

ReSciLaC N°10, vol.2

ISSN: 1840-8001



Indexation



Vol.2, décembre 2019



ReSciLaC N°10, vol.2

Université d'Abomey-Calavi
Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts et Communication
LASODYLA-REYO / UAC – 2019



ReSciLaC
Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication

Dépôt légal N°8184 du 15/10/2015
Bibliothèque Nationale, 4ème trimestre
ISSN: 1840-8001 – ReSciLaC N°10, vol.2 – décembre 2019

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- Braconnier, C. 1993. Quelques aspects du passif mandingue dans saversion d'Odiène. *Linguistique Africaine* 10: 29-64.
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Présentation

ReSciLaC (Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication) est une revue du Laboratoire de Sociolinguistique, Dynamique des Langues et Recherche en Yoruba (LASODYLA-REYO) de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi (UAC). ReSciLaC est une revue pluridisciplinaire qui accueille des contributions abordant un grand nombre de champs d'études des sciences humaines et sociales.

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INVESTIGATING GRAMMAR TEACHING PRACTICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL CLASSES IN BENIN



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Abstract

In language teaching, many researchers have spoken against the systematic teaching of grammar. However, the teaching of grammar remains part and parcel of language teaching. That is the reason why this study seeks to explore the teaching of grammar at secondary school level. More specifically, the study has been designed to find out strategies used by secondary school EFL teachers to teach grammar and to examine grammar lesson planning practices. In order to reach those objectives, a questionnaire was administered to a sample of 15 secondary school EFL teachers and lesson plans were collected and analyzed. The findings revealed that the respondents use the inductive as well as deductive methods or a combination of both to teach grammar. Many of them also reported that they use corpus linguistics but the explanations they provided revealed that they are not familiar with the concept of corpus linguistics and its application to grammar teaching. Some respondents equally reported that they use the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) strategy. However, most of them failed to explain how they use this strategy. With regard to lesson planning, some of the lesson plan samples analyzed do not include critical components such as objectives, timing, and final assessment.

Keywords: Grammar, teaching, lesson planning, secondary school

Résumé

Dans l'enseignement des langues, plusieurs chercheurs se sont prononcés contre l'enseignement systématique de la grammaire. Cependant, l'enseignement de la grammaire demeure une partie intégrante de l'enseignement des langues. C'est pour cela que cette étude vise à explorer l'enseignement de la grammaire au secondaire. L'étude a été spécifiquement conçue pour déterminer les stratégies utilisées par les enseignants de l'anglais langue étrangère du secondaire pour enseigner la grammaire et aussi pour examiner les pratiques de préparation des fiches de grammaire. En vue d'atteindre ces objectifs, un questionnaire a été administré à un échantillon de 15 professeurs d'anglais et quelques fiches de grammaire ont été collectées et analysées. Les résultats montrent que les participants à l'étude utilisent les méthodes inductives et déductives ou la combinaison des deux pour enseigner la grammaire. Nombreux sont également les participants qui ont signalé qu'ils utilisent la linguistique de corpus mais les explications données ont révélé qu'ils ne s'y connaissent vraiment pas en matière de linguistique de corpus et de ses applications à l'enseignement de la grammaire. Certains participants ont également fait savoir qu'ils utilisent la stratégie de Présentation-Pratique-Production (PPP) même s'ils ont manqué d'expliquer comment ils utilisent la stratégie. Pour ce qui est de la préparation des fiches, certains des échantillons de fiches analysés ne comportent pas des éléments essentiels comme les objectifs, le timing et l'évaluation finale.

Mots-clés : Grammaire, enseignement, préparation des fiches, enseignement secondaire

Introduction

Despite all the criticism leveled against the teaching of grammar separately, there is no doubt that grammar teaching remains a critical component of foreign language teaching. That is probably the reason why most EFL teachers in Benin devote a considerable amount of their teaching time to grammar. However, it is worthwhile to note that in most cases, teachers focus on the teaching of grammatical rules. Grammar is taught neither in context nor communicatively. For that reason, students may know plenty of grammatical rules without being able to use them in a communication context. According to Larsen-Freeman (2014), “grammar is about much more than form, and its teaching is ill-served if students are simply given the rules” (p. 269). As it appears, teaching grammar is not to be assimilated with the teaching of grammatical rules as this is not of any help to learners. Unfortunately this is how grammar is taught in most Beninese secondary schools.

