

Newby stresses language performance; the meaningfulness of grammar; a realistic view of grammatical correctness; and the teacher's role in finding appropriate methodology for the learning of grammar and language. The aims of grammar learning should be reflected in the way grammar is taught. In the citation below, Ellis (2006) broadly defines grammar teaching as any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand grammar metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalise it.

The outcome of grammar teaching can be, according to this definition, both learning of formal grammar with a focus on the structures of the language, and/or learning of the ability to use grammar in practice. Throughout the history of language teaching, there have been shifting views on how to teach grammar. However, the teaching of grammar can be defined broadly as any instructional technique used to learn grammar (Timmis, 2012).

Furthermore, previously, the teaching of grammar was traditionally dominated by the grammar-translation method, where the learners' mother tongue is used and seen as important in explaining the meaning of the target language. This was done by translating the target language into the native languages. An example of this was highlighted by Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Richards and Rodgers (2001) who claim that the grammar-translation method requires learners to learn grammar rules and vocabulary of the target language.

After that, learners are provided with an explanation of grammar rules in their mother tongue. Next, they would be given examples, told to memorise them, and then asked to apply the rules to other examples. Since the introduction of English language

teaching, grammar is perceived as a component that could complement other language skills: Listening, speaking, reading and writing. Grammar plays an important part in grasping and producing spoken language because learning grammar is considered fundamental in acquiring the correct utterances of the language (Widodo, 2004). As for reading, grammar enables learners to understand the interrelationship of sentences within a paragraph, a passage and a text. Apart from that, applying grammar rules also allows the learners to organize their ideas into comprehensible sentences so that successful communication can be achieved through a written form.

In the case of vocabulary, grammar gives learners some pathways on how some lexical items should be combined into a sentence so that they can form meaningful and communicative statements or expressions. This is supported by Doff (2000) who believes that learning grammar enables students to express meanings in the form of phrases, clauses and sentences. Grammar is seen as a fundamental part of language learning. When learners are exposed to grammar, they are indirectly taught the use of language. Previous studies show that the teaching of grammar is important for L2 learners in enhancing their language learning (Thornbury, 1999). However, the issue of the best approach to teaching grammar has been debated for more than four decades among scholars in the field of second language acquisition (Ellis, 2001). Language instructors (English teachers and lecturers) were also found to hold different views on grammar teaching.

2.3.1 The importance of grammar

Muhsin (2015) stated that there are some advantages of studying grammar, those were:

- a) Grammar is vital to preparing for examinations. After all, people want to do a great job and earn high marks. But there is a deeper importance to excellent grammar than simply scoring high on the tests. We also want to be able to communicate with people effectively- at work, at home, with friends and with strangers.
- b) Great grammar will make someone a better listener, speaker, reader, writer and communicator. Words are just words until we learn how to organize them. With excellent grammar, we will learn to say what we mean. There will be less misunderstanding and better communication.
- c) Great grammar builds up our style. Once someone becomes more advanced in English, she/ he can develop her/ his unique style of communicating, which can lead to a rewarding career as a writer or public speaker.
- d) Logic and reasoning. Understanding and using grammar properly would help people think logically. Without logic and organisation, writing (and all other communication skills) will be much disorganised. The more we understand grammar, the more clearly, meaningfully, and freely we will be able to organise and communicate our ideas as well as comprehend the ideas of others.

2.4 Concepts in Grammar Teaching

This section discusses some concepts of grammar teaching based on scholars' points of view.

2.4.1 Form and Function

Form means the external characteristics of the language (Chalker and Weiner, 1994), i.e., the structure of the language. In formal grammar, which has to do with the forms of language and often refers to the instructed learning found in the traditional teaching of language, little attention is given to meaning (semantics) and use and context (pragmatics) (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). For many people learning a language is synonymous with explicitly learning its grammar (Eisenmann & Summer, 2012). Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1988) say: "Not only has grammatical focus long been considered a necessary part of language instruction; it has also even to this day often been considered a sufficient condition for successful language learning" (p. 15).

In formal grammar teaching, the classroom contents are typically organised mainly based on analysis of language forms, rather than language functions and real communication. The language is often divided into parts and taught in isolation. The presentation-practice production (PPP) approach to grammar teaching has been widely accepted and used, despite the lack of support by research findings (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). In the PPP approach, a grammar rule is typically presented to the learners, then the learners accomplish various tasks to practice the rule or structure, and finally, they might use the rule or structure more freely in communicative tasks. Many have used this method successfully, while others question its value. Some deficiencies to consider with the PPP approach are that rules can be abstract and inappropriate for some (especially young) learners; and learners are not always able to

transfer their knowledge from practice exercises into real written or spoken communication (Larsen-Freeman, 2001).

Form and formal grammar are often contrasted with function and functional grammar. Functional grammar has a different starting point than formal grammar, and the focus is mainly on social interactions, communication and why some forms are more appropriate than others. Some say that language is not considered to be a set of rules since language use is what is of importance (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). This is somewhat problematic because grammar does have to do with rules and the structure of the language. It cannot be claimed that grammar is purely functional, although it has functions and these functions are of utmost importance. Nonetheless, the approaches used to teach grammatical items can have different starting points, for example, whether grammar is explained in terms of language use and meanings or rather in terms of rules, perhaps using abstract grammatical terms (metalanguage).

Larsen-Freeman (2001) explains the functional view on grammar in the following way: “What is of interest (...) is not that the rules generate grammatical sentences, but rather that the production of rule-governed sentences is the means to coherent communication” (p. 36). Function stresses the semantic role of sentences, and how language functions pragmatically and socially, rather than formally (Chalker and Weiner, 1994). Larsen-Freeman (2003) says that grammar has to do with rules and that the rules are helpful, and also that it is easier to understand “how” when you understand “why”. Thus, grammar rules should not be learnt in isolation, but rather in a way that is meaningful and helps the pupils understand the language and how it is best used.

In the 1970s Halliday described seven language functions. People use language to get things done (instrumental); to control the behaviour of others (regulatory); to create interaction with others (interactional); to express personal feelings and meanings (personal); to learn and discover (heuristic); to create a world of imagination (imaginative); and to communicate information (informative) (Halliday, 1975). These functions are developed in three phases according to Halliday. From a native speaker's point of view, the child develops a sense of meaning first, then he learns to express meaning, in simple words first, and then at the final stage (adult), he can express meaning in appropriate manners for these functions.

2.4.2 Meaning

Grammar can be described as a means of expressing certain types of meaning notions and functions through grammatical forms. The primary function of language is interaction and communication. However, in traditional approaches to grammar, rules and forms are the starting points for grammar teaching. Both communicative and cognitive approaches stress that meaning happens before form, that is speakers use forms to express what they mean. Thus, grammar can be presented as a set of meanings, i.e. functions and notions, rather than a set of rules (for example, A *verb* is a *doing* word). As a result of the idea that “in actual language use meanings give rise to forms and not vice versa” (Newby, 1998, p. 188), some syllabuses define grammar as a set of meanings, either functions or notions, rather than as a set of forms. The functional-notional syllabus design was a result of the large-scale attempt to incorporate a broader view of language than the structural view into the syllabus in the 1970s.

Structural syllabuses were increasingly criticised because they tended to focus on only one aspect of language, i.e. formal grammar (Nunan, 1988). However, in the 1970s stronger emphasis was given to the purposes and functions of language, and the use of notional syllabuses was applied in the development of communicative competence. In many textbooks, grammar was described in terms of notional, rather than formal, labels. Functions can be defined as “the communicative purposes for which we use language” and *notions* as “the conceptual meanings expressed through language” (Nunan 1988, p. 35).

Newby (1998) defines notions as a single grammatical concept, which is encoded into a form, or “single meanings that are expressed through forms” (p. 188). Examples of notional categories are time, duration, movement, location, and space. Chalker and Weiner (1994, p. 266) say that suggested notional categories covered three areas: semantic-grammatical (for example, time and space), modal meaning, and functions (for example, how to express disapproval, persuasion, or agreement). (...) In later developments in foreign language teaching, the term notional tended to be restricted to the first category (general concepts of time and space, and many others) which were explicitly contrasted with functions, such as agreement or suasion.

Language is complex. A single form can realise more than one function. Furthermore, a given function can be realised in more than one form. When the notion categories, rather than the formal categories, are the starting point for grammar teaching (for example, intention rather than going to), there is a stronger focus on how grammar functions and the various purposes of language can be identified. A meaning-based approach to grammar teaching reflects how grammar is used in real life and makes it possible to integrate context and grammar. Meaningful learning likely happens when

cognitive and affective needs are met because the pupils engage more strongly in the learning process.

Drills, for example, do not activate the mind nor engage the pupils in such a way that meaningful learning is likely to happen. Tasks in which they must solve a problem or where they have their curiosity satisfied are much more meaningful. Learning is meaningful when the pupils are allowed to learn from each other, associate new items with existing knowledge, and have an overall focus on language meaning.

2.4.3 Pragmatics and discourse in grammar teaching

The terms pragmatics and discourse are not emphasised in traditional grammar teaching, but in the light of communicative competence and a functional view of grammar, they are rather significant. Pragmatics has to do with language use in sociocultural contexts. Crystal (as cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001) defines pragmatics as “(...) the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (p. 2).

In communication, there are many possibilities and pragmatic strategies for conveying communicative acts and meaning. To be a competent speaker the pupil must learn to use the language appropriately when it comes to these matters. The social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance, and proper social behaviour is also a significant aspect of language use (Rose & Kasper, 2001). Pragmatics is an important part of communicative competence.

In Canale and Swain's review of this concept (as cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001), pragmatics is included in what they call *sociolinguistic competence*. Pragmatic ability is a necessary part of EFL teaching. EFL pupils often have little access to target language input outside the classroom (although Norwegian pupils are to a considerable degree exposed to English movies, music, games, and many others). Most pupils have even fewer opportunities for productive use of the language outside the classroom. When most of the experience with the foreign language takes place within the classroom, how do teachers effectively teach pragmatics?

Rose and Kasper (2001) suggest that pupils must be made aware of the pragmatic knowledge that is either universal or transferrable from their native language to start with. Pupils often have trouble using what they already know in new tasks, and thus might need encouragement to use this underlying knowledge. They must also be made aware of cross-cultural differences. In the audio-lingual method, for example, some of the conversations that were practised might not have been appropriate to have with strangers from other cultures. If one asks someone one has recently met "how much is your salary", that could be perceived as inappropriate for sociocultural, although not for grammatical, reasons. As the example illustrates, not only knowledge of how to use grammar correctly but also knowledge of how to use grammar appropriately is significant in language learning. Pragmatic abilities are tied to grammatical and lexical structures. One way to approach grammar is through a focus on pragmatics and language use. The pupils get a chance to focus not only on the formal possible ways to utter something, but also to understand the importance of social, cultural, and contextual aspects in communication.

