

FROM ERRORS OF LOWER ELEMENT SYNTACTIC CONCEPTS TO ANALYTICAL TEACHING

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Abstract

Second language learners and users of the English language are bilinguals who have acquired a reasonable mastery of their mother tongue or the language of their immediate environment before being exposed to the English language in school. This situation often results in the English language being strongly influenced by their first language. This is commonly manifested in the type of errors that second language learners and users make in their writing due to the transfer of the rules from their mother tongue or their first language to English.

In this paper, I argue that some of the common errors which plague second language learners and users are caused by inadequate mastery of lower element syntactic concepts such as number, person, case, gender, tense and concord. The argument is based mostly on three contrastive and error analysis investigations as well as the errors encountered in my students' written work in almost two decades of lecturing in three countries - Nigeria, Swaziland and Namibia. I conclude by advocating for analytical teaching in order for learners to understand the contrast in these concepts between their languages and English.

Key Words: error analysis, contrastive analysis, second language learners, lower element syntactic concepts, analytical teaching, language teaching and learning.

1. Introduction

English is superimposed on all other languages in countries where it is used as a second language and as the language of instruction at all levels of education. The written and spoken performance of learners of English in these countries is characterised by interference, deviation and creativity. Interference naturally results from the learners transferring the structure of their first language onto the target language in the course of their acquisition and learning. Interference phenomenon may diminish in the performance of second language learners as they develop good mastery of the target language and become more proficient in its usage. However, because of psychological and social factors and also sometimes the complex nature of the target language itself, this may not be the case. Deviation results from the inability of second language learners to adequately master the rules and features of the target language. This is due in most cases to the fossilization of the interference features found in their interlanguage performance or to inadequate teaching and learning of the target language. Creativity is a more positive effect on the performance of second language learners. This is widely manifested in a second language environment in the innovative ways in which new words are coined in English and in the ways writers and authors use the English language to express life experiences.

The concern in this paper is with the deviation that occurs in the written English of second language learners with particular reference to English grammar. English grammar is one area that is commonly problematic to second language users of English. While deviations in phonology can easily be tolerated and explained away by regional variations in terms of dialects and accents, it is not the case for grammar because it is intrinsic to the nature of language structure. The importance of grammar to language is appropriately pointed out in the following words: “grammar is to language what anatomy is to human body” (Brooks, cited in Oluikpe, 1976b, p, 48) Storch (2010, p, 207) also asserts that “grammar is considered central to language learning and language use.” In a nutshell, there is a sense in which one could almost say that knowing and using the English language well requires mastery of its grammatical complexity.

2. Theoretical Considerations in Second Language Grammar Research

There are two distinct but connected issues involved in second language grammar research. The two issues have been identified as (a) what constitutes knowledge of grammar and how we assess that knowledge and (b) grammar instruction in L2 classes (Storch, 2010). According to Ellis (2005) the two distinct types of grammatical knowledge, explicit and implicit knowledge, are found in separate parts of the brain. Among the criteria he used to distinguish between the two are level of awareness, accessibility and verbalization of the knowledge by learners. Explicit knowledge is defined broadly as the conscious

rules and conventions of use about a language that learners can often verbalize (Storch, 2010). A further characterization of this knowledge is that it is slow to access because processing is controlled. On the contrary, implicit knowledge is described as unconscious knowledge that is easily and rapidly accessible. This knowledge is further described by Storch as that which learners draw upon when rapidly producing or comprehending language in fluent communication. It is therefore the knowledge that constitutes genuine understanding of a language.

The second major issue, grammar instruction in L2 classes, is fraught with controversy. The main contention concerns whether grammar should be explicitly taught to second language learners. Explicit grammar instruction traditionally means presenting and explaining a predetermined set of grammar rules, usually but not necessarily followed by practice (Storch, 2010). Three different positions have been established in this debate in the literature of applied linguistics with all three positions based on assumptions concerning whether explicit knowledge can become implicit knowledge.

