

Enhancing Students' Grammar Acquisition with the Use of Dictionary

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Abstract

The study examined the use of the dictionary in teaching English grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State. It also determined the effectiveness of the use of dictionary in enhancing students' acquisition of grammatical concepts in the schools. The study adopted the descriptive survey and the non-equivalent pretest-post-test control group research designs. The population and the sample consisted of three hundred and fifty-six Senior Secondary Two (SS II) students in nine intact classes and nine English teachers selected from the existing 30 LGAs in the State. Intact classes of SS II students with their English teachers were selected in each of the schools. Two intact classes were selected as the experimental and control groups. Two instruments titled Use of Dictionary Observation Schedule and Students' English Grammar Achievement Test were used to elicit information from the respondents. Simple percentages, Analysis of Co-variance and t-test statistics were employed to analyse the data. The results showed that the use of the dictionary in teaching and learning English grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State was low as 100% and 87% of teachers and students failed to use the dictionary to teach and learn English grammar respectively. The results also showed that there was significant effect of the use of dictionary on students' achievement in grammar ($F=37.87$, $p<0.05$). The study concluded that the dictionary was not effectively used in teaching and learning of English grammar in secondary schools in Osun State.

Keywords: *Syntax, Grammatical acquisition, Students' Achievement, Language Competence and Performance and instructional aids*

INTRODUCTION

Grammar has been an important aspect of every language. It is central to the teaching and learning of language. It is also one of the most difficult aspects of language to teach well. The word “grammar” generally suggests a fixed set of word forms and rules of usage. People tend to associate “good” grammar with the prestige forms of the language, such as those used in writing and in formal oral presentations and “bad” or “no” grammar with the language used in everyday conversation or used by speakers of non-prestige forms. According to Tomori (2005), grammar is the term used for the quality of the knowledge of a language possessed by speakers, as inferred from the nature of their utterances. This meaning of grammar, according to Tomori, is what one has at the back of one's mind when one refers to the utterance of a particular speaker as an example of poor grammar.

Akinbode (2022) is of the view that grammar is the spinal cord of any language and the user's mastery of it determines his competence and performance in the language. A good writing

requires a working knowledge of grammar (a refinement of the basic or instinctive knowledge the writer has already). A good writing is more than the art of obeying grammatical rules. In essence, a language user's competence and proficiency in a particular language is determined by the level of his mastery of the grammar of that language (Akinbode, 2022). More importantly, grammar rules facilitate clear and concise communications. Errors in verb tense, sentence structure, contractions, punctuation, spelling and word usage detract from the intended message of the speaker. Being an effective communicator helps in making a positive impression on others. The first few minutes of meeting someone shapes the course of the relationship (American Psychological Association, APA, 2012). This, in a concise language, shows the importance of teaching grammar in schools (both primary, secondary) and at tertiary levels.

A critical examination of literature (such as works of Osisanwo, 2003 and Olatunbosun, 2009) has shown that most second language learners are often faced with grammatical errors or problems. Some scholars have identified some problematic areas for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. For example, Olatunbosun (2009) identifies poor knowledge of tenses and sequence of tenses, weakness in concord, winding constructions due to illogical thinking, wrong use of preposition, direct translation from mother tongue to English, inability to apply reading speed to reading material and many more as problematic areas for ESL learners. These problems can be associated with the following factors: language transfer (interlingua), faulty application of rules (intralingua), faulty instructional materials and techniques and the inconsistency in the orthography of English (Orinya, Ugadu & Agwu, 2023).

Effective use of different types of instructional aids/materials is said to help alleviate the problematic factors listed above and the use of aids has not only become common but imperative when teaching a language for whatever purposes and in whatever situations. The use of these aids in the language class makes the teaching and learning of English grammar more effective. Such aids include textbooks, charts, diagrams, sentence strips among others. However, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyanu (2006) have observed that most English teachers rely heavily on the use of textbooks in teaching grammar and this has affected the use of other instructional aids that can bring about effective teaching of English grammar. Scott and Husain (2021), explain that apart from teachers' over-reliance on textbooks, ESL course books also exhibit a characteristic of over-emphasis and superiority of a particular teaching method over the other(s), forgetting, according to language experts, that there is no best way of learning and that learners learn best when different learning methods and approaches/strategies are used. Visits to a few schools in

Osun State have also shown that teachers use other materials while teaching grammar without paying attention to the use of dictionary despite its importance and educational value.