Topics related to social and cultural aspects are included in *The Knowledge Promotion* and EFL textbooks today. However, grammar is perhaps not so much integrated with these topics. Discourse-based approaches to grammar teaching are linked to pragmatics. Structural approaches to EFL teaching have traditionally emphasised grammar instruction alone and described and studied grammar as “context-free knowledge” (Hinkel & Fotos, 2002, p. 120). A discourse-based approach to language teaching, on the other hand, would focus not only on grammatical forms but also on the meaning and use of the forms in context.

Nassaji and Fotos (2011) recognise the pragmatic meaning in context as an essential function of grammar. Many grammatical items and rules cannot be explained without reference to context, as they are context-dependent. A sentence can be understood in one way if it is understood literally and in a quite different way if contextual and pragmatic factors are considered. A grammatically correct utterance is, as already mentioned, not necessarily appropriate. Thus, discursal knowledge, in addition to grammatical and lexical knowledge, is significant. Discursal knowledge takes into account what has already been mentioned and what is likely to be mentioned next. Consequently, context and discourse should be included in the teaching of grammar. Grammar should be taught “through context-embedded discourse rather than through abstract, context-free sentences” (Celce-Murcia, 2002, p. 122).

Grammar is seen as a complex process of making context-based choices that are influenced by psychological and social factors as well as syntax and vocabulary. Because of this complexity, it is insufficient to work with grammar rules in isolation and practice grammar only at the sentence level. In a discourse view on language teaching, there is a stronger focus on the interaction between linguistic forms and

pragmatic conditions than an analysis of the grammatical structure alone (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

There are several reasons for incorporating discourse into EFL teaching. Hughes and McCarthy (1998) point out the following: first, in a traditional approach, teaching the paradigms (a list of formal choices that realise contrasting meanings within particular sets of words) is important. Learning the paradigms is an important step in mastering the English grammar. On the other hand, the items of the traditionally organised grammatical paradigms do not necessarily correspond with the choices in authentic communicative situations. That is, not all grammatically possible alternatives are actual choices in real-life communication.

Second, the pedagogical grammar rules are often too simple. The simplified rules work for most pupils in most situations. However, although the pupils manage to create well-formed sentences by the rules given, the rules do not necessarily offer sufficiently precise guidelines to choose the most appropriate alternatives in all contexts. Teachers often seem to move from sentence to discourse level when they need to explain a grammatical item and the conventional rules do not say enough to help the pupils produce appropriate language, i.e. the “exceptions” are often explained by discourse. Third, discourse is often suitable when explaining the differences between spoken and written grammar. Although both modes share much grammar, some grammar occurs much more often in one than the other. These differences are best explained by observing the occurrences in discourse.

Fourth, some grammatical items cannot be fully understood when seen only in isolated sentences (for example, this/that/it and many word order phenomena need to be seen in a larger context than the sentence). There are certain benefits with

sentence-based grammar as well: for many, the sentence is a manageable item to work with; the rules are clear and it can be convenient in the classroom (for example, can be written on the board, analysed and changed); the decontextualisation can be a benefit for attention or learning load; the framework appeals to the analytical learner; and the terminology used has a long history and is the same for all pupils and teachers, which can be beneficial.

On the other hand, the view of language as a series of units that can be detached from context fails to help the pupils in stringing together longer sections of discourse. Another disadvantage is that traditionally learning the language may result in the pupils having to relearn it in a way that makes the structures usable in authentic use. However, a discourse-based approach can be messy in the sense that it may not give clear rules. This may cause uncertainties both for the pupils and the teachers. There are certain advantages as well as disadvantages with both discourse and sentence-based approaches as seen above.

However, they are not mutually exclusive. The motivation for moving from sentence to discourse level is not to change something if it works perfectly fine, but “to represent more accurately actual language in use” (Hughes & McCarthy, 1998, p. 268). Within the communicative paradigm and a discourse-based view, the communicative use of grammar, thus, the ability to understand and use grammar in communicative contexts, is of utmost importance. Pragmatics and discourse play an important role here, and should perhaps have an even greater place in the teaching of grammar than it traditionally has had.

2.5 Difficulties Pupils face in Learning English Grammar

Effendi et al. (2017) this study focused on A Study on Grammar Teaching at an English Education Department in an EFL Context. The data obtained are analysed by using two methods, those methods were Quantitative and qualitative. The population of this study is English students in the 2, 4, and 6 semesters. The samples were taken by random technique. That technique was used to accumulate the data from the observation, testing and distributing questionnaire. Those instruments are used to know the students' grammar mastery and also, the difficulties faced by the students in grammar. In this research, the researcher did not choose the population and sample as the participants, but the researcher used the subject as the participants in this research. The issue of this research was some of the EFL learners of the English Department at the University Muhammadiyah of Makassar.

The technique of data collection was by distributed questionnaire. Widianingsih (2016) study focused on Grammatical Difficulties Encountered by Second Language Learners of English. This study to find out the errors made by language learners. Thus, the notion of the difference between errors and mistakes was not explicitly addressed in this research. It focuses more on error analysis theory in its nature. In this research, the researcher investigated the challenges only in grammatical knowledge faced by the EFL learners at the University Muhammadiyah of Makassar.

Sopin (2015) this research focused on Students' Perceptions of Grammar Teaching and Learning in English Language Classrooms in Libya. The purpose of this study was not to discover whether or not it is necessary to teach grammar explicitly. It was to find out what the students' perceptions were on focus on form and error correction, and where these perceptions came from. From this study, it seems that even students

from similar backgrounds may have very different preferences regarding grammar teaching.

It was also, evident that students do feel that there is a role for grammar instruction in language education. The students in the study, all having learned English in a foreign language setting, seem to agree that being in an ESL context, they need to have more of an English-speaking environment to improve their language proficiency. They decided that in the past, grammar instruction had been helpful, but now it should be limited. There is no doubt that individuals do differ in the amount of explicit grammar instruction they wish to have and that their perceptions of the importance of grammar instruction will change with time and circumstances.

Refnita (2014) this study focused on Students' Grammatical Problems in Writing Simple Paragraphs: Lack of Grammatical Competency or Language Carelessness? She believed that the lack of grammatical competence and language carelessness might have adverse effects on the quality of sentence constructions written by EFL learners, particularly in Indonesia. The lack of grammatical competence and language carelessness, of course, is not a reasonable condition in any programs of EFL learning. Notably, writing skill needs sufficient language awareness and grammatical competency. It is suggested that all programs of English grammar and writing instructions should be addressed to build and develop students' grammatical competence and language awareness. By doing so, grammar instructions help develop and improve students' linguistic and communicative competencies which can be practically seen in writing and other language skills. Because of Renita's statement above, the researcher realised how vital grammar is. Therefore, the researcher wanted to find out what is the main challenge in developing grammatical knowledge,

hopefully, it can help increase grammatical knowledge after knowing the main challenge in developing grammatical knowledge.

Al-mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011) this study focused on Difficulties in Teaching and Learning Grammar in an EFL Context. The study was mainly quantitative in design, using a questionnaire and the subjects responded to each statement on a five-point Likert-type attitude scale (from 5 for 'strongly agree' to 1 for 'strongly disagree'). The respondents also provided background information on gender, qualification, teaching experience and the level they teach, for creating their profile in terms of variables. The data was analysed using the SPSS (t-test and ANOVA). In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative and the researchers only focused on analysing challenges in improving grammatical knowledge faced by EFL students at the University Muhammadiyah of Makassar.

2.6 Sources of Difficulties Pupils Face in Learning English Grammar

According to Yusof's (2018) findings, some difficulties faced by English teachers and students in the teaching and learning of grammar were the following:

a) Students' needs

One of the English lecturers claimed that she did not know the students' needs while two of them believed that correcting students' mistakes is also a challenge as they do not know precisely when they should correct the students' mistakes, especially in speaking class. Three of the English lecturers said that having students with low proficiency is also a challenge while two more English lecturers claimed that their students had negative attitudes towards grammar.

b) Experience

The second theme is Experience. Four of the English lecturers claimed that they lack experience which makes it difficult to teach grammar while three of them teach grammar through a trial and error process as they were not taught ways of teaching grammar. Eight respondents were not TESL graduates and they were also not taught techniques of teaching grammar. Therefore, this has become a disadvantage for them compared to those with a TESL background.

c) Facilities

In terms of facilities, two English lecturers stated that even though they have enough facilities, most of them are not working well. Perceptions of the teachers can also be a challenge in which the English lecturers have to change their negative stigma on grammar. Four of the English lecturers believed that grammar is the hardest part of the teaching job while two of them did not enjoy teaching grammar.

d) Perceptions

Teachers' perceptions play a significant role and can be a great challenge to English lecturers. Based on the interview session, it was found that the perceptions of the English lecturers are more to the grammar teaching itself and not so much to the students or the lessons.

e) Expectations of the English Lecturers

The next category is the expectations of the English lecturers. Three of the English lecturers had high expectations of their students in learning grammar as they believed the students had learnt a lot when they were in school. Two of them, on the other hand, had expectations of the condition of the classroom to be costly and comfortable for the students to learn. In terms of the grammar lesson, three English lecturers

claimed that it was a challenge for them to create lessons which could cater to various kinds of students' needs. Three English lecturers also believed that grammar lessons consume more time than other language skills.

According to Akbari's (2016) findings, some problems faced by the EFL students in Iran in learning English grammar, were:

1. Not knowing how to learn English
2. Not enough use in daily life
3. Lack of motivation for teachers whether language teachers or content teachers to learn English during undergraduate studies
4. Living in rural areas with limited facilities for learning English
5. Limited vocabulary knowledge
6. Weakness in recognizing the grammatical function of different parts of a sentence esp. in complex/compound sentences
7. Not knowing where and how to start learning English.

According to Effendi et al. (2017), there are some difficulties faced by the students at Ahmad Dahlan University. The difficulties encountered by the students were linguistic and non-linguistic ones. They comprised:

1. The difference in the structure of the English and Indonesian languages makes the students have difficulty understanding the structure of English and writing in English.
2. The occurrence of interference in using the English language. Students write sentences in Indonesian first before writing a sentence in English.
3. Some students (20%) stated they learn in the English department not because they want to. So, they lack the motivation to follow the course.

4. Students are less active in asking questions in class (59%).

Zhou et al. (2014) investigated the views of learners and teachers on learning grammar in writing tasks. The results show that there is a limited correspondence between the intentions of learners and teachers for grammar teaching. Learners were found to hold the view that learning specific grammar rules would help in their writing tasks whereas the teachers focused on higher-level writing skills. Therefore, a mismatch exists between students' and teachers' views on grammar teaching.

Rafajlovicova (2010) stated that many teachers worry about the status of grammar within the process of teaching and learning, whether they should teach it or not, and how this is best done. Ever since foreign language teaching began, there have been debates concerning the most effective and appropriate ways of enabling learners to acquire a system of rules that would enable them to use the language purposefully, appropriately, creatively and accurately. The view that the communicative approach to language teaching and learning means that one does not have to bother about grammar is wrong.

Ellis (2008) distinguishes two types of challenges:

1. The difficulty learners have in understanding and expanding a grammatical feature
2. The difficulty learners have in internalising a grammatical feature so that they can use it fluently and automatically in communication.