The first position is described as “a zero position.” It is the position supported by Krashen (1981, 1993) who believes that there is little or no merit in explicit grammar teaching. His argument is based on his 1981 comprehensible input hypothesis which is rooted in the claims that the same processes underlie first and second language acquisition. He therefore argued that to acquire a second language, learners only have to be exposed to language inputs that they can understand. His argument is buttressed by other research findings such as those of Bailey et al. (1974) which showed that the acquisition of certain grammatical structures by second language learners followed the same order irrespective of whether they were naturalistic learners or instructed. Schwartz (1993) also represents other applied linguists who believe in this position citing Chomsky’s (1976) Universal Grammar to defend the fact that second language acquisition has nothing to do with explicit knowledge because it is innately acquired. The consequences of this position are that classroom teaching should focus only on meaning; on the exposure of learners to authentic and comprehensible L2 input first through listening and reading activities and later with authentic production opportunities (Storch, 2010).

The second position is “a focus on forms” (FonFs) and it is represented by scholars such as Lightbown (1991), DeKeyser (1998) and to some extent Nick Ellis (2005). DeKeyser asserts that explicit grammar instruction can contribute to the growth of implicit knowledge if it is sustained and enhanced by appropriate meaning-based practice. Lightbown also proposes that explicit knowledge can function as a priming mechanism to assist learners to recognize structures in the L2 input. While admitting to the fact that the bulk of language learning takes place through usage, Nick Ellis indicates that learning cannot

begin without an explicit representation of linguistic forms. The implication of this position for teaching is that explicit grammar instruction should occur before practice.

A focus on form (FonF) is the third position and it is demonstrated in the works of Long (1991, 1996). This position represents the views of scholars who acknowledge the advantages in explicit grammar instruction but only when it is reactive rather than predetermined (Storch, 2010). Long's position relies on Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis which posits that only language which is attended to is processed. In terms of language teaching, this means a spontaneous reaction to learners' language learning needs as they engage in meaning-focused activities. These needs can be conveyed as requests for clarification or can be obvious in learners' errors. In terms of pedagogy, this implies that the teacher is responsible for drawing the attention of the learners to the problematic grammatical structure through an explanation or correction.

Storch (2010, p, 208) asserts research evidence in support of some form of grammar instruction but he describes the evidence as "largely indirect" as shown in research findings that without grammar instruction learners' grammatical accuracy may not develop. The most conclusive evidence is from the French immersion programmes in Canada where Harley and Swain (1984) discovered that despite exposure to rich and extensive L2 input as Krashen (1993) advocated, second language learners may become fluent but not accurate in the use of their second language.

Storch concludes his comment on the debate by saying there is a generally accepted theory that some form of grammar instruction is beneficial but that the grammar should not be the sole focus as in traditional language pedagogy. What is advocated by a growing number of scholars in second language teaching is what has been referred to as communicative approach with an integrated focus on meaning and grammar (Hinkel & Fotos, 2002). This translates pedagogically to a focus on relevant content material or tasks which provide learners with opportunities for exposure to an authentic practice in producing grammatical structures (Storch, 2010). There are two areas of research within the communicative approach to grammar teaching. The first is task-based and has to do with how best to teach grammar and the second is based on feedback on errors and has to do with finding out the most effective ways of dealing with learners' grammatical errors. It is on this second approach that this paper is focused.

The efficacy of feedback on written production has been as hotly debated as the matter of explicit grammar instruction. One group of researchers whose view is represented in Truscott (1996, 2007) argue against feedback on grammar in second language writing based on their belief that there is no merit

whatsoever in feedback. Another group of scholars however argue for feedback based on the merit for learners and teachers (Ferris, 1999, 2006).

3. Methodology

Three primary research works underpin this paper. They are based on the error analysis of the written English of second language learners from Form Five (Grade 12) to graduate students in Nigeria. Samples included final year secondary school English examination scripts and other written compositions; undergraduate examination scripts and written assignments; long essay/project drafts of final year undergraduates; seminar papers/handouts originating from university teachers; personal letters and materials from newspapers and magazines.

