

**FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ENGLISH INVERSION INTRICACIES
AMONG GRADE TWELVE LEARNERS**

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Abstract: This study investigates the factors that contribute to the intricacies of English inversion among Grade Twelve students at Nkulumashiba Secondary and Mikomfwa Secondary Schools in Luanshya District, Zambia. It aims to identify and evaluate persistent challenges identified in Examinations Council of Zambia reports from 2019 to 2022, which indicate poor student performance in grammatical structures such as inversion. The research involved 30 purposively selected students and 6 teachers, with data presented qualitatively. The study is framed within the theoretical perspectives of Generative Grammar and Second Language Acquisition. Key findings reveal several factors that contribute to inversion difficulties which include the following, a lack of in-depth knowledge by teachers, a shortage of teaching and learning materials as well as reliance on unguided internet resources. The reliance on unguided internet sources often results in the dissemination of incorrect information which further complicates students' understanding of inversion rules. Additionally, the study highlights an unfavorable learning environment, characterized by inadequate instructional methods and limited access to educational resources. The research uncovers a pervasive lack of knowledge among students and a significant gap in teachers' understanding of inversion concepts which contributes to poor student performance. These findings underscore the need for improved teacher training, enhanced teaching methodologies, and the development of comprehensive teaching materials to address the identified challenges. Addressing the above issues would improve English language proficiency and examination outcomes for Grade Twelve students in Zambia.

Keywords: *Factors, English Inversion, Difficulties, Secondary schools, Zambia.*

1. Introduction

The mastery of the English language, particularly its grammatical structures, is crucial for academic success in Zambia's education system. However, reports from the Examinations Council of Zambia between 2019 and 2022 have consistently highlighted challenges faced by Grade Twelve students in certain grammatical constructs, notably inversion. This study aims to explore the factors that contribute to these inversion intricacies among Grade Twelve students at Nkulumashiba and Mikomfwa Secondary Schools in the Luanshya District of Zambia.

Inversion in English involves a change in the typical word order of a sentence, often used for emphasis or in question forms. Klein (2009) says, "English inversion is a syntactical feature that involves the reversal of subject and verb order, commonly used in questions, negations, and certain sentence structures." It can be argued that the concept of inversion requires an understanding of grammatical rules and the ability to apply them accurately. Additionally, Richard (2020:12) says, "In English grammar, inversion is a reversal of normal word order especially the placement of a verb ahead of the subject." Several studies have examined the nature and functions of inversion in English syntax, providing insights into its usage and grammatical principles. Inversion errors can impact communication and written expression, hindering students' overall language proficiency.

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Therefore, this study seeks to identify the specific challenges and barriers that impede Grade Twelve students' proficiency in inversion that subsequently contribute to poor performance in English examinations. By doing so, it aims to inform teaching strategies and curriculum development, to enhance English language education and improve student outcomes in Zambia.

2. Literature Review

The literature review provides an overview of relevant scholarly work and research findings related to English inversion and second language acquisition. The review explores existing studies, theories, and pedagogical approaches that shed light on the challenges faced by Grade Twelve pupils in mastering inversion in English. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2023:34), “English inversion refers to the syntactical structure in which the subject and verb order are reversed, typically occurring in questions, negations, and certain sentence types.” On the other hand, Crystal (2003:225) says, “Inversion is a term used in grammatical analysis to refer to the process or result of syntactic change in which a specific sequence of constituents is seen as the reverse of another.” These studies highlight inversion as a complex syntactical feature that poses challenges for both native and non-native English speakers and writers.

Akinwamide & Oguntade (2023) posit that Subject-auxiliary inversion can be used after restrictive adverbs such as scarcely, hardly, seldom, really, never, no sooner, barely, only, and little is similar to the use of inversion with negatives because it emphasizes and strengthens the point that something has never been seen before or that there was little knowledge of something, for instance in these sentences: Little did I know, he was French, No sooner had we arrived than dinner was served, Never have I seen such a wonderful view, Barely has he seen her, Only afterward did I learn the truth. Based on the above given examples, the materials currently used in Zambian secondary schools on English inversion are limited which is in tandem with Smith (2019) who observes the current curriculum addresses fundamental grammatical concepts but overlooks the intricacies of inversion for secondary school learners.