Studies have indicated that dictionaries can be used to learn more about a particular word (such as the correct pronunciation, the grammatical class, and the correct usage of a particular word). Kirkness (2004) observes that learners cannot only correct their lexical errors and add to their vocabulary by using a dictionary; they can also improve their use of grammar. Learners' dictionaries can also help in the personal study of students and can be used in the teaching of some basic concepts in English such as different parts of speech. Unfortunately, not only do teachers and students not explore this window, but there is also a paucity of empirical studies on the extent of use of the dictionary and its effect on students' achievement of English grammar.

The Concept of English Grammar

The term 'grammar' has been variously defined by diverse scholars across the globe, thereby, making it difficult to pin it down to a single definition. It is a term that is said to mean different things. To some scholars, grammar deals with the structure of 'expressions' in a particular language which includes the structure of 'words', 'phrases', 'clauses' and 'sentences. According to Debata (2013), the word "Grammar means different things to different people. To the ordinary citizen, it connotes correctness or incorrectness of the language that he or she speaks. To a school student, it means an analytical and terminological study of sentences. Knowledge of grammar helps the student in the correction of mistakes and improvement of written work. A person cannot learn a foreign language accurately only through a process of unconscious assimilation. Grammar is a sure ground of reference when linguistic habits fail us. So grammar is indispensable for the students (Debata, 2013).

Osisanwo (2008) views grammar from two different perspectives. First, grammar is seen as the body of descriptive statements about the morphological and syntactic structures of a particular language. Secondly, grammar is defined as the totality of language description. According to him, while the first definition subsumes morphology and syntax which should be accepted very strictly as the true definition of the word 'grammar', the second definition in modern concept is nothing but linguistics; the scientific study of language (Odebunmi, Osisanwo, Bodunde, Ekpe, Osisanwo and Oyeleke (2016). Although grammar has been viewed from different perspectives due to its nature, therefore, only the one which best fits into this study shall be considered. For this study, the meaning of grammar is the study of the rules that guide the use of a particular language. These rules are prescriptive which form the focus of Traditional Grammar. Similarly,

grammar can be seen as the way a language manipulates and combines words or bits of words in order to form longer units of meaning. English grammar, therefore, deals with the structure of expressions in the English language which includes the structure of words, phrases, clauses and sentences.

The Importance of Teaching English Grammar

Grammar is considered as the way a language manipulates and combines words or bits of words to form longer units of meaning. There is no doubt then that teaching grammatical rules constitutes an essential aspect in the mastering of a given language. According to Subasini and Kolilavani (2013), communication is the heart and soul of the human experience. They observe that, people usually never concentrate on learning grammar, especially their mother tongue to use it for speaking, but people must pay attention in learning grammar to enrich the beauty of their own mother tongue. When we come to learning a new language like the English language, grammar is more important and the importance of grammar cannot be neglected.

Wang (2010) observes that mastering grammar is the foundation in the proficiency of language. To him, grammar teaching is an essential part of language teaching. In a similar vein, Zhang (2009), is of the view that grammar is often misunderstood in the language teaching field. This misconception, however, lies in the view that grammar is a collection of arbitrary rules about static structure in the language. Further questionable claims are that the structures do not have to be thought, learners will acquire them on their own, or if the structures are taught, the lessons that ensue will be boring. It argues that grammar teaching is necessary in language teaching.

To Greenbaum and Nelson (2002), it is impossible to teach a language without taking into consideration its grammatical structures. This is captured in the following lines:

In the study of language, grammar occupies a central position. But there is also, a practical reason to emphasize the study of grammar. It is easy to learn to use dictionaries by yourself to find the pronunciation, spelling, or meanings of words, but it is difficult to consult grammar books without a considerable knowledge of grammar (p.6).

Greenbaum and Nelson (2002) identify several applications of grammatical study. These among others include; a recognition of grammatical structures, which is often essential for punctuations; a study of one's native grammar - helpful when one studies the grammar of a foreign language; a knowledge of a grammar which helps in the interpretation of literary as well as non-literary texts, since the interpretation of a passage sometimes depends crucially on grammatical analysis; a

study of the grammatical resources of English is useful in composition; in particular, it can help you to evaluate the choices available to you when you come to revise an earlier written draft.