He argues that the first sense of grammatical difficulty relates to explicit knowledge, while the second sense relates to implicit knowledge.

2.7 Strategies in Dealing with Difficulties Pupils Face in Learning English

Grammar

The following section will highlight the most common approaches that can be used to help learners have a better understanding of the concepts of grammar.

2.7.1 Grammar-translation method

This method is also known as the classical, formal or traditional method. It is an instructional method descended from Greek and Roman principles which consider memorizing and reciting rules an ideal mode when learning a language (Haussamen, 1997; Weaver, 1996). It is also characterized as an Aristotelian methodology (Haussamen, 1997; Hillocks & Smith, 1991). Such instruction is demonstrated today in worksheets, diagramming parts of language, and drills. It also emphasises constant correction of spelling, punctuation, diction and the lack of manipulation with parts of speech. Such a method belongs to the traditional grammar instruction family mentioned previously. In the context of this paper, traditional grammar is “teaching grammar as a system, and teaching it directly and systematically, usually in isolation from writing” (Weaver, 1996, p. 7). Unfortunately, despite its marked shortcomings, it “is still alive throughout Europe, Asia and even in the Americas” (Taber, 2008).

2.7.2 Focus-on-form method

This approach is also known as the Grammar-in-Context approach and it is based on the notion that “students need to construct knowledge of grammar by practising it as part of what it means to write” (Ehrenworth & Vinton, 2005, p.10). Advocates of this method assume that students tend to learn and apply language structure through practice and that manipulating sentences through writing helps students practically use the language and therefore increase their language proficiency level. The term

context is defined in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as “the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning.” Under this definition, this approach can be linked to Krashen’s language acquisition theory. Krashen (2004) proposes that language acquisition goes beyond reciting, memorizing, and completing closed exercises. He explains that to be functional, language needs to be taught and experienced through authentic context.

Anderson (2005) clarifies that context does not necessarily mean a lengthy text; it can be a paragraph or even a sentence (p.11). Thus, the contextual grammar approach can be applied by using simple sentences and paragraphs to explain grammar concepts and mechanics in a relatively meaningful situation that English Language Learner (ELL) students can relate to. This approach is influenced by the constructivist theory. Through this study, I explored the efficacy of such a method that presents both explicit grammar instruction and meaningful input that allows students to elaborate on, experiment with, and relate to the received knowledge.

As accomplished practitioners, acknowledging and being aware of the theories and methodologies that have influenced ELL teaching and learning is a crucial step. Yet, teachers must consider that “all the theories are based on limited information” and that this information is consistently being examined and perhaps even amended (Wilson & Peterson, 2006, p. 3). Therefore, teachers must know what works for their students and use a “balanced view of learning and teaching.” (Kilpatrick, Swafford & Findell, 2002 as cited in Wilson & Peterson, 2006, p. 4). This may mean it is necessary to employ more than one approach when teaching rather than focusing on just one approach. For instance, following the Behaviorist theory alone can lead to learning grammar rules in isolation and students’ inability to transfer this knowledge

to other language skills. Similarly, following the UG or the SLA theory, which both stress language learning without grammar instruction, may not be ideal for many students either. Many experienced teachers and those who have interacted with ELLs realize that some students will need a type of grammar coaching as well as meaningful input depending on the student's level and style of learning. Thus, having a solid understanding of how we teach, possessing the ability to articulate our instructional approach, and being aware of various learning theories may hold a lot of promise in boosting our teaching performance and may provide satisfying results. However, we must choose the appropriate approach that suits our learners' needs.

Traditional grammar instruction has dominated the field of teaching English as a second language for decades (Eaton, 2010). For many ELL educators, traditional grammar is considered the substructure of language learning and knowledge (Sjolie, 2006). Problematically, the underlying philosophy of this approach builds on the notion that students automatically apply concepts and rules that have been presented in isolation to their writing (Anderson, 2005; Weaver, 1996). However, many researchers have found that the majority of students *do not* transfer knowledge without guidance (Weaver, McNally & Moerman, 2001).

Research has shown that students need to be guided through such processes to reap the benefits of grammar and to produce effective writing (Weaver, 1996). Such guidance can be provided through constant writing and teaching grammar concepts in a meaningful context (Calkins, 1994; Krashen, 2003). Poth (2006) explains that grammar exercises that are introduced through worksheets and workbooks provide students with limited knowledge that does not necessarily relate to the authentic use of grammar. Likewise, Thomas and Kington (1974) found that "the school- grammar

ignores many of the important facts that we have learned about in the last 150 years” (Thomas & Kington, 1974; as cited in Weaver, 1996, p.6).

Unfortunately, the Aristotle version remains a typical approach that is implemented in today’s schooling systems (Sönmez, 2021). In terms of writing, it can be confidently said that teaching grammar rules in isolation would not likely improve students’ writing skills (Weaver, McNally, & Moerman, 2001). The excessive implementation of and the value placed on teaching traditional grammar can be traced to the late 1800’s. Some researchers have even concluded that the teaching of traditional grammar may result in negative outcomes.

Braddock, Lloyd, and Schoer (1963) found that “the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or ... even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing” (as cited in Dean, 2008, p. 9). Similarly, Hillocks (1986) points out that “if schools insist upon teaching the identification of parts of speech, the parsing or diagramming of sentences, or other concepts of traditional grammar..., they cannot defend it as a means of improving the quality of writing” (p.138). Despite the early prediction of the negative aspects of following the traditional grammar approach solely, it was not until 1936 that the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) asserted that traditional grammar instruction had little impact on the student’s quality of writing (Anderson, 2005; Dean, 2008).

Since the mid-1900s, educators have noted the limited effect of traditional grammar on ELL’s language learning. Weaver (1996) states that, in the past, traditional grammar instruction “... allowed for limited production of language in addition to requiring analysis” but this method is still being followed in today’s schooling systems (p.5). A synthesis of studies in the 1960s revealed that “knowledge of

grammar does not materially affect a student's ability to learn a foreign language" (1960, p.9 as cited in Weaver, 1996).

Research has noted that "... although the contribution of the knowledge of English grammar to achievement in a foreign language has been its chief justification in the past, the experimental evidence does not support this conclusion" (Chin, 2000 as cited in Weaver, 1996, p.9). Despite the early dates of these articles, they discuss issues that are relevant to what teachers and students are experiencing today. According to Frodesen (2001), ELLs are "often able to access and explain grammar rules" (p.235); however, they fail to utilise this knowledge when writing. Hence, it is evident that ELL educators need to employ a more transformational method that allows students to apply grammar rules in writing.

Opponents of the traditional approach argue that knowing the foundation and structure of language is a principal factor in learning a second language (Dean, 2008); however, following such a method solely has been proven to significantly deprive ELL students of the natural outcomes of practically applying grammatical conventions to serve communicative needs, specifically when writing (Hillocks, 1986; Huang, 2010; Wang, 1999 as cited in Lin, 2008, p.5). The use of traditional grammar instruction alone is ineffective in improving students' writing performance (Weaver, McNally & Moerman, 2001). Traditional grammar helps students label parts of sentences and become familiar with the system of a particular language.

Accordingly, Hillock (1987) assures that traditional grammar instruction familiarises students with the structure of language. However, the only advantage that students may reap from such methodology is the ability to recite rules and analyze the various parts of sentences and paragraphs. The predicted limited influence of the traditional

method led many educators to conclude that the need for both explicit and implicit grammar is crucial for ELL's language growth and that teaching grammar separately from other skills may be inapt (Ellis, 2005 as cited in Huang, 2010; Sjolie, 2006).

“Teaching grammar divorced from reading and writing creates a fractured, disjointed approach that does not improve reading and writing” (Controversy of Teaching Grammar, n.d.). Burgess (n.d.) acknowledges the importance of teaching grammar to students yet emphasizes the role of choosing the appropriate approach when teaching it. He states, "There is a satisfactory boniness about grammar which the flesh of sheer vocabulary requires before it can become vertebrate and walk the earth. But to study it for its own sake, without relating it to function, is utter madness” (Burgess, n.d.).

Similarly, Sjolie (2006) shows the importance of teaching grammar in ELL classes in familiarizing students with the structure and patterns of English; however, he found that the “study of grammar itself... offers little in the way of sentence structure improvement” (p.36). Such findings are echoed in Hillocks' (1986) meta-analysis of writing research studies. After reviewing a significant number of reports, Hillocks (1986) found that all reports emphasised the fact that grammar instruction had no impact on the students' writing skills. Weaver, et al (2001) concluded that “Teaching traditional grammar in isolation is not a very practical act” (p.18). Justifiably, “in some form, the role of grammar will remain as an essential component of effective written communication” (Frodesen, 2001, p. 247).

However, the effectiveness of building grammar awareness in ways that enable ELLs to functionally use it in their writings mostly depends on the method that is followed. Hence, although the traditional method has been widely used and is acknowledged for familiarising ELL students with the mechanisms of the English Language (Hillocks,

1987; Weaver, 1996), it has remarkably failed ELL students when attempting to transfer this knowledge to writing.

Several educators such as Azar (2006) advocate the presence of both grammar teaching as well as communicative teaching in the ELL classroom. Azar (2006) explains that “communicative teaching and grammar teaching are not mutually exclusive. They fit hand in glove” (p.3). For instance, in favouring the notion of weaving grammar instruction with communicative teaching, Nassaji (2000) explains that several educators have found that comprehensible input alone, such as the naturalist movement advocates, is partially beneficial yet it is not enough to achieve accuracy and fluency in the target language (Nassaji, 2000, p. 242).

In fact, despite the bountiful exposure to meaningful context in the targeted language, Harley and Swan (1984), who launched an empirical research study found that the ELL subjects in their study revealed problematic grammar structuring and forming after being exposed to “meaningful input” alone for a considerable amount of time (as cited in Nassaji, 2000, p.242).

Since the mid-20th century, the positive impact of teaching grammar-in-context on students’ writing has been recognized (Anderson, 2005; Calkins, 1994; Dean, 2008; Sjolie, 2006; Weaver, 1996). A host of current studies have emphasized the fact that humans tend to learn “in a web-like fashion the web of content.” (Anderson, 2005, p. 10). Teaching grammar in context provides a meaningful framework that connects to reality in the targeted language (Anderson, 2005). We must have a practical approach that allows ELLs to generate thoughts and make use of the received knowledge.

Del VanPatten (2003) stresses the importance of providing writing input to the teaching of grammar. “Language learners must have opportunities to produce output to gain fluency and accuracy” (Guilloteau, n.d.). Teaching writing as a process to ELLs was first introduced by Vivian Zamel in 1976 (as cited in Kroll, Long, & Richards 2003). Many researchers stress the fact that ELLs need to experience grammatical conventions in various contexts to control and use them correctly (Anderson, 2005). For instance, Calkins (1994), Fu (2003), and Anderson (2005) demonstrated the effective impact of teaching language, specifically grammar conventions and mechanics, through writing.