The major reason why students are not able to use the rules they know to communicate is that grammar is taught out of context. In Beninese secondary schools, it is not rare to hear a teacher make a statement like “Today, we are going to study the passive voice” at the beginning of the lesson. After that, most teachers would spend much time teaching students how to transform sentences into the passive voice without telling them what the passive voice can be used for in terms of communication. This study comes at the right time as it helps to better understand the limitations of EFL grammar teaching and the lesson plan problems. At the same time, it shows teachers the best ways to teach grammar to their learners so that the latter can use the rules they learned to communicate. By identifying shortfalls in the lesson planning processes, the study is likely to help teachers to improve their lessons planning practices.

As mentioned earlier, the teaching of grammar is fraught with difficulties. Therefore, the purpose of this research work is to investigate how grammar is taught in secondary schools. More specifically, this study is intended to (a) find out the strategies used by EFL teachers to teach grammar and (b) examine EFL grammar lesson planning practices. In other words, the study addresses the following questions:

- what strategies do EFL teachers use to teach grammar?
- how do EFL teachers plan their grammar lessons?

Before explaining the methodology used to conduct the study it is appropriate to explore the relevant literature.

I. Literature Review

The theoretical underpinnings as well as the practice of grammar teaching are the two components of this literature review.

I.1 Theoretical Underpinnings of Grammar Teaching

As stated earlier, there is a continuing debate among applied linguists about whether or not grammar needs to be taught directly. Despite this controversy, grammar is still taught in most EFL classes directly or indirectly. According to

Harmer (2015), grammar can be taught in an unexpected way to address a problem students are confronted with in another activity like reading or listening or as a result of a deliberate choice by the language teacher

For many EFL teachers, students have to practice grammatical rules frequently in order to master and use them confidently. The Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) strategy is very pervasive in grammar teaching. Advocates of the PPP put forth a number of theories. The skill theory makes a distinction between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. According to Ur (2016) declarative knowledge is built through explanations provided by teachers or contained in textbooks and procedural knowledge is acquired through grammar exercises. On the other hand, the Power Law Practice posits that the quick, fluent and correct performance of a target skill on the part of a learner depends on the number of practices (Ur, 2016; Anderson, 2000). In other words, the more students practice a grammar construction, the more they become conversant with it. For the proponents of the expertise theory, expert level in a field is achieved through a large number of deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2016).

All three theories reflect the saying that “practice makes perfect.” However, the issue is to know if teachers always have enough time to practice as they often have a syllabus to cover. With regard to instructional practices, the question is to know if teachers put these theories into practice in an appropriate way?

Another important theoretical framework of grammar teaching is referred to as three-dimensional grammar framework (Figure 1) designed by Larsen-Freeman (2014). The first component of the framework is called form or structure and it is related to the various forms the grammar construction may take; the second component is the meaning or semantics and it has to do with the meaning each of the forms of the grammar construction can take; the third component is use or pragmatics and it refers to the context in which each form is used (Larsen-Freeman, p 258). Larsen-Freeman further recommended that teachers need to have a clear idea of the form-meaning-use framework of each grammar construction before teaching it. It is worthwhile to mention that this framework shows unequivocally how incomplete most grammar books are. Most of those grammar books provide a superficial presentation of grammar constructions.

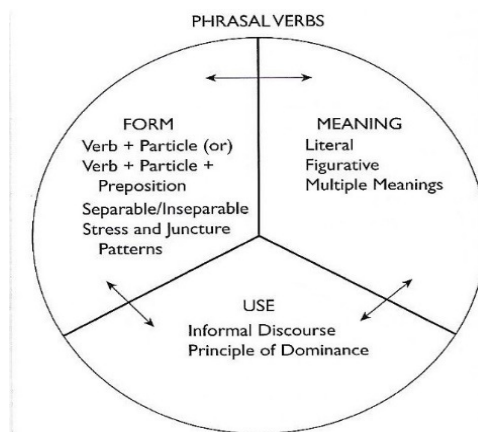


Figure 1: The three-dimensional grammar framework (source: Larson-Freeman, 2014, p. 258)