Govindasamy & David (2002) opine that inversion is defined as the appearance of the main verb before the subject auxiliary inversion, where an auxiliary verb changes places with its subject. The challenges that learners encounter in understanding certain linguistic nuances and grammatical systems such as inversion poses a problem for practitioners. Comrie (1989) posits that English word-order patterns are among the most confounding textual features second language learners encounter whereas learners at Nkulumashiba Secondary School in Luanshya are not exceptional. Lack of syntactic study on the challenges encountered by the Grade Twelve learners in particular causes a persistent poor performance at the final examination based on the 2019-2022 Examination Council of Zambia Performance report.

Quasim Obayes (2017) shows that most Iraqi college students face more challenges in mastering inversion in making correct grammatical sentences of their own as well as in paragraph writing. The scholar concluded that fourth-year students have challenges when they use inversion because they do not have a complete mastery of subject-auxiliary inversion in English. His research targeted students in college, however, the current study deals with difficulties in English inversion among students at the secondary level before they proceed to college and to improve their performance at the Grade Twelve examination in the Zambian context.

Aladdin et al., (2021) conducted research in Palestine and Malaysia respectively on inversion and word order in English from; a functional perspective. The duo studied their research among secondary school students and their study aimed substantially at finding out whether inversion verb subject has semantic meaning as opposed to non-inversion subject verb contributed any meaning to the pragmatic process of communication. In addition, Aladdin et al., (2021) provided a good attempt to describe the factors that drive the distribution and pragmatic use of inversions in scientific texts

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and concluded that most of the literature on inversion in English is syntactic rather than functional in nature and orientation. However, the present study focuses on learners' performance during the examination and not at a functional level, hence based on writing and analyzing the syntactic literature that is used by learners in their spoken and written discourses.

Mwaba (2018) investigated the general challenges faced by Zambian students in English language learning and highlighted issues related to grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. The findings suggest that students struggle with complex sentence structures, including inversions. However, the study was very broad and did not address specific inversions such as the subject auxiliary inversion which the present study has accounted for.

Banda & Chabala (2019) explored the challenges faced by Zambian students in writing English essays. The results indicated that students often struggled with sentence structures involving inversion, leading to errors in their written compositions. The scholars indicated a need for further research specifically focusing on the difficulties associated with inversion structures in English particularly in sentence transformation among Grade Twelve pupils in Zambia. It can be argued that no study in Luanshya has attempted to establish the difficulties encountered by Grade Twelve when utilizing the structural exponent of English inversion, a gap this study has filled.

Mumba & Mwanza (2020) explored the role of instructional materials in facilitating English language learning in Zambian schools. The lack of teaching and learning materials in most learning institutions in Zambia was consistent with an earlier study by Mkandawire & Tambulukani (2017). The findings revealed a lack of adequate resources tailored to the specific needs of learners, including materials addressing complex grammatical structures like inversion. This study emphasized the importance of developing contextually relevant teaching materials and curriculum frameworks that target areas of difficulty identified among Zambian learners, including inversion in English syntax.

Therefore, the reviewed literature shows the significance of investigating the syntactic difficulties related to English inversion faced by Grade Twelve pupils in Luanshya District. Existing studies highlight the complex nature of inversion, the challenges encountered by second language learners, and various pedagogical approaches for addressing these difficulties. By examining the specific challenges faced by Grade Twelve pupils in Luanshya district, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge, inform pedagogical practices, and enhance English language education in Zambia.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in two significant linguistic and educational theories: Generative Grammar and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory. These theories provide the conceptual foundation for understanding the factors contributing to English inversion intricacies among Grade Twelve students at Nkulumashiba Secondary and Mikomfwa Secondary Schools in Luanshya District, Zambia.

Generative Grammar, pioneered by Noam Chomsky in the mid-20th century, revolutionized the study of linguistics by proposing that the ability to generate grammatically correct sentences is innate to all humans. According to Chomsky, the human mind possesses a Universal Grammar, a set of grammatical principles shared across all languages that allow individuals to understand and produce language. Generative Grammar emphasizes the importance of syntax, or sentence structure, in language acquisition and production (Krashen, 1987). In the context of this study, Generative Grammar serves as a lens through which to examine students' difficulties with English inversion, a syntactic structure that often deviates from typical subject-verb-object order. By analyzing how students internalize and apply inversion rules, the study explores whether challenges arise from a misalignment between innate grammatical knowledge and learned language structures.

