



CHALLENGES OF LEARNING ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN A RURAL NIGERIAN COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This article described the challenges of learning English grammar among the Junior Secondary School (JSS) students in a rural community in Khana Local Government Area (L.G.A.) of Rivers State. The objectives are to identify the difficulties, describe the causes and proffer possible solutions. The research design is qualitative. An achievement test on sentences that comprise some English words which can function both as nouns and verbs, and also on verbs only was administered on 38 purposively selected JSS1 students of Community Secondary School, Luubaara. The findings revealed that the students who had no prior exposure to English in real-life contexts had difficulties identifying the words that only function as nouns in Khana but can as well function as verbs in English while those exposed to English were able to identify their verbs functions. The study concluded that students' lack of opportunities to use English for communication in the rural community posed a hindrance to their learning of the syntactic behaviour of words that can function both as noun and verbs in English but only function either as nouns or verbs in their L1. The study recommends that the teaching and learning of English in rural communities should use a bi/multilingual approach that encourages explicit grammar teaching utilizing conscious raising grammar tasks that provide pedagogic activities on some forms of English grammar which the learners do and also supports the use of translanguaging and translation as teaching strategies that would enable the students to achieve explicit understanding of the grammatical features of English that differ from the grammar of their native language. There should also be a re-skilling of the English language teachers, whether they are native speakers of the learners' L1 or not, and an improvement in their approaches to teaching English grammar.

Keywords: English grammar, rurality, second language teaching and learning, grammar conscious raising

Introduction

The learning of English in Nigeria is plagued with lots of linguistic hitches resulting from the improper handling of her multilingualism, the prestigious status of English and its domestication in Nigeria. Identifying the challenges posed by these is a lead-way guide for teachers and learners of English. As the language of education, literacy and all official and formal interaction in Nigeria, Muhammad, Ya'u, Aliyu and Hassan (2018) describe it as the language of the Nigerian elite. Its usage for all formal interactions and even some non-formal interactions resides basically with the elites and so, a large concentration of its use in daily communication is found among dwellers in towns and cities. Among the rural dwellers, its use is mostly for strict official government activities. Hardly is it used in the daily communication of the rural dwellers. Instead the indigenous languages are used because the eco-linguistic texture is usually monolingual and mono-cultural. This reduces greatly the opportunities for using English among rural dwellers and invariably creates a wide acquisition gap between city dwellers, particularly the educated, and the rural dwellers. So, most people in the rural areas who need Standard English, particularly for educational purposes, do not have readily available opportunities for use and hence, hardly have direct access to it.

Statista.com (2024) and Ugwuanyi (2020) report that an estimated 53% of Nigerians speak a form or the other of English. These forms include standard and non-standard varieties, and Pidgin English. This is because English is Nigeria's official language and as the language of education it is learned right from the primary school level, irrespective of their areas of domicile. Unfortunately, a good number of rural dwellers are not able to use the Standard English for daily interactions and so their children could not acquire it at their childhood acquisition ages. This category of children learned the English language after they have acquired their mother tongues usually in formal contexts at school where English is equally used as the medium of instruction. Learning a language that is to be used for such a serious assignment in formal school settings, when the learners ought to have been prepared to use the language for educational

developmental projects, does not signal a good start for such learners (Darasadhi, 2016 cited in Shan & Aziz, 2022). This compels the learners to learn English through concerted efforts as a second language in a formal setting. They tend to be forced by this situation to transfer their knowledge of their mother tongue into the learning of English. Such transfer makes the learners to experience a lot of difficulties learning areas that English and their mother tongue do not share similarities. This makes the teaching and learning of English, especially its grammar, a tedious task for both the teachers and the learners because it impedes the progress rate of the whole processes.

For successful education, particularly in the rural environment, the language of instruction must be accessible to every potential user. If the 'education for all' mantra of the Nigerian government, as contained in the Federal Government of Nigeria's National Policy on Education (2014), should be realisable, the language of education must be common to every Nigerian child. This is because learning can never take place except there is communication between the teacher and the learners and there can hardly be any communication except through a language understood by all the communicants. So, effective teaching and learning via English in the classroom cannot be possible without the learners being part of the culture of English. Schumann (1978) in Oyatogun (2023) opines that successful learning of a second or foreign language involves becoming part of the target culture and Stubbs (1976) equally observes that linguistic failure is academic failure. Therefore, for teaching and learning of English in the rural communities to yield the expected results, the students should have access to the Standard English for daily communication. The language should be acquired simultaneously with their mother tongue or better still become one of the languages they interact with before they start formal schooling.