1.2 The Practice of Grammar Teaching

In this section, we look into some grammar teaching strategies including PPP, Focus on Form, inductive and deductive strategies, and grammaring. The Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) strategy is one of the widespread strategies used to teach grammar. The process starts with the explanation of a new grammatical structure (Presentation), then follows the exercises intended to practice the new structure (Practice). In the third phase, students are given the opportunity to use the structure for communicative purposes (Production) to achieve accuracy and automation (Ur, 2016; Sheen, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2014). Referring back to the skill and expertise theories, it can be stated that the third phase enables learners to acquire proceduralized knowledge or expertise. However, in most EFL classes, teachers often stop at the level of presentation or in the best case scenario, the learners are taken through a few drills or given a homework on the structure. That is the reason why students know grammatical rules but they are not in a position to apply those rules to writing or speaking situations. Such knowledge is what Larsen-Freeman refers to as inert knowledge.

The next grammar teaching technique or strategy considered here, Focus on Form (FonF), is a strategy designed by Long (1991) and picked up by many scholars. FonF is a reactive treatment of grammar based on learner error and not a predefined grammar syllabus (Ur, 2016). According to Larsen-Freeman (2014), FonF can take many forms: enhancing the input which consists in highlighting the specific grammar construction to be taught; input flooding which consists in exposing learners to a text in which the construction to be studied is very frequent, and input processing which consists in providing learners with the opportunity to use the grammar construction under study in a meaningful way (Larsen-Freeman, 2014, p. 263). To a large extent, the input flooding strategy is very close to consciousness raising which consists in drawing learners' attention to grammatical rules or constructions through the inductive or deductive teaching of such rules (Ur, 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2014; Ellis, 2002). Induction and deduction are also strategies for teaching grammar. In the inductive approach, students work out the grammatical rules themselves through a text that contains the rule used in context whereas in the deductive approach, students are given the rules and requested to apply them. Nunan (2016) advocated that the inductive approach is more natural and more conducive to learning. Students will easily remember rules they have worked out themselves than the rules they have been told. However, there is a general consensus on the combined use of the inductive and deductive approaches in order to cater for different learning styles in a group of learners (Nunan, 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2014; Brown, 2007) even though in practice it is not always easy to distinguish both approaches.

The last grammar teaching technique discussed in this section is grammaring, defined as "the ability to use grammar constructions accurately, meaningfully and appropriately" (Larsen-Freeman, 2014, p. 264). This strategy is a practical application of the three-dimensional grammar framework discussed in the first section of this literature review. It is also a strategy that enables learners to overcome the

inability to apply grammatical rules they know in communicative spoken contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Toth, 2006). But in order to use this strategy correctly, teachers need to identify the learning challenge related to the grammar construction to be taught. Such a challenge must be at the level of form, meaning or use. For example, if the challenge is at the level of form, teachers need to build in their lesson plans input flooding activities for their learners to become familiar with that construction in question (Larsen-Freeman, 2014; Sgalowitz, 1998). As it appears, the use of this technique require a preliminary work on the part of the teacher.

A number of grammar teaching approaches or strategies have been presented in this section. Nonetheless, there are no fixed boundaries among them. For example, in the Presentation-Practice-Production strategy, the grammar constructions can be presented inductively or deductively.

1.3 Format of a Lesson Plan

Although there is a variety of lesson plan formats, teachers need to decide on which one to use and plan their lessons before going to their classes. Lesson planning is important and without it, teachers face many difficulties in teaching their lessons and learning becomes more difficult for students. It serves as a map or checklist that guides teachers in knowing what they want to do next and it includes a series of activities that enable teachers to reach the lesson objectives. Celce-Murcia (1991) defined a lesson plan as “an extremely useful tool that serves as a combination guide, resource and historical document reflecting our teaching philosophy, students population, textbooks, and most importantly, our goals for our students”(p. 403). A lesson plan is, therefore, a critical document which is designed on the basis of prevailing educational ideology of the moment as depicted in curricula and textbooks. By specifying goals for learners, a lesson plan becomes essential when the time comes to assess learners who followed the lesson.

Information about textbooks, student population, and goals are part of the top component of a lesson plan. With regard to the goals, Brown (2007) stated that they enable the teachers to know what they are going to accomplish in the classroom and to evaluate student success at the end of each lesson. According to Riddell (2015), objectives can be framed from the teacher’s perspective or from the students’ perspective.

