



# Techniques and challenges of teaching modern English grammar in universal basic education/primary schools in Niger north, Niger state, Nigeria

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## Abstract

There are a good number of techniques teachers used in the course of teaching their pupils grammatical concepts among which include Providing Examples, Language Games, etc. Grammar is undeniably an essential component of effective communication. The importance of teaching English grammar and by extension, English language in Nigeria educational institutions cannot be over emphasised because of the roles English language plays in Nigeria society. Like any other job, teaching comes with its challenges some of which often lead to an attainability of the target goal for the grammar lessons. Hence, this current research is aimed at identifying the functional techniques of teaching modern English grammar in rural and semi urban settings in Niger North Senatorial District of Niger state, Nigeria. This research is based on quantitative method with the application of survey research design. Simple random sampling technique is used to select the 20 UBE/Primary schools across the research area and the 60 research participants. A set of questionnaire and observation checklist are used to obtain data. And at the end of the analysis of the data, Providing Examples Technique of teaching grammar aspects of English language is found to be the most effective technique among other five techniques identified in this study. Equally, this study identified some challenges teachers of modern English grammar faced in the course of teaching aspects of English grammar to their pupils/students which includes learners' learning attitude, class size, inadequate teaching resources, etc. The study concludes that there is need for diversification of the use of teaching techniques among teachers of modern English grammar in order to make their teaching more impactful and the study also recommends opportunity for on the job training/workshop of teachers of English grammar among other things so that they can update their knowledge on the best techniques to use while teaching grammar aspects to their pupils/students.

**Keywords:** techniques, challenges, English grammar

## 1. Introduction

Language is an essential tool for human to learn and interact. It is constructed with various components and grammar is one of the basic components of language. Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988, p. 16) <sup>[1]</sup> define grammar as a subset of those rules which govern the configurations that the morphology and syntax of a language assume. It means that language is a type of rule-governed behaviour. Chomsky (1957, p. 64) <sup>[2]</sup> opines that: all languages in this world have some sort of grammatical rules. With the help of grammar, we can arrange morphemes into words, words into phrases, phrases into clauses, clauses into sentences, sentences into meaningful paragraph using rules and principles of language.

The main purpose of teaching grammar is to help the learners know how different grammatical elements can be strung together to make chain of words/sentences. Thus, learners may be able to choose appropriate structures and develop their fluency level which express the meaning of that particular language. The teacher can present it as a classroom activity by using appropriate methods and techniques while teaching grammar. Thus, teaching grammar involves any instructional technique or activity that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that helps them to comprehend the process and the production so that they can

fully internalize it. To learn and teach effectively, we need to have the knowledge of teaching principles, methods and techniques. Thus, teaching grammar requires teachers having the knowledge of a number of techniques and methods in order to teach it effectively and efficiently.

Teaching is not an easy job. Teachers need to adopt various methods, techniques and strategies while teaching students in the classroom. Technique is a particular way of doing something especially, one in which you have to learn special skill. Anthony (1963, as cited in Krishnaswamy and Krishnaswamy, 2006, p. 40) <sup>[10]</sup> states, "A technique represents implementation; it is the actual implementation of the method in the classroom. It is a particular way of doing things to accomplish immediate objectives." Techniques are the activities which are implemented in the classroom to support the successful learning. The techniques or strategies that a teacher uses in the classroom will determine how learners learn grammar. Thus, teachers need to adopt plenty of techniques while teaching grammar because grammar plays a pre-vital role in the learning of language to communicate effectively.

Therefore, teachers need to be updated every time. Particularly, talking about grammar teaching, first language learners learn mother tongue intuitively but the second language learners, especially in the case of learning English in Nigeria, need to be

acquainted with the norms of the target language and it is a serious task to teach them. Thus, it is sure that a number of challenges may occur while teaching grammar. Thus, English grammar teachers need to be aware about those possible challenges that may occur in their teaching due to various factors. These challenges must be identified first in order to solve them which in turn leads to effective language teaching and learning, especially at UBE level of Nigeria educational programmes.