The first study was the present author's undergraduate project (1984) titled "The Verb Phrase in the Written English of Yoruba Learners of English", the second, a Master's thesis (1986) titled "The Noun Phrase: A Contrastive and Error Analysis of First Year Undergraduates of Ogun State University", now Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago Iwoye, Nigeria and the third (1997) Ph.D Thesis titled "An Error Analysis of Selected Coreferential Phenomena in Educated Nigerian English Usage". All drew upon Chomsky's Generative Transformational Grammar. The paper is also informed by my experiences of grading students' assignments, tests and examinations as a lecturer of English Language courses in three universities. More recent sources of evidence are the MA Thesis of a colleague from the Department of Languages at the Polytechnic of Namibia, "Error Analysis: Investigating the Writing of ESL Namibian learners" (Mungungu, 2010) and a postgraduate honours dissertation, supervised in 2012, "An Error Analysis of the Written English of Selected Students from a Namibian Tertiary Institution." (Batholmeus, 2012).

The intention of the present work is to offer practical ideas to improve the teaching of grammar in English as a second language. The need for this has been brought home by the sight of would-be graduates of English Language who cannot identify parts of speech and have little idea about tense, concord, gender, case and number. The situation may be worse in other disciplines.

4. Lower Element Syntactic Concepts

Number, person, case, gender, tense and concord are referred to as lower elements because their forms and functions can best be described under grammatical words as opposed to major categories of lexical words. In addition, the forms of the concepts are morphologically marked at the deep structure level of language and are manifested at the surface level as either inflections or variation in forms of words as can

be seen with tense markers “s, ed, ing, en” or with pronoun forms as in the opposition between “he/she, him/her, they/them” etc.

Research findings and my teaching and lecturing experiences indicate that poor mastery of concepts such as number, gender, case, person, tense and concord is responsible for the majority of the problems faced by educated second language users of English. In fact, an understanding of their forms and functions represents in some sense what is needed to be proficient in English grammar.

Number as a grammatical concept is marked as singular or plural in form. Singular means one while plural refers to more than one item; i.e. two and above. Number is morphologically marked for nouns, pronouns and subject verb concord as can be seen in the following examples:

Singular	Plural
1. Book	Books (Noun)
2. I	We (Pronoun)
3. He knows the story	They know the story (Concord)

Some determiners such as this/these, that/those, every/several and each/some also have singular and plural distinction.

The concept of **person** is expressed as first person (the speaker), second person (the person spoken to) and the third person (the person spoken about). The following sentences show the communicative roles assigned by the use of these persons:

4. (a) I beat the boy - 1st person.
(b) You beat the boy - 2nd person
(c) He beats the boy - 3rd person.

Case as a concept is marked for the subjective, objective and possessive forms. The subjective case in a sentence is the word or group of words that we speak about. The objective case is a noun or a pronoun which tells us the person to whom or thing to which the action of the verb happened. The possessive case indicates possession. With the possessive case, the pronoun is used as modifier of a noun and cannot, therefore, stand alone because it does not function as a noun phrase. The following examples illustrate the different cases:

5. (a) We know the story (the pronoun at subject position).
(b) The man saw us.
The man stays near them (the pronoun at object or complement position).

(c) My mother went late (the pronoun used for showing possession).

In sentence 5(c) the pronoun ‘my’ is a determiner and therefore a modifier to the noun ‘mother’.

A difference of **gender** is marked in English with the designation of the pronouns that stand for males as masculine while those that stand for females as feminine. Pronouns that stand for things are referred to as neuter. For example:

6. (a) Masculine - He knows the story.
- (b) Feminine - She knows the story.
- (c) Neuter - It is a story.