The middle component of a lesson plan is the lesson content. It includes procedures or activities along with transition note as well as classroom management strategies for different activities. Brown (2007) suggested that this section needs to include the following elements:

- An opening statement or activity as a warm-up
- A set of activities and techniques in which he has considered appropriate proportions of time for whole-class work, small group and pair work, teacher talk, student talk,
- Closure (p. 166).

For Riddell (2015) all lesson plans are likely to include “Level of class, length of lesson, aims of lesson . . . , personal aims, anticipated problems (for the students) and possible solutions, stages, aim of each stage, estimated timings, interaction, procedure, board layout” (p. 166). Riddell’s lesson planning framework is more comprehensive but it would be cumbersome to define an aim for each stage. It also follows from this framework that the middle component of a lesson plan includes anticipated problems (for the students) and possible solutions, stages, aim of each stage, estimated timings, interaction, procedure, board layout. It is also important to highlight the need to anticipate problems included in this framework as it builds proactivity in the lesson plan.

Pang (2016) suggested that a lesson plan should include four sections (pp. 452-454). Section 1 includes lesson information, section 2 is about content and design, section 3 describes the process of teaching and learning and the section 4 includes resources. Here, the middle component encompasses section 2 and section 3.

The last component which is often the shortest contains assessment and extra-class work (Brown, 2007). In plain language, the extra-class work is called homework. The assessment enables to check if the lesson objectives have been reached.

2. Methodology of the Study

This study uses a mixed methods design. According to Dornyei (2007), the “mono method research is the biggest threat to the advancement of the social science” (p. 7) because it hardly enables to understand all the aspects of a phenomenon under investigation. This implies that it is better to combine the quantitative and qualitative methods to have a more comprehensive view of the issue under investigation that focusses on a single secondary school in the south of Benin. To that effect, all the fifteen EFL teachers in the school were selected to participate in the study. A questionnaire was administered to all of them. The questionnaire included 12 items. Its first part is about the respondents’ academic and professional qualifications.

The second part of the questionnaire includes eight items and it is about the methods and strategies used by respondents to teach grammar. The third part investigates the difficulties that the respondents are confronted with in planning their grammar lessons.

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents on a Wednesday which is the day on which the teachers hold their weekly professional development meeting. The responses were collected at the end of the meeting.

Apart from the questionnaire, lesson plans were also collected. The objective was to collect at least one lesson plan from each of the 15 respondents but only five of them accepted to share a lesson plan.

For the analysis of the quantitative data, percentages were calculated. For the qualitative data we read through the answers and identify emerging themes and illustrated them with statements from the respondents as suggested by Dörnyei (2007).

3. Findings of the Study

The analysis of the data has yielded various findings that are presented here.

3.1. Strategies Used to Teach Grammar and Improvement of Grammar Teaching

Out of the 15 respondents that filled out the questionnaire, six hold a *Licence* (a three-year academic degree) and nine a *Maîtrise* (a four-year academic degree) whereas only six hold professional qualifications. Those respondents use various strategies to teach grammar. Forty percent (40%) of teachers give plenty of examples to students that illustrate the rules and they ask learners to work out the rules themselves, 33.33 percent of the respondents give the rules and some examples and ask learners to apply the rules to make their own sentences and 26.67 percent use the combination of both. These findings reveal that a significant number of teachers rely on the deductive method which focuses on the teaching of rules to teach grammar while almost 27 percent combine both deductive and inductive approaches. The focus on the teaching of rules is certainly what leads 100 percent of the respondents to correct their learners' errors. The fact that the respondents correct their learners' errors is likely to hamper communication insofar as 45 percent draw their learners' attention to their errors before correcting such errors.

Furthermore, 40 percent of the respondents reported that they use corpus linguistics while 60 percent do not use corpus linguistics. Nonetheless, among those who claim to use corpus linguistics, only two explained how they use it. The two explanations are as follows: corpus linguistics is used "by listening and repeating each word" and "While dealing with corpus linguistics, I used to draw students' attention on how effectively linguistics aspect is useful". The findings here show some level of contradiction with the previous paragraph because the 60 percent who do not use corpus linguistics probably resort to the deductive approach.