### Statement of the problem

Grammar helps language learners to convey the right meaning appropriately as it is intended to. Although it is one of the most important aspects of language, it is perceived as an additional skill of a language along with the other four language skills: (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Every language has its own grammar and it should be taught to its learners to be competent in communication in that particular language. In addition, teaching grammar plays significant role in language teaching. It is the study of how words and their component parts combine to form sentences. Learners must have knowledge of grammar rules to make correct sentences as well as to convey the right meaning in a particular context.

To teach grammar, teachers need to adopt various techniques such as songs, games, storytelling, etc. in order to aid in teaching grammar. However, there may occur many of challenges while implementing these techniques from theory into practice in the classroom. Teaching grammar is serious and has lot of challenges that teachers face such as poor background of the students, difficult lessons and its boring nature, classroom setting, different learning styles and so on. Therefore, teachers need to adopt various techniques for teaching grammar in order to make it more effective.

Different scholars have suggested various techniques for teaching grammar. The use of these techniques determine how learners learn grammar. The techniques used depend on the contexts. They do not necessarily seem to be fitted in all contexts. Talking about Nigerian context, techniques used in teaching grammar may vary from teachers to teachers and from institutions to institutions. Thus, this study intends to find out the techniques used in teaching grammar by teachers of English in UBE/Primary schools. and the possible challenges they could face while deploying those techniques for teaching grammar. hence the need for their identification and suggestion for way forward in order to make grammar teaching and learning more effective.

### Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this research is to carry out a survey on the techniques used and challenges faced by the teachers of modern English grammar teaching pupils/ students of UBE/Primary Schools in Niger North of Niger State, Nigeria. While the objectives for this research are:

- a) To find out the techniques used in teaching Modern English Grammar in Niger state UBE/Primary schools,
- b) To identify the challenges faced by the teachers of Modern English Grammar in Niger State UBE/Primary schools,

### Significance of the study

This research focuses on the techniques and challenges in teaching modern English grammar in Niger State UBE/Primary schools. Often times, teaching grammar is given the least attention than the other four language skills. However, a second language learner must have the knowledge of grammar to perform the functions of a particular language in a correct form. Moreover, this study is primarily significant to the UBE/Primary school teachers of English language as foreign language in discovering their ways of teaching grammar aspects. In addition, those teachers would become aware about the challenges that might occur during grammar teaching. It is also beneficial to all those teachers, textbook writers, curriculum designers and all those who are involved in the teaching and learning of English language. Educational policy makers may become aware of the importance of teaching grammar in order to ensure the teachers and students' grammatical competence which to an extent leads to academic successes of the learners.

### Research questions

The research questions of this study are:

- What techniques do UBE/Primary schools teachers of English use while teaching Modern English Grammar topics?
- What challenges do UBE/Primary schools teachers of Modern English Grammar face while teaching grammar related topics to their pupils?

### Research hypothesis

This research tests the following null hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference among the various techniques used by teachers of English grammar in UBE/Primary schools of Niger state.
- There are no challenges faced by teachers of English grammar in UBE/Primary schools of Niger state.

### Scope of the study

This research covers the techniques and challenges of teaching modern English grammar topics in UBE/Primary schools. It is also limited to 60 participants to be drawn from 20 UBE/Primary schools; 6 within Kontagora LGA and 2 each from the remaining seven LGAs that make up Niger North Senatorial District (Zone C), which will be randomly selected in accordance with the research sampling technique. This research is based on quantitative method with the application of survey research design. The simple random sampling strategy is applied to select the participants. The research tools prepared for the data collection were both questionnaire and observation checklist.

## 2. Concept of teaching grammar

English is the world mostly used language (Greenbaum & Quirk, 2008, p. 7) <sup>[6]</sup>. Teaching of English takes place all around the world due to its international recognition, importance and popularity. Every language of the world has its own grammar and it is sure that the languages that we speak

and write have a number of set of rules and styles to convey the intended meaning.

Etymologically, the word 'grammar' is derived from the Greek word 'grammatika' which means the art of writing and a part of philosophy of a way of purifying language. In other words, it provides correctness while using a particular language. Teaching language in general incorporates teaching grammar of the target language.

