

Influence of instructional approaches on students' achievement in English grammar in public secondary schools in Kenya

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Abstract

The use of appropriate instructional approaches enhances instruction in English language. In Kenya, performance of English in most secondary schools has remained poor as evidenced by successive Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination results (2013-2018). Factors attributed to dismal performance in the subject include teachers' failure to use appropriate instructional approaches. This study examined the influence of instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya. This study was anchored on Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. A pragmatic paradigm was adopted using an exploratory sequential mixed methods and a quasi-experimental design of non-randomized pre-test and post-test control group design. Target population comprised of all the form two students and teachers of English in Teso North Sub-County. Stratified and simple random sampling were used to select 10 schools. Simple random sampling was used to select 509 students. Purposive and simple random were used to select 10 teachers. Data was generated using interview schedule, observation schedule, questionnaire and English Grammar Achievement Tests. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed using narrative analysis technique and presented through narration and direct quotes. Findings revealed that grammar was mostly taught through deductive approach, students' achievement in grammar was poor where experimental group obtained (M=12.39; SD=3.86) and control (M=12.24; SD=4.16) in the pre-test, grammar in context approach was superior (M=16.02; SD=3.51) to the deductive approach (M=14.12; SD=3.33) in regard to students' achievement in grammar. Pearson Correlation revealed that there existed a statistically significant relationship between instructional approaches and achievement in grammar ($r = .123$, $n = 509$, $p = .005$). The study concluded that grammar in context approach is an effective instructional approach which teachers of English should be encouraged to use to enhance students' achievement in grammar.

Keywords: Deductive Approach, Inductive Approach, Grammar in Contextual Approach, Achievement

1. Introduction

An instructional approach is a set of principles, beliefs or ideas about the nature of leaning which is translated into the classroom (Hoque, 2016). Best practices in teaching and learning, English grammar included, entail the use of effective instructional approaches. Thus, an appropriate

approach should not only help students speak and write accurate grammar, but also help them to speak fluent unrehearsed English (Richards, 2012). This assertion indicates that English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers should wisely select approaches that will enable them deliver the English grammar content with success.

Instructional approaches employed by teachers over the years is one aspect of teachers' instructional practice that is mostly cited for undesired learning outcomes among students. Sackeyfio, (1996) cited in Gifty (2017) asserts that ineffective teaching methods play a significant part in adversely affecting the performance of students in English language. Similarly, Gathumbi, Vikiru and Bwire, (2009) observe that most teachers of English language in Kenya use teacher-centered methods which are not stimulating to the learners thus leading to poor achievement in English. Thus, Akowuah, Patnaik and Kyei (2018) recommend that to improve learning of English, ESL teachers need to adopt student-centered approaches.

English language is a prerequisite for higher studies and job opportunities (Durga, 2018). Furthermore, it is a medium of instruction, language of examinations, and used in regional and international communication (Okwara, Shiundu and Indoshi, 2009; Rao, 2016; Durga, 2018). Consequently, it is important that ESL teachers use effective instructional approaches that will enhance students' achievement in English, more so, its grammar. This is because mastery of grammar of a language is very important since it forms the basis for achieving proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), 2006; Richards and Reppen, 2014).

Despite the perceived benefits of English language, its performance both at primary and secondary schools in Kenya has persistently remained below the expected standards (Okwara, Shiundu & Indoshi, 2009; Syomwene, 2016). More so, the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) annual reports indicate that the overall performance of English in Kenya still falls short of the average mean of (6.0) 50% (KNEC, 2013-2018). Research has shown that using the right approach in the teaching of English language can improve students' performance (Sa'ad & Usman, 2014). Hence, it is against this background that this study sought to examine the influence of instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya.

1.1 Purpose of the study

This study sought to examine the influence of instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya.

1.2 Research objectives

The research objectives were to:

- i. Establish the instructional approaches used to teach English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya.
- ii. Examine the influence of the instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya.