Similarly, Graham and Perin (2007) found that students’ writing performance over a substantial period had dramatically improved when following the grammar-in-context approach (p. 21). Weaver, et al. (2001) affirm that effective writing is a result of teaching grammar in context because it allows students to apply mechanics and conventions and produce effective writing. Experts conclude that grammar is best understood conceptually, rather than mechanically, and is best learned in an inductive, discovery-based process (Dean, 2008; Ehrenworth & Vinton, 2005). Such standards can be provided and illustrated in writing. ELL educators need to contextualise grammar instruction through writing to “build student's understanding of grammar through writing” (Dean, 2008, p. 75).

ELL instructors and educators need to distinguish the purposes of traditional grammar in language and the role that such an approach can play. They also need to realise the shortages that can result from focusing on this approach solely. Weaver (1996) provides a clear summary of the reasons for teaching traditional grammar for decades

(p.7-9). She states that traditional grammar can help a student understand the structure of a language, in other words, to understand how a specific language works.

However, this prescriptive purpose needs to be appealing to the student and accompanied by a transformational approach to achieving the intended goals of a descriptive method. Kolln (1991) anticipated that grammar instruction accompanied by “explicit application” may potentially be more powerful than teaching grammar in isolation. Students need guidance to translate and transfer traditional grammar knowledge to functional use (Hillocks, 1986). Hence, we should not expect students to automatically apply concepts and rules that have been presented in isolation (Anderson, 2005). If the shortcomings of traditional grammar are so evident, then why do ELL educators continue to follow and implement it in their curriculum?

Unfortunately, although grammar-in-context has been “greeted with fanfare” since the mid-1900s, it has hardly been put into action (Weaver, 1996). Many educators remain loyal to the traditional grammar fad (Dean, 2008). Such commitment can be the result of many reasons. The urge to teach traditional grammar may be due to public expectations such as parents and politicians who hold prior assumptions about the benefits of the teaching of grammar (Weaver, 1996; Weaver, McNally & Moerman, 2001). The dysfunctional application of grammar rules in

ELL’s writing, when taught through the traditional approach, is because our minds have been settled on the allusion that “practice makes perfect and that skills practised in isolation will be learned that way and then applied as relevant” (Weaver, 1996, p.17). What many may not realize is that, with the absence of a transformational stage, we are training ELL students to become grammarians who may excel in diagramming and analyzing language but fail to apply this knowledge to

communicative use (Frodesen, 2001; Leki, 1992). Their brains become fixed on the sentence analysis phase and hardly ever develop the concept of transferring this knowledge to produce effective writing. Another reason why this method is still being used in many ELL classes is that “it is easy to teach” (Taber, 2008, p.1). Teachers following this method do not need to be fluent in speaking and pronunciation (Taber, 2008, p.2).

To raise the quality of ELL’s writing performance, educators need to embrace and prize “improving their writing, not just learning grammar for the sake of knowing the proper terminology or to pass a grammar test” (Weaver et al., 2001, p. 25). ELLs need plenty of guidance and experience with authentic material to write in the approved manner (Weaver, 1996). Weaver (1996) asserts that we teach grammar to “train the brain, to aid in learning a second language, to help students score well on-scale tests, ... and to help them improve as writers and readers” (Dean, 2008, p. 13).

However, the method of teaching grammar according to the purpose varies. If the goal of teaching grammar in ELL classes is to generate grammarians, then we have succeeded in doing so. However, the majority of ELL students aspire to use English practically. “Grammar and mechanics are not ruling to be mastered as much as tools to serve a writer in creating a text...” (Anderson, 2005, p. 5). “Grammar maps out the possible; rhetoric narrows the possible down to the desirable or effective” (Francis Christensen as cited in Weaver et al., 2001, p. 19). This necessitates the presence of a transformational stage from familiarizing ELLs with the structure of language to applying grammar to writing.

In addition, it is critical to realise that teachers need to consider applying suitable modifications when implementing any teaching method discussed previously due to

the following differences: To commence with, in most EFL classes, the curriculum, which is more often than not designed for test preparation, is determined and fixed through the teaching ministry (Fotos, 1998) and employing other material can be a hurdle for many teachers who mandatorily teach from the school textbook alone. This constraint may pose a challenge in exposing ELLs to authentic and meaningful input from the targeted language. Hence, EFL teachers must conceive and explore various ways to implement authentic English material with a tight curriculum and few resources.

Another obstacle is the class size (Fotos, 1998). Having a large number of students can impact a teacher's feedback, especially in providing one-on-one guidance. Giving EFL students one-on-one feedback may result in generous learning, however, such practice can be difficult for teachers who teach large numbers of students. Therefore, the burden is placed on teachers to adapt strategies to allow students to receive feedback constructively and efficiently. For instance, teachers can utilise peer feedback amongst their students.

Additionally, EFL students lack when compared with their ESL peers less input of the targeted language in terms of interacting and using the language in a realistic environment. Many EFLs experience English input for one hour at most through a classroom environment as opposed to their ESL peers who have the advantage of interacting with real-life language situations in and outside of school (Fotos, 1998). This factor remains a true obstacle that interferes with the fluent usage of language for many EFLs.

However, despite these negative factors, Long (1988) explains that a solution to such obstacles can be developed through several steps (as cited in Fotos, 1998). First, he

explains that EFL schools have begun to incorporate communicative skills into curricula such as listening and speaking activities that provide more input in the targeted language. He also suggests that teachers promote and encourage cooperative activities within the limited time of class to provide more input opportunities in the targeted language. Therefore, it is assumed that the Focus on the Form approach is the most convenient approach that fits the EFL group (Fotos, 1998). Long (1988) adds that the Focus on the Form approach is adaptable in both ESL and EFL settings, of course, by considering the various adjustments needed in each environment.

According to the reviewed studies, the effect of grammar instruction on language acquisition is debated among researchers. Grounded on various language learning theories, several methods of teaching English to ELLs have emerged. These approaches vary in the amount and type of grammar instruction included in ELL instruction. However, the approaches that call to exclude grammar instruction from ELL programs, such as the communicative approach, have been accused of having a limited impact on the language growth of ELLs (Nassaji, 2000). Researchers have also argued that many students who received such instruction struggle with producing sufficient writing with appropriate English structure (Harley & Swan, 1984 as cited in Nassaji, 2000).

Further, several researchers have indicated that teaching grammar alone, such as in the case of the traditional grammar approach, also showed inadequate results. Despite the strong advocacy of formal grammar instruction and the widespread spread of this method in several ELL programs, several studies have proven this method to be ineffective in developing functional English skills for ELLs (Sjolie, 2006; Weaver, McNally & Moerman, 2001). Such results were linked to the lack of guidance in this

method (Weaver, 1996). Due to the shortcomings in the previously discussed methods, several educators have recognised a balanced grammar instruction approach that allows the instructor to provide both explicit grammar and meaningful context; this method is known as the grammar-in-context approach. This approach invites instructors to include both explicit grammar teaching as well as meaningful input when teaching ELLs.

Many researchers, such as Azar (2006) and Weaver (1996), considered the fact that neither the separation nor the neglect of grammar instruction seemed to have a strong impact on ELLs language learning development. Advocates of weaving both grammar instruction and meaningful input explain that contextual grammar familiarises students with the language structure and enables them to write and speak practically. It also helps them relate the received knowledge to realistic situations. Noticeably, contextual grammar has resulted in appreciative results in many cases (Anderson, 2005; Calkins, 1994; Fu, 2003; Graham & Perin, 2007).

2.8 Chapter Summary

In basic schools in Ghana, several challenges contribute to difficulties in teaching and learning grammar. These challenges include a lack of proper teacher training, an overemphasis on rote memorisation, limited opportunities to practice outside the classroom, limited integration of technology, limited time for instruction, and a lack of student motivation. Students in basic schools in Ghana may not have enough opportunities to practice using grammar rules in real-life contexts. This limits their ability to develop fluency in the language.

Furthermore, there is limited integration of technology in grammar instruction, primarily due to the lack of resources and infrastructure. This hampers the potential

benefits of using technology to enhance grammar teaching and learning experiences. Lastly, many JHS learners lack the motivation to learn grammar, often due to factors such as inadequate parental support, ineffective teaching methods, and a perceived lack of relevance to their lives.



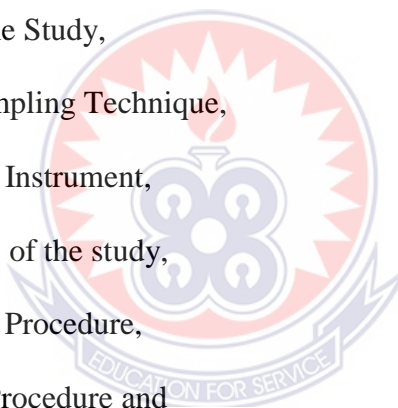
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the teaching of English Grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. This chapter deals with the research methodology adopted to carry out the research. The methodology outlines the following sub-topics:

1. Research Approach,
2. Research Design,
3. Population of the Study,
4. Sample and Sampling Technique,
5. Data Collection Instrument,
6. Trustworthiness of the study,
7. Data Collection Procedure,
8. Data Analysis Procedure and
9. Ethical Considerations



3.1 Research Approach

The study employed a qualitative research approach with interviews to collect data on the teaching of English Grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. The qualitative research approach has been described as the one in which the descriptions of observation are not ordinarily expressed in quantitative terms but do not suggest that numerical measures are used rather, other means of descriptions are emphasised. (Bryman, 2012). Seidu (2007) explains that

qualitative research emphasises a holistic description of what is being observed rather than comparing the effects of a particular treatment.

The study employed a qualitative research approach based on the nature of the topic: “Teaching of English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana.”. Even though qualitative research emphasises the description and interpretation of data in words rather than numbers, numerical data were collected in the process and analysed as such to understand the nature of the teaching of English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. Since the study adopted the case study design for an in-depth study of the teaching of English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana, the qualitative research approach was the most appropriate for the in-depth investigation of the topic.

3.2 Research Design

According to Seidu (2007), research design describes the procedures and methods used to gather data. It also lists and describes the instruments used for the collection of data. A descriptive case study design was chosen due to its ability to provide an in-depth insight into the unit to be studied and the research question starts with “how” type of phrase. It is widely accepted that “why” and “how” questions can best be answered by the use of case study methods, as this method allows careful and complete observation of the social unit (Kusi, 2012). Again, this research sought to carry out an intensive analysis of the teaching of English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana to facilitate pupils’ better understanding of the concept of grammar in the English language.

The research sought to describe the pattern of relationship between effective teaching of grammar and its contribution to pupils' understanding of grammar; hence, descriptive case study design was used in the study. This supports Yin's (2014) argument that a descriptive case study design is an empirical inquiry method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries are not evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

Additionally, a case study was suitable for this study since the research was carried out in a natural setting where the researcher had little control over the events. Apart from the fact that the phenomenon under exploration was a contemporary issue, the use of descriptive case study enabled generalisation of the results on populations with similar characteristics. Therefore, the results of this study may be used for similar pupils especially districts or municipalities in the Greater Accra region, Ghana.

3.3 Population for the Study

Population in research refers to the aggregate or totality of objects or individuals regarding which inferences are to be made in a sampling study (Seidu, 2007). Population as used in this study refers to the people with common characteristics that the researcher decided to involve in the study (Seidu, 2007).