Debata (2013) describes grammar as the study of words and the ways words work together; an invisible force that guides us as we put words together into sentences. He further explains that any person who communicates using a particular language, consciously or unconsciously becomes aware of the grammar of that language. He gives a beautiful analogy of two drivers to illustrate the use of knowledge of grammar. “Imagine two car drivers. The first driver knows only driving and nothing about the working of the engine. He feels helpless whenever there is some trouble with the machinery. The second driver knows driving and understands the working of the machinery. The person who knows grammar like the second driver, in case he is doubtful about the correctness of a particular thing, his knowledge of grammar comes to his rescue. Therefore, to speak in a clearer and more effective manner, we must study grammar.

Subasini and Kokilavani (2013) believe that all languages have grammar, and each language has its own grammar. People who speak the same language can communicate because they intuitively know the grammar system of that language that is, the rules of making meaning. To Subasini and Kokilavani (2013), grammar is important because it is the language that makes it possible for us to talk about the language. Grammar is seen as the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. Students who are native speakers of English already know English grammar. They recognize the sounds of English words, the meanings of those words and the different ways of putting words together to make meaningful sentences (O’Hare, 1873 in Subasini & Kokilavani, 2013).

Using the correct grammar is important to avoid misunderstanding and to help the listener to comprehend the speaker easily. Language with errors will slow down the communication and conversations. Similarly, through grammar teaching, students will be able to get new information, different thoughts and opinions from various group activities due to the information gap. By finishing the task in a communicative way, students become more responsible and play a more positive role in their learning. It is a change that the students no longer just listen to the teachers, but they also ask questions when they do not understand and make every effort to use the language. In this sense, varied activities, interactions and topics can all contribute to main language practice, and lessons in general more enjoyable and effective for the students (Subasini & Kokilavani, 2013).

Praschant (2010) citing Varghese (1989) acknowledges the importance of grammar teaching. In his own view, a knowledge of grammar is perhaps more important to a second-language learner than to a native speaker. This is because in the process of acquiring the language, the native speaker has intuitively internalized the grammar of the language whereas the second language learner has to make a conscious effort to master those aspects of the language which account for grammaticality. It is, therefore, necessary for us, to whom English is a second language, to learn the grammar of the language”. Hence acquainting the learners of L2 with the correct norms of the target language and providing them practice through creating meaningful situations in the classroom becomes necessary (Praschant, 2010).

Empirical Studies

Importance of the Dictionary in Teaching Grammar

Dictionary has been considered as an important device for both EFL teachers and EFL learners. It is highly needed to conduct effective teaching and learning (Al-Nauman & Ahmed, 2013). Scholars such as Miller (2006) have considered the dictionary as an effective instructional aid for the teaching and learning of English in the second language environment. It is a resource which is often overlooked by both the students and teachers of English as a second language as established by Miller (2006). Kirkness (2004) observes that teachers as well as the students are not aware of the wealth of information contained in dictionaries. Results of previous studies have shown that teachers do not use dictionary in grammar class as established by Prichard (2008). Further studies have also shown that teachers as well as the students consult the dictionary only when they want to look out for the meanings of difficult words and to develop their vocabulary (Miller, 2006, Prichard, 2008). Fauzanz, Basthomi, and Ivone (2022) explains that the wealth of grammatical information contained within the learners’ dictionary can help students improve their English language skills as well as their academic writing thereby improving their achievement in grammar specifically and in English language generally.

In a similar vein, Takahashi (2012) opines that the dictionary is one of the common learning tools for second and foreign language learners. He further explains that various types of dictionaries are used to help learners work on their language development. Marmol and Angela (2013) see the dictionary has traditionally been a widely used tool by Foreign Language students, both in their self-process of vocabulary acquisition and trying to understand a text. They explain that the reason is that vocabulary which is the main content of a dictionary can be considered the building block of languages (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001). That is why students carry

dictionaries and not grammar books, when they travel abroad (McLaughlin, 1978 in Marmol & Angela, 2013).