1.3 Research hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested:

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in students' English grammar achievement of students who are exposed to grammar in context approach and those exposed to the deductive approach

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory which postulates that social interaction plays an important role in a child's learning. Some of the principles in Vygotsky's theory relevant to this study are mediation, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding. According to Vygotsky, learning situations need to be mediated by the more knowledgeable other (MKO) such as a teacher, parent, a more capable peer and resources. The ZPD is "the distance between the actual developmental level, as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development, as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with a more capable peer," (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). Vygotsky (1978) posits that the nature of the social interaction between the learner and the MKO yields effective learning. Therefore, if learners work on tasks within their ZPD, with assistance from MKO, then they will eventually learn to do these tasks on their own. Most importantly, instruction will be more effective if ESL teachers teach within the ZPD using effective instructional approaches. On the other hand, scaffolding works in conjunction with the ZPD. Scaffolding entails the MKO providing learners appropriate support, guidance, advice, prompts, direction or resources that will enable them to eventually learn to do the task independently (Davis & Miyake, 2004). As learners become more independent in doing a task, the scaffolds are withdrawn (Harland, 2003). Scaffolding needn't come solely from the teacher but also from the more capable peers. The significance of scaffolding in this study is evident where the ESL teachers support learners having difficulties in grammar by facilitating their learning using effective instructional approaches that allow learners solve grammar tasks independently. This theory is relevant to this study because it requires the ESL teacher and learner to collaborate to improve achievement in grammar.

2. Literature Review

This section presents literature related to the instruction of English grammar and approaches used in the instruction of grammar.

2.1 The teaching and learning of English grammar

Grammar is a set of rules that determine how language sentences or correct grammatical structures are formed (Thornbury, 1999). According to the Kenya Secondary Schools English Syllabus volume 1 (KICD, 2002), the main objective of teaching grammar is to help learners understand how language works and use it correctly and appropriately in different contexts. The syllabus also proposes that in order to help learners gain a thorough mastery of language as a whole, grammatical structures should be presented in context. This implies that a grammar item should be presented within its context. Teaching of grammar is aimed at getting learners perceive structures in their form and meaning. Hence, mastery of grammar is very crucial since it forms the basis for achieving proficiency in the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (KICD, 2006).

Ellis (2006) posits that teaching grammar entails using instructional techniques that draw learners' attention to specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them to understand it either meta-linguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it. Therefore, grammar cannot be ruled out in our schools, hence the need to teach it well.

2.2 Instructional approaches for teaching English grammar

Anthony (1963) as cited in Kabir (2011) defines an approach as theories related to the nature of language and language learning that serves as the source of practices and principles in language teaching. He says that an approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and

language learning are specified. He explains that a theory of the nature of language gives an account of the nature of language proficiency as well as the basic units of language structure.

The way grammar is taught has been influenced by the numerous approaches held by teachers of English language. Woods (1995) derived three views of grammar based on the different approaches held by teachers of English. These are: grammar as rules, grammar as forms and grammar as a resource. These views of grammar, inform teachers about their approaches to teaching grammar in ESL classroom. Different approaches to language teaching have been developed. These approaches address the issue of grammar teaching differently. In addition grammar teaching approaches developed in language teaching methods, teachers have been developing their own approaches. The reason for teacher made approaches to teaching grammar are the disagreement on the concept and teaching of grammar among language teaching methods, absence of clear guidelines and educational and professional experiences (Borg, 1999).

There are many teaching approaches that can be used in teaching English grammar. The teacher is advised to choose an approach to use depending on: objectives, content, resources available, learners' abilities and interests as well as class size. Thus an instructional approach a teacher of English adopts to teach grammar may influence students to learn and therefore affect their achievement in grammar.

2.3 Teaching English grammar through the deductive approach

The deductive approach to English grammar teaching is a 'rule-driven,' or 'top-down' learning (Alzu'bi, 2015). In the deductive approach, students are first given a grammatical rule by the teacher and explanation and after learning the rule they start applying it (Nunan, 1999). Widodo (2006:127) observes that "when the rules are presented in the deductive approach, the presentation should be illustrated with examples, be short, involve students' comprehension and allow learners to have a chance to personalize the rule."