Non-use of English as a language of daily communication in rural areas makes the students unable to interact freely in an English-only medium of instruction classroom because they have no competence in the grammar norms of English. As English is not the language of their

daily interaction in their immediate environment, their first contact with English happens in a classroom setting while learning it as a subject and also through it as the medium of instruction for other school subjects. Hence, they are linguistically handicapped to communicate in the language of education. The teachers therefore, are saddled with the dual tasks of teaching English as a subject and also as the language that the students ought to acquire for all educational purposes. Thus, explicit teaching of the grammar of the English that would enable them attain the expected competence needed for learning other subjects through the English is required. The aim of this paper therefore is to investigate the challenges of learning English grammar among junior secondary school students of Community Secondary School, Luubara in Khana L.G.A. Its objectives are to (i) find out the interlingual differences between English and Kana in the use of some nouns and verbs that pose learning difficulties to the students; (ii) describe the causes of the challenges and proffer solutions

Literature Review

Second Language Teaching and Learning

Second language teaching and learning go together and happen in a well-defined time and environment. It involves two active participants in the classroom, the teacher and the learners. Thus, setting off the language learning process does not depend entirely on the teacher. Rather, it requires helping the learners to use the resources of the target language to achieve a wide range of functions. The resources to be learned consist both the formal and functional aspects of language that would eventually enable the learners to utilize the language effectively as a medium of communication. Second language teaching and learning occur in a variety of contexts. These contexts include foreign environment, formal versus informal settings as well as monolingual versus multilingual situation.

Second language learning is an active process that requires learning another culture to the point of experiencing it from the inside (Kim, 2020). This experience makes the learner able to communicate in the language. It is always associated with putting in efforts to learn a language after acquiring a first language

effortlessly. This involves the learner taking some measures to master a language and use it for communication after his first language.

In Nigeria, the learner of English is “already a linguistic adult by the time s/he learns English” (Adegbite, 2020, p. 256). Unlike the native speakers who acquire the language from infancy, most Nigerians would have learnt one language, usually his/her mother tongue or Pidgin, before learning English. This means that the Nigerian already has a language to cater for his/her immediate communication needs and therefore does not feel the urgency to learn English. English therefore, serves a secondary role in the communication network of the majority of the learners, especially those in the rural areas.

English language teaching and learning in Nigeria is a compulsory school endeavour. Its teaching is compulsory at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels; at the tertiary level English is learned as one of the General Studies (GST) courses. The objectives of its teaching include serving as a means of inculcating the spirit of nationalism in Nigerian learners, gaining access to modernism and as a tool of internationalism (Adegbite, 2020). Hence, the practices of its teaching at the primary and secondary school levels emphasizes, in addition to the efficient mastery of the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, the mastery of its grammar.

The process of its teaching at the primary and secondary school levels is described in literature as a very problematic task because there is more to it than vocabulary and grammar teaching (Adebileje & Akinola, 2020). At these levels, it is taught as a subject and as well be used as the medium of instruction. The teaching therefore, must be effective to enable the students to have not only the expected subject knowledge, but also to learn it well enough to learn through it and achieve proficiency in it for successful academic and professional work. This implies efficient mastery of its grammar, especially, as it has to do with the order and patterns in which words are arranged in sentences. The students have to understand when and why the use of one form rather than the other is preferable and/or the most appropriate. Grammatical proficiency therefore, is both an important pedagogical skill and an

important part of English language proficiency. Hence, mere teaching and learning English as a subject for few hours in the classroom is not enough to enable learners achieve the expected proficiency for using it adequately.

Akujobi and Chukwu (2012) observe that English does not share the same form, grammar and meaning with the Nigerian learners' mother tongue; so, the learners experience overwhelming challenges learning it. Unlike native speakers of English who have implicit knowledge of the grammar of English and are competent in it, the Nigerian non-native learners need to build an explicit awareness of how the grammar rules of English are formed. Building such awareness is not an easy task as the learners often face some English grammar problems such as the omission and misuse of prepositions, article, past tense, comparative forms of adjective. To help the learners overcome this, Madrinan (2014) opines that second language teachers should be specialised in their first language (L1) as well as their L2 (in this case English) because as they major in two languages, such specialization enables them to easily isolate the structural and functional differences between the grammars of the two languages. This tends to suggest that the Nigerian learners of English should be taught English by a competent native speaker of their L1 who is also a trained English teacher for best results. As it is necessary for the Nigerian learners to master the grammar of English in order to be competent in the four language skills, because incorrect use or lack of mastery of grammar might hinder effective listening, speaking, writing and reading, the teachers should be able to identify the challenges and adapt the teaching to solving the problems. Hence, this paper aims at examining the challenges secondary school students in a particular rural area have in learning English grammar.

Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language in the Rural Area

Rurality, according to Coady (2019) cited in Shan and Aziz (2022) is related to geographical features such as impoverished condition of social amenities. Poor states of social infrastructures associated with rurality constitute stumbling block to effective learning. Shan and Aziz (2020)

claim that this makes teaching English in the rural area is a challenging task. Ranjit (2022) identifies teaching strategies as one of the major problems facing English language teachers. She claims that teachers in the rural areas are not well equipped to use the available strategies to impact the learners. For Aziz, Swanto and Azhar (2019) cited in Shan and Abdul Aziz (2022) the students' family background, socio economic status and also the status of English in the learners' area lead to poor English result among rural students. The learners' mother tongue is viewed by Adebileje and Akinola (2020) as complex such that it hinders proficiency and easy comprehension of English. Acknowledging Cummins (1979), Adebileje and Akinola (2020) posit that children learning a second language have a communicative barrier and that there is more to learning English than vocabulary and grammar. Thus, a second language learner of English can only be adjudged competent in the language when he is able to use its lexical and grammatical structures accurately for communication, and for a normal memory span at conversational speed to the extent of being able to notice any error that occurs.

Yu (2019) contends that students in rural areas have no necessary English environment to exercise English. So, they practice dumb English which makes them lack language communicative ability. Omachonu (2018) observes that the location of a school is an important factor in learning and it affects their achievements. Hossain (2016) asserts that the broad goal of English programmes is to develop the communicative ability to convey and interpret a message through spoken modalities to another person but most of the students in the rural areas are not able to attain the primary English language competences due to prevailing challenges. Idoli and Ummanah (2010) also confirm that students in the urban centres perform better than those in the rural areas in oral English.

Available literature reveals that the opportunity to use the English language in urban setting is higher than the rural setting. Yule (2020) opines that a child growing up requires interactions with other users of the language in order to bring the language faculty into operation. The immediate environment of a child in the rural community in Nigeria hardly gives him or her

such opportunity to interact with other users of English before he or she faces it at school. Thus, the English language used in the classroom is often artificial and unnatural because it is neither native nor familiar to the learners. These factors and many more have contributed to the difficulties experienced by teachers and learners of English in the rural communities. Other studies (Hossain, 2016; Obiakor & Malu, 2020; Cuong, 2021) have shown that lack of social amenities such as conducive classrooms, and overcrowding of students in the classrooms, lack of trained teachers in English, lack of ICT facilities to aid learning, lack of control in the classroom and excessive use of mother tongue are among the factors that challenge the teaching and learning of English in the rural environments. This study differs from these as it examines how the students' lack of exposure to English challenges the learning of English grammar in a rural community secondary school with a view to find out how the learners' transfer of their knowledge of their mother tongue into the learning of English affect their ability to identify some basic word classes when used to form simple sentences, using the noun and lexical verb classes as point of reference.

The rationale for this study derives from the second author's experience of teaching English in a rural Community Secondary School in Khana L.G.A. As a native speaker of Kana and a teacher of English in the rural area for more than a decade, she has had first-hand experience of these challenges. Hence, the investigation of the challenges encountered by the students, with little or no background knowledge of English, whose language of every day communication is different from English, the language of education, and so, they compulsorily learn it as a subject in the formal school setting.

Methodology

This study is descriptive. Thirty-eight out of the forty students of the JSS1 class of Community Secondary School Luubaara were purposively selected while the remaining two were not eligible because they are non-indigenes and also are not speakers of Kana. Eight, out of the thirty-eight have a little exposure to English because they have spent their holidays in urban and semi-urban

cities where English is used for daily communication. All the students live in Luubaara community. Luubaara is one of the secluded rural communities in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State in Nigeria. The majority of the students are indigenes of Luubaara community and more than ninety-eight percent of her population communicate in Kana language on a daily basis.