The target population for the study was 202. It comprised 192 JHS 2 learners and 10 English language teachers in Kwashieman 2 Basic School, Accra. Thus, out of the 192 learners, 85 were boys representing 44% and 107 were girls representing 56% (Headteacher's situational report, 2023). 51 of the boys were between the ages of 12 to 13 years, 31 of them were between 14 to 15 years, and 3 of them were between 16 to 17 years (Headteacher's situational report, 2023). The girls were also made up of 72 who were between the ages of 12 to 13, 33 of them between 14 to 15, and 2 of

them between 16 and 17. Also, there were 10 English language teachers which was made up of 4 males representing 40% and 6 females representing 60% (Headteacher's situational report, 2023).

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

Kumekpor (2002) explains sampling as “the use of the definite procedure in the selection of a part for the express purpose of obtaining from its description or estimates certain properties and characteristics of the whole” (p. 46). Sampling is the process of selecting a representative unit from a population. The sample used in this work is a small proportion of the population selected for the study. It is the selected subject of the whole which is being used to represent the population (Seidu, 2007).

The sample for the study was 5 English language teachers and 64 Form Two Learners. Though Creswell and Creswell (2018) argued that five to twenty respondents can be used for qualitative research, the sample for this study was based on data saturation. Thus, the researcher would continue to gather until she realises that there is no more new information to be shared by the respondents. At that point, respondents interviewed so far would be recorded as the sample for the study.

A maximum variation type of purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explained that when using the maximum variation type of purposive sampling method to select cases, the researcher purposefully targets those who are rich with information about the subject of inquiry and those whom the researcher can learn from. Creswell and Creswell (2018) added that participants must be conveniently accessible, and must be willing to participate in the research. Creswell and Creswell (2018) described the purposive sample as a sampling method that allows the researcher to select units based on specific

requirements necessary for answering a research question. This considered school English language teachers having diverse demographic information.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

Data for the study was collected using a semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide had two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A comprised close-ended items that solicited demographic information of participants. They included: difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra and strategies to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra. A sample of the interview guide can be seen in Appendix B.

3.6 Trustworthiness of the Study

Credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability were used to establish the trustworthiness of the interviews as suggested by Lincoln, and Guba (1985).

3.6.1 Credibility

To ensure the credibility of the interviews, the researcher used probes to elicit detailed responses. Also, interactive questioning was used which helped the researcher return to matters previously raised by the respondents and extracted related data through rephrased questions. Again, the researcher gave opportunities to coursemates pursuing the same programme and the research supervisor to scrutinise the interview guide before data collection. Feedback provided by the coursemates and research supervisor helped the study to offer fresh perspectives that enabled the researcher to refine some of the items on the semi-structured interview guide.

Also, a member check was employed to check the credibility of the interviews. Thus, the audio recordings of the interviews were played to the respondents after each interview for their confirmation. This helped in allowing the respondents to consider whether their words matched what they intended to share. This is in line with what Tobin and Begley (2004) posited.

According to Tobin and Begley (2004), member checking is an important technique that qualitative researchers use to establish credibility. Tobin and Begley (2004) further argued that in using this technique, the data, interpretations and conclusions of the study were shared with participants. It allowed participants to clarify what their intentions were, correct errors and provide additional information where necessary.

3.6.2 Dependability

To address the dependability of the interviews, the processes within the study were reported in detail. As a result, the researcher believed that it would enable future researchers to repeat the part of the findings in their studies if not necessarily to gain the same results. The study also provided a detailed description of the research design by describing what was done in the study and why it was done. This supports what Denzin and Lincoln (2013) postulated that the idea of dependability emphasises the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. To achieve dependability, researchers can ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). When readers can examine the research process, they are better able to judge the dependability of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

3.6.3 Transferability

In this study, since a sufficient thick description of the phenomenon under investigation was provided, the researcher conceptualised that it would help readers to have a better understanding of the study report. For this reason, the researcher believed that readers would be able to compare the instances of the phenomenon described in the research report with those that they have seen emerge in their situations.

This confirms what Kothari and Carg (2014) indicated that transferability means the extent of the degree to which the results can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. Transferability refers to the generalisability of inquiry. In qualitative research, this concerns only case-to-case transfer (Kothari & Carg, 2014). The researcher cannot know the sites that may wish to transfer the findings; however, the researcher is responsible for providing thick descriptions, so that those who seek to transfer the findings to their site can judge transferability (Lee, 2013).

3.6.4 Confirmability

The researcher took steps to help ensure as far as possible that the study's findings were the true result of the experiences and ideas of the respondents, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. To this end, beliefs underpinning decisions that were made and methods that were adopted were acknowledged within the research report. Also, the study gave reasons for favouring one research approach while others could have been adopted and weaknesses in the techniques that were employed were also admitted. The study also provided an in-depth methodological description which allowed for the integrity of research results to be scrutinised.

This is in line with Denzin and Lincoln (2013) who argued that an audit trail can be used to grant the confirmability of an interview. To achieve this, the researcher detailed the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the data. Also, the study recorded issues that were unique and interesting during the data collection, wrote down the researcher's thoughts about coding, provided a rationale for merging some of the codes and also explained what the themes meant. An audit trail will be used since it is the most popular technique used to establish confirmability because it is incredibly useful when writing up the results chapter as indicated by Denzin and Lincoln (2013).

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

An introductory letter from the Head of, the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba was obtained to get approval from the gatekeepers (Headteacher and English language teachers). The researcher met the participants and gave them explanations of the purpose of the study and the intended use of the findings. Again, aspects of confidentiality and anonymity were explained to respondents. Moreover, measures were taken to ensure that the settings for the interviews helped promote confidentiality by way of ensuring that the respondents were not overheard.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted using the English language. They were audiotaped after permission had been granted by participants. This helped the researcher to ensure a more accurate picture of the questions and answers. Further, it helped to improve the credibility of the interviews. In the same way, the recorded interviews helped the researcher to focus more on the interviewee's non-verbal attitudes and even body language than to concentrate more on the taking of field

notes. Aside from the audio recordings, important information (field notes) was written which served as a backup in case the recorder developed a fault.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analysed using themes and direct comments. Thematic analysis “is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 79). The general approaches to analysing qualitative data are considered in the following steps:

1. Familiarisation with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Defining and naming subthemes
5. Producing the report

3.8.1 Familiarisation with the Data

The audio recordings of the interviews were listened to repeatedly for familiarisation purposes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each interviewee was given a numeric code for easy referencing (Yin, 2015). The codes assigned were based on the order in which the participants were interviewed. The recording of each interview was typed verbatim and hesitations and pauses were noted (Yin, 2014). The goal was to preserve originality and ensure that no information was misinterpreted or lost.

The transcribed version was read through while listening to the audio tape several times to ensure that there was no omission. Each interview was then summarised. Doing this helped to conceptualise what the interviewees said and identified similarities and differences in their statements. It also drew attention to the close link

between the research questions and the responses given. Additionally, general notes and comments were written about initial thoughts and relevant issues that emerged from the data.

3.8.2 Generating initial codes

Coding is part of analysing qualitative data and helps the researcher to think critically about the meaning of the data (Bryman, 2016). The units of analysis were identified. These were described as the basic text unit that contained the essential idea concerning the research questions (Yin, 2018). Similar essential ideas were colour-coded, underlined and notes made to make meaning of the text and this process guided the topic under investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To address the coding of multiple issues in a single response, the researcher split the response into segments and coded them under the appropriate theme or sub-theme.

3.8.3 Searching for themes

The semi-structured interviews were predefining main themes that were closely linked to the research questions and the quantitative data. The subthemes, however, were not predefined, but rather identified from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of arriving at the final subthemes or ideas involved constant referral to the transcribed interviews and the already identified ideas/themes; if they matched existing ones, the researcher added them, if not, they were named and included (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This exercise helped the researcher to see how different parts of the data fit together to form a whole (Yin, 2018).

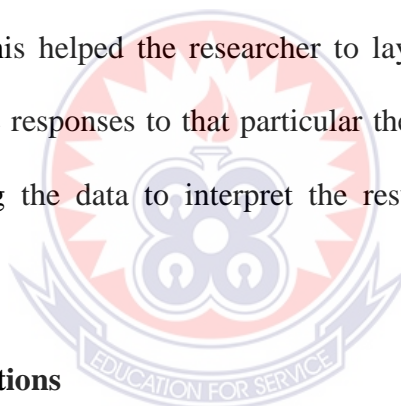
3.8.4 Defining and naming subthemes

The researcher read the coded data and the illustrative extract of the responses and organised them into a coherent whole (Yin, 2018). The researcher also ensured that

the names that had been given to the subthemes were concise to immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme was about (Yin, 2018).

3.8.5 Producing the report

In writing the findings chapter of the study, all the ideas were reviewed and put under themes. Main themes were selected and included in the final report. This offered the opportunity for the “selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, the final analysis of selected extracts, relating of the analysis to the research question and literature (Yin, 2018). The selections of verbatim extracts included in the final write-up were chosen from the pool of responses based on their detail, clarity, relevance and vividness (Yin, 2018). Also, the number of responses that were used to support each theme were varied. This helped the researcher to lay emphasis and also illustrated different aspects of the responses to that particular theme. The researcher tried to go beyond just describing the data to interpret the results that were obtained in the analysis (Yin, 2018).



3.9 Ethical Considerations

After receiving a letter from the Head of the Department of Applied Linguistics, the researcher presented them to ensure that the right thing was done. Furthermore, the researcher adopted the appropriate methodological procedures to avoid bias in the selection of the sample and reporting the findings of the study. Thus, the findings of the study were presented as they were, not as the researcher thought they should be. Additionally, the researcher took the pain to acquaint himself with adequate methodological principles that ensured professionalism in the implementation of the research process. This ensured the orderly and systematic execution of the study and the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

There was also a frantic effort to ensure a correct reporting approach; by this, the researcher did not attempt to change or slant primary data to suit his interest. The data were also presented in a way that avoided any direct or indirect possible adverse effects on the respondents. The researcher also obtained written or verbal consent from participants and assured them of anonymity and confidentiality. For example, pseudo names such as ET: 1, 2 and 3 were assigned to the interview data.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology used. The research approach was qualitative, and a descriptive case study design was used to provide an in-depth analysis. The sample for the study was 10 English language teachers. This sample was on data saturation. They were selected using the maximum variation type of purpose sampling technique. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data. The semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from English language teachers. Direct comments and themes were used to analyse the data. Additionally, ethical issues were discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

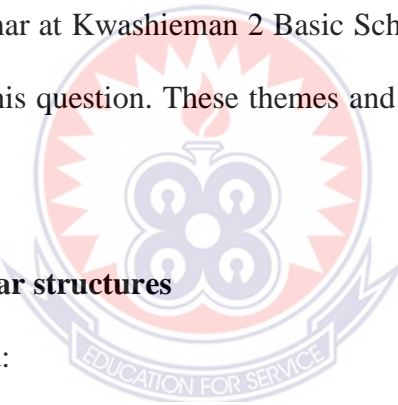
The purpose of this study is to explore teaching English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. This chapter deals with the results and discussions of the findings. Thus, the chapter presents the results and discussion of the findings.