The deductive approach has greatly been criticised as a poor approach because it is mostly teacher-centred and thus not capable of bringing out the desired results. As Norland (2006:20) observed, "deductive teaching begins by giving students the rules and working with them to produce language. This is a more teacher-centered approach to teaching grammar." Based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, the traditional model where teachers transfer information to their students is irrelevant.

2.4 Teaching English grammar through the inductive approach

The inductive approach to English grammar teaching is a 'rule-discovery,' 'bottom-up' learning (Alzu'bi, 2015). This implies that learners discover grammar rules while working through exercises. Anani (2017:60) identifies the importance of using the inductive teaching approach as follows: a) The grammar structures are learnt in real life situations and this situational learning encourages students to use the language in a real life situation, b) It also encourages teachers to give correct input when the need arises and c) It helps teachers to avoid long definitions they make students memorize. Thornbury (1999) stresses that the inductive approach is based on the learner activity and there is more opportunity for language practice, nevertheless, this approach is time-consuming and pupils may work on the wrong grammar rule or the wrong grammar hypothesis and they can think that the main goal of language learning is the rule they are looking for.

2.5 Teaching English grammar through a contextual approach

To be functional, language needs to be taught through authentic context which include but not limited to newspapers, songs, literary texts and the internet (Thornbury, 1999). Anderson (2005:11)

clarifies that, “Context does not necessarily mean a lengthy text; it can be a paragraph or even a sentence.” Thus, to help learners to master English as a whole, teachers should present grammar items in context (KICD, 2002).

In criticizing the teaching of grammar through isolated sentences, Nunan (1999) affirms that often in textbooks, grammar is presented out of context where learners are given isolated sentences which they are expected to internalize through repetitive exercises. Such exercises only provide ESL learners with formal mastery of rules. Thus, learners will not be able to see the relationship between form, meaning and language use which can only be achieved if they were given opportunities to explore grammar in context. While supporting this point of view, Mart (2003:126) highlights that “presenting grammar in isolated sentences will not allow learners to see how grammatical structures function in sentences,” thereby leading to ineffective communication.

According to KICD (2006) contexts for teaching English grammar include but not limited to texts, songs, writing assignments, pictures, language games, role-play, situational exercises, dialogues, filling gaps, puns, substitution tables, completion exercises and transformational exercises. Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory promotes a learning context in which students play an active role in learning.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This section discusses the research paradigm, design, research site, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, validity and reliability of the research instruments

3.1 Methodology

A pragmatic philosophical paradigm was adopted; hence, an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach was used. Mixed methods approach was employed because the qualitative method generated explanations on the instructional approaches used by ESL teachers to teach grammar whereas quantitative method generated explanations for the relationship between instructional approaches used and students’ achievement in grammar. The exploratory sequential design implemented the qualitative and quantitative strands in the same phase of the research process. Qualitative data was collected and analyzed in the first phase while quantitative data was collected and analyzed in the second phase. The findings were merged during the interpretation and discussion stage.

3.2 Research design

Quasi-experimental research design was used in this study. The quasi-experimental form chosen was the pre-test and post-test control group design (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2010). The experimental group consisted of 264 students while the control group had 248 students. Both groups sat for a pre-test and post-test. The notational paradigm of the research design is presented in Figure 1.

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group (EG)	O ₁	X	O ₃
Control Group (CG)	O ₂	O _x	O ₄

Figure 1: Non-equivalent control group design

Key:

X = Experimental treatment using grammar in context approach

O_x = Control treatment using the deductive approach

O₁ = pre-test result for the EG

O₂ = pre-test result for the CG

Q₃ = post-test result for the EG

O₄ = post-test result for the CG

.....= indicates that the experimental and control group were not formed randomly

3.3 The research site

This study was conducted in public secondary schools in Teso North Sub-County of Busia County, Kenya. This research site was selected because its performance in English subject at KCSE examinations had consistently fallen short of the average mean score of (6.0) 50% (KNEC Reports, 2013-2018). This trend has raised concern among education stakeholders, therefore, creating the need to establish causes leading to poor performance in English language.