A well-structured achievement test that comprises fifteen (15) simple declarative sentences was used. Six English words (water, plant, dance, cut, zip, cook) that could function as nouns as well as verbs were used in ten simple declarative sentences (1-10) accordingly, and another five English words (come, go, stand, sit, sing) that could function only as lexical verbs were used in five sentences (11-15). For the first five sentences (1-5), the students were asked to indicate the use of the words, *water, plant, cut, zip, cook*, as nouns while for sentences 6-10, they were to identify the uses of *water, dance, cut, zip, cook*, as verbs. The third part of the test comprising sentence 11-15 which contain the words, *come, go, stand, sit, sing*, required the same students to identify the verbs in those sentences. The students' performances were recorded and for the purpose of accounting for the sources of the challenges they had in identify the syntactic functions of the words, literal translations of the fifteen sentences to Kana were done and the English glosses were given if they are structurally different from the English sentences. For the purpose of data presentation and analysis, the English sentences are coded as S1(i), S2(i), S3(i), S4(i), S5(i), S6(i), S7(i), S8(i), S9(i), S10(i), S11(i), S12(i), S13(i), S14(i), S15(i). The Kana translations of these sentences are given as (ii) and any whose syntactic structure is not a direct equivalent of the English sentence in (i), the English glossis given as (iii).

Data Presentation and Analysis

All data collected were analysed to see how language use for daily interaction in the rural environment affect the teaching and learning of English. The following words were used in sentences 1-5. S1: Water; S2: plant; S3: cut; S4: zip and S5: cook. They are used as nouns. S1-5(i) are the simple declarative English sentences

while S1-5(ii) are the Kana translations. Their Kana equivalents are presented so as to show the similarities and differences between simple declarative sentence structures in both languages.

- S1 (i) I fetched two buckets of water.
 (ii) M íbì bàc bókèèti maa.
 (iii) I fetched two bucket water

All thirty- eight students were able to identify *water* as a noun in S1 (i). This is because structurally, the sentences in both English and Kana have the SVO structure, except the use of the preposition *of* in English which Kana omits. Those who have not been exposed to English outside the classroom were first subjected to the test. Each of the respondents took a few minutes to ponder before answering, though they got it right.

- S2 (i) I like beautiful plants.
 (ii) M wereloo èkpédeḡ té/epanya.
 (iii) I like beautiful tree/leaf.

Eighteen students identified *plant* as a noun in S2(i). This includes the eight students that have minimal exposure to English outside the classroom setting and Luubaara community and ten others. The remaining twenty failed to identify it as a noun. This is possibly because word, *plant*, as used in S2(i) does not have such broad referent in Kana; rather, *tree* is the appropriate linguistic item to collocate with beautiful in Kana. But then, the term *tree* is used in Kana, just as it is in English, to refer to some particular types of plant. So, Kana does not have an umbrella term for everything that is planted, which the word, *plant*, stands for in English.

- S3 (i). Kara has a deep cut.
 (ii) Kara éré to gatoga múu.
 (iii) Kara has deep wound.

Apart from identifying the subject (Kara) of S3 (i) as a noun, none of the thirty-eight students was able to identify *cut* as a noun. This is attributable

partly to the traditional grammar definition of a verb as an action; hence they see *cut* as an action and nothing else. This situation is more challenging due the fact that the function of *cut* as a noun here is not applicable in Kana. Rather the word used in Kana is equivalent to *wound* in English.

- S4 (i) Please, fix my zip.
 (ii) Sóósóò, yere na zip.

All thirty-eight respondents were able to identify *zip* as the noun in sentence S4 (i). This is because all the linguistic items that make up the simple sentence feature and function alike in both languages. So, the students were able to use their innate knowledge of Kana to infer the meaning of the sentence and so, were able to identify the noun easily. Moreover, Kana has no indigenous lexical item for the object, zip.

- S5 (i) My mother is a cook.
 (ii) Mdaa ka lu waa bui nu.
 (iii) My mother is woman cooking thing.

All students were able to identify the common noun, *mother* at the subject position of S5 (i) correctly, as a noun. None was identified the second noun, *cook*, in the sentence. This could be because of the traditional grammar definition of any word that indicates an action as a verb. Isolating such word as *cook*, it indicates action and so should be seen as a verb. It requires a proper knowledge of how the grammar of English works, without heavily depending on traditional grammar and knowledge of the grammar of their mother tongue, for them to identify *cook* as a noun.