Therefore, teaching of English surely demands teaching of its grammar for effective language learning. Here, teaching grammar means teaching accuracy of a language which is only possible in formal learning environment. The formation of word and sentence is concerned with the rules of grammar. These rules of a language help for the correct use of that language. Thus, teaching grammar is one of unavoidable aspects for language teaching and learning.

The term 'grammar' has been defined by various scholars in a number of ways. In general, it is a set of rules that governs the language more accurately. According to Thornburry (1999, p. 1) [12], "Grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language. Traditionally, grammar has been concerned almost exclusively with analysis at the level of sentence. Thus, a grammar is a description of the rules that governs how a language's sentences are formed." It can be said that grammar is a device by which words are combined into larger units of discourse. In addition, it can be defined as the study of language descriptively, prescriptively and communicatively in a pedagogic manner.

Furthermore, grammar can be conceptualised as thus:

- Traditional perspective perceives grammar as a set of normative prescriptive rules established in order to preserve the purity and standard of language.
- Structural or descriptive perspective describes grammar as a device by which words are combined into larger units of discourse or it is the study of organization of words into various combinations often representing many layers of structure such as phrase, sentences, and utterances.
- Generative perspective takes grammar as the model of native speaker's competence which consists of finite rules that generate infinite number of grammatical sentences in the given language.

Cowan (2012, p. 3) [4] defines grammar as 'the set of rules that describes how words and group of words can be arranged to form sentence in a particular language.' It means that the grammar of a language describes how smallest units are structured to form a sentence and how different sentences are organized to form a unified, meaningful and purposive stretch of language use. Hagemann (2002, p. 3) [7] concludes that grammar is a set of rules of the language shared by its speakers which tells how to pronounce syllable (phonology), how to form words (morphology), how to structure sentences (syntax) and what style of language to use in a given context (pragmatics).

Furthermore, grammar can be interpreted in terms of historical and descriptive perspective which are commonly known as diachronic and synchronic grammars. In diachronic study, grammars or languages are studied from the point of view of

their historical development. On the other hand, synchronic grammar studies language at a theoretical point of time.

Debata (2013, p. 482) [5] aptly, conceptualizes the concept of grammar and its importance in the use of language as:

*The word grammar means different things to different people. To the ordinary citizen it connotes to correctness and incorrectness of the language that he or she speaks. To a school student, it means an analytical and terminological study of sentences. Knowledge of grammar helps the student in the correction of mistakes and improvement of written work ... So, grammar is indispensable for the student.*

From above, it can be concluded that grammar plays vital role in language learning by providing set of rules to the language learners. In other words, teaching grammar seems to have great impact in language learning in order to be competent in the target language.

### Misconceptions on teaching of grammar

Misconception of grammar is said to be false beliefs or wrong assumptions made about grammar and the grammatical descriptions. They raise some ambiguities whether to take grammar as a great deal of confusion or to take it as explicit object of discussion. In addition, they are myths, illogical, conservation and irrational ideas ignoring its importance in teaching language.

Larsen-Freeman (1997, p. 23) [11], has presented some major misconceptions that arise because of improper and inadequate reflection on the nature and structure of the language:

*'... Grammar is acquired naturally; it need not be taught. It assumes that some language learners acquire second language grammar naturally without instruction. Grammar is a collection of meaningless forms. With no concern on other grammatical dimensions (meaning and use), it associates grammar with verb and rules about linguistic form. Grammar consists of arbitrary rules. It means to say that the given rules are based on individual discretion or judgment and not based on any objective distinction...'*

In conclusion, these above mentioned myths should be ignored and focused not only on form but also on meaning and used in order to teach grammar accurately, meaningfully and appropriately.

### Importance of teaching grammar

Talking about the context of teaching English language as either a second language or a foreign language, it cannot be acquired and learnt naturally; therefore, instruction and instruction of the language are important for language learning.

A sound knowledge of grammar is essential if pupils are going to use English creatively (Hutchinson, 1999, as cited in Thornburry, 1999, p. 14) [12]. This statement stresses on the importance of teaching grammar for effective language learning. Including grammar in teaching obviously enhances effective communication skill as well as it can real effect on all the four skills of language learning.