3.4 The target population

The target population consisted of 3399 form two students and 84 teachers of English from all the 31 public secondary schools in Teso North Sub-county, Kenya. Form 2 was selected because the grammar topic 'active and passive voice' used in the pre-test and post-test is offered in the Form 2 Secondary Education English syllabus (KICD, 2002). Also, this was not an examination class and hence available for this study.

3.5 Sample size and sampling techniques

The sample size consisted of 10 teachers of English language and 509 students from 10 public mixed sub-county secondary schools. Stratified sampling was used to categorize the study site in five zones. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 2 schools from each Zone. Hence, 10 schools were selected. In schools which had more than one stream, simple random sampling was used to select one stream which participated in this study. Purposive and simple random sampling was used to select 10 teachers of English teaching the form two class. Simple random sampling was used to assign classes to either the experimental or control group. Consequently, five schools were assigned to the experimental group while the other five were assigned to the control group.

3.6 Data collection instruments

Data was generated using the interview schedule for teachers, observation schedule, questionnaire for students and English Grammar Achievement Tests (EGAT) in the form of pre-test and post-test. The interview schedule was used to gather information related to the instructional approaches teachers used to teach grammar. Observation schedule was conducted after the interviews to establish how grammar lessons were being conducted. The questionnaire was administered to the students to verify the data generated through the interview schedule and observation schedule. The English Grammar Achievement Tests were designed to investigate the research hypothesis. The grammar items were adapted from the KCSE English past papers and modified to suit the level of the participants. The pre-test and post-test consisted of 30 open-ended items on the grammar topic 'active and passive voice.' Validity of the research instruments was assessed through experts' judgment and piloting. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using the Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Reliability of the pre-test and post-test were estimated using the test-retest method and the values obtained were 0.94 and 0.76 respectively.

3.7 The experimental procedure

The sampled teachers were trained on how to use the prepared passages/newspaper articles and lesson plans. The experimental group were trained on how to use the grammar in context approach while the control group were taken through the deductive approach. The sampled students were pre-tested before treatment began. The experimental group received instruction through the grammar in context approach with the aid of prepared passages and lesson plans while the control group was taught using the deductive approach but without the aid of prepared passages but using prepared lesson plans. The treatment lasted for a period of four weeks after which the post-test was administered to both groups. The post-test bore items resembling those of the pre-test on the topic 'active and passive voice.' The tests were marked by teachers and the researcher analysed the scores.

3.8 Controlling the extraneous variables

The success of quasi-experimental designs rely on the stringent control of extraneous variables (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2012). The extraneous variables were mitigated as follows: Firstly, the Hawthorne effect was mitigated by using regular teachers to teach their own students. This made the students believe that they were undertaking their normal lessons. Secondly, the effect of the pre-test on post-test was mitigated by administering the two tests after the interval of four weeks which was long enough not to permit the pre-test to affect the post-test. This prevented students from becoming familiar with the test items. Thirdly, the effect of teacher differences was mitigated by providing the teachers in the experimental and control group prepared lesson plans that enabled them maintain uniformity. Fourthly, the effect of participants' interaction was mitigated by ensuring that participants in the experimental and control group belonged to different schools not so close to each other. Additionally, the participants were not informed about other participating schools. Finally, the effect of students' variation in achievement in English grammar was mitigated by using only students from public mixed sub-county secondary schools who were of comparable academic ability.

3.9 Data collection procedures

The interview schedule was administered first to generate data regarding the approaches ESL teachers used during the instruction of grammar. A total of ten teachers were interviewed. Thereafter, all the ten grammar instruction lessons were observed to verify data obtained through the interview schedule. The questionnaire for students was used to corroborate data from the interview schedule and observation schedule. The pre-test and post-test generated quantitative data which was used to test hypothesis. Both tests contained 30 test items on the grammar topic 'active and passive voice.' The post-test bore test items that resembled those of the pre-test but differed wording. The teachers marked the tests while the researcher analyzed the scores.