The above analysis reveals that there is sameness in the use of the words, *water* and *zip* and variance in the usages (syntactic and lexical) of the words, *plants*, *cut* and *cook* as nouns in S1- 5. Also the syntactic structures of S1- S4 in both languages are similar (SVO). This is evident in S1: English: I (S) fetched (V) two buckets of water(O) Vs Kana: M (S) íbì(V) bàè bókèèti maa (O); S3: English: Kara (S) has(V) a deep cut (O)

Vs Kana: Kara (S) éré (V) to gatoga múú (O). Despite differences in phrasal compositions, there is lexical variance in S2, S3, S5 (S5: English: My mother is a cook. Vs Kana: Mdaa ka lu waa bui nu. (English gloss: My mother is woman cooking thing)

The second part of the test comprises S6-S10 which contains the words, *water*, *dance*, *cut*, *zip* and *cook* used as verbs respectively.

- S6 (i) I want to water my plant
 (ii) M gbi e yere máá lóó na te/lo.
 (iii) I want to put water on my tree/farm.

All the students had difficulty identifying *water* as the verb in S6. They rather added *put* before *water* as the action word (verb); thus realizing the sentence, *I want to put water on my plant*. They were more confused to see *water*, which is always believed to be the name of a 'thing' according to traditional grammar definition, said to be functioning as a verb. To worsen the situation, *water* does not in any way function as a verb in the Kana culture that the learners have been enmeshed in. So, because the students were not able to use their knowledge of Kana to decipher the verb in this sentence, they were not able to identify *water* as the verb.

- S7 (i) Sira likes to dance very well.
 (ii) Sira wèrèlòó èyèh kááná kááná.

All the students were able to identify *dance* as the verb in sentence S7 (i). This is possibly because *dance* indicates action and it features and functions alike in both Kana and English constructions.

- S8 (i) Saaro has cut the plantain.
 (ii) Saaro efirà lò ebuc.

Identifying the verb in sentence S8 (i) was not difficult for the respondents. This could be because the use of the Kana word for *cut* (fi) corresponds with its use in English as a verb. The verb also features after an auxiliary and before a

noun phrase just as it is in English, although the Kana auxiliary 'e' and 'ra' are circumfixed to the lexical verb 'fi'. Hence, the English verb group, *has cut*, is one word in Kana, "efira". This combinatory similarity of the auxiliary verb, 'has', and the lexical verb, 'cut', in both languages makes the Kana student learners of English as a second language not to have any difficulty identifying the verb in this sentence.

- S9 (i) Please, help me and zip my cloth.
 (ii) Soosoo yereba mē ne sa kpaē/zuura na zip.
 (iii) Please put hand me for and close/draw my zip.

All the respondents that have not been exposed to English, except in the school, had difficulty identifying *zip* as a verb in sentence S9 (i) and two of those that have been exposed to English had a little difficulty. This could be possibly because in their L1, Kana, the word, *zip*, does not function as a verb. The Kana word 'kpaē' (close) or 'zuura' (draw) is rather used.

- S10 (i) I like to cook rice.
 (ii) M werelóó ebùì elòòsi.

The respondents were also able to identify the verb *cook* in sentence S10 (i) with ease. They had no difficulty identifying it, unlike when it functioned as a noun in sentence S5 (i). Their ability to identify *cook* as a verb is because all the linguistic items in the sentence are concatenated alike as they feature in both languages, corresponding to the Subject-Verb-Object syntactic structures.

The third part of the test comprising S11-S15 tested the students ability to identify *come*, *go*, *stand*, *sit*, and *sing* as verbs.

- S11 (i) Queen will come tomorrow.
 (ii) Queen elu li nyooee.
 (iii) Queen will come at tomorrow.

- S12 (i) They will go now.
 (ii) Ba ekii amaanya.
- S13 (i) Let me stand here.
 (ii) Doo m yira akeama.
- S14 (i) Come and sit down.
 (ii) Lu wée egentéké
- S15 (i) I like to sing songs.
 (ii) M werclóo eu yoo.

All the students were able to recognise and identify the verbs in the above sentences. This seems to confirm the position of inter-language theory that learners of a second language apply their knowledge of their first language to the second language learning so that where the features of both languages are the same, the knowledge helps the learners whereas they experience some difficulties where the features of the languages are not the same.