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Second Language Acquisition theory investigates the processes through which individuals learn a language other than their native tongue. Key figures in SLA, such as Stephen Krashen, have proposed models that highlight the importance of comprehensible input, motivation, and the affective filter in language learning. Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that learners acquire language most effectively when they are exposed to input slightly above their current proficiency level, fostering natural language development. SLA theory is particularly relevant to this study as it examines the external and internal factors influencing students' mastery of English inversion. The study considers how learners' environments, exposure to language input, and individual motivation impact their ability to acquire inversion structures. Additionally, SLA theory helps identify gaps in the teaching methods and resources available to both students and teachers, influencing their proficiency in English grammar.

The application of Generative Grammar and SLA theory to this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by students and teachers in mastering English inversion. Generative Grammar offers insights into the cognitive processes involved in learning complex syntactic structures, while SLA theory emphasizes the importance of effective teaching strategies and learning environments.

By integrating these theories, the study identifies key factors contributing to inversion difficulties, such as teachers' limited knowledge of inversion rules, reliance on inadequate materials, and the impact of ineffective teaching methods. The theoretical framework underscores the need for targeted interventions that address both cognitive and environmental aspects of language learning, ultimately aiming to improve student performance in English grammar and enhance educational outcomes in Zambia.

4. Methodology

The study used qualitative research whose results are normally holistic, non-numerical, inductive, subjective, and process-oriented methods used to understand, describe, interpret, and develop a theory on a particular phenomenon (Brink & Wood, 1998; Siame, 2022a; Siame et al, 2023; Siame & Banda, 2024). The results of the present undertaking were obtained using the qualitative design and results were reported using words and sentential expressions (Mutch, 2005; Siame, 2022b). The study was conducted at Nkulumashiba and Mikomfwa Secondary Schools in Luanshya district in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. The study population included teachers of English and Grade Twelve learners. Purposive sampling was employed to select 3 teachers of English from each school and 30 learners of English who were the respondents during the study.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The data collection instruments used in the study were the interview guides, the questionnaire, and the pre-test. Empirical primary data were collected through interviews and language proficiency assessments whose aim was to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing learners' proficiency in auxiliary inversion. The pre-test on subject auxiliary inversion in English was administered to 15 learners and thereafter the questionnaire was administered to 15 learners of English who were selected randomly to supplement data generated from both test results and the questionnaire. The 6 teachers were selected purposively and were subjected to interviews. Pseudonyms were adopted for teachers to observe research ethics.

Data collection went hand in hand with data analysis (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The collected data were read through and interpreted before a detailed analysis was conducted. The study employed a descriptive thematic analysis to make interpretations or meanings of the data (Siame & Lubungu, 2023). In addition, the data were analyzed inductively (Creswell, 2009).

5. Results and Discussion

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The study identifies and examines the challenges faced by educators and learners alike, highlighting the underlying causes and implications for effective teaching and learning in this area.

5.1 Lack of Knowledge of Inversion by Teachers of English

The study reveals that a significant factor contributing to the difficulties Grade Twelve students face with English inversion is the lack of knowledge and understanding of the concept among teachers themselves. This issue is illustrated by the responses of Teacher PRT from Mikomfwa Secondary School, which highlight misconceptions and inadequate instructional strategies regarding inversion.

When asked about the most common difficulties students face with inversion, Teacher PRT initially responded:

Learners do not know how to read and write.

This response indicates a misunderstanding of the specific challenges associated with inversion as a grammatical structure. Inversion involves the alteration of the usual word order for various syntactic purposes, such as forming questions or emphasizing certain parts of a sentence. It is distinct from basic literacy skills like reading and writing, yet the teacher conflates these separate language abilities.

