

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR STRUCTURES: THE CASE OF EFAL TEACHERS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

English grammar instruction is fundamental to learners' success, especially in contexts where English is not a first language. However, despite its importance, the teaching and learning of English grammar continue to face persistent challenges. This paper investigates the teaching of English First Additional Language (EFAL) grammatical structures in selected public secondary schools in Limpopo Province, South Africa, and identifies obstacles to effective grammar instruction. The study was prompted by learners' inadequate grammatical proficiency, as reflected in National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results. Employing a qualitative exploratory design, data were collected through classroom observations of Grade 11 EFAL teachers across five schools representing five education districts. The study is grounded in both the Grammar Translation and Communicative Language Teaching approaches. Its significance lies in exploring the practical realities of grammar instruction, thereby shedding light on possible causes of learners' grammatical weaknesses. Findings reveal that while some teachers demonstrated a sound understanding of grammar rules and structures, others showed misconceptions regarding grammar teaching. Evidence of learner interlanguage, permeability, and fossilization was also observed. Moreover, teachers employed varying degrees of adaptation of the three approaches and utilized diverse teaching and learning materials. The study concludes that effective grammar instruction requires enhanced teacher training in the integration of multiple pedagogical approaches to strengthen learners' understanding of English grammatical structures.

Keywords: *English first additional language; fossilization, grammar structures; learner-teacher material; permeability; teaching approaches and methods.*

1. Introduction

According to Ahmed (2024: 41), for second language teachers, grammar is a crucial section of language teaching which can potentially enhance English Second Language (ESL) learners' overall understanding of the language. Santana, 2019 and Marzulina et al. (2019) observed that many ESL learners worldwide display inadequate proficiency levels in English language, projected largely through poor reading and speaking as well as the employment of

ungrammatical English, especially in writing tasks such as tests and examinations. South Africa is not immune to this problem. Hence, researchers, authorities and the entire SA society appear disturbed by poor English language proficiency of South African ESL learners. The EF English Proficiency Index for Schools (EF EPI-s) (2019), which examines the acquisition of English skills by full-time students aged 13 to 22, asserts that the millions of children that learn English at schools, including in South Africa, and who sit for a standardised university entrance examination at the end of secondary education, do not have an understanding of grammar which helps learners with effective language use in both written and spoken forms.

South Africa is one of the many countries whose school-going population is consisted largely of ESL learners as well as teachers. ESL, namely English First Additional Language (EFAL) in the South African context, is the level at which English language is delivered across a majority of schools. These learners thus spend a large portion of their academic year in the classroom taught by predominantly EFAL teachers who, even when well qualified, do not possess the necessary expertise to deliver lessons in English, resulting in failure by the ESL learners to acquire the proficiency that is of acceptable standards (Nel & Swanepoel, 2010: 47).

The inadequate expertise of EFAL teachers is worsened by their insufficient knowledge, and application of unsuitable grammar teaching methods. The issue of teaching methods of English language and their effect on learner acquisition of ESL is brought to the fore by a study by Makiwane-Mazinyo, (2017:10457), who asserts that teachers' inability to apply correct ESL methods will likely affect the teaching of English language, which will consequently act as a barrier to teaching grammatical structures.

Additionally, according to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2011:11), English grammar should regularly be incorporated in the teaching of the language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, while also, at times, it needs to be explicitly and independently taught. This implies that grammar should at times be taught as an entity and not always in the context of the four skills. Doing so requires that teachers discern which methods to employ in English language teaching and for which language skills are those methods best suited.

The employment of unsuitable methods of grammar teaching brings to light the poor quality of teaching and learning that takes place in English language classrooms, and in particular, the effectiveness of teaching grammar in EFAL environments. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 28) highlight the pivotal role that grammar teachers play in teaching of grammar. For the majority of ESL learners, the teacher is the sole provider of knowledge and direction. This implies that teachers, with the employment of correct ESL methods, are often considered by their learners as the only accessible models, stimuli, counselors and mentors of ESL, which learners should emulate. In addition, in a study by Uys, Van der Walt, van der Berg and Botha (2007:77), cited in Nel and Swanepoel (2010:48), it was found that the teachers demonstrated a lack of knowledge and skills required to teach the four language skills as well as a disregard of the importance of methodological skills. This seems to have a bearing on the general poor English language proficiency of South African ESL learners, which is perceived to be escalating by various researchers, authorities and the entire SA society. While various studies have investigated the phenomenon of inadequate grammar proficiency within and beyond South Africa (Mkhatshwa, 2017, Van der Walt, van der Berg and Botha, 2007; Makiwane-Mazinyo, (2017; Nel & Swanepoel, 2010: 47) there is a research gap on how EFAL teachers' grammar pedagogy impacts on this phenomenon especially in Limpopo Province, which necessitated this study which aimed to examine how English First