Summary of Findings

Based on the above analysis, the findings are summarized as follows:

- (1) There is sameness in the use of eleven words and variance in the usages (syntactic and semantic) of four words, *cut* and *cook* as nouns in S3 and S5 and *water* and *zip* as verbs in S6 and S9 in English and Kana;
- (2) The syntactic structures of the fifteen sentences in both languages are similar despite differences in phrasal compositions and the lexical variance.
- (3) the differences in the syntactic functions of words, the phrasal composition and lexical item cause grammar learning challenges.

Discussion

The above analysis of English and Kana has shown that English shares some similarities with Kana. Both are Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) languages. However, the syntactic feature of some English words being grouped into more than

one class based on the function of such word is not applicable to Kana. Nevertheless, when an English construction is concatenated similarly with Kana, the learners are able to identify the word classes in English constructions but when the same word takes another function that makes it to belong to another word class, it becomes difficult for Kana learners of English, especially those in the rural areas, who have not been well exposed to English to identify the class that such word belongs to. This accounts for the respondents' inability to identify *cut* in S3(i) and *cook* in S5(i) as nouns and also *water* and *zip* as verbs in sentences S6(i) and S9(i). The learners therefore transferred their mother tongue usage patterns of these words into the learning of the English grammar. Another reason is that the traditional grammar definitions of a noun as the name of a person, animal, place or thing and a verb as an action or a doing word are still part of the pedagogic grammar taught at the primary and secondary school levels in Nigeria. So, anything that the learners have known to be referred to as the name of a thing becomes difficult to be classified as a verb and vice versa by them because the pedagogic definition and traditional grammar they have learned do accommodate the reclassifying of a word into two or more lexical category.

The ease with which the respondents were able to identify words that function primarily as verbs in S11-S15 affirm the interlanguage principle that aspects of the learners' MT/L1 that are similar to the target language facilitate learning. Hence, those English words that share the same syntactic features with the Kana equivalents are easier for Kana students learning English as a second language to master while those with different usages pose problems to them.

The finding that the dual syntactic functions of the English, *cut*, *cook*, *water* as nouns and verbs are non-existent in Kana attest to the challenges the learners had when they came across such words in English sentences; hence, their inability to identify what class such words belong to. This affects such learners' ability to relate the forms to their function. This poses a problem to the learners because as the functions of words in a language constitute a complex network of sense

relations and such create the dual or multiple syntactic behaviours of some words (Ejele, 2014), this dual syntactic behaviour peculiar to some English words constitute a learning challenge to the Kana learners that are not conversant or familiar with such intra-lingual syntactic feature of English. This informs why the teacher of English, as a source of linguistic data in English language learning in rural areas, should be competent native speakers of the students MT that is well trained in English to teach. The learners need to be properly guided to master the norms of the English grammar and differentiate such from those of Kana.

Conclusion

The syntactic functions of some lexical items in English that are not applicable to Kana make the learning and understanding of such aspects difficult for the second language learners. One way a teacher can help learners overcome this is to be part of what the learners know as well as what they do not know in both the target and acquired languages of the learners. Lack of access and opportunities to use the English language as a language of communication within the immediate environment also influence effective English grammar learning. To enable the learners of English language in rural areas gain mastery of its grammar, the teaching of English in rural community should be aimed at detecting the possible causes of the grammar difficulties students have and how to enable them tackle the challenges.

Recommendations

This study, therefore, recommends that:

1. As that both languages are SVO languages, the Kana learners should be taught how to differentiate the grammar norms of English from those of their indigenous language. This can be achieved by using a bi/multilingual approach that encourages explicit grammar teaching, utilizing conscious raising grammar tasks that provide pedagogic activities on the English sentence structures which the learners do and also support the use of translanguaging and translation as teaching/learning strategies. This would enable the students to achieve explicit

understanding of the grammatical structure and functions of English words, phrases and sentences that differ from the grammar of their native language. When the learner's attention is drawn to the varying grammatical functions of words and structure of phrases of the English language, accurate understanding and effective usage of English grammar would be achieved.

2. The government should deploy English teachers that speak the indigenous languages of the learners to the schools in the rural areas. For effective teaching and learning, the teachers of English in rural communities, whether native or non-native speakers of the learners' MT/L1, should be re-trained and understand the power of the learners' home language to the learning of the English grammar.
3. The use of English as a language of communication alongside the indigenous languages in the rural school settings should be highly encouraged. Modern grammar descriptions that enable identify the various word classes in English based on function should be introduced at the primary and secondary levels by the teachers to help the learners understand the syntactic nature of the English open word class.

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