In addition to corpus linguistics, the respondents reported other methods and techniques they use to teach grammar. Whereas 46 percent of the respondents reported using the PPP (Presentation, Production Practice) method, 33.33 percent focus on forms while teaching grammar and 20 percent resort to grammaring. Most of the respondents stated that they use the PPP methods because it facilitates lesson understanding by learners, it is adapted to some teaching conditions and helps students to master quickly what has been taught. Concerning grammaring for instance, the respondents resort to this method because for them, it can develop learners' intelligence, it contains a lot of grammar activities and it enables the learners to use the grammatical rules. The method also "helps to make learners understand in a short time."

Grammar teaching strategies used by the respondents also includes charts, objects and dialogue. In fact, 40 percent of the respondents reported that they use charts to teach grammar, 13.33 percent use objects and 53.33 percent use dialogues. It appears clearly that most of the respondents use dialogues as main technique to teach grammar. This is all the more true since most grammar lessons in student's textbooks

are introduced with dialogues. The explanations given for using each strategy vary from one respondent to another.

Many respondents use dialogues to teach grammar because they think that through dialogues, students are in a better position to communicate or to use the language to exchange ideas. Dialogues provide the opportunity to practice grammatical structures after teaching them. One of the respondents stated that dialogues are very important because “learners will be engaged in communication, basing on some grammatical examples”. Another respondent believes that dialogues are very useful because they enable “students to understand the lessons quickly and also permit them to communicate easily without mistakes”. While the use of dialogues can foster communication, it is not obvious that it can enable students to achieve accuracy, that is to speak without mistakes. Speaking without mistakes should not even be the objective of teaching grammar.

On the other hand, some respondents reported that they use charts to teach grammar because they want to show how the charts are used and how students will use the rules in real life situations. Some use objects to teach grammar because while teaching it, they “ask students to say something about themselves, even if it is false.” Some respondents did not choose any technique because for them, teaching grammar is just a process and it depends on the grammatical structure they are about to teach.

3.2. Grammar Lesson Planning Practices

This section provides a short description of each sample lesson plan and highlights the missing elements in each of them as shown in Table I below.

Table I: Analysis of the lesson plans

Lesson plans	Elements included	Elements missing
Lesson plan N°1	Objectives, materials, lay out, implementation, consolidation exercises, homework, title, date	Final assessment
Lesson plan N°2	Objectives, materials, lay out, implementation structure, homework title, exercises	Final assessment, title of the lesson, date
Lesson plan N°3	Date, title of the lesson, exercise examples	Objectives, materials, timing, homework, final assessment
Lesson plan N°4	Date, materials, title of the lesson, exercises, vocabulary, examples	Objectives, timing, homework, implementation
Lesson plan N°5	Structure activity I + answer, observation, homework	Materials, objectives, timing, title of the lesson, date

The analysis of Table I shows that all the five lessons are completely different in terms of their components. The first two contain objectives, materials, the implementation, consolidation exercises, timing and a homework but not the final assessment. The third one contains only one exercise and some examples. This lesson plan lacks a lot of components such as the objectives, materials, timing, homework and the final assessment. The fourth lesson plan has the material, exercises, and examples but it fails to include objectives, timing, homework and the final assessment. The fifth one contains the following items: structure, activity, answer, observation, and homework. This lesson does not include objectives, materials, timing and the final assessment.

What is quite striking about the lesson plans is that they had been developed by teachers from the same school and one would expect them to share some similarities but this is not the case. In addition, some of the respondents do not know what needs to be included in a lesson plan. Lesson plan No 3 is a typical example of a poorly planned lesson as it includes “Date, title of the lesson, and exercise examples”. This lesson plan is certainly from a newly hired teacher with no experience in EFL teaching. It could also be from an experienced teacher who just brought this with him to show that he/she has a lesson plan in case of an inspector or a teacher advisor’s visit. It is also worthwhile to note that objectives are a critical part of a lesson plan. That is the reason why the objectives contained in the lesson plans have been minutely reviewed. This review revealed that most three out of five lesson plans did not include any objectives and even when the objectives exist, they contain some limitations. Only two teachers’ lessons plans contain objectives. In the first lesson plan, the teacher gave two objectives. The first one reads: “at the end of this lesson, my learners should be able to use the expressions *ago* and *for* appropriately”. This objective does not specify what the learners are going to use the two times markers to do. In addition, the activities contain in the lesson plan are not adequate for this objective. The lack of final assessment equally shows that the teacher set objectives without defining how to check the attainment of such objectives.