In a survey of 42 international students in Australia, it was found that very few knew what information could be found in a Monolingual English Learners' Dictionary (MELD) or how it could be applied to their academic writing (Miller, 2006). Miller (2008) also observes that teachers too often did not know that grammatical details, or information about collocations and idioms, were available in a MELD. According to Kirkness (2004), the MELD serves as a single most valuable source of linguistic information on all aspects of the target language for teachers and students. Miller (2010) however, indicates ways in which learners' dictionaries (both paper and electronic copies) can assist ESL learners to improve their academic writing thus, engaging them more fully in the wider world of academic study.

In another study carried out by Muller in 2006 on the importance of using learners' dictionaries in English class in Australia, four students among other students used for the research felt that a learners' dictionary could enhance their English skills. The results of the study indicated that the students realized that the use of dictionaries could contribute not just to the decoding of unfamiliar words but to their productive use in encoding and their correct use in terms of register and context. Also, the students saw that the dictionary was a wider resource than they had thought. However, it has been observed that before students can effectively use the learners' dictionaries, they need to be taught the use of dictionary skills. Takahashi (2013) is of the view that students need to be shown how the forms of words can be built. In this way, they will be able to separate nouns, adjectives and adverbs, so that words such as euphemism, euphemistic and euphemistically can be more easily recognized and found. They could also be made more aware of the importance of, for example, countability, in determining article use, or the irregular forms of English verbs and look for these details in their dictionary searches (Takahashi, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Grammar has been considered as one of the most important aspects of any language without which it will be difficult for anyone to become a competent user of language. It is seen as the spinal cord of any language and users' mastery of it determines their competence and performance in the language. It therefore becomes expedient for users of language to have a high level of knowledge of the grammar of a language before they can be considered competent users of that language. However, previous studies have shown that students learning English are often faced with diverse difficulties across the various linguistic levels including grammar. Research

has shown the importance of instructional resources in alienating these problems. Unfortunately, it has been observed that the dictionary which is an equally important resource is often overlooked by teachers in Nigeria in their selection and use of instructional resources when teaching grammar. While several studies have been carried out on the use of different approaches and instructional resources in teaching grammar, much has not been done on teachers' lack of the use of dictionary in the grammar class in secondary schools particularly in Osun State; hence, the need for this study.

Research Objectives

This study investigated the use and effect of the dictionary on students' learning of grammatical items in senior secondary schools in Osun State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- a. examine the use of the dictionary in teaching English grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State.
- b. determine the effect of the use of the dictionary on students' achievement in English grammar in senior secondary schools in the study area.

Research Questions

In line with the objectives formulated, the following questions were examined.

- a. How is the dictionary used in teaching English grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State?
- b. What are the reasons for the use or non-use of the dictionary in teaching English grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis was tested for the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of the use of the dictionary on students' achievement in English grammar in senior secondary schools in selected local government areas in Osun State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive and the non-equivalent pretest-post-test control group research designs. The descriptive survey research design was used to gather relevant data on the use of the dictionary in the grammar class in senior secondary schools in Osun State while the non-equivalent pretest-post-test control group research design was used to determine the effect of the use of the dictionary on students' achievement in English grammar. There were two groups of two intact classes, one experimental and one control group. The experimental group was taught

some concepts in English grammar using the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English while the control group was taught some concepts in English grammar using Conventional Teaching Methods (CTM). Another nine intact classes with their English teachers were observed during their grammar classes.

The population of the study comprised Senior Secondary School Two (SS 2) students and their English teachers. The sample consisted of three hundred and fifty-six Senior Secondary School Two students in nine intact classes and nine English teachers nine secondary schools from three Local Government Areas in Osun State. The three Local Government Areas were selected from the existing 30 LAGs in Osun State using simple random sampling technique. They were Osogbo LGA, Olorunda LGA and Egbedore LGA. Three schools and three intact classes were selected from each LGA.