Thornburry (1999, p. 15-17) [12] provides seven arguments for the case of teaching grammar in language:

- **The sentence-machine argument:** Through teaching finite sets of rules of grammar, learners can innumerate finite number of marginal sentences. Thus, grammar is taken as a kind of sentence making machine.
- **The fine-tuning argument:** This argument assumes that teaching grammar helps language learners to produce correct sentences and structures minimizing the possibilities of committing errors.
- **The fossilization argument:** This argument clarifies that receiving instruction on grammar do not seem to be at risk of fossilizing than receiving no instruction.
- **The advance-organizer argument:** It argues that grammar instruction might have indirect influence in language learning. It means that later noticing previously is a prerequisite for language learning.
- **The discrete item argument:** It assumes that language is enormous and vague from outside by which arises possible challenges for learners. Therefore, if grammatical items are split in the smallest specific items or into neat categories i.e. discrete item, then it can be digestible to learners.
- **The rule-of-law argument:** It advocates the rules, orders and disciplines which are unavoidable aspects of grammar because grammar is taken as a system of learn able rules.
- **The learners' expectations argument:** Many learners come to language classes with the expectation that they can develop their grammatical competence for successful language learning.

### Teaching English language in Nigeria primary schools

The rationale for studying English Language as a major subject at the primary level of Education may include the following: it is a universal language for communication; It is a means by which pupils/students obtain and advance knowledge; it imparts the right and timely attitude and skills in pupils, necessary for their overall adaption and interactions with others and the world; initiating and sustaining meaningful relationships with people; for expansion of pupils' understanding and knowledge in the world cultural diversity. More so, the English language plays a fundamental role in equipping learners with the skills and experiences needed for a lifelong learning, problem-solving, creativity, creative thinking and innovation and for adapting to the rapid changes and demands of the society. It opens up the world of freedom and fun packed activities for learners. It does provide new possibilities in learners' social and intellectual development, career advancement, educational attainment, cultural understanding and personal fulfilment.

The Second Language status conferred on English in Nigeria and the official role it plays as not only the language of instruction but also a subject that determines the realization of the higher education dream of young Nigerians has placed huge demands on the teaching and learning of English in our multilingual nation. Although grammar is not explicitly listed in the four language skills taught in the English Language; listening, speaking, reading and writing but performance in these four skills is implicitly hinged on the knowledge of

grammar. Knowledge of teaching grammatical structures enables a language user to process information derived from listening in order to decode the intended message. Similarly, a speaker needs to understand how the language works to be able to construct acceptable sentences in English.

Furthermore, graduates' comprehension in reading is facilitated not only by the knowledge of vocabulary items in the text but also by a basic knowledge of the interrelationships that exist between certain elements of sentence. Writing also requires the ability to organize elements of language into larger units to form acceptable sequences.

Jowitt, (1991, p. 49). asserts that:

*... much of the English produced by students in school in Nigeria, even after many years of classroom teaching, is bound to contain many imperfections, including many fossilized errors which, as suggested above, have been largely learned outside the school. Difficult to eradicate, they are often carried over into the usage of tertiary-level students and even of graduates ...*

### Methods of teaching grammar

Scholars have enumerated a number of methods for language teaching. Particularly, teaching grammar can be done through adopting these methods and here are some of the lists (Musilova, 2010, as cited in Ibrahim, 2016, p. 53):

- a. **Grammar-translation method:** It is an old or traditional method which still existed so widely. Through this method, grammar rules are properly explained and there is focus on structure. In other words, there is a focus on learning the rules of grammar and the application in translation passages from one language into the other.
- b. **Other methods of teaching grammar are:** The Audio-Lingual, Communicative Language Teaching and Communicative Approach, etc. Similarly, Ur (2009, p. 84) has presented some different techniques of teaching grammar which are as follows:
  - **Awareness:** Firstly, teacher introduces structures to learners. Then, students are given opportunities to study some kind of discourse and do a task that focuses their attention on its form and meaning. For example, learners are given an extract from the newspaper article and asked to underline all the examples of past tense that they can find.
  - **Controlled drills:** With the help of the cues provided by teachers or textbooks, learners can produce examples of the structures which are very clear to ended cues. For example, Fati speaks good English but does not understand French, etc.
  - **Meaningful drills:** The teacher provides situation and guidelines and the students should respond them within the limitation and a number of limited choice of cues. The responses are very controlled. For example: In order to practice the forms of the present simple tense, students are asked to choose someone and compose true statement about him or her according to the following model. She/he likes ice cream; or She/ he does not like ice cream. etc.