3.10 Data analysis procedures

Qualitative data was analyzed through narrative analysis technique and presented through narration and verbatim responses. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics consisted of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations and presented in tables. Inferential statistics used included the independent samples t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

4. Findings

This study examined the influence of instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya. The findings were as follows:

4.1 Instructional approaches used when teaching English grammar

Data for this objective was generated using the interview schedule for teachers, observation schedule and questionnaire for students. These were the findings:

4.1.1 Data obtained from the interview schedule

Teachers were asked to describe the instructional approaches they normally used when teaching English grammar. The findings revealed that 7 out of the 10 teachers had been using the deductive approach. Two participants reported they had been using grammar in context approach while one participant had been using the deductive approach. The respondents who had been using the deductive approach stated that it enabled them cover the syllabus in good time. Teacher 1 remarked:

I mainly begin by explaining the grammatical rules of the item I'm teaching. Once the learners have understood the rules, I then provide examples on how the rules can be applied. English language is taught in a quite limited time, 40 minutes per a lesson. If I use another approach, there is no enough time to enable me cover the syllabus. To have students cover most of the topics, I have to save the time.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that teachers used the deductive approach when teaching grammar because they found it easier to use in ESL classes with higher enrolment compared to other instructional approaches. Teacher 3 commented that:

Well, I normally use the deductive approach in my class because it's easier for me. Seriously, using other approaches in a classroom of over 50 students doesn't seem effective to me. I could use other approaches available, but some of my students may fail to take part in the discussion.

Another respondent pointed out that he used the deductive approach because it enabled the students to understand the grammar rules. Teacher 7 observed that:

In my teaching I lay more emphasis on the grammatical rule because I want students to think of the grammar rule. It is important for the students to understand the grammar rules. If they can find out the rule, then they should be able to pass the examinations

These sentiments were also confirmed Teacher 5, 8 and 9 who explained that they used the deductive approach because it enabled the students learn grammar rules easily.

Teachers were further asked to describe their students' performance in English grammar. The findings revealed that students' performance in English grammar was poor. All the 10 teachers reported that their students' achievement in English grammar was poor. Teacher 6 said:

In spite of their eagerness to learn, their performance in grammar is generally below average. However, individually some students may occasionally score above average marks in some specific topics. But these cases are always fewer than those who score below average.

Supporting this, Teacher 4 reiterated that:

Generally, I would describe the performance of my students in grammar as largely below average and even at times very poor. In most cases, most of them obtain very low marks in class assignments and even in other termly examinations.

Teacher 9 stated that, *'Their performance sometimes depends on the topic. However, I can describe their performance as fair but most of them are below average.'*

4.1.2 Data obtained from the observation schedule

Ten grammar instruction lessons were observed to verify the data obtained using the interview schedule. The findings revealed that all the 10 teachers used the deductive approach to teach grammar. For instance, in lesson 1, the teacher used the deductive approach when teaching the grammar topic: comparative and superlative forms of adverbs. In this particular lesson, the researcher observed that the teacher wrote the topic on the blackboard and asked the students to define the term adverbs. After the students had given their definitions, the teacher then provided his own definition. Thereafter, the teacher went ahead to write examples of adverbs on the blackboard. Students were then asked to give further examples of adverbs. As the lesson progressed, the teacher explained the difference between comparative and superlative adverbs. At this point, the teacher explained the grammar structures by himself. The learners were not given room to obtain the information themselves. After the teacher had given all the explanations on comparative forms of adverbs, he asked the students whether his explanations had been clear. During this lesson, it was observed that the teacher did a lot of talking and there was very little learner involvement. The learners remained passive most of the time.

In lesson 9, the teacher was observed teaching *'independent and subordinate clauses.'* This particular class had 46 students. The observation revealed that the teacher used lecture method throughout the lesson. All explanations were done by the teacher. The learners listened keenly while copying lesson notes. After the teacher had given definitions, he went ahead to write down the examples of each clause on the blackboard.