When further questioned about identifying students struggling with inversion and the steps taken to address their difficulties, Teacher PRT said:

I give learners a passage to read and learners find it difficult to read

This approach does not directly address the intricacies of inversion or provide targeted support to improve students' understanding of this grammatical concept. The teacher's reliance on reading exercises as a means to diagnose and address inversion difficulties suggests a lack of familiarity with effective teaching strategies specific to inversion.

The misunderstanding of inversion by teachers such as PRT reflects a broader issue of inadequate professional development and training. Teachers may not have received sufficient instruction on how to teach complex grammatical structures like inversion, leading to gaps in their knowledge and instructional practices. This lack of expertise affects their ability to effectively guide students in mastering inversion and contributes to the ongoing challenges students face.

In the study, a teacher acknowledged the issue by explaining that he provided a passage to students in an attempt to help them understand inversion. However, this approach is often misplaced, as it fails to effectively address the intricacies of inversion. The teacher's method reveals a knowledge gap, indicating that teachers may not fully comprehend the grammatical structure themselves, leading to ineffective teaching strategies.

The inability of teachers to thoroughly understand and explain inversion contributes to students' struggles with this grammatical concept. Inversion, which involves reversing the typical order of subject and verb, can be complex, particularly in certain contexts such as question formation and conditional sentences. If teachers are not equipped with the proper knowledge and techniques to teach inversion, students are likely to experience confusion and misunderstanding. This gap in teacher knowledge can stem from several factors, for instance, Inadequate Teacher Training, Many teachers may not receive sufficient training on complex grammatical structures during their education, leading to a lack of confidence in teaching them. Also in Limited Professional Development Opportunities, opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding of English grammar and teaching methods are often limited, contributing to the persistence of knowledge gaps. Additionally the Curriculum Constraints, The curriculum may not emphasize inversion or other advanced grammar topics, leading teachers to focus on areas that are prioritized, potentially neglecting inversion.

Moreover, the lack of adequate training and professional development for teachers on how to effectively teach inversion is a significant barrier. Teachers may struggle to deliver clear and consistent instruction on inversion due to their limited exposure to comprehensive materials and

training. This gap in teacher knowledge affects their ability to address students' questions and misconceptions about inversion effectively.

5.2 Insufficient Information in the Curriculum

This study reveals another critical issue on the content of the current curriculum. One key issue identified through interviews with teachers at Nkulumashiba Secondary School is the insufficient information provided in the curriculum and materials used for teaching inversion. This shortfall significantly impacts students' understanding and application of inversion rules in English.

Teacher PSF expressed dissatisfaction with the curriculum and materials as shown in the example below:

"The curriculum and materials that we use do not give enough information at all,"

The teacher's response underscores a fundamental issue in the current educational framework. The limited scope of the curriculum fails to provide comprehensive coverage of inversion rules, leading to a gap in both teaching and learning. This insufficiency in instructional content results in a lack of clear guidance for teachers, leaving them ill-equipped to convey complex syntactic structures effectively to students

Based on extensive experience in teaching English, another teacher noted a discrepancy between the curriculum and the available materials. Teacher JPO remarked:

Grade Twelve learners lack understanding of inversion due to insufficient information in the curriculum and materials in school.

The above observation highlights a critical gap in the educational system. The current curriculum does not adequately cover inversion concepts, leaving students without a solid foundation in this area of grammar. The above results are in tandem with Smith (2019) who observes that the current curriculum addresses fundamental grammatical concepts but overlooks the intricacies of inversion. This deficiency results in a lack of clarity and depth in students' understanding, leading to difficulties in applying inversion correctly in examinations and real-world communication.

The inadequacy of instructional materials compounds the problem. Many schools lack comprehensive resources that clearly explain inversion rules and provide sufficient practice opportunities. Teachers often have to rely on piecemeal resources from various sources, which can lead to inconsistencies in the information presented to students. This inconsistency contributes to confusion and misunderstanding among learners, further exacerbating their difficulties with inversion.

5.3 Reliance on Internet Resources

Another factor contributing to the difficulties in understanding inversion among Grade Twelve students is the reliance on Internet resources. This reliance can lead to challenges in learning complex grammatical concepts, such as inversion, due to the variability in the quality and accuracy of online information.