### 3. Methodology

#### a) Design and methods of the study

The survey research design is chosen as the appropriate research design to do this study. It means that the researchers collect the data usually from the large sample to talk about trends, opinions or attitudes. The result of this design is based on the quantitative or numbered data obtained from questionnaire and checklist observation.

#### b) Population, sample and sampling strategy

In this research study, the population covered all the teachers of English language who teach modern English grammar in UBE/Primary schools of Niger North Senatorial District Niger State, Nigeria. Specifically, the samples for this study are sixty teachers of English language out of defined population. The research adopted simple random sampling strategy for the selection of the research participants from 20 UBE/Primary Schools across the study area.

#### c) Research tools and techniques

The research tools for this study are questionnaire and observation checklist. Sixty UBE/ Primary school teachers of English language were distributed a set of questionnaire. Likewise, an observation checklist was prepared to observe classes of the selected teachers by the researchers during classroom teachings.

#### d) Data analysis and interpretation procedures

After collecting the data, the data have been analysed and interpreted with the help of simple statistical tools like percentage and tables. The data both from the questionnaire and observation checklist were collected and counted, and then converted into percentage with the help of tabulation. Then, the obtained numerical were analysed in a descriptive way.

### 4. Analysis of data collected through questionnaire

A set of questionnaire was given to all the sixty English teachers teaching in UBE/Primary schools in order to find out the techniques used for teaching grammar. The obtained responses were then analysed and interpreted. The following section consists of the analysis of the data on different teaching aspects of grammar. Each table indicates the aspect of the grammar, the frequency and the percentage the given aspect and five different teaching techniques were sampled for each table respectively.

**Table 1: Nouns**

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	20	33%
Controlled Drills	16	27%
Language Games	12	20%
Using Pictures	5	8%
Discussion	7	12%
Total	60	100%

From the above table, out of 60 English language teachers, 33% of the teachers used Providing Examples Technique to teach

nouns of English grammar. Likewise, the techniques such as controlled drills, language games, discussion and using pictures were applied by 27%, 20%, 12 % and 8% respectively. Thus, it can be said that all the given five techniques are used for teaching nouns of English grammar. However, providing examples technique has been mostly favoured among the other techniques.

**Table 2: Articles**

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	25	42%
Controlled Drills	12	20%
Language Games	07	12%
Using Pictures	10	16%
Discussion	06	10%
Total	60	100%

To teach articles of English grammar, with the help from the above table, providing examples as a technique is used by 42% of the 60 English teachers sampled. Similarly, the other techniques such as controlled drills, using pictures, language games with 20%, 16% and 12% while discussion technique is least used in teaching articles as grammatical concept. Thus, it can also be deduced from the table that providing examples technique has been used by most of the teachers to teach articles; (definite and indefinite).

**Table 3: Regular and irregular plurals**

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	19	32%
Controlled Drills	16	26%
Language Games	14	23%
Using Pictures	06	10%
Discussion	05	9%
Total	60	100%

The table above indicates that 32% of the 60 teachers of English grammar used providing examples technique to teach regular and irregular plurals alongside other techniques; controlled drills, language games, using pictures and discussion, with 26%, 23%, 10% and 9% respectively. This implies that providing examples technique is mostly used in teaching regular and irregular plurals and discussion technique is least used by the sampled teachers in the teaching of the concept of regular and irregular plurals.

**Table 4: Verbs**

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	23	38%
Controlled Drills	17	28%
Language Games	13	22%
Using Pictures	04	7%
Discussion	03	5%
Total	60	100%

On teaching verbs, providing examples technique is used most with 38% of the 60 teachers sampled, suggesting that teaching

verbs is best done through providing examples to pupils/students. However, other teaching techniques were also used as thus: controlled drills 28%, language games 22%, using pictures 7% and discussion 5% respectively. This also implies that discussion technique is least used in the teaching of verbs.