Additional (EFAL) teachers taught English grammatical structures in the selected public schools in Limpopo Province. In an attempt to achieve this aim, the study formulated the following research objectives:

1. To explore and describe the experiences of the phenomenon of the handling of grammar structures by EFAL FET grammar teachers.
2. To suggest ways in which the teaching of English grammar to ESL pupils by EFAL teachers can be improved.

The researchers strongly believe that information collected from the results of this study will help enhance the teaching of English grammar particularly in ESL contexts where teachers are predominately EFAL. Therefore, to achieve the above-mentioned aims, the researchers formulated the below mentioned research question: *How do EFAL teachers in Limpopo Province implement and adapt grammar teaching approaches in classroom practice?*

2. Literature Review

In relation to the purpose of the study, the below section reviews the literature pertinent to this study in three subtopics namely: general pedagogical frameworks, the significance of grammar structures, grammar in South African context, the role of the teacher in grammar teaching as well as the main approaches and methods employed for grammar teaching. The researchers felt that the above selected areas of literature would help to position the study well.

2.1 Pedagogical Frameworks

The philosophical frameworks underpinning this study include an Objective-based Approach, Competency Approach and Problem-solving Approach. An objective-based approach posits that objectives are presented as students' behavior. Thus, the formulations of these objectives refer to activities from the point of view of the student, not from the teacher. This approach resonates with the behaviorist theory that is concerned with the study of observable behaviors of students and is relevant to this study because teachers' perspectives (which are sometimes expressed through certain behaviors) are paramount in this study.

The competency approach, on the other hand, hinges on the commitment to making learners work on global activities that are related to their everyday life. To implement a competency -based approach, certain principles must be respected. This approach, since its focus is on competency, is relevant to the teaching of English grammar structures since the focus is usually on competency.

Lastly, Problem-solving Approach is increasingly used in areas where it is impossible for learners to master all the knowledge in the field within a limited time frame. It is argued that problem-based learning is effective in developing skills and improving learners' attitudes toward learning. Indeed, learners who actively participate in the construction of various problems in the classroom will be involved in solving them. It is understood that the role of the teacher in this approach is to only facilitate and guide the learning process. This approach also aligns well with the teaching of English grammar structures since it touches on the development of specific skills and the attitudes of learners.

Table 1.1 below summarises the above-mentioned pedagogical approaches by Chekour (2018).

Educational Approaches			
In French		In English	
In the article	In the title of the article	In the article	In the title of the article
"approche par objectifs"		"Objective - based approach "	
421	10	659	12
"approche par compétences"		"Skills-based approach"	
4340	11	4470	90
" Approche par projet"		"project-based approach"	
485	15	9280	315
"approche par résolution de problèmes"		"Problem solving-based approach"	
123	0	148	3
"Approche d'investigation historique"		"Historical-investigative approaches"	
0	0	75	1

2.2 Methods of Grammar Teaching

Grammar teaching encompasses the use of suitable approaches and methods. Hasanova et al. (2021:375) define an approach as a principle and informed viewpoint which makes teaching possible, and which provides the framework on which the teaching process is based. Further, an approach provides direction and expectations that are obtainable from the teaching process. Conversely, a method denotes a planned, organized, orderly and systematic procedure employed by the teacher to impart knowledge and skills to the learner. According to the British Council (2015), a language teaching approach is a manner of analyzing teaching and learning and providing an underlying view of what constitutes a language, and of how it can be learned. An approach can therefore be defined as theories about the nature of language and language learning, which serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching. Therefore, teaching methods, procedures and techniques of teaching and assessment follow logically from the approaches. For example, the Communicative language teaching method emanates from the Communicative approach.

Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers (1986: 16) postulate that there are generally two major categories of teaching approaches inter alia: Major approaches and the Alternative/Current approaches. Among the vast varieties of approaches developed, the most commonly known include Audio-lingual, Communicative, Text-based, Process, Grammar-translation, Direct, Reading, Comprehension-based, Content-based, Task-based and Participatory approaches.