Gender is strictly marked only for third person singular pronouns. Third person plural and first and second person pronouns are not marked for gender as they could be masculine/feminine or neuter depending on the context in which they are used, as can be seen in the following examples:

7. (a) The women have just arrived. Greet them when they come out (Feminine).
- (b) The rivers are dry. They will have water in them by the rainy season (Neuter).
- (c) The men have just arrived. Greet them when they come out (Masculine).

Tense is a central concept in English grammar especially in relation to the variety of ways in which our thoughts can be expressed in relations to time and modality. Tense is **obligatory** and is an element of the auxiliary in the verb phrase. The other elements of the auxiliary which are optional are modal (shall, will, should, might...), the perfective aspect marked by the form “have” plus the past participle morpheme “en”, and the progressive or continuous aspects marked by the form of “be” plus the present participial morpheme “ing”. Three basic tenses are identified in English grammar but technically, tense in English is either present or past. The three basic tenses are the present, the past and the future.

The present tense is used of states that are permanent or likely to remain as they are for an indefinite period of time. **The past tense** is generally used of actions or events which took place, and were completed in the past. **The future tense** is used of actions occurring during the future time and is conventionally expressed using the modal “will” and “shall”. Two other forms of tense that are expressed in English as a result of the aspectual element of the auxiliary mentioned earlier are **the progressive and perfective tense** which can either be present or past.

Concord is a concept that is used in grammatical theory and description to refer to formal relationships that exist between elements of grammar. In simple terms concord, otherwise known as agreement, means that a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another. There are various kinds of concord in

the English language because the principle of agreement between forms is central to grammar. The concept of concord underlies the relationship between the following grammatical structures in English

The first and perhaps the most important is **the concord that requires that verbs and their subjects agree in number in the third person present tense**. A second type of concord that is related to the one described above is **the concord that exist between the forms of the verb “to be” and the personal pronouns that function as their subjects**. The third type of concord also has to do with number concept but in relation to **the nature of certain nouns**. There are nouns which, in actual fact, are singular but typically denote a collection or group of individuals. These nouns are singular in form but are plural in meaning and they are referred to as collective nouns. Examples are: *government, people, army, team, staff and committee*. The notion of number inherent in collective nouns implies that the concord relation that exists between the subject and the verb involves the idea of number rather than the actual presence of the number marker for that idea. Very often, collective nouns are used as subjects which select both a singular and plural verb. The fourth kind of concord is the one **between subject and complement of a sentence in terms of number**. The fifth kind of **Concord involves the principle of proximity**. The rule in this kind of sentence construction is that a singular subject followed by a plural modifier will require a singular verb even though the verb may be immediately placed next to a plural noun that is functioning as a post modifier to the subject of the sentence. A different but related consideration of the rule of proximity involves those cases when two or more subjects are connected by ‘or’ / ‘nor’ and are differently marked for number, as in the following sentence: “The children or their father *is* washing the floor.” The subject in the closest proximity to the verb determines the number marker for the verb. The sixth kind of concord is the one between **Determiners and the Nouns they Modify in terms of number** and a seventh kind of concord is the one involving **the Personal Pronouns in the Third Person**. The concord concerning the personal pronouns requires that the third person personal pronouns *he, she, it and they* must agree with their antecedents both in number and gender as in: The students went to University of Ibadan, but *they* did not visit the zoo; I saw Binta and *she* gave me the book.

5. Sample Errors

Errors of Number

1. The books are few and students have to photostat them before they gain access to it.
2. English in Nigeria is not a mother tongue language. This is because the users have already acquired his mother tongue that is, the first language.
3. These two examples are subjected to different meanings according to its uses.

4. A farmer who does not know how a particular machine should be used finds it so difficult to use them.
5. Free morpheme is a morpheme that can stand on their own.

Errors of Person

1. We poured water on her but you refused to respond to the water
2. The road commissioner told the driver I should limit his speed.