**Table 5:** Verb forms

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	22	37%
Controlled Drills	17	28%
Language Games	2	3%
Using Pictures	07	12%
Discussion	12	20%
Total	60	100%

The table above shows that providing examples technique is mostly used in the teaching of verb forms with 37% which is closely followed by controlled drills with 28% of the 60 teachers sampled. Other techniques also used to teach verb forms are discussion, using pictures and language games, with 20%, 12% and 3% respectively. This statistics, implies that in teaching verb forms, the 60 sampled teachers hardly deploy language games technique to teach verb forms because of technicalities involve in its usage. Also, using pictures technique is not impressively deployed too.

**Table 6:** Negative expressions

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	24	40%
Controlled Drills	14	23%
Language Games	11	19%
Using Pictures	05	8%
Discussion	06	10%
Total	60	100%

Table 6 above indicates that providing examples technique is mostly favoured by the sampled teachers of English with 40% in teaching of negative expressions. Other techniques used in teaching negative expressions are controlled drills, language games, discussion and using pictures with 23%, 19%, 10% and 9% respectively. This also implies that using pictures technique is not much favoured fill in the blanks technique is least used by the sampled teachers of English in teaching negative expressions.

**Table 7:** Primary auxiliaries

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	20	33%
Controlled Drills	13	22%
Language Games	10	17%
Using Pictures	8	13%
Discussion	09	15%
Total	60	100%

Table 7 above shows that providing examples technique is most favoured among other teaching techniques used in teaching the primary auxiliaries to students/pupils with 33%.

This is followed by controlled drills technique with 22% and then, language games technique 17%. Other techniques used are discussion and using pictures with 15% and 13% respectively. Again, this table indicates that using pictures technique is least favoured by the sampled teachers who responded to this questionnaire.

**Table 8:** Modal auxiliaries

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	25	42%
Controlled Drills	09	15%
Language Games	06	10%
Using Pictures	14	23%
Discussion	06	10%
Total	60	100%

Table 8 above indicates that the technique of providing examples is used by majority of the sampled teachers in the teaching of modal auxiliaries with 42% among other techniques used in the teaching of this aspect of English grammar. Other techniques used are using pictures, controlled drills with 23% and 15% while language games and discussion techniques got 10% each. This table suggests that providing examples technique is the most effective technique in teaching modal auxiliaries while language games and discussion techniques were least deployed in teaching modal auxiliaries.

**Table 9:** Adjectives

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	34	57%
Controlled Drills	11	18%
Language Games	05	8%
Using Pictures	06	10%
Discussion	04	7%
Total	60	100%

Table 9 above shows that providing examples technique is used with 57% of the 60 sampled teachers of English grammar in teaching of adjectives. Other teaching techniques used are controlled drills, using pictures, language games and discussion with 18%, 10%, 8% and 7% respectively. This implies that in teaching adjectives, overweening majority of the sampled teachers deploy it while discussion technique is used least.

**Table 10:** Punctuations

Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Providing Examples	16	27%
Controlled Drills	21	35%
Language Games	10	16%
Using Pictures	04	7%
Discussion	09	15% %
Total	60	100%

Table 10 above shows that controlled drills technique is favoured most by the 60 sampled teachers of English grammar in teaching punctuations aspect of English grammar with 35%

and is followed with providing examples technique with 27%. Other techniques used in teaching punctuations are language games, discussion and using pictures with 16%, 15% and 7% respectively. This implies that controlled drills technique is most effective technique in the teaching of punctuations and using pictures technique is least favoured.