When asked how the topic of inversion is covered in the curriculum and materials, Teacher JPO responded that:

The content on inversion is not enough, it is very difficult for the teacher to teach, and therefore, I am forced to go on the internet each time am teaching certain topics as a result of using unguided information to mislead the learners.

Based on the above excerpt, it can be argued that the reliance on inadequate materials exacerbates the English inversion difficulties. Many teachers depend on internet resources, which are often unguided and inconsistent in quality. This reliance can lead to the dissemination of incorrect or incomplete information, further complicating students' understanding of inversion. Additionally, the lack of access to well-structured, contextually relevant teaching materials contributes to teachers' difficulties in explaining inversion rules and their application in various grammatical contexts.

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The study reveals that some teachers admitted to using information from the internet as a primary source for teaching inversion. While the internet provides a wealth of information, it can also lead to inconsistencies and misinformation if not used judiciously. Teachers relying heavily on online resources may inadvertently introduce errors or incomplete explanations, which can confuse students.

The reliance on internet resources presents several challenges in effectively teaching and learning inversion: Based on the standard of quality and accuracy of Information, the internet contains a wide range of educational content, but not all of it is accurate or of high quality. Teachers who rely on unverified sources may present students with incorrect or misleading information about inversion, complicating their understanding.

Moreover, Internet resources may not align with the specific curriculum or learning objectives of a particular educational system. Teachers may struggle to adapt online content to fit the needs of their students, resulting in a lack of coherence in instruction. Depending too heavily on Internet resources can discourage teachers from developing their teaching strategies and materials. This reliance can lead to a lack of critical engagement with the material and a missed opportunity to tailor instruction to student needs.

5.4 Use of Unguided Information

The use of unguided information, particularly the reliance on books that are not officially recommended, is another factor contributing to the difficulties in understanding inversion among Grade Twelve students. This practice can lead to inconsistencies in teaching and hinder students' ability to grasp complex grammatical concepts.

The study highlights a critical issue faced by teachers in the teaching of English inversion. The reliance on unguided information is due to a lack of sufficient teaching materials. This reliance significantly affects the quality of instruction and contributes to students' difficulties in mastering inversion, a complex grammatical structure.

One teacher, referred to as JPO, stated that:

The content on inversion is not enough, it is very difficult for the teacher to teach, and therefore, I am forced to go on the internet each time am teaching certain topics as a result of using unguided information to mislead the learners.

The study reveals that some teachers resort to using books that are not recommended by the educational curriculum. These books may lack the necessary pedagogical framework and may not align with the learning objectives intended for students. The use of such resources can lead to discrepancies in the information provided to students, further complicating their understanding of inversion. The above verbatim is in tandem with a study by Mumba & Mwanza (2020) who explored the role of instructional materials in facilitating English language learning in Zambian schools. The lack of teaching and learning materials in most learning institutions in Zambia was consistent with an earlier study by Mkandawire & Tambulukani (2017). The findings revealed a lack of adequate resources tailored to the specific needs of learners, including materials addressing complex grammatical structures like inversion.

5.5 Language Barriers

The study sheds light on the challenges faced by Grade Twelve students in mastering English inversion, with language fluency being a significant contributing factor. Teacher SPR from Mikomfwa Secondary School provided insight into the difficulties learners face, emphasizing the impact of limited English fluency on their ability to effectively use inversion. Teacher SPR submitted that:

The majority of our learners at Mikomfwa Secondary School do not know how to speak English fluently. English is a second language, so it is very difficult for learners to use the English language effectively. Because of this, learners lack practice, which can make them improve inversion.

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This response highlights the broader issue of language proficiency as a barrier to mastering specific grammatical structures like inversion. English, as a second language for most students at Mikomfwa Secondary School, presents inherent challenges. Students often struggle with fluency, which affects their confidence and ability to practice and apply complex grammatical structures. The lack of fluency limits their opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations and exercises that could enhance their understanding and use of inversion. The response given above by Teacher RTY corresponds with Govindasamy & David (2010) in second language acquisition (SLA) who explored the acquisition and development of syntactic structures in non-native English speakers. Scholars have indicated that learners face challenges in acquiring the syntax of a second language, including inversion.