Likewise in lesson 7, the teacher was observed using the deductive approach while teaching indirect speech. In this particular lesson, the teacher wrote an example of indirect speech on the black board: *"I am going to school now," said Anne.* The teacher then explained the rules related to the reported speech as follows: *'If the verb in the original sentence is in the present tense in direct speech, it shifts to past tense in reported speech. The pronoun I changes to she and the adverb of place now becomes then.'* As the teacher explained the rule, he wrote more examples of changing direct speech to indirect speech on the blackboard. He then asked the learners to study the rules before applying them. After the teacher had explained all the grammar rules, he gave the learners an exercise on reported speech. The learners were required to do the exercise individually.

These aspects were also witnessed in other lessons observed. For instance, in lesson 3 and lesson 8, there was too much teacher talk as they endeavoured to explain grammar rules. The data generated through the observation schedule revealed that ESL teachers mainly used the deductive approach to teach grammar.

4.1.3 Data obtained from the questionnaire for students

The questionnaire for students was used to verify data generated using the interview schedule. The students were asked to rate the frequency with which their teachers had been using the three listed instructional approaches when teaching grammar. The responses were rated on a five-point Likert Scale where 1= never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4= frequently and 5 = always. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Use of instructional approaches in teaching English grammar

Instructional Approach	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Deductive approach	17 (3.3%)	71(13.9%)	85 (16.7%)	104 (20.4%)	232 (45.6%)
Inductive approach	28 (5.5%)	79 (15.5%)	99 (19.4%)	135 (26.5%)	168 (33.0%)
Grammar in context approach	94 (18.5%)	146 (28.7%)	112 (22.0%)	58 (11.4%)	99 (19.4%)

Source: Field Data (2019) N=509

Table 1 revealed that the instructional approaches always used included deductive approach reported by 232 (45.6%) students, inductive approach 168 (33%) and grammar in context approach 99 (19.4%). The results suggested that 421 (82.7%) students indicated their teachers had been using the deductive approach.

Item 2 of the questionnaire sought to establish students' achievement in English grammar. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' achievement rating in English grammar

Achievement in grammar rating	Frequency	Per cent
Very poor	16	3.1
Poor	62	12.2
Average	276	54.2
Good	105	20.6
Excellent	50	9.8
Total	509	100.0

Source: Field Data (2019)

Table 2 revealed that 276 (54.2%) students rated their achievement in English grammar as average, good 105 (20.6%), poor 62 (12.2%), excellent 50(9.8%), very poor 16 (3.1%). This data suggests that 354 (69.5%) regard their achievement in English grammar as poor.

4.2 Influence of the instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar

Data used to answer this research objective was generated using English Grammar Achievement Tests (pre-test and post-test). The findings were as follows:

4.2.1 Data obtained from the pre-test

A pre-test was administered before the treatment began to establish students' baseline ability in English grammar. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pre-test results for the experimental and control group

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Experimental	264	12.39	3.86	.23776
	Control	245	12.24	4.16	.26601
	Total	509			

Table 3 revealed that the experimental group had a slightly higher mean score ($M=12.39$; $SD=3.86$) than the control group ($M=12.24$; $SD=4.16$). To establish the significance relationship between the results of the two groups, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Independent sample t-test for pre-test for experimental and control group

Pre-test	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.264	.608	.431	507	.666	.15342	.35578	-.54557	.85241
Equal variances not assumed			.430	495.927	.667	.15342	.35678	-.54757	.85440

***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Table 4 revealed that there was no significant difference in grammar achievement between the experimental and control group in the pre-test mean scores $t(507) = 0.431$, $p > 0.67$. The p-value is greater than 0.05α , ($0.67 > 0.05$) which means that we accept the null hypothesis. This implied that the two groups had equal ability in grammar at the onset.

4.2.2 Data obtained from the post-test

All the students in the experimental and control group were taught the same grammar content on the topic 'active and passive voice' in the simple present, simple past, present perfect past participle and future tense. The experimental group used the grammar in context approach while the control group used the deductive approach. A grammar post-test was administered to both groups. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Post-test results for the experimental and control group

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	Experimental	264	16.02	3.51	.21596
	Control	245	14.12	3.33	.21156
	Total	509			

Table 5 revealed that the experimental group had a higher mean score of ($M=16.02$; $SD= 3.51$) while the control group had ($M=14.12$; $SD=3.33$).