In the same vein, methods of teaching involve the breakdown of language learning approaches into tangible behaviors. They include mainly traditional methods such as the Audio-lingual, Grammar-translation and Communicative Language Teaching as well as the more recent 'designer methods' such as the Silent Way, Community Language Teaching and Suggestology or Suggestopedia (Celce-Murcia, 2013: 2). Out of the myriads of teaching methods, the Communicative Language Teaching, Process, Comprehension-Based and Text-Based methods are a few commonly known and employed methods in South African schools (Mashiane, 2019: 33, Mkatshwa, 2017: 9070).

2.3 Pedagogical Significance of Grammar Structures

Grammar, as a concept, means different things to different people. Rooney, K., & Soukhanov, A. (Eds.) (1999: 812) perceives it as a particular set of language rules. Ameen (2023) opines that grammar is a system and structure that plays a significant role in language learning, and which allows effective communication to take place in the target language.

Greenbaum and Nelson (1999:5) view it as a range of language activities such as word-formation and sentence as well as a book in which the organizing principles are presented. Thus, someone who follows the rules of a language may result in being referred to as someone who 'knows' his or her grammar. Wang (2010:78) corroborates what the previous authors stated by saying that grammar is a set of rules one follows when choosing words and putting words together to make sense. Rules, as a result, play a significant role in language teaching'. Debata (2013: 483) describes grammar as a force that guides how people should put words together into sentences, whereas Ellis (2006: 84) views it as a presentation of distinct grammatical structures. According to Hudson (1992: 20), both language structures and vocabulary are embedded in grammar. Larsen-Freeman (2013: 258) defines grammar as 'a system of vocabulary and grammatical patterns that are used to create appropriate meaning'. That means that grammar deals with the structure or form of the language while also functioning as an instrument through which meaning is formed. Bastone (1994) views grammar as a formal multi-faceted form of language that indicates meaning in that language and a flexible commodity which functions as a point of reference for users and learners of a language. Abdulmajeed and Hameed (2017: 40) assert that grammar is the word that represents the rules that people follow when they use a language. Therefore, grammar focuses primarily on the rules or structures of a language, which may facilitate communication. Without these rules, effective communication with others would be unrealizable. Since it is difficult for students to speak English well without learning English grammar, in formal education, it is inevitable for teachers who teach foreign languages to teach grammar (Wang, 2010:78). Grammar is very important in pedagogy because the standard of mastering a language embodies the importance of grammar teaching. Grammar is also very important for communication (e.g. expression), that is, to be clear without any nuances.

2.4 Grammar in South African context

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011: 46), grammar entails predominantly the presentation of language structures and conventions. For the Further Education and Training phase, which includes Grades 10 to 12, English First Additional language grammar comprises the comprehensive list of forms and rules with which English language is learnt as well as English vocabulary, which involves the use of synonyms, antonyms and other word relations. Furthermore, it is a study of figures of speech, idiomatic expressions, etymology and neologisms, parts of speech, spelling, punctuation as well as grammar structures. Grammar structures refer, in EFAL settings in Further Education and Training (FET), to items such as nouns, determiners, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, verbs, tenses, concord, modals, conditional sentences, voice, and speech (EFAL Paper 1: 2019).

2.5 The role of the teacher in grammar teaching

Ameen (2023) concludes that while grammar is a necessity in language teaching, it is not an inspiring section to study for many learners. The dull and uninspiring connotations linked to grammar brings to the fore the pivotal role that grammar teachers need to assume to help this situation. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 28) assert that the role of teachers in grammar teaching depends on the methods that they employ to teach it. These roles include the teacher being viewed as the primary source of language, as in the Audiolingual method, to that of a psychological counsellor in methods such as Counselling Learning. Ameen (2023)

postulate that since grammar has negative connotations for many learners, which may impact the process of learning it, it is the teachers' prerogative update their manner of teaching English grammar, which would exert a positive mind-set among learners toward learning it.

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011: 12) stipulates a clear need for direct teaching of the basics of grammar. Notwithstanding the fact that it is encouraged that teachers mainly play a supportive role in language learning, CAPS stresses the need for explicit teaching of structures, particularly if the learners keep on committing errors in their language learning activities. It is therefore essential for EFAL FET teachers to constantly seek for suitable, adequate and effective methods to teach grammar in order to facilitate interpretation and assimilation. This is because it has been shown that inadequate knowledge and practice of language structures will hinder the practice required by the main four English language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Consequently, inaccuracies in speaking reading, listening and writing activities will likely impact learners' comprehension during listening and speaking activities as well as create confusion for the reader or misrepresent the intended message (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, 2011:15).