The second objective is as follows: “they should also recognize these expressions as key words for the simple past”. As was the case with the first objective, the verb used here is not appropriate either. A verb like *to identify* would have been better. Furthermore, while the word ‘ago’ is a time marker of the simple past, this is not always the case with ‘for’. This time marker is used for the present perfect and past perfect in some cases. If the lesson is taught on the basis of this objective as it has been stated, it is likely to create confusions in the minds of the learners.

In the second lesson plan, the objectives are not clearly stated. The first objective is as follows: “At the end of these sections, my learners should be able to use the vocabulary, grammar and function related to STDS/AIDS”. This objective is too broad. It is hard to imagine how students are going to use vocabulary, grammar and function in a two-hour lesson. The final assessment is also missing as in most of the lesson plans. The second objective is not clearer than the first one: “They should be able to manipulate English sentences and words related to STDS/AIDS”. The

meaning of the word ‘manipulate in this context is not easily grasped as it does not portray the behaviour(s) the learners are going to develop as a result of their participation in the lesson insofar as the words or sentences are not objects or chemical products.

4. Discussion of the Findings of the Study

The discussion of the findings includes strategies used to teach grammar and grammar lesson planning practices.

4.1 Strategies Used to Teach Grammar

The respondents reported that they use various strategies to teach grammar. In terms of approach, 33.33 percent of the respondents use the deductive approach while 40percent use the inductive approach. It is also important to note that 26.67percent use the combination of the deductive and the inductive approaches to teach grammar. In this communicative language teaching era, the percentage of the respondents who use the deductive approach is too high because it consists in teaching rules and providing information about the language (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). Therefore, it is obvious that this approach does not foster communication because learners learn about the language and not the language itself. The predominant use of the deductive approach is an indication that students are taught the language to pass examinations and not for communication purposes.

Apart from the inductive and deductive approaches to teaching grammar, various other grammar teaching strategies were explored. One of those strategies is “grammaring”. The findings reveal that 20 percent of the respondents use it because it contains a lot of activities and helps learners to understand the lesson in a short time. However, the respondents do not even mention one of the activities they perform. Larsen- Freeman (2014) maintains that the proper goal of grammar instruction should be grammaring that is the ability to use grammar constructions accurately, meaningfully and appropriately. The low percentage of respondents who use the grammaring strategy may be accounted for in two ways. Either the respondents are not very cognizant with the strategy or they are aware that looking for accurate use of grammatical rules may impede communication and learning in general.

In modern language teaching in general and grammar teaching in particular, corpus linguistics plays a pivotal role. Nearly half (40%) of the respondents reported that they use corpus linguistics to teach grammar through listening and repetition of words and to draw students’ attention to the usefulness of linguistics aspects. It is not clear which linguistic aspects the first respondent is referring to and the reasons why it is important to draw students’ attention to those aspects have not been specified either. The respondent has not stated how students’ attention is to be drawn either. As for the second respondent, his/her explanation does not seem to be related to the teaching of grammar. The respondent seems to make a confusion between the teaching of vocabulary and pronunciation drills and the teaching of grammar. These comments reveal that those two respondents are not familiar with corpus linguistics

and it is certainly because the other respondents are not cognizant with corpus linguistics that they refrained from explaining their answers. According to Conrad (2016), the use of corpus linguistics in grammar teaching starts from the selection of the textbook to be used. For her, teachers should select “a grammar textbook that integrates information from corpus investigations” (Conrad, 2016, p. 55). The use of corpus-informed books may help teachers save time because they will not spend time searching databases. Such books contain words associated with the grammar feature and enable to teach grammar in context and differently from what they are used.