Independent Samples t-test was used to determine the level of significance. The hypothesis tested was H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in students' English grammar achievement of students who are exposed to grammar in context approach and those exposed to the deductive approach. The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Independent samples t-test for the post-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	.006	.940	6.406	510	.000	1.93988	.30281	1.34498	2.53478
	Equal variances not assumed			6.417	509.941	.000	1.93988	.30231	1.34595	2.53382

***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Table 6 revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the performance of the experimental group and control group in the post-test mean scores $t(510) = 6.406, p < 0.001$. The p-value is less than $0.05\alpha, (0.000 < 0.05)$ which means that we reject the null hypothesis. This implied that grammar in context approach had a positive influence on students' achievement in grammar.

Finally, Person Product Moment Correlation was used to establish if there existed a relationship between instructional approaches and students' achievement in English grammar. The hypothesis tested was:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between instructional approaches used and students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Correlation between approaches and students' achievement in English grammar

		Instructional approaches	Achievement in English grammar
Instructional approaches	Pearson Correlation	1	.123**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	509	509
Achievement in English grammar	Pearson Correlation	.123**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	509	509

***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Table 7 revealed that there existed a statistically significant relationship between instructional approaches used and students' achievement in English grammar ($r = .123, n=509, p = .005$). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected given that $p < 0.05$. This implies that instructional approaches used positively influence students' achievement in English grammar.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This study examined the influence of instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya. Data was generated using the interview schedule for teachers, observation schedule, students' questionnaire and English Grammar Achievement Tests. The findings are discussed as follows:

4.3.1 Instructional approaches used to teach English grammar

This objective was aimed at establishing the instructional approaches used to teach English grammar. The findings revealed that teachers predominantly used the deductive approach when teaching grammar. The observation schedule confirmed that all the 10 teachers used the deductive approach. This was corroborated by data generated by the interview schedule which revealed that 7 out of 10 teachers had been using it. This was further confirmed by the results of the questionnaire where 421(82.7%) students reported their teachers had been using the deductive approach as presented in Table 1. These findings are in line with those of Adhikari (2017) who pointed out that 80 percent of the English grammar lessons by Nepalese teachers were taught through the deductive approach. The study concluded that for many teachers, talking about the rules of grammar explicitly seemed the norm. These findings are also supported by the findings of Koceva (2017) who in his study entitled, "Survey for determining the current status of grammar instruction in Foreign Language Teaching in the Republic of Macedonia," established that deductive grammar instruction was predominant in the teaching of foreign languages in elementary and high schools across the Republic of Macedonia. Similarly, Ahmadzai, Katawazai, and Sandaran (2019) observe that teachers of English language generally prefer the deductive approach as they were trained in the classical method of teaching grammar. This practice was not in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which espouses that the learner plays an active role in the learning context where roles of the teacher and learner are shifted and teachers should collaborate with learner to facilitate meaning construction, (Vygotsky, 1978).

The study further established that ESL learners were not actively involved in the grammar instruction process. This was because the deduction approach that was mostly used by ESL teachers did not encourage learners to participate actively during the grammar lessons. The results of the observation schedule revealed that most learners remained passive most of the time during the grammar lessons because the teachers did not give them an opportunity to practice what they were teaching. This finding corresponds to the finding of Male (2018) who pointed out that grammar explanation is teacher-centred which is often at the expense of learner involvement and interaction. As a result, learners are not actively involved in the learning process, but simply remain passive recipients.

The use of the deductive approach by the ESL teachers to teach grammar might prove negative to some ESL learners' achievement in grammar. This was because the deductive approach was not learner centred. Vygotsky (1978) affirmed that students are active participants in their learning. The teacher-learner collaboration at the core of ZPD allows co-construction of knowledge between the teacher and the learner. Thus, teachers should use instructional approaches that gives learners room to be active participants in their learning. The social cultural theory requires that teachers and students play untraditional roles and collaborate with each other. Instead of a teacher dictating his/her meaning to students for future recitation, a teacher should collaborate with his/her students to create meaning in ways through which a child can achieve competence and work independently. The findings of this study portray that teachers took the centre-stage during the English grammar instructional process. More so, the findings revealed that students did not interact among themselves during the grammar lessons. This could possibly explain the poor students' achievement in English grammar as shown by the pre-test results presented in Table 3.