2.6 Conceptual framework

According to Wang (2010:80), the history of language teaching and the role of grammar have been addressed by a number of linguistic theories and pedagogies, and the way grammar is considered has a decisive influence on pedagogical practices, learning processes and many other areas involved in language teaching. The study in this article focused on how EFAL teachers taught grammar. Thus, this study was underpinned by principles of Grammar Translation Method (c.f. Chomsky, 1965) and Communicative Language Teaching approach. Wang (ibid) argue that Communicative approach makes linguistic knowledge run through linguistic performance as a teaching purpose. Grammar teaching services linguistic performance, therefore, we can assert that as an indispensable part of language teaching. The two frameworks were selected over others because they permeate through the whole process of grammar learning and teaching. They also had most potential to shape the observation criteria in this study as the teachers observed would likely employ either the Communicative approach which emphasises the need for language production which is uninhibited by language correction or Grammar-Translation approach whose focus is rather on the learners producing correct grammar structures. This implies that it was almost imperative that teachers' practice would lean mainly on one of the two.

2.7 The Study

The choice of the site of a study resulted from a combination of criteria including availability, accessibility and theoretical interest (Schwedt, 1997:140). This study was conducted at five secondary schools, each sampled from five education districts namely, Capricorn, Mopani, Waterberg, Vhembe and Sekhukhune districts in Limpopo province, South Africa. The selected schools were in terms of SA Department of Education classified ranging from quintile 1 to 3. The motivation for selecting these schools emanate from each representing each of the five education districts. The researchers in this study are lecturers at the University of Limpopo, which is located in Capricorn District. In SA, pupils write an examination in Grade 12 to obtain a National Senior Certificate (NSC). The NSC in SA is a statutory requirement for entry into higher education and the results of the NSC are often

difficult to interpret for the purposes of higher education (Prince, 2017:134). A majority of teachers who teach in public (government) schools are black and L2 speakers of English. Teachers who do not do Bachelor of Education (BED) do Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education PGCE. The training of a PGCE in SA is one year. Thus, one of the arguments in this study is that teachers who do PGCE suffer from not being inadequately trained in terms of teaching methodology.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design and Method

This study employed an exploratory research design which, according to Leedy and Ormond (2013: 32), is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social phenomenon. Thus, teachers' handling of EFAL FET grammar structures was explored. According to Swaraj (2019), exploratory research design formulates problems, accumulates insights and explanations as well as clarifies concepts, thus preventing impracticalities in an organized and precise manner. The researchers employed a qualitative approach in this study. To meet the aims of this study, a single-method strategy comprising a self-designed observation scheme was developed and used to observe grammar teachers in classes and the type of pedagogy/ies utilized. This strategy was designed and modelled on well-known and tested observation schemes by other scholars because it fitted well with what the researchers wanted to investigate. The trustworthiness of observations was ensured by using member-checking. Varpio et al. (2017) postulate that member checking is a commonly used method of ensuring trustworthiness which often entails presentation of data transcripts to participants to obtain feedback from them. In this regard, the observed practices by the teachers were shared with the teachers after each observation to get rid of any misconceptions and discrepancies in interpretation.

3.2 Population, Sample, Sampling Method and Procedure

Furthermore, the study employed purposive sampling derived from a selected number of EFAL FET grammar teachers. Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2024) assert that purposive is commonly used in qualitative research because of its ability fulfil a specific purpose that a researcher has and ascertain the production of unbiased, reliable and trustworthy findings. The specific purpose of the researchers was to explore the manner in which grammatical structures were handled. It was thus hoped that the answer to the above research question would contribute to answering the question: How do EFAL teachers handle the teaching of grammatical structures, particularly in public schools in Limpopo Province, South Africa?