Two research instruments were used for data collection namely: Use of Dictionary Observation Schedule (UDOS) and Students' English Grammar Achievement Test (SEGAT). UDOS is an observation schedule designed by the researcher to gather information on the use of dictionary in teaching grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State. It is divided into three sections. Section A covers the personal information of the school, class, teacher and students observed. Section B contains the relevant characteristics or behaviour observed in teachers while Section C covers the characteristics or behaviour observed in students as regards the use of dictionary in grammar class. The following parameters were used to measure/score the characteristics and behaviour observed: (1) Not at all, (2) Once, (3) Often, (4) Very Often (for teachers' schedule) and Yes or No (for students' schedule). SEGAT consisted of questions drawn from selected questions from West African Senior Secondary Council Examinations (WASSCE) and grammar textbooks based on students' syllabus. Questions were also adapted from the instrument used by Miller (2006 cited in Miller, 2011) to investigate the effect of English learners' dictionaries on international students' acquisition of the English article system. The questions covered some aspects of grammar such as identification of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, the use of prepositions, conjunctions, articles and interjection. The instrument was used at the pre-test stage to examine the pre-knowledge of students in selected grammatical items in English and post-test stage to examine students' achievement in selected grammatical items in English.

Procedure

The study was carried out in eight weeks. The first and second weeks were used to carry out the observation study on the teachers and students in all the selected schools with the use of UDOS. The pre-test was also conducted in the first two weeks of the study for the two intact classes that made up the control and experimental groups using SEGAT with the help of research assistance. The third, fourth, fifth and sixth weeks were used to teach the control group and experimental group some selected topics in English grammar. The experimental group was taught some concepts in English grammar using the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. The control group was also taught some concepts in English grammar using Conventional Teaching Methods. The same syllabus was used for both the experimental and control groups. At the end of the intervention in the sixth week, a post-test was conducted also with the help of the research assistance for both control and experimental groups on the seventh week using SEGAT in order to check for their achievement in English grammar. The seventh and eighth weeks were used for data analysis. Data collected were analysed using simple percentages and Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA). Simple percentages were used to answer the two research questions while ANCOVA was used to test the hypothesis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In response to research question one, the results indicate that the mean of relative significant score of teachers' use of the dictionary while teaching grammar is 1.0 which signifies low use of the dictionary in grammar class by the teachers. The mean of relative significant score of the teachers referring to the dictionary while teaching grammar is 1.1 which also indicates low use of the dictionary in grammar class by the teachers. The mean of relative significant score of inclusion of the dictionary as part of the instructional materials to be used in teaching grammatical concepts in senior secondary schools is 1.0 (low) while that of inclusion of the dictionary as instructional resources for teaching comprehension is 2.3 which is at a moderate level. This shows that most teachers included the dictionary as one of the instructional materials to be used in teaching comprehension while they failed to include the dictionary as of the instructional materials to be used in teaching grammar. It also shows a low level of teachers' use of the dictionary in grammar class.

However, the mean of relative significant score of teachers' use of dictionary in teaching comprehension and vocabulary development is 2.3 (moderate level) while the mean of relative significant score of teachers' use of the dictionary in teaching writing skills is 1.7 (low). This is a clear indication that teachers used the dictionary in teaching comprehension/vocabulary. The mean of relative significant score of teachers coming to class with a copy of the dictionary especially in grammar class is 1.0 (low) which shows that teachers rarely go to class with a copy of the dictionary. The mean of relative significant score of the teachers instructing the students to check-up the meaning of words in the course of the lesson and making emphasis on the use of dictionary to improve students' communication skills 1.1 which shows a low level of teachers' use of the dictionary in the English class. Also, the mean of relative significant score of teachers' use of the dictionary in correcting students' grammatical errors is 1.2 which indicates low use of the dictionary in the grammar class. Meanwhile, the mean of relative significant score of teachers' use of other instructional materials more than the dictionary in the teaching of grammar is 4.0 (high). This is a clear indication that teachers who participated in the study used other instructional materials such as textbooks more than the dictionary in the grammar class.

The above findings show that the teachers (100%) did not use the dictionary in the grammar class while only 55.6% of teachers used it to teach comprehension/vocabulary. It was also observed that all the teachers did not go to the class with a dictionary and did not help students to correct grammar-related errors with the use of the dictionary. This therefore shows a low level of the use of the dictionary by teachers in senior secondary schools in Osun State particularly in grammar class.