4.3.2 The influence of instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar

This objective examined the influence of the instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya. The findings revealed that students' achievement in English grammar was poor. The findings of the interview schedule confirmed that all the 10 ESL reported that their students' achievement in grammar was poor. This finding was corroborated by the results of the questionnaire where 354 (69.5%) students rated their achievement in English grammar as poor as presented in Table 2. Furthermore, the pre-test results presented in Table 3 revealed that students in the experimental group obtained ($M=12.39$; $SD=3.86$) while those in the control group obtained ($M=12.24$; $SD=4.16$) which was below the 50% mark. These findings confirmed the findings of Ombati, Omari, Ogendo, Ondima and Otieno (2013) who established that many students in Kenya fail to express themselves in proper English due to their poor grammar. This could be an indication that ESL teachers do not provide appropriate scaffolding that would enable learners reach their ZPD of English grammar, a requirement espoused by Vygotsky (1978).

The findings of this study revealed that grammar in context approach had a positive influence on students' achievement in grammar. Table 5 revealed that students in the experimental group who were taught grammar using the grammar in context approach obtained a higher mean score ($M=16.02$; $SD = 3.51$) than students in the control group who were taught grammar using the deductive approach ($M=14.12$; $SD=3.33$). This implied that the grammar in context approach was beneficial. These findings are consistent with the findings of Raheem and Hassan (2019) who observed that using grammar in context approach can be considered as an activity style in teaching English because of the positive effectiveness on the development of English language skills. These findings are also supported by Özkan (2015) who established that teaching and learning grammar is best done within context of authentic resources.

Similarly, Ghelichi (2017) in his study, "Contextualizing grammar instruction through meaning-centered planned pre-emptive treatment and enhanced input in an EFL context," concluded that students who are taught grammatical points and structures in real-life-like contextualized activities performed better than those taught in de-contextualized deductive grammatical explanation. The results indicated that de-contextualized instruction failed to promote use of auxiliary verbs. In fact, the Kenya Secondary Schools English Syllabus volume 1 (KICD, 2002) proposes that in order to help the learner gain a thorough mastery of the English language as a whole, grammatical structures should be presented in context. Thus, grammar items should be presented within their context. The purpose is to get the learners to perceive the structure, its form and meaning. Mart (2013:128) observed that, "If learners are given grammatical structures in context, they will be able master the language better. Teaching grammar in context will help learners to acquire grammar structures and forms." This view is in line with Vygotsky (1978) who asserts that the ZPD entails a process where the learner acquires knowledge over time under the guidance of the teacher.

Pearson Product Moment correlation results revealed that there existed a statistically significant relationship between instructional approaches and students' achievement in grammar ($r=.123$, $n=509$, $p = .005$). This implies that ESL teachers could enhance students' achievement in English grammar by employing effective instructional approaches. These findings are in line with those of Collins and Norris (2017) who confirmed that teaching grammar in context enhanced grammar achievement within a short period of time. This view is reinforced by Vygotsky (1978) who

espoused that the nature of interaction between the learner and the teacher will determine the learners' performance in the school and in the later years.

5. Conclusions

This study examined the influence of instructional approaches used on students' achievement in English grammar in secondary schools in Kenya. Based on the findings, the study concluded that instructional approaches used influenced students' achievement in English grammar. The findings revealed that grammar in context approach is an effective instructional approach which teachers of English should be encouraged to use to enhance students' achievement in English grammar.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that teachers of English language should adopt the grammar in context approach when teaching English grammar. Hence, in-service training programs should be facilitated by the Ministry of Education through KICD to sensitize teachers of English on the importance of using the grammar in context approach when teaching English grammar.

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