Errors of Case

1. The name of the man is Mr Okoro and they nickname he as “Mihero.”
2. I will appeal to all students to schedule their time-table to enable they read well.
3. If this student should continue with this attitude him or her is bound to fail his or her WAEC/GCE exam.
4. The students continue in their bad ways. Whereas at the end them find themselves to blame.
5. Taking my problems to him will be too much because his is the backbone of the family.

Errors of Gender

1. I hope that the boy will not die at this time because it is very good at games.
2. The relationship between the speaker and the hearer, if it is between a lecturer and its student in the classroom the relation will be formal.
3. Standard English can be written or spoken. Under spoken form we can hear it on the English Programme of BBC in his written form it is also made use of on the television.
4. It simply means the type of morpheme which cannot stand on his own
5. Even with my dad old age I still discussed the matter with her.

Errors of Tense

1. I have determining to be one of the Nigerian volley ballers.
2. Your council has been done very well in providing the people with maternity, market and public field.
3. I have to thank you for the contribution you have gave us in the past
4. The state has be congratulating you
5. My brother bought a new car very soon.
6. We had a group discussion throughout that night, and when the prep is over I go to my hostel.

Errors of Concord

1. I wants to be a lawyer
2. We has a part to play
3. I disagree with him because of these reason
4. The girls are a liar
5. I asked Mariam the time but he left without telling me.
6. My father have five wives and each of them have up to five children.

Errors of tense and concord are found to be more prevalent because of their complex nature. They are also more prone to fossilisation. In addition, they are the most penalised and frowned upon by native speakers of English as well as competent language teachers.

Two major underlying issues are revealed as the causes of the errors. First is the learners' lack of a conceptual grasp of the over-riding interlingual contrasts between the lower level syntactic elements of number, person, case, gender, tense and concord in their first and second languages. The second is the complex nature of English grammar itself. This often confuses second language learners and makes the task of teaching and learning more difficult. These two causes form the basis of my advocacy for analytic teaching.

6. From Errors to Analytical Teaching

The term analytic teaching is alluded to by Lightbown (1990, p, 91) as the method of teaching that allows comparison between the target language and the native languages of the learners, thereby making the learners see where their uses of the target language differ from that of the native speakers. Stern (1990, p, 94) also describes analytic teaching as guided instruction. Both authors refer to a lack of analytic teaching in the context of explaining why second language learners of English are unable to achieve the level of competence needed to make both their oral and written performance error free, sometimes despite several years of exposure to the target language. Stern explains that the lack of analytic teaching leads to the development of fossilized interlanguage when the learners become able to communicate fairly successfully (Lightbown 1990, p, 94). O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p30) also reason that the complexity of language rules and the difficulty of committing them to memory without recourse to the learners' first languages account for a majority of students falling by the wayside and failing to reach the desired goal. They gave the same explanation for the operation of interlanguage rules and intermediate forms of target language by second language learners.

My usage of analytic teaching is rooted in the definitions and explanations provided by the authors mentioned above. However, I have modified it to suit our immediate purpose in this paper and have defined it as a teaching strategy of interactively engaging second language learners of English with their own errors, drawing on the implicit knowledge of their first language and guiding them to critically think through the possible reasons for the errors they are making. This is with the intention of helping second language teachers find a creative method to meet the needs of their learners, while at the same time consciously raising the students' awareness to what they need to learn.

In order to solve the problems we have identified as the bane of second language learners, there is a need to draw upon our knowledge of our indigenous languages and pay particular attention to how the concepts of number, case, gender and person contrast with the target language.