#### 4.2. Analysis of data collected through observation checklist

The researchers prepared the observation checklist which is

based on Yusob's (2018, p. 151-155) categorization. Hence, each individual teacher's class was observed during teaching grammar related topics. And it was observed that the sixty (60) different classes of grammar teaching by sixty (60) different teachers of English grammar teaching in UBE/Primary schools in the 8 Local Government Areas that made up Niger North of Niger State, Nigeria. The table below indicates the frequency and percentage of challenges faced by teachers in the course of teaching Modern English grammar in their respective schools. Simple statistical tool of percentage is used for the analysis:

**Table 11:** Outcome of Observation Checklist

S/No	Challenges faced in the teaching of modern grammar	Frequency (out of 60)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Are there grammatical lessons according to the pupils/ students' need and their levels?	58	97%
2.	Does the teacher correct pupils/ students' grammatical mistakes?	47	78.3%
3.	Do pupils/ students feel boring while teaching grammar lessons to them?	30	50%
4.	Do the teachers have adequate training and experience of teaching grammar?	36	60%
5.	Do the teachers use appropriate technique for teaching specific grammar lesson?	37	62%
6.	Do the teachers have adequate resources and materials while teaching grammar lessons?	42	70%
7.	Do the teachers have adequate knowledge about techniques and methods for teaching grammar?	15	25%
8.	Are grammar lessons time consuming?	20	33.3%
9.	Do the pupils/ students feel difficult while learning grammatical lessons?	30	50%
10.	Do the pupils/ students have negative perception towards grammar learning?	25	42%

From the above table, it shows that 97% of the sampled observed teachers agree that grammatical lessons are in accordance with pupils/ students' needs and levels as designed in the curriculum. Thus, it can be deduced that there is no significant challenge seen on the grammatical lesson to be taught for the particular classes. Likewise, on item 2 in the table above indicates that over 78% of the teachers do take the pain of correcting all the grammatical errors committed by the pupils/students while teaching grammar lessons in the classroom. It meant to say that ignoring grammatical errors made by the second language learners could create a challenge because they might repeat the same errors again and again if the task of correcting is not immediately done after making mistakes by all the teachers teaching grammar.

Furthermore, while observing the classes, most of pupils/students, 50% of the classes were seen bored while teaching grammar lessons to them. It meant to say that teachers need to be more dynamic in their presentation of grammar lessons to pupils/students which could lead them provide due concentration while being taught grammar lessons. And on the item 4, it was found that 60% of the teachers lack experiences of teaching grammar despite the fact that 90% of the teachers observed are trained and certified teachers (NCE and or B ED/BA ED). This data came with the fact that these teachers were novice in a sense that they had just entered into teaching profession or refuse to adopt to the changing nature of teaching. Likewise, as presented in the above mentioned table, it was found that 25% of the teachers who were observed did not have adequate knowledge about many modern techniques for teaching grammar. In other words, the data displayed that with improper techniques and methods classroom teaching and

learning may seem to be ineffective. In addition, the observation results show that over 30% of the teachers did not use appropriate technique for teaching specific grammar lessons. This implies that teachers often teach grammar lessons using inappropriate technique (s) that best apply for a given grammar topic. And this has further created difficulties in the understanding of the lessons by the majority of the class. Similarly, 50% of the teachers did not have or use adequate teaching resources that could facilitate the learning of the grammatical concepts. This data came out with the fact that teachers are facing this challenge due to insufficient resources and materials at their disposal. And on the item 10, It was found that 42% of the grammatical lessons seemed to be time consuming. This implies that pupils' /students' inability to learn the particular grammatical lessons within allocated time (35 to 40 minutes) is significant challenge teachers of Modern English grammar faced in the UBE/Primary schools.

#### 5. Findings

On the basis of the analysis of data of this research and interpretation of the results from the questionnaire and observation checklist, the study has found that five techniques are among the viable teaching techniques used in the teaching and learning of modern English grammar in Niger State UBE/Primary schools and they are:

- Controlled Drills
- Discussion
- Language Games
- Providing Examples
- Using Pictures

**Table 12:** Techniques Used in the Teaching of Modern English Grammar

S/N	TECH	Ns	ART	R/R	Vs	VF	NE	PA	MA	ADJ	PUN	TF	%
1	Providing Examples	20	25	19	23	22	24	20	25	34	16	228	38
2	Controlled Drills	16	12	16	17	17	14	13	09	11	21	146	24
3	Language Games	12	07	14	13	02	11	10	06	05	10	90	15
4	Using Pictures	05	10	06	04	07	05	08	14	06	04	69	12
5	Discussion	07	06	05	03	12	06	09	06	04	09	67	11