Furthermore, the lack of an immersive English-speaking environment contributes to these challenges. Many students do not have sufficient exposure to English outside the classroom, reducing their chances to practice and internalize inversion rules. This lack of practice impedes their ability to apply inversion correctly in both written and spoken contexts.

The difficulty in using English effectively also stems from the limited availability of language support programs and resources tailored to the needs of second-language learners. Without targeted interventions and additional practice opportunities, students continue to face obstacles in achieving language fluency and grammatical accuracy.

5.6 Poor Teaching Methods on Inversion

The study also shows that pupils encounter difficulties in mastering grammatical rules of subject-auxiliary inversion at Nkulumashiba Secondary School due to the way teachers teach the topic. A pupil, one of the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the teaching of inversion in their class. When asked how the topic is taught, Pupil Q stated that:

The teaching of the topic of subject-auxiliary inversion is not effective at all at Nkulumashiba Secondary School. This is one of the reasons we fail to answer questions on structure in Grade Twelve because we are not equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills.

This response underscores several key challenges. The pupil's dissatisfaction suggests that the current methods used to teach subject-auxiliary inversion are not effectively helping students grasp this concept. Teachers may be relying on traditional, lecture-based approaches that do not engage students or address their individual learning needs. This lack of engagement can result in students memorizing rules without truly understanding them, leading to difficulties when applying these rules in exams.

The student's feedback indicates that current teaching methods may not be effectively engaging students or addressing their needs. Traditional lecture-based approaches often do not provide opportunities for active participation and interaction, which are essential for deep learning.

When asked about the practical steps or exercises the teacher takes to help learners with inversion difficulties, teacher BRT stated that:

The above challenge can be overcome by giving learners examples and allowing them to practice or exercise.

This method the teacher uses lacks specificity and depth. Generative Grammar, developed by Noam Chomsky, emphasizes the importance of understanding the underlying rules and structures of a language (Krashen, 1987). Simply providing examples without explicitly teaching the syntactic rules governing inversion fails to equip students with the necessary cognitive tools to generalize these rules to new contexts. This method is superficial and does not foster a deep understanding of the syntactic structures involved in inversion, such as auxiliary inversion in questions like, "Are you coming?" or subject-verb inversion in conditional sentences for instance "Had I known, I would have left earlier".

Furthermore, another teacher responded differently to the practical exercise or step taken to help learners with Inversion difficulties. Teacher BGT submitted that:

It's very difficult to take a step on practical exercises because these learners do not know how to read.

This response is markedly negative and defeatist. This perspective not only underscores a lack of confidence in the students' abilities but also reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the teaching process. According to Generative Grammar, language learning involves the innate ability to understand and produce grammatical structures (Krashen, 1987). Therefore, rather than focusing solely on reading skills, it is crucial to engage students in exercises that develop their intuitive grasp of syntax through oral practice and interactive activities. The teacher's failure to provide constructive steps or alternative strategies highlights a significant gap in pedagogical methodology. In another interview teacher SPR suggested that:

After assessing the work done, the teacher should identify specific problems.

This is a reactive rather than proactive approach. While assessment is an essential component of teaching, it should not be the sole strategy. Generative Grammar theory advocates for a proactive approach where the underlying grammatical principles are taught explicitly before students are expected to apply them (Krashen, 1987). Identifying specific problems after the fact does not address the root cause of misunderstanding and results in piecemeal correction rather than comprehensive learning. Effective teaching methods should include a structured approach to syntax instruction, where rules are clearly explained and reinforced through targeted practice.

The responses from the teachers reflect a series of poor teaching methods that do not align with the principles of Generative Grammar. The lack of explicit instruction on syntactic rules, the negative outlook on students' capabilities, and the reactive approach to problem identification all contribute to the difficulties students face with inversion. To improve learning outcomes, educators must adopt more structured, rule-based teaching methods that align with the cognitive processes outlined in Generative Grammar theory, thereby enabling pupils to internalize and apply the rules of inversion more effectively.