4.1 Difficulties Face in Learning English Grammar

The objective of this question was to explore the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra. Ten themes were obtained in analysing this question. These themes and direct comments are discussed next.

4.1.1 Complex grammar structures

For example, ET: 4 said:



“Forming complex sentence structures and understanding advanced grammatical concepts, such as conditional clauses and reported speech, poses significant challenges to learners in this school in the teaching and learning of English grammar” [ET: 4].

The comment suggests that the process of creating intricate sentence structures and comprehending advanced grammatical ideas, such as conditional clauses and reported speech, presents noteworthy difficulties for students in this particular school when it comes to the instruction and acquisition of English grammar. It indicates that the students might struggle with grasping and effectively using these complex grammar elements.

4.1.2 Irregular verbs and verb tenses

For example, ET: 6 said:

“The irregularity of English verbs and the various tenses they take often lead to confusion among learners in this school, making it difficult to apply the appropriate verb forms in different contexts” [ET: 6].

The comment implies that the non-standard patterns of English verbs (irregular verbs) and the multiple tenses they can assume frequently result in bewilderment or uncertainty among students in this specific school. This complexity makes it challenging for them to correctly utilise the suitable verb forms in various situations or contexts. In essence, the comment highlights the difficulties students face in mastering irregular verbs and verb tenses due to their unpredictable nature.

4.1.3 Ambiguity and homophones

For example, ET: 10 said:

“I have discovered in my 15 years of teaching the English language that ambiguity in English grammar, especially in sentences with multiple interpretations, and the presence of homophones create difficulties for learners in understanding the intended meaning, leading to the miscommunication” [ET: 10].

The comment suggests that the teacher has observed, for 15 years of teaching the English language, that the presence of ambiguity in English grammar particularly in sentences that can be interpreted in multiple ways and the existence of homophones (words that sound the same but have different meanings) result in challenges for learners. These challenges hinder the learners' ability to comprehend the intended meaning of the language, often leading to instances of miscommunication. In essence,

the comment emphasises the impact of ambiguity and homophones on students' language understanding and communication skills.

4.1.4 Pronunciation and stress patterns

For example, ET: 2 said:

“As for me, I believe that mastering English pronunciation and stress patterns is a common challenge for these learners, as the language contains numerous phonetic variations and stress rules that can affect comprehension and communication” [ET: 2].

The comment implies that the teacher personally holds the belief that achieving proficiency in English pronunciation and stress patterns is a shared difficulty among learners. This is because the English language incorporates a multitude of phonetic differences and stress regulations, which can significantly impact both comprehension and effective communication. In essence, the comment underscores the teacher's perspective on the widespread struggle learners face when it comes to mastering pronunciation and stress patterns in English.

Some examples related to the challenges of pronunciation and stress patterns in English include:

1. Homophones and Stress:

- Pair: I need a pair of shoes. (noun)
- Pare: Please pare the apples. (verb)

2. Homographs with Different Pronunciations:

- Tear: She had a tear in her eye. (noun, pronounced like "teer")
- Tear: Be careful not to tear the paper. (verb, pronounced like "tair")

3. Stress on Different Syllables:

- Present: I got a present for my birthday. (noun, stress on the first syllable)

- Present: She will present her findings tomorrow. (verb, stress on the second syllable)

4.1.5: Articles and word order

For example, ET: 9 said:

“I have discovered that determining when to use 'a,' 'an,' or 'the' correctly, and comprehending the specific word order in English sentences, especially for non-native speakers, can be sources of difficulty in grammar learning” [ET: 9].

The comment suggests that the teacher has found that two specific aspects of English grammar, namely the appropriate usage of articles ('a,' 'an,' or 'the') and understanding the correct word order in sentences, can pose challenges for non-native speakers when learning English grammar. These challenges may stem from differences in language structures and conventions between English and the learners' native languages, leading to difficulties in mastering these particular grammar concepts. In essence, the comment highlights the teacher's observation regarding the potential hurdles that learners from non-English backgrounds might encounter when dealing with articles and word order in English sentences.

Some examples illustrating challenges related to articles and word order in English sentences included:

Articles:

1. Using 'a' or 'an' correctly:

- Incorrect: She is an university student.
- Correct: She is a university student.

2. Choosing 'the' appropriately:

- Incorrect: I saw the movie yesterday.

- Correct: I saw a movie yesterday. (when referring to any movie in general)

Word Order:

1. Subject-Verb Agreement:

- Incorrect: Runs he in the park every morning.
- Correct: He runs in the park every morning.

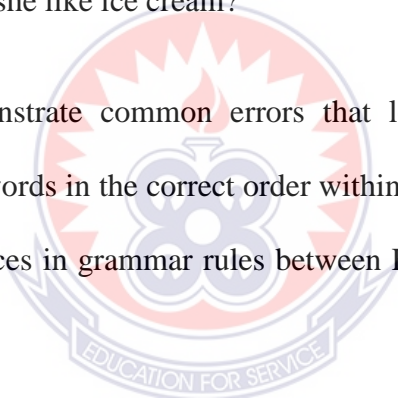
2. Adjective Order:

- Incorrect: She has two red big cars.
- Correct: She has two big red cars.

3. Question Word Order:

- Incorrect: Likes she ice cream?
- Correct: Does she like ice cream?

These examples demonstrate common errors that learners might make in using articles and arranging words in the correct order within English sentences. Such errors can arise from differences in grammar rules between English and the learners' native languages.



4.1.6: Passive voice and active voice

For example, ET: 1 said:

“I have noticed among these learners that distinguishing between passive voice and active voice constructions, and knowing when to use each appropriately, poses challenges to these learners, particularly when translating from their native languages” [ET: 1].

The comment signifies that the teacher has observed a specific difficulty among the learners in understanding and distinguishing between passive voice and active voice sentence structures. Additionally, the learners face challenges in correctly determining when to use each construction in the appropriate context. These challenges are

especially pronounced when the learners are translating from their native languages into English. This suggests that the concept of passive and active voice, along with its proper application, can be complex for these learners due to differences in language structures between their native languages and English.

Some examples that showcase the difference between passive voice and active voice constructions:

Passive Voice:

1. Sentence: The book was written by the author.

- Passive Voice: The action (writing) is the focus, and the receiver of the action (the book) becomes the subject of the sentence.

2. Sentence: The house was built last year.

- Passive Voice: The action (building) is emphasized, and the doer of the action is either unknown or less important in the context.

Active Voice:

1. Sentence: The author wrote the book.

- Active Voice: The subject (the author) acts (writing), and the sentence is direct.

2. Sentence: They cleaned the classroom after school.

- Active Voice: The subject (they) performs the action (cleaning), and the sentence is clear and concise.

4.1.7 Prepositions and phrasal verbs

For example, ET: 5 said:

“Learning the usage of prepositions and phrasal verbs, which often have multiple meanings and contexts, in most cases serve as complex for these learners and requires extensive practice” [ET: 5].

These grammatical elements can have different meanings and functions depending on the context and the combination of words. Therefore, learning how to use them correctly and appropriately requires a lot of practice and exposure to authentic language. Learning the usage of prepositions and phrasal verbs, which often have multiple meanings and contexts, in most cases serve as complex for these learners and requires extensive practice.

An example that illustrates the challenge of understanding prepositions and phrasal verbs:

“Take off”

“Come in”

“Call off”

4.1.8 Adjective and adverb forms

For example, ET: 7 said:

“Differentiating between adjectives and adverbs, as well as understanding their comparative and superlative forms, present difficulties for learners in this school in their efforts to express nuances of meaning” [ET: 7].

The comment signifies that the teacher has noticed a challenge among the learners in distinguishing between adjectives and adverbs, as well as comprehending how to form comparative and superlative forms of these words. This difficulty becomes evident in the learners' attempts to convey subtle shades of meaning in their language usage. The comment emphasises that these particular grammar aspects pose hurdles for the students when it comes to accurately expressing nuances in their writing and speech.

4.1.9 Lack of contextualisation

For example, ET: 10 said:

“Difficulties arise when grammar lessons lack meaningful context and real-world application, making it challenging for these learners to see the relevance and practical use of the grammar rules being taught” [ET: 10].

This statement highlights that challenges arise for learners when grammar lessons are disconnected from meaningful contexts and real-world applications. When grammar rules are taught in isolation without connections to how they are used in everyday situations, it becomes difficult for learners to understand the relevance and practical value of these rules. In such cases, learners may struggle to grasp the purpose behind the grammar rules and how to apply them effectively in communication. Providing meaningful context and showing real-world examples of how grammar rules are used can help learners better understand and appreciate the importance of these rules in their language-learning journey.

4.1.10 Confidence and speaking fluency

For example, ET: 8 said:

“Lack of confidence and speaking fluency in using English grammar hinder learners in this school from effectively applying their knowledge in oral communication, leading to limited language production” [ET: 8].

The comment suggests that within this school's learner population, a significant challenge arises from a lack of both confidence and fluency in speaking English. This lack of confidence and fluency specifically impacts the learners' ability to apply their knowledge of English grammar effectively during oral communication. As a result, their ability to engage in conversations and express themselves in English is

restricted, leading to limited language production. In essence, the comment underscores the pivotal role that confidence and speaking fluency play in allowing learners to utilise their grammar knowledge for effective communication.

From these comments, it could be realised that difficulties faced by learners in studying the English language varied from one learner to another. It was then concluded that difficulties JHS 2 pupils faced in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra were complex grammar structures, irregular verbs and verb tenses, ambiguity and homophones, pronunciation and stress patterns, and articles and word order. Passive voice and active voice, prepositions and phrasal verbs, adjective and adverb forms, lack of contextualisation, and confidence and speaking fluency were other difficulties JHS 2 pupils faced in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.

This finding concurs with that of other students. For example, Smith (2019) found that learners encounter difficulties due to the ambiguity of certain English grammar rules. For example, irregular verbs and exceptions to grammar patterns can be confusing and may lead to errors in language production (Smith, 2019). Further, according to Smith (2019), learners may face challenges in English grammar learning due to the ambiguity of certain rules, such as irregular verbs.

Also, it has been established that difficulties in learning English grammar may also be attributed to first-language interference, where learners transfer grammar structures from their native language to English, leading to errors and unconventional language usage (Brown & Lee, 2018). Thus, Brown and Lee (2018) found that learners may experience difficulties in English grammar due to the influence of their first language. Moreover, Johnson et al. (2017) found that learners face challenges when there is a

lack of explicit grammar instruction in the classroom. Without clear guidance on grammar rules, students may struggle to understand and apply them effectively (Johnson et al., 2017). That is Johnson et al. (2017) pointed out that learners may encounter difficulties in English grammar learning when explicit grammar instruction is lacking.