The above table shows how these techniques are deployed by teachers differently depending on the topic at hand. But in the end of the analysis from the data above, Providing Examples Technique is most used 38% and it is followed by Controlled Drills Technique which has 24%. And then Language Games and Using Pictures Techniques, 15% and 12%, then finally Discussion Technique with 11%. This research does not however claim that the five techniques identified in this study are the only modern teaching techniques teachers used, but certainly are among the common teaching techniques in used in the modern days teaching and learning of modern English grammar, especially to second language learning environment.

#### **Challenges faced in the teaching of modern english grammar in the Niger state UBE/primary schools are:**

- Learners' linguistic backgrounds
- Inexperience of the teachers
- Poor state of classrooms
- Class size of the observed schools
- Inadequate teaching resources

All of these are said to form part of challenges teachers of modern English grammar faced in their discharge of their core mandate of teaching modern English grammar to pupils/ students who are learners of English language as a second language. However, some of these challenges are more severe than others in their negative impact to the effective teaching and learning of the language.

#### **6. Conclusion**

The essence of grammar teaching can be significantly observed as infinite number of sentences can be enumerated with the help of basic rules in order to communicate in meaningful way. Different grammatical topics are put in a curriculum for teaching and learning a language. However, not all grammatical items have the same rules, forms and structures, hence they are different from one another. This points to the basic fact that teaching grammar includes teaching different aspects of that grammar so that only one technique does not necessarily tend to be effective for all the grammatical items thereby necessitating the use of eclectic techniques in teaching an aspect of grammar. Thus, grammar teachers should have the knowledge of different techniques for teaching different grammatical items. Not only that, they should also be aware of the appropriateness of techniques they deploy to use in the grammar classes.

Furthermore, this study identifies five modern techniques; providing examples, controlled drills, language games, using pictures and discussion among others as most viable techniques in the teaching of modern English grammar in a second

language environment to both the teachers and pupils/ students. Similarly, this study identifies 10 different grammatical aspects upon which the said five techniques are assessed. The grammatical aspects include: Nouns, Articles, Regular and Irregular Plurals, Verbs, Verb Forms, Negative Expressions, Primary Auxiliaries, Modal Auxiliaries, Adjectives and Punctuations.

Teaching is one of the demanding tasks, especially in an conducive environment where the teacher has to do a lot of things to get things rights such like Nigeria rural and semi urban settings; which serves as the area of coverage of sampled schools for this current study. However, as trained and certified teachers there is the need to think above board in order to make use of the available recourses for the good of the leaners.

Furthermore, teaching is said to be a challenging job, hence grammar teaching cannot be of exceptional. However, challenges in teaching grammar should be viewed in a positive way because they can be means to step forward for achieving the desired goal. Thus, teacher should be aware of the possible challenges while teaching language in general and grammar teaching in particular. Challenges do not necessarily come from a single source as they can be related to learners, teachers, lessons, resources and materials, perceptions, expectations, etc. modern English grammar teachers should always prepare their minds towards meeting challenges in the course of discharging their duties as language teachers in general and modern English grammar in particular.

#### **7. Recommendations**

This study has number of recommendations in order to get it right with teaching modern English grammar in particular and English language as a subject/ medium of instruction in Nigeria UBE/Primary schools which are the foundation levels of formal education acquisition:

- Teachers of English language should be aware of different techniques for teaching grammar with appropriateness.
- While developing teacher guidelines for the specific class, the concerned authorities should have insight on multiple techniques for teaching different aspects of grammar with appropriateness.
- Being aware about the challenges faced while teaching grammar can be helpful for the concerned institutions and individuals in order to cope those challenges.
- The concern institution and individuals should have impactful management skills for the solution of the occurred challenges while teaching English language in general and grammar teaching in particular.
- English language teachers should get an opportunity to participate in the trainings related to different techniques



for teaching grammar.

- Future researches can be conducted on different aspects (pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar) of English language.

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