Further assessing the use of the dictionary by the students during grammar class, the results indicate the percentage of the students who came to school with a copy of the dictionary is 43.1% which is moderate while the percentage of students who brought out their dictionary in the course of the lesson (without the teachers' directive) is 16.9% which is very low. The percentage of students who had a copy of the dictionary is 52.8% which is moderate while the percentage of students who had a complete dictionary is 13.9% which is also very low. In addition, the percentage of students who used the dictionary in grammar class is 12.6% which shows a very low level of the use of the dictionary in the grammar class by the students. The percentage of students who used the dictionary to check up the meaning of unfamiliar words is 52% (moderate) while the percentage of students who used the dictionary to learn grammatical

concepts is 6.2% which is low. This, however, indicates that students use the dictionary in checking up the meanings of unfamiliar words more than using it to learn grammatical concepts.

Also, the percentage of students who used the dictionary to correct grammatical errors is 9.6% which shows a very low level of students' use of the dictionary in solving grammatical errors. The percentage of students who had difficulty in using the dictionary to correct grammar related errors is 84.3% which is very high. Furthermore, the percentage of students who were exposed to the use of other instructional materials such as English textbooks more than the dictionary is 100% which is very high. This is a clear indication that students' use of dictionary is very low compared to other instructional materials used in learning grammar. The percentage of students who used the dictionary in checking up for the correct spellings of words is 45.2% which is moderate. This therefore shows a moderate level of students' use of the dictionary in checking up the meanings of unfamiliar or difficult words.

The above findings show that students' use of dictionary in grammar class and correcting grammatical errors is very low. The result shows that students used the dictionary mostly to check up meanings and spellings of unfamiliar words only and not to learn concepts in grammar. It shows that 55.6% of the students lacked the necessary skills to use the dictionary effectively. It was also observed from the result that 100% of the students used other instructional materials used in learning grammar more than the dictionary while the percentage of students who used the dictionary to check up for the correct spellings of words is 45.2% is at moderate level. This however shows a very low level of the use if dictionary by the students to learn grammar.

The results on research question two show that 100% of the teachers claimed that they had a copy of the dictionary. Some of them showed the researcher their dictionaries while some did not. Based on the results of the use of the dictionary by the teachers, it was observed that 100% of the teachers observed did not go to the class with a copy of the dictionary. 100% of the teachers when asked why they did not go to the class with a copy of the dictionary, they claimed they were not making use of it for the topic taught in the class. When further asked if they have been going to the class with a copy of the dictionary, 22.2% of the teachers said they only go to the class whenever they want to teach the students registers or vocabulary developments and when they were doing dictionary search while 78.8% of the teachers were of the view that they did not go to the class because most of their students did not have it.

On why the teachers have not been using the dictionary to teach grammar, 100% of the teachers interviewed said that the use of the dictionary mostly in grammar class was time consuming. They further complained about the time allotted to each period did not allow them to make judicious use of the dictionary in class, mostly in grammar class. In addition to this, 66.7% of the teachers claimed that the attitude of the students towards the use of the dictionary was not encouraging as few of the students who had copies of the dictionary were being compelled to use it. Furthermore, 100% of the teachers attested to the fact that the dictionary is an important tool in teaching grammar. Also, 100% of the teachers claimed they were aware of the grammatical information contained in the dictionary and acknowledged the importance of the dictionary in teaching grammar.

However, 100% of the teachers believed that the dictionary could be used to teach grammar but about 66.7% of them said it might not be applicable to all aspects of grammar. 44% of the teachers said they preferred the dictionary to other instructional materials used in teaching English grammar and were ready to use it provided they found themselves in an organized setting where dictionaries would be made available for all students and more time would be allotted to the teaching of grammar. However, 55.6% of the teachers were of the view that they still preferred other materials such as textbooks to the dictionary because they believed the dictionary could not bring about total effective teaching of grammar. They concluded by saying the dictionary could only be used as a complement to other instructional aids used in teaching grammar but not as the main instructional material to be used to teach grammar.

Based on the results of the findings, it could be concluded that the following factors are the reasons behind the non-use of dictionary by the English teachers in teaching grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State: Time factor, that is, limited time allotted to the teaching of English (100%) and time-consuming of its use (56%), unavailability of the dictionaries (79%), students' attitude towards the use of the dictionary (67%) and ineffectiveness of the dictionary for the teaching of grammar (56%).