A total of five (1 female and 4 males) grade eleven (11) teachers participated in the in the study after giving their informed consent. All these research respondents indicated that they spoke English as a Second Language. The assumption was that native speakers might have a different view towards teaching of grammar. The researchers observed these lessons at different times of the day. The procedure was that each research participant taught his or her lesson observed by the researchers. As mentioned, the sample was made up of five (5) grade eleven (11) teachers from five (5) schools, (3 males and 2 females) each school belonging to each of the five (5) Limpopo Province districts. The rationale for selecting each of the five schools was as follows: one school was selected because it was one of the top performing schools in the district, one was from a largely rural area, while another one was one of the oldest schools in Limpopo, established in 1937. The other two schools comprised of a Maths, Science and Commerce stream only school while the fifth was selected as it was

located in the semi-urban township. Sampling was done in this manner to ensure that Limpopo Province is covered satisfactorily. The profile of the research subjects (teachers) is indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Teachers' Profiles

Teacher No	Gender	Language	Number of years teaching English	Qualification of the teacher
T1	Female	Sepedi	11	BA degree + PGCE
T2	Male	Sepedi	13	STD (Teachers Diploma)
T3	Female	Sepedi	14	STD (Teachers Diploma)
T4	Male	Sepedi	17	STD (Teachers Diploma)
T5	Male	Xitsonga	24	STD (Teachers Diploma)

Data was collected through observations. The researchers only played a role of just observers, implying that they did not, at any point, in any way, intrude in the lesson. Observations refer to the act of closely and systematically watching or monitoring phenomena to gather data and information (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018). An observation scheme was developed and used to observe grammar teachers in classes (see Appendix A). Ethical considerations included informed consent, respect for dignity of participants, anonymity and confidentiality.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Analyses

This study employed classroom observations as data collection instrument. This instrument was used to collect data meant to explore and describe how grammar structures were taught by EFAL FET grammar teachers in various selected schools. Observations from EFAL FET grammar classes were analysed through Thematic Content Analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a six-step thematic analysis. The steps include familiarisation with the data collected, generation of codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes as well as producing the report. This implies that the data collected from the observations were presented narratively in line with the thematic content analysis. Some of the themes that emerged from the analysis were outcomes, learner grammar, methods, types of teaching materials used, learner-teacher support materials and assessment. Furthermore, researchers such as Read (2007:107) posits that this kind of investigation typically require a relatively large sample. In this study, the sample was significant enough to make generalisable results.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Observations data are presented in terms of biodata, outcomes, learner grammar, methods, types of teaching materials used, learner-teacher support materials and assessment (see Appendix A). The topics taught during the observations were word classes taught in the context of autobiography, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, reading comprehension techniques (which was not a grammar topic) and cartoon interpretation.

The results indicate that 4 of 5 teachers held Senior Teachers' Diplomas (STDs) whereas only 1 had a university teaching degree. The lesson outcomes were stated excellently by 4 teachers, while 1 teacher did not state the outcomes. Two teachers taught grammar structures and rules excellently. This was good for the other 2 teachers, while 1 teacher did not teach a grammar topic. Two teachers employed a single method of teaching

excellently, 2 did so marginally, while for 1 teacher, the employment of a single method was good. The adaptation of the chosen method(s) was considerable in 1 lesson and good in another. There was, however, no adaptation in the other 3 lessons. In terms of methods used, 1 teacher used the Grammar translation method excellently, 1 used the Task-Based Language Teaching method excellently, while 1 teacher's application of this method was good. Communicative Language Teaching was applied considerably and well in 2 lessons, respectively. No teacher used the Audio-lingual method in any of the lessons. No textbooks were used in all 5 lessons, but there was excellent use of the chalkboard in all lessons. Pamphlets were used excellently in 2 lessons, considerably in 1 and well in another. A study guide was used by only 1 teacher, whereas no teacher made use of the dictionary, projector, chart or poster. The learner-teacher support materials' suitability was marginal in 1 lesson, considerable in another and excellent in the other 3 lessons. The learner-teacher materials authenticity was evident in only 2 lessons; in the other 3 there was no authenticity. Lastly, there was no learner self-assessment in any of the 5 lessons, but 2 teachers allowed peer assessment considerably. Peer assessment was excellently allowed by 1 teacher.