The study revealed that some teachers admitted to using inadequate methods to teach inversion, such as merely providing examples and asking students to perform tasks without sufficient guidance or explanation. This approach lacks specificity and depth, failing to engage students meaningfully or provide them with a clear understanding of the concept. As a result, students struggle to apply inversion correctly in various contexts. Several issues arise from the use of poor teaching methods for inversion, providing examples without structured guidance does not adequately explain the rules and nuances of inversion. Students may not understand why or how inversion occurs, leading to confusion and incorrect usage. Teaching methods that focus solely on surface-level examples do not encourage students to explore the underlying principles of inversion. Without a deep understanding, students are unable to apply inversion correctly in different situations. Additionally, methods that lack interactivity and critical thinking opportunities can result in passive learning. Students may not be actively engaged or motivated to explore the concept further, hindering their overall understanding.

5.7 Unfavorable Environment for Learning

Another significant factor contributing to the difficulties in understanding inversion among Grade Twelve students is the unfavorable learning environment. This environment can impede students' willingness and ability to learn effectively, particularly in grasping complex grammatical concepts like inversion. Pupil G suggested that:

Teachers should also change the way they deliver lessons to us and should not be learning in fear and fail to ask questions where necessary. Creating an enabling environment for learners is cardinal.

The student's mention of learning in fear and failing to ask questions highlights a critical issue in the classroom environment. Fear of making mistakes or being reprimanded can significantly hinder students' willingness to engage and learn. Creating a positive and supportive classroom environment is essential for encouraging students to express themselves freely and seek clarification when needed. Teachers should foster a culture of openness and respect, where students feel comfortable asking questions and exploring ideas without fear of judgment.

The study revealed that pupils often feel afraid to ask questions in class due to the risk of being reprimanded by their teachers. Pupil TPF said that:

This fear stems from being reprimanded without reason when they seek clarification. As a result, pupils are discouraged from engaging in the learning process, missing out on opportunities to deepen their understanding of inversion.

The fear of asking questions is a critical barrier to effective learning. When students are hesitant to seek clarification, they are less likely to grasp challenging concepts like inversion, leading to persistent misunderstandings. Several aspects contribute to this unfavorable learning environment: A positive and supportive relationship between teachers and students is crucial for fostering an open learning environment. When students feel intimidated or fearful of their teachers, they are less likely to participate actively in class discussions or ask questions.

Furthermore, a classroom culture that discourages inquiry and open communication can hinder learning. If students feel that their questions are unwelcome or will be met with negative responses, they may choose to remain silent rather than risk reprimand. Teachers who do not actively encourage questions and participation may inadvertently create an environment where students feel their input is not valued, leading to disengagement.

This study reveals several critical factors contributing to the difficulties pupils encounter with English inversion. One major issue is the inadequate understanding of English inversion among teachers, which significantly impairs their ability to teach this concept effectively. The curriculum itself also plays a role, as it provides insufficient information on this topic, leaving gaps in students' knowledge. Teachers often turn to Internet resources for help, but the reliance on these unguided sources can lead to confusion and the acquisition of incorrect or incomplete information. Additionally, the study identifies poor teaching methods and an unfavorable learning environment as contributing factors. Ineffective pedagogical approaches and a lack of support within the classroom further hinder pupils' ability to grasp English inversion. These combined issues create a challenging learning scenario, resulting in persistent difficulties for students in mastering this aspect of English grammar.

6. Conclusion

The intricacies of inversion among Grade Twelve pupils at Nkulumashiba Secondary and Mikomfwa Secondary can be attributed to several key factors. First, the lack of knowledge about inversion among teachers of English contributes significantly to students' struggles. Teachers' inadequate understanding of this grammatical concept leads to ineffective teaching strategies, leaving students confused and unable to grasp the principles of inversion. Additionally, the unfavorable learning environment further exacerbates these difficulties, as students often fear asking questions due to reprimand, limiting their opportunities for clarification and deeper understanding. The reliance on Internet resources and the use of unguided information also play a role in the challenges students face. Furthermore, the impact of poor teaching methods, such as using superficial examples without providing structured guidance, hinders students' ability to apply inversion correctly. Professional development programs should also focus on equipping teachers with the skills to effectively evaluate and integrate online resources into their teaching. By enhancing teachers' ability to discern high-quality materials, they can better guide students and avoid the pitfalls of using misleading

information. Finally, adopting explicit instruction and active learning techniques can provide students with a deeper understanding of inversion, thereby, enabling them to apply the concept confidently and accurately.

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