In addition, Chen and Wang (2016) found that the complexity of sentence structures in English, such as relative clauses and conditional sentences, can pose challenges to learners. Understanding the correct usage and placement of clauses may lead to difficulties in language production (Chen & Wang, 2016). Chen and Wang (2016) emphasised that complex sentence structures, including relative clauses and conditional sentences, present challenges for English language learners.

4.2 Possible Reasons for the Difficulties JHS 2 Pupils face in Learning English

Grammar

The objective of this question was to ascertain possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra. Ten themes were discovered in analysing data for this question. Next is a discussion of these themes and direct comments to support them.

4.2.1 Lack of prior language knowledge

For example, ET: 8 said:

“It’s challenging for learners in this school to study grammar when they lack a strong foundation in their native language, as it affects their ability to understand grammatical concepts in the target language” [ET: 8].

The comment implies that learners in this school face difficulties with studying grammar due to their inadequate understanding of grammar in their native language. The lack of a solid foundation in their native language hinders their ability to grasp grammatical concepts in the target language (presumably English). This suggests that a strong understanding of grammar in one's native language serves as a foundation for comprehending similar concepts in a new language. In this context, the lack of prior language knowledge becomes a significant obstacle in effectively learning and applying grammar concepts in the target language.

4.2.2 Inadequate exposure to the target language

For example, ET: 10 said:

“Insufficient exposure to the target language outside the classroom to me hampers learners’ ability to grasp complex grammatical structures and apply them effectively in real-life contexts” [ET: 8].

The comment suggests that learners’ limited exposure to the target language (presumably English) beyond the classroom setting adversely affects their ability to comprehend intricate grammatical structures and use them proficiently in real-life situations. When learners do not have ample opportunities to engage with the language outside of formal learning environments, they might struggle to internalize and apply complex grammar rules in practical, everyday scenarios. The comment emphasises the importance of consistent exposure to the target language in various contexts to enhance learners’ grasp of grammar and their capacity to use it naturally and effectively.

4.2.3 Fear of making mistakes

For example, ET: 9 said:

“Many learners in this school struggle with grammar due to the fear of making mistakes, which in most cases leads to avoidance of practising and experimenting with different sentence structures” [ET: 9].

The comment suggests that a significant number of learners in the school encounter difficulties with grammar due to a fear of making mistakes. This fear often results in these learners avoiding opportunities to practice and experiment with various sentence structures. The implication here is that the fear of making errors inhibits their willingness to engage in active learning and experimentation, which are crucial for gaining proficiency in grammar. This avoidance hinders their progress in mastering grammar concepts and limits their ability to explore different ways of constructing sentences effectively.

4.2.4 Absence of practical application

For example, ET: 2 said:

“When learners in this school are not provided with opportunities to use grammar rules in real communication, they may find it difficult to internalise the concepts and apply them in their writing and speaking” [ET: 2].

The comment suggests that if students are not given chances to apply the grammar rules they learn in real-life communication situations, they might struggle to truly understand and remember these concepts. Without practical usage, the grammar rules could remain abstract and disconnected from their practical usage in speaking and writing. The implication is that active engagement and practical application of grammar rules in real communication contexts are crucial for the effective

internalisation and successful application of those rules in both spoken and written language.

4.2.5 Overemphasis on traditional grammar drills

For example, ET: 7 said:

“I think the excessive focus on repetitive grammar drills without meaningful context can lead to disengagement and hinder the development of learners' actual language skills” [ET: 7].

The comment implies that when too much emphasis is placed on repetitive grammar drills that lack meaningful context, it can result in students becoming disinterested or disconnected from the learning process. This approach can also potentially obstruct the development of their practical language skills. In essence, the message is that an overemphasis on traditional grammar drills, divorced from a real-life application, can lead to a lack of engagement and hinder the overall growth of students' abilities to effectively use the language in authentic communication scenarios.

4.2.6 Cultural and linguistic differences

For example, ET: 8 said:

“Cultural and linguistic differences between the learners' native language and the target language can create interference, making it harder to comprehend and apply grammar rules accurately” [ET: 8].

The comment suggests that the presence of cultural and linguistic differences between a student's native language and the language they are trying to learn can result in interference. This interference can make it more challenging for learners to understand and correctly apply grammar rules. Essentially, the message conveyed is that these differences can introduce confusion and complications that hinder the accurate and effective use of grammar in the target language.

4.2.7 Cognitive factors

For example, ET: 1 said:

“Some learners face cognitive challenges, such as dyslexia or working memory issues, which can impede their ability to process and retain grammatical information” [ET: 1].

4.2.8 Lack of motivation

For example, ET: 10 said:

“When learners lack motivation or interest in studying grammar, they may struggle to invest the necessary effort and attention required to master the subject” [ET: 10].

The comment indicates that when students do not have the motivation or interest to engage in the study of grammar, they might encounter difficulties in dedicating the essential effort and focus needed to excel in the subject. In essence, the lack of motivation can hinder their ability to fully grasp and internalise the intricacies of grammar rules and concepts. The implication here is that motivation plays a crucial role in facilitating effective learning and comprehension of grammar.

4.2.9 Limited access to resources

For example, ET: 5 said:

“Inadequate access to grammar resources and materials in this school had hindered learners’ ability to practice and reinforce their understanding of grammar rules” [ET: 5].

The comment suggests that due to a lack of sufficient access to grammar-related resources and materials, students in the school have been facing challenges in practising and solidifying their comprehension of grammar rules. The implication is that having limited resources prevents students from engaging in meaningful

exercises, examples, and practice that would help them reinforce their understanding and application of grammar concepts. Inadequate access to such resources can consequently hinder the overall effectiveness of grammar learning and skill development.

4.2.10 Teacher competence

For example, ET: 3 said:

“Lack of trained English teachers who lack expertise in teaching grammar effectively in this school may contribute to learners’ difficulties in understanding and applying grammatical concepts” [ET: 3].

The comment suggests that the absence of well-trained English teachers who possess the expertise to teach grammar effectively within the school could be a contributing factor to the challenges students face in comprehending and using grammatical concepts. In essence, the implication is that teacher competence plays a pivotal role in the successful transmission of grammar knowledge to students. Teachers who lack the necessary training and proficiency in teaching grammar may struggle to convey the concepts in a manner that is clear and accessible to students, thus hindering their ability to grasp and apply these concepts accurately.

It could be deduced from the discussions so far that these themes and verbatim quotations highlight the diverse factors that can contribute to learning difficulties among learners in studying English grammar. Teachers, learners, and educational institutions can use this awareness to tailor instructional strategies and support systems to enhance language learning experiences. Based on these comments it was concluded that lack of prior language knowledge, inadequate exposure to the target language, fear of making mistakes, absence of practical application and overemphasis

on traditional grammar drills were possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra. Also, cultural and linguistic differences, cognitive factors, lack of motivation, limited access to resources, and teacher competence were other possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.

This finding supports the findings of other studies. For example, one factor contributing to learning difficulties in grammar is working memory capacity. Working memory refers to the ability to temporarily hold and manipulate information during cognitive tasks (Montgomery et al., 2019). A study by Montgomery et al. (2019) found that learners with lower working memory capacity had more difficulties in acquiring complex grammar structures. Also, another significant factor is language aptitude, which refers to the natural ability to learn languages (Li et al., 2018). A meta-analysis by Li et al. (2018) revealed a positive correlation between language aptitude and grammar learning. Learners with higher language aptitude tend to grasp grammar rules more easily compared to those with lower aptitude. Additionally, (Dörnyei, 2009) argued that motivation and attitudes towards language learning can significantly impact a learner's grammar acquisition. A study by Dörnyei (2009) emphasized that learners who have a strong intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes towards the target language tend to be more successful in mastering grammar structures.

4.3 Strategies Used to Minimise Difficulties in Learning English Grammar

The objective of this question was to find out strategies that can be used to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic

School in Accra. Seven themes were identified in analysing data for this question.

Next is a discussion on these themes and direct comments to support them.

4.3.1 Interactive and engaging learning activities

For instance, ET: 5 said:

“Introducing interactive and engaging learning activities, such as grammar games, role-plays, and multimedia presentations, can minimise difficulties learners face in the teaching of English grammar to Form Two students. By incorporating these activities, we can create a lively and participatory classroom environment, fostering student interest and active involvement in grammar lessons” [ET: 5].

The comment indicates that incorporating interactive and engaging learning activities, such as grammar games, role-plays, and multimedia presentations, can have a positive impact on addressing the challenges students encounter when learning English grammar, specifically for Form Two students. By implementing these types of activities, the classroom environment becomes more dynamic and participatory, leading to increased student interest and active participation in grammar lessons. The implication here is that such interactive methods can help make the learning process more enjoyable, effective, and successful in enhancing students' understanding and application of English grammar concepts.

4.3.2 Technology integration

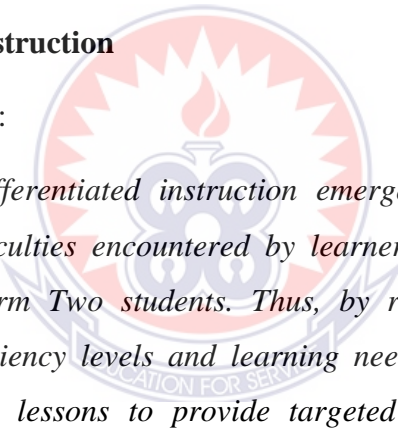
For instance, ET: 3 said:

“Technology integration emerges as a promising strategy in minimising difficulties faced by learners in English grammar instruction. Utilising language learning apps, online grammar exercises, and interactive digital resources can cater to varied learning styles and enable self-paced learning, promoting a deeper understanding of grammar concepts among Form Two students” [ET: 3].

The comment implies that integrating technology into English grammar instruction can be an effective approach to addressing the challenges that students encounter when learning grammar, particularly for Form Two students. By incorporating tools such as language learning apps, online grammar exercises, and interactive digital resources, educators can accommodate different learning styles and allow students to learn at their own pace. This approach can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of grammar concepts. The suggestion is that leveraging technology can make grammar learning more engaging and adaptable to individual needs, ultimately fostering better comprehension and application of grammar rules among Form Two students.

4.3.3 Differentiated instruction

For instance, ET: 9 said:



“Embracing differentiated instruction emerges as a key theme in alleviating difficulties encountered by learners in English grammar teaching to Form Two students. Thus, by recognising the diverse language proficiency levels and learning needs of students, we can tailor grammar lessons to provide targeted support, ensuring all learners grasp fundamental grammar principles effectively” [ET: 9].

The comment implies that integrating technology into English grammar instruction can be an effective approach to addressing the challenges that students encounter when learning grammar, particularly for Form Two students. By incorporating tools such as language learning apps, online grammar exercises, and interactive digital resources, educators can accommodate different learning styles and allow students to learn at their own pace. This approach can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of grammar concepts. The suggestion is that leveraging technology can make grammar learning more engaging and adaptable to individual needs, ultimately

fostering better comprehension and application of grammar rules among Form Two students.