Table 3

Depicts the summary of the data in a Table form

Teacher	Qualification	Gender	No years in the profession	Topic	Preferred pedagogical approach
T1	BA degree + PGCE	F	11	Cartoon	Competency approach
T2	STD (Secondary Teachers Diploma)	M	13	Subject-verb agreement	Problem-Solving Approach
T3	STD (Secondary Teachers Diploma)	F	14	Reading comprehension techniques	Objective-Based Approach
T4	STD (Secondary Teachers Diploma)	M	17	Word Classes in a autobiography	Problem Solving Approach
T5	STD (Secondary Teachers Diploma)	M	24	Punctuation	Problem Solving Approach

4.2 Discussion

This study set out to examine and analyze how EFAL teachers handle the teaching of grammatical structures, particularly in public schools in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study achieved its main aim by investigating how these EFAL teachers taught English grammar and how they basically handled that process. The results indicated that teachers generally possessed only the basic teachers' qualifications, that is, the Secondary Teachers Diplomas, as only 1 teacher had a BA and PGCE. Most teachers' outcomes were realistic and aligned to CAPS. Grammar structures and rules were taught, which aligns to Richards and Rodgers (2001: 28) who emphasize the role of teachers in grammar teaching grammar.

However, there were indications of interlanguage and permeability of learner language, as well as variability in the grammar methods. This is congruent to the assertion by Ameen (2023) that as grammar is generally viewed by learners as dull and tedious to learn, it depends on the teacher to use variability in grammar teaching methods to ensure that the content permeates the learners' interlanguage fossilization. Fossilisation is as asserted by Ellis (1997: 34), a phenomenon that develops if language learning reaches a

stagnant period in which further learning of rules and structures slows down considerably or is no longer possible. The teachers used a variety of methods and some of them adapted their chosen teaching methods. However, in spite of the use of various strategies, there were still instances of fossilization still apparent in 3 of the lessons observed. The methods used were grammar—translation, task-based and communicative language teaching. Although there was no use of textbooks in all the lessons observed, there was some excellent use of the chalkboard. Pamphlets and study guides were also used, while the dictionary, projectors, charts or posters were not. Support materials were suitable in various degrees; some were authentic while others were non-authentic. The materials were, on the whole, adequate. None of the 5 teachers allowed self-assessment. However, there was peer-assessment, group assessment, some classwork, and homework and feedback given.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that many teachers do not try to upgrade their qualifications, which could possibly have an impact on how they deliver lessons on grammar. Secondly, it appears that teachers generally teach grammar structures and that they align their teaching to the chosen curriculum policy. This was taught mainly through three main methods, Grammar-translation, Task-based and Communicative language teaching, and all traditional methods. There was no evidence of innovative methods used. While the use of these methods is key in grammar, teachers need to regularly update their knowledge of different methods of grammar as well as include some of the more recent or innovative ones. Even though textbooks were available and adequate in the observed schools, there was no use of the textbooks in any of the observed lessons. The use of textbooks needs to be encouraged as most of the other teaching-learning materials may not adequately cover all the grammar content it should. The most commonly used learner-support materials were the chalkboard, teacher-generated pamphlets and study guides. Learner support materials such as the dictionary, projectors, charts or posters did not seem to be used at all. The teachers could be provided with support to encourage the use of a variety of materials. While support materials were suitable and adequate, some were authentic while others were not. Peer and group assessment appeared to be used and preferred almost equally to classwork and homework; however, self-assessment was never used. This could be addressed through workshops on different ways of conducting assessments.

The findings of the current study are in line with the results of the studies, which emphasize the beneficial role of teaching grammar in a language-learning situation, particularly in a foreign language-learning situation. The findings of this study advocate for proper handling of English grammar teaching. They also reveal that explicit meta-cognitive strategy training has a significant positive effect on the vocabulary learning grammar teaching on the part of EFAL pupils, and that meta-cognitive knowledge about L2/FL learning is a prerequisite for self-regulation and the effective management of language learning. Furthermore, the findings of the present study might have notable implications for those involved in language education in ELT (c.f. Kekana & Mogoboya, 2021). From a theoretical point of view, the findings of the present study will add value to the existing literature on how to teach English grammar to L2 English pupils like the ones in Limpopo Province, South Africa. From a practical point of view, ELT methodologists, textbook designers and material developers should pay serious attention to the incorporation of grammar inculcating strategies into the language textbooks and materials.

The following recommendations are accordingly suggested:

1. A survey of EFAL FET grammar teachers' qualifications in the Limpopo Province (LP) could be conducted and teachers be encouraged to upgrade their qualifications.
2. Teachers could be workshopped on the use of different grammar teaching methods and approaches in order to encourage variation and assist in making grammar learning a worthwhile activity for the learners.
3. A survey on grammar learner and teacher support materials in the schools within the Limpopo Province could be carried out. This will help address any shortages or irregularity in provision of these materials to the schools.

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