Let us illustrate our point using the concepts of number and gender. In teaching these two concepts, the teacher in a Yoruba speaking environment, for example, should not only teach their features in English but also show the learner how the concept of number is not morphologically marked in Yoruba. In the case of gender, attention should be drawn specifically to the fact that English makes a distinction of gender in the third person singular personal pronouns. This awareness will help the learners to distinguish between the form 'he', 'she' and 'it'. When this has been achieved the teacher should now go on to inform the students that the three forms (he, she and it) are realised as one single form in Yoruba. The salient differences can then be practically demonstrated by comparing grammatical structures in the two languages as in the table below:

Comparison of Some Structures in English and Yoruba

English	Yoruba
(1) <u>Two</u> books	Ìwé méjì
(2) The books <u>are</u> on the table	Àwon ìwé nàà wà ní orí tábìlì.
(3) The <u>book is</u> on the table	Ìwé nàà wà ní orí tábìlì.
(4) <u>Many</u> of his problems	Òpòlopò àwon ìsòro rẹ̀.
(5) These two <u>chairs</u>	Àwon àga <u>méjì</u> wònyí
(6) (a) He went	ó lo
(b) She went	
(c) It went	

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|-----|---|---|
| (7) | (a) The <u>boy</u> <u>eats</u> the food | Omokùnrin nàà je oúnje nàà. |
| | (b) The <u>boys</u> eat the food | <u>Àwon</u> omokùnrin nàà je oúnje
nàà |
| (8) | The children are here | Àwon omo nàà wa níbí. |

Sentence 1 should be used to draw attention to the fact that in Yoruba the plural form is marked by numerals such as ‘méjì’. The student should also be informed of other elements that show plurality, for example, the determiners like “òpòlopò.” This should then be contrasted with the fact that in English the presence of a ‘plural’ numeral will not be enough to show plurality. This fact should be demonstrated by pluralisation of the noun “book.”

The sentences in 2 and 3 should be explained and used to draw attention to the nature of the noun phrases which function as the subjects of sentences in English especially in terms of the feature specification [+] or [-] plural. The students should be informed further that this feature specification dictated the selection of the verb ‘are’ in 2 and ‘is’ in 3. By comparing the English structures in these two sentences to the Yoruba version, the teacher will be able to demonstrate that the concord between subject and verb in English does not exist in Yoruba. Again ‘àwon’, a plural determiner in Yoruba, is the only word which marks ‘iwé’ in this sentence for plurality and thus distinguishes it from sentence 3.

The teacher should use the sentences in 4 and 5 to raise the learners’ consciousness and inform them that within the noun phrase constituent structure in English the different constituent parts (that is, the qualifiers and the head noun) must agree in terms of number. In contrast, it should be shown that the Yoruba noun phrase does not require such an agreement.

The sentences in 6 should be used to demonstrate that the forms he, she and it are realized as ‘o’ in Yoruba; while those in 7 should be used to show that the third person singular subject in the present tense takes the ‘s’ form of the verb while the plural counterpart takes the base form of the verb. Again attention should be drawn to this marked feature of the third person singular subject which does not occur in Yoruba. Finally, sentence 8 should be used to help the learners become aware that there are irregular cases of plural formation in English.

An analytical awareness of the complexity involved in the English language itself can be demonstrated using the suffix ‘-s’ as a grammatical morpheme. This suffix is used in English to mark plurality. This appears to be a simple rule to follow but confusion comes for us as second language users when the same

form ‘-s’ is equally use to distinguish the third-person singular form in the present tense as illustrated in the following sentences:

The girl dances well
She walks to school

The confusion in the use of ‘-s’ arises from the fact that the same morphological process is used to distinguish two distinct properties of the same language.

As if that confusion is not enough, the same process applies to the rule in English that stipulates concord or agreement between the subject and the verb of a sentence in terms of number. This rule further complicates an existing problem in the use of the suffix ‘-s’ especially with the concept of number. Here are some examples of this rule in practice:

Singular	Plural
a. The student sleeps soundly	a. The students sleep soundly
b. The dog barks often	b. The dogs bark often

Now if we look at the rule governing the pluralisation of nouns as mentioned above, we would normally have assumed that because the subjects of the two sentences under the heading “singular are in the singular, the verbs should not have been marked with the suffix-‘s’ and that the subjects of the sentences under the heading “plural” should have been marked instead for plurality but this assumption does not hold because of the nature of English grammar. Nouns are marked for number but verbs are inflected for their forms. So for many second language users this is a source of difficulty.