On the students' response on the use of dictionary in grammar class, the students identified factors such as the size and weight of the dictionary (56%), irregular use of the dictionary by the teachers in class particularly in grammar classes (67%), parents' socio-economic status (31%), lack of exposure to the grammatical information contained in the dictionary (66%) and lack of

interest in the use of the dictionary (33%). Others include lack of encouragement from the teachers, lack of use of dictionary skills and unavailability of the dictionary in schools as factors hindering their use of the dictionary in grammar class.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant effect of the use of dictionary on students’ achievement in English grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State. This hypothesis was formulated to test the effect of the use of dictionary on students’ achievement in English grammar in senior secondary schools in Osun State.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Pre-test and Post test Scores of the Two Groups

Test	N	Experimental Group				Control Group				
		Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Pretest	40	23.00	56.00	39.10	8.76	37	27.00	57.00	38.87	7.27
Posttest	40	50.00	77.00	61.90	7.53	36	26.00	52.00	35.36	6.02

The pre-test score of the experimental and control groups revealed a mean pre-test and post test score of 39.10 and 38.87 with not much difference. It also reveals a mean post test score for the two groups as 61.90 and 35.36 with those exposed to the use of the dictionary having a higher score. This shows that students exposed to the use of the dictionary had higher scores than those who were not exposed to the use of the dictionary.

Table 2: ANCOVA Analysis of Co-variance of the Effect of the Use of Dictionary on Students’ Achievement in English Grammar Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: post-test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Corrected Model	13304.755 ^a	2	6652.377	212.184	.000
Intercept	2890.958	1	2890.958	92.210	.000
Pre-test	1187.623	1	1187.623	37.880	.000
Group	11533.567	1	11533.567	367.874	.000
Error	2288.690	73	31.352		
Total	204992.920	76			
Corrected Total	15593.445	75			

a. R Squared = .853 (Adjusted R Squared = .849)

The table reveals the ANCOVA analysis of co-variance of the effect of the use of the dictionary on students' achievement in English grammar ($F= 367.87$, $p<0.05$). It shows that the p-value of 0.00 for the post-test group is less than the 0.05 level of significance thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there exists a significant effect of the use of the dictionary on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in selected local government areas in Osun State.

The result is line with the findings of Miller (2006) on the effect of English learners' dictionaries on international students' acquisition of the English article system. The results of the study revealed that the groups who were not taught with the use of the dictionary had an average overall score of 6.5, and an average writing score of 6.3 while the two groups taught with the use of the dictionaries had an average overall score of 6.3 and an average writing of 6.2. The results of the study also indicated that the students who used the dictionary achieved a slightly higher number of correct answers in the given article exercises and expressed a higher level of satisfaction with the session, than those who had not used the dictionary. Miller, therefore, observed that the small difference in increased correctness between the dictionary and non-dictionary users was disappointing and attributed this to the users' lack of familiarity with the dictionaries and their reluctance to check every noun in the dictionary for countability.

CONCLUSION

The use of the dictionary has been an effective tool in teaching some concepts in English grammar in Senior Secondary Schools. The study established that a significant percentage of teachers and students in senior secondary schools in Osun State did not make use of the dictionary in grammar class. The study also revealed the factors responsible for the non-use of the dictionary by both teachers and students in senior secondary schools in Osun State which include time factor (limited time allotted to the teaching of English), unavailability of the dictionaries, students' attitude towards the use of the dictionary among others for the teachers while factors such as the size and weight of the dictionary, irregular use of the dictionary by the teachers in class particularly in grammar classes, parents' socio-economic status, lack of exposure to the grammatical information contained in the dictionary among others affect students' use of the dictionary in grammar class. The study was concluded by establishing the fact there was significant effect of the use of the dictionary on students' achievement in English grammar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Teachers and students should be provided with copies of the dictionary in order to facilitate the use of the dictionary in grammar class.
- ii. Seminars and workshops should be organized for both teachers and students to sensitize them on the importance of the dictionary in teaching some aspects of English such as grammar.
- iii. Teachers should endeavour to expose the students to the grammatical information contained in the dictionary in order to enhance the effective use of the dictionary by the students to learn some grammatical concepts on their own with little or no supervision.

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