4.3.4 Formative assessment and timely feedback

For instance, ET: 4 said:

“The idea of formative assessment and timely feedback had emerged as an effective strategy in minimising difficulties learners face in English grammar learning. Regularly assessing students’ progress and providing timely feedback on their grammar performance would allow for timely intervention and individualised support, enabling students to address specific grammar challenges promptly” [ET: 4].

The comment implies that the concept of using formative assessment and providing timely feedback is a powerful strategy for addressing the challenges that students encounter when learning English grammar. By consistently evaluating students' advancement in grammar learning and offering prompt feedback on their performance, educators can promptly identify areas where students are struggling. This facilitates timely intervention and tailored support to help students address their specific grammar difficulties. The implication here is that the combination of formative assessment and timely feedback can create an environment where students receive the necessary guidance to improve their grammar skills, ensuring that challenges are addressed promptly and effectively.

4.3.5 Collaborative learning and peer support

For instance, ET: 1 said:

“Encouraging collaborative learning and peer support surfaces as a significant theme in mitigating difficulties encountered by learners in English grammar instruction. That is to say fostering peer interactions, group discussions, and collaborative grammar activities, these students can learn from each other, reinforce grammar knowledge, and gain confidence in applying grammar rules effectively” [ET: 1].

4.3.6 Explicit grammar instruction and metalinguistic awareness

For instance, ET: 6 said:

“Explicit grammar instruction and metalinguistic awareness emerge as crucial themes in addressing learners’ difficulties in English grammar teaching. By explicitly teaching grammar rules, structures, and functions, we will equip these students with metalinguistic awareness, empowering them to analyse and understand the underlying principles of English grammar more proficiently” [ET: 6].

The comment suggests that emphasising explicit grammar instruction and fostering metalinguistic awareness is essential in overcoming the challenges students face when learning English grammar. By providing clear and direct instruction on grammar rules, structures, and functions, educators can enable students to develop a heightened awareness of the language itself, allowing them to analyse and comprehend the fundamental principles of English grammar more effectively. The implication here is that by combining explicit instruction with metalinguistic awareness, students can gain a deeper and more intuitive understanding of grammar, leading to improved language skills and better application of grammar concepts.

4.3.7 Contextualised grammar practice

For instance, ET: 10 said:

“The theme of contextualised grammar practice gains prominence as an effective strategy in tackling difficulties learners face in English grammar instruction. By providing meaningful and real-world examples of grammar usage, these students can grasp the relevance and application of grammar rules, leading to enhanced comprehension and retention” [ET: 10].

The comment indicates that emphasising contextualised grammar practice is a valuable approach to addressing the challenges students encounter in English grammar learning. By offering grammar exercises and examples within meaningful

and real-world contexts, students can better understand the practical relevance and application of grammar rules. This approach helps students connect grammar concepts to their everyday lives, leading to improved comprehension and the ability to retain and apply grammar rules more effectively. The suggestion here is that contextualised grammar practice can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical usage, ultimately enhancing students' overall grasp of grammar concepts.

These comments suggest that English teachers perceived that difficulties faced by learners in studying English grammar can be minimised. The comments further suggest that to these teachers, these difficulties can be minimised through various strategies such as technology integration, differentiated instruction, formative assessment and timely feedback, collaborative learning and peer support, explicit grammar instruction and metalinguistic awareness and contextualised grammar practice. On this premises, it was concluded that strategies that can be used to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra included: technology integration, differentiated instruction, formative assessment and timely feedback, collaborative learning and peer support, explicit grammar instruction and metalinguistic awareness and contextualised grammar practice.

This finding affirms that of Johnson et al. (2022) who examined the effectiveness of technology integration in English grammar instruction among students. The findings revealed that incorporating interactive grammar apps and multimedia resources significantly improved students' engagement and motivation to learn grammar. Moreover, the use of technology allowed for personalised learning experiences,

accommodating different learning styles and paces. As a result, students demonstrated enhanced understanding and application of grammar rules, leading to improved language proficiency (Johnson et al., 2022).

Also, Johnson and Lee (2022) investigate the effectiveness of using interactive grammar games as a strategy to minimise difficulties learners face in the teaching of English grammar. A randomised controlled trial was conducted with 100 students from two junior high schools. The experimental group received regular grammar instruction supplemented with interactive grammar games, while the control group received traditional grammar instruction. Pre and post-tests were administered to assess students' grammar proficiency. The findings indicated that the experimental group showed significant improvement in grammar scores compared to the control group, suggesting that the integration of interactive grammar games can be an effective strategy for enhancing English grammar learning among students.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter provides an analysis and description of the findings of a study on teaching English grammar to basic learners. Teaching grammar poses challenges due to the complex and abstract nature of grammar rules, and difficulties in comprehending and applying specific aspects of grammar. Learners often struggle with understanding and using different parts of speech accurately, ensuring subject-verb agreement, and comprehending grammar rules themselves. These challenges are exacerbated by a lack of foundational knowledge of grammar and inadequate exposure to English in authentic contexts. What is more, the large class sizes make it extremely difficult for teachers to effectively assess pupils and provide timely feedback.

To address these difficulties, educators can employ strategies that make grammar instruction more accessible and engaging. This includes providing explicit and structured grammar lessons, incorporating interactive activities and authentic examples, and offering ample practice opportunities. Additionally, building a strong foundation in basic grammar concepts and providing exposure to English through diverse and authentic materials can help learners develop a better understanding and application of grammar rules. The large class sizes as a matter of urgency must be looked at by the school authorities especially to facilitate effective teaching and learning. By addressing the sources of difficulty and employing effective teaching techniques, educators can enhance grammar instruction and support learners in their language development.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore teaching English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. The chapter presents the summary, conclusion, implications for practice, recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

5.1 Summary

This study explored teaching English grammar to Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra, Ghana. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.
2. Ascertain possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.
3. Suggest strategies to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. Also, a descriptive case study design was adopted in this study. Ten English language teachers were sampled using a maximum variation type of purposive sampling technique. A semi-structured interview guide was used to gather data in this study. Direct comments and themes were used to analyse the data.

It was found that difficulties included complex grammar structures, irregular verbs and verb tenses, ambiguity and homophones, pronunciation and stress patterns, and

articles and word order. Passive voice and active voice, prepositions and phrasal verbs, adjective and adverb forms, lack of contextualisation, and confidence and speaking fluency were other difficulties JHS 2 pupils faced in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.

Also, lack of prior language knowledge, inadequate exposure to the target language, fear of making mistakes, absence of practical application and overemphasis on traditional grammar drills. Also, cultural and linguistic differences, cognitive factors, lack of motivation, limited access to resources, and teacher competence were other possible reasons for the difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.

Additionally, strategies that can be used to minimise difficulties JHS 2 pupils face in learning English grammar at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra included: technology integration, differentiated instruction, formative assessment and timely feedback, collaborative learning and peer support, explicit grammar instruction and metalinguistic awareness and contextualised grammar practice.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlighted the significance of adopting student-centred and interactive teaching methods for English grammar instruction at Kwashieman 2 Basic School. By addressing the identified difficulties and embracing innovative teaching practices, educators can enhance learners' engagement, understanding, and overall language learning experience. Such improvements can lead to better language proficiency and academic achievement among Form Two learners at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra.

5.3 Implications for Practice

The following are some implications for practice based on the findings of the study:

1. Adaptation of learner-centred teaching approaches: The study highlights the importance of adopting learner-centred teaching methods that actively engage learners in grammar instruction. English teachers at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra should encourage interactive learning activities, group discussions, and problem-solving exercises to foster a more engaging and participatory learning environment.
2. Integration of technology in grammar instruction: The study suggests integrating technology, such as interactive language apps and online resources, to enhance grammar learning. The headteacher at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra should invest in providing access to digital tools and educational software to enrich grammar lessons and make them more appealing to students.
3. Provision of professional development: The headteacher at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra should offer regular professional development opportunities for English teachers. These workshops should focus on effective teaching strategies, technology integration, and classroom management to improve the overall quality of grammar instruction.
4. Implementation of formative assessment: English teachers at Kwashieman 2 Basic School in Accra should incorporate formative assessment techniques to continuously monitor students' progress in grammar learning. Regular feedback helps identify individual learning needs, allowing for personalised instruction and support.

5.4 Recommendations

The following are recommended:

1. **Creating a supportive learning environment:** School administrators should foster a supportive learning environment that encourages collaboration among teachers and promotes the sharing of best practices. Establishing a positive teaching atmosphere enhances teacher motivation and helps implement innovative teaching approaches.
2. **Embracing flexibility in curriculum:** Teachers should be encouraged to adapt the curriculum to accommodate students' diverse learning needs and proficiency levels. Flexibility allows for tailored instruction and ensures that no students are left behind in their grammar learning journey.
3. **Involving parents and guardians:** The study emphasises the importance of involving parents and guardians in the learning process. Schools should actively engage parents, providing them with information on the significance of grammar instruction and ways they can support their children's language development at home.
4. **Evaluating and monitoring progress:** Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of implemented changes in grammar instruction and monitor students' language proficiency and academic performance over time. Data-driven decision-making can guide further improvements and adjustments to teaching practices.
5. **Advocating for policy changes:** School administrators and educational authorities should advocate for policy changes that support innovative teaching practices, technology integration, and the implementation of a more flexible curriculum.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Future researchers can consider the following areas:

1. Conducting a comparative study that explores the effectiveness of different teaching methods for English grammar instruction.
2. A longitudinal study that tracks the language proficiency and academic performance of Form Two learners over an extended period.
3. A study that specifically examines the impact of technology integration on grammar learning.
4. A study on the impact of tailored teacher training programs that focus on enhancing English teachers' pedagogical skills for teaching grammar.
5. A qualitative study to explore students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English grammar.
6. Investigate the role of parental involvement in students' grammar learning.
7. In-depth classroom observations to gain a comprehensive understanding of the actual teaching practices in grammar lessons.
8. Examining how cultural and linguistic factors influence students' learning experiences and challenges in English grammar.
9. Studying the effects of integrating formative assessment techniques into grammar instruction.
10. Investigating the effectiveness of peer tutoring and cooperative learning strategies in enhancing grammar learning outcomes.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questions for Teachers

Please these questions are for academic purposes only and all data would be kept with utmost confidentiality.

1. Can you share some specific examples of difficulties that JHS 2 pupils at Kwashieman 2 Basic School face when learning English Grammar?
2. How do these difficulties affect their overall performance in English class?
3. In your opinion, what are some possible reasons why these difficulties exist?
4. What strategies have you employed in the past to help students overcome these difficulties?
5. How would you plan to address these difficulties if you were a class teacher at Kwashieman 2 Basic School JHS 2?
6. How do you plan to measure the progress of students in learning English Grammar and ensure they are meeting their learning objectives?
7. Have you worked with any specific teaching tools or methodologies that have been successful in helping students overcome difficulties in learning English Grammar?
8. What kind of support do you think teachers and school administrators can provide to help students improve their performance in English Grammar?
9. How do you plan to collaborate with other teachers and staff to ensure a cohesive approach to teaching English Grammar?
10. Finally, what do you think is the most important thing for students to keep in mind when learning English Grammar, and how do you plan to communicate this to your students?