In addition, the same suffix-‘s’ is also used along with apostrophe to mark possession as in:

The boy’s shoe
The teachers’ books

In analytic teaching, students’ awareness needs to be raised to appreciate the different structural environments in which the suffix ‘-s’ functions in English and to learn to use the form appropriately.

Within the analytic teaching approach we are advocating, tense should be taught not in isolation but as an element within the verb phrase. Among other things, it should be highlighted that tense is the obligatory element of the auxiliary and that it patterns with modal and aspectual elements that are optional. The relationship between these three elements of the auxiliary and the main verb should also be highlighted and used to explain prevalent tense errors in the written performance of learners.

With concord, students should be sensitized to become aware of the different types of concord, as discussed in the section on lower element syntactic concepts

The practical demonstrations in sentences in 1 - 8 and the analytical explanation for the complexity of English will help learners to retain the concepts when applying low-level inflectional rules in all kinds of positions and relationships. This will improve the learners' attitude to discovering for themselves the underlying rules, categories and systems of the target language.

Furthermore, this will enable learners to establish adequate interconnections and differences between first and second language with respect to number gender, case, person, tense and concord. In fact the learners should be able to say to themselves "in my language (L₁) the conceptualization of number, gender, case, concord etc. is different." In addition, they should be better able to appreciate the contexts giving rise to the differences and improve their competence in the second language.

7. Conclusion

In the first semester of 2013, I applied the analytical teaching advocated in this paper for first year students in a bridge course aimed at helping them understand how grammar works in writing. Using errors of concord and tense in their own writing, the lower element syntactic concepts discussed in this paper were explored in conjunction with the students' own languages. Now in their second year and in my English Morphology class, the students are better placed to understand these concepts as they relate to inflectional morphology. In addition, the students are more conscious of errors of tense and concord and are constantly working towards improving their written English.

I have attempted in this paper to advocate for analytic teaching as a means of unravelling the difficulty that plagues second language learners of English in relation to six fundamental concepts intrinsic to the nature of English grammar. In doing so, I have based my argument on the findings of empirical research projects as well as my own experiences as a language teacher.

Analytic teaching, as demonstrated in relation to the six lower elements considered, has the merit of contributing positively to grammar instruction in second language classroom. It is a method that can contribute to the implicit knowledge of learners thus enabling them to have a genuine understanding of their target language. This is because analytic teaching utilises learners' own errors to promote awareness, accessibility and verbalization. In addition, it allows for focused individual attention, conforming to Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis as difficult and complex areas of grammar can be attended to and processed. This in turn will allow the measure of accuracy to be determined. The method also conforms to the current communicative approach in language teaching practice. It is based on a spontaneous reaction

to learners' needs with an integrated focus on meaning and grammar, as well as offering direct feedback that is based on the conceptual contrast between the learners' first and second language. An effective implementation of analytic teaching in second language classrooms will allow for a more systematic approach to the teaching of grammatical morphemes. It will allow learners to evaluate their own performance and will prevent their errors from fossilizing.

Despite all the advantages highlighted above, it must be mentioned that both teachers and learners have to be competent in their first language in order for the approach to work. This is not always the case in multilingual situations where learners may be compelled to shift from their indigenous languages to their target language resulting in a precarious situation where both languages are not appropriately mastered. Other constraints may have to do with teacher training curricula that may not encompass the skills needed to effectively implement the approach. Institutional constraints and government educational policy that may not be conducive for this type of approach may also impact on the extent to which it can be implemented.

In my view, the full advantages of analytic teaching may be best achieved if it is introduced in the mid primary years. This will prevent errors from fossilizing as learners would have processed their interlanguage more competently to achieve the desired proficiency level by the time they finish their secondary school education. However, this view needs to be investigated further.

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