With regard to grammar lesson planning, none of the lesson plans is comprehensive. Three of the lesson plans do not include objectives, three are without the timing, three do not include the final assessment. The title of the lesson and the date are missing in some of the lesson plans. The lesson plans without objectives can be compared with a traveller without destination. According to Dautry (2010), the role of objectives is to operationalize the goals and contents of a course. Therefore, it would be difficult to establish the link between an objectiveless lesson and the course within which it falls. Dautry further delineated the close link between objectives and assessment as follows: “there is no formative assessment without the explicit formulation..... of objectives and no formulation of objective without taking into account the degree to which they can be realized” (Dautry, 2010, p. 452). It can be inferred from this statement that objectives and assessment are the two extremes of the lesson plan. Defining objectives is like setting a destination for the lesson plan and formative assessment provides the opportunity to know if the destination has been reached. The lack of objectives and assessments is a major shortfall in the lesson plans under investigation. However, there are some issues with the lessons plans containing objectives. In some cases, the objectives are too broad. In other cases, they have not been worded appropriately using the Bloom’s taxonomy. One of the objectives reads as follows “At the end of these sections, my learners should be able to use the vocabulary, grammar and function related to STDs/AIDS.” This objective is too broad because in a single two-hour lesson, it is not possible to teach grammar, vocabulary and a function. Furthermore, the objective has not specified the grammar, vocabulary and function items that the learners are supposed to use. It should also be noted that the degree to which the learners should master the use of the grammar, vocabulary and function related to STDs/AIDS have not been indicated. The condition under which the learners were going to perform the stated behaviour has not been explained either. In this case, it will be difficult to design an adequate assessment of what the students have learnt at the end of the end of the lesson.

Another major problem identified is that the activities contained in the lesson plans are not timed. It is true that the timing in the lesson plan is just an estimation but it is a critical component because it helps the teacher to manage time more appropriately.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore the teaching and practices of EFL in a secondary school in Abomey-Calavi. In other words, the study has been designed to find out strategies used by EFL teachers to teach grammar and to examine EFL grammar lesson planning practices. A questionnaire was administered to all EFL teachers in the selected school and lesson plan samples were collected for analysis.

In terms of strategies used to teach grammar, most of the respondents stated that they use the deductive and inductive methods or a combination of both methods. Some respondents also reported that they use corpus linguistics but the explanations they provided show that they are not cognisant about corpus linguistics.

There are also some issues about lesson planning practices. The analysis of the lesson plan samples revealed that some critical elements such as objectives, assessment, and timing were missing in those samples. In some of the samples that contain objectives, the objectives are poorly framed.

All the data analysed in this study are self-reported data. Therefore, it is worthwhile conducting an empirical study which might include classroom observations in order to have a comprehensive view of the issues surrounding grammar teaching in the selected secondary school in particular and at secondary school level in Benin in general.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire to EFL Teachers

This questionnaire is intended to investigate the teaching of grammar practices in Beninese secondary schools. It contains 12 items. There are no right or wrong answers and the questionnaire is anonymous, which means that your identity will never be revealed. Therefore, you are encouraged to give/select answers that reflect your true and honest opinion. Thank you.

1) What is your highest academic qualification?

- a) BAC b) DUEL c) LICENCE d) MAITRISE
 e) DOCTORATE

2) What is your professional qualification?

- a) BAPES b) CAPES c) NONE

3) When teaching grammar, how do you proceed?

- a) You give the rules and some examples and ask students to apply the rules to make their own sentences
- b) You give plenty of examples that illustrate the rules and ask learners to work out the rules themselves
- c) You use the combination of a) and b) above

4) Do you often correct errors when teaching your grammar lessons?

- a) Yes b) No

5) If yes, how do you proceed?

- a) You correct the errors immediately after learners make them
- b) You reformulate correctly what the learners have uttered wrongly
- c) You write down the errors and correct them at the end of the lesson
- d) You draw student's attention to their errors before correcting them
- e) Others (specify)

.....

6) Do you use corpus linguistics to teach grammar?

a) Yes b) No

7) If yes, how do you use it?

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.....
.....

8) What difficulties are you confronted with in planning your grammar lessons?

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.....
.....

9) Which of the following grammar teaching methods are you familiar with?

a) PPP (Presentation Production Practice)

b) Focus on forms

c) Grammmaring

Explain your choice(s)

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.....
.....

10) Various techniques can be used to teach grammar. Which of the following one do you use?

a) Charts (to practice grammatical patterns, such as frequency adverbs and verb tenses)

b) Objects (to teach grammatical structures such as the possessive case)

c) Dialogue (to introduce and practice grammatical points by engaging students in communication with each other)

Explain your choice(s)

11) What other strategies or techniques do you use to teach grammar?

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12) What are your suggestions to improve the teaching of grammar in our secondary schools?

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Thank you so much for your precious contribution!



ReSciLaC N°10, vol.2