

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS OF VERB CONJUGATION IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH AMONG TVET STUDENTS AT FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC ILARO, OGUN STATE.

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the variation in conjugation of verb in English and French and their respective complexities among Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) students at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. While these languages belong to Indo-European family, their verb conjugation is quite different in various aspects of learning and usage. French being a Romance language has more complex conjugation with numerous verb endings based on tense, mood, and subject, while English as a Germanic language uses more simplified conjugation structure relying on the auxiliary verb. This study adopted qualitative and quantitative analysis to pinpoint and analyze verb conjugation complexity which may pose the challenges and data were obtained from 1000 scripts of students from the school of Engineering, Management studies, Environmental studies, and Pure and Applied sciences. The findings showed that while French verb conjugation poses challenges with a variety of ending depending on the subject, agreement in number and gender (je, tu, elle, il, nous, vous, ils, elles), English is simpler and less complicated.

KEYWORDS: Comparative analysis, English and French verb conjugation, impact, TVET students

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper provides insight into how verb conjugation can shape grammatical competence of TVET students and help also in fluency in both languages. Verb conjugation plays a crucial role in language acquisition and proficiency, influencing both written and spoken communication. This language acquisition is fundamental in educational setting, particularly for TVET students who often navigate multiple languages in their academic and professional lives. English and

French, both widely spoken languages, present unique challenges in verb conjugation which plays a crucial role. Krashen (1982) emphasizes that language acquisition is essential for vocational students to comprehend technical instructions and communicate effectively in their fields. In TVET context, language proficiency is not only about everyday communication but also about understanding specialized terminology and instructions (Carter, 2012).

Conjugation of verbs is the linguistic process in which a verb changes its form in order to reflect aspects like person, number, tense, mood etc. Changes in verbs can be by the way of inflections, changes in spellings, usage of helping verbs and so on. In simpler terms, the verb in the infinitive form is conjugated to agree with the person, number, mood and tense of the particular sentences (<https://byjus.com>). Verb conjugation is the process of altering a verb to provide information about the action being performed, including aspects such as tense, mood and voice. In English, verb conjugation is relatively simple, often involving changes in suffixes. In contrast, French verb conjugation is more complex, involving multiple forms for different pronouns and tenses. For example, Buckley (2014) found that students learning French often struggle with multiple forms of verb compared to their counterparts learning English. *According to Harley (2006), the English verb system is characterized by its simplicity with a basic distinction between regular and irregular verbs. In contrast, the French verb system is described by Fraser (2010) as highly intricate, involving three main conjugation groups and a wide range of irregular verbs that do not follow consistent pattern.*

Similarly, Smith (2017) highlighted the importance of teaching strategies tailored to the specific challenges of verb conjugation in each language. Understanding the conjugation of verbs is essential for mastering any language while English verb conjugation is relatively straightforward, French verb conjugation involves more complex rules and irregularities. This study explores these differences and their impact on students learning experiences and also seeks to identify the root causes of these difficulties and propose effective solutions. This comparative analysis highlights the challenges and benefits faced by students learning these two languages, providing insights into effective teaching methodologies and language learning strategies.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to:

1. Examine the structural differences between French and English verb conjugation system (tense, mood and aspects).
2. Evaluate the challenges faced by learners of French and English due to verb conjugation complexities including common errors and strategies for effective learning and teaching methods for improving verb conjugation skills.
3. Assess communicative impacts in French and English particularly in terms of clarity, formality and the expression of temporal nuances and speaker intentions.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive and comparative research design to investigate the impacts of verb conjugation in French and English, so it employed a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collected through surveys, and interviews (pre-test, post-test) by providing a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences and challenges. The data were collected from one thousand scripts of both ND1, ND2, HND1 and HND2 students from schools of Engineering, Management studies, Environmental Studies, and Pure and Applied Sciences. Data collection methods also included structured questionnaires which were used to collect quantitative data on students' experiences and challenges with verb conjugation. In-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of respondents to gather qualitative insights. The instruments are pre-tested to ensure reliability and validity with the help of some language lecturers in the school. The tables below summarize the quantitative result of the study, providing a clear view of the data collected. 1300 questionnaires were administered and 1000 were retrieved from the respondents using statistical methods. The qualitative data are analyzed thematically, identifying common themes and patterns in students' responses.

Table 1: Demographic profile of Respondents.

This summary highlights the key findings from our questionnaire, which gathered responses from 1000 participants. The results are presented by frequency and percentage to provide a clear overview of the responses.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n=1000)	Percentage (%)
Age	Under – 18	50	5
	18-24	500	50
	25-30	250	25
	31-35	150	15
	36 and above	50	5
Gender	Male	600	60
	Female	380	38

Schools	Other	20	2
	Engineering	300	30
	Management studies	250	25
	Applied sciences	200	20
	Environmental Studies	150	15
	Other	100	10
Level of study	ND 1	250	25
	ND 2	250	25
	HND 1	250	25
	HND 2	250	25
Primary language	Yoruba	400	40
	Igbo	300	30
	Hausa	200	20
	Other	100	10
Previous language learning	Basic	400	40
	Intermediate	300	30
	Advanced	200	20
	None	100	10

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Difficulty level	French (n=1000)	Percentage (%)	English (n=1000)	Percentage (%)
Very difficult	350	35	150	15
Difficult	400	40	250	25
Neutral	150	15	200	20
Easy	70	7	250	25
Very Easy	30	3	150	15

**Table 2:
Challenges in
verb
conjugation**

**Table 3:
Common
challenges in**

verb conjugation.

Challenges	French (n=1000)	Percentage (%)	English (n=1000)	Percentage (%)
Irregular verbs	700	70	500	50
Multiple conjugation pattern	650	65	—	—
Gender Agreements	500	50	—	—
Tense usage	450	45	400	40
Subject verb agreement	—	—	300	30
Uses of auxiliary verbs	—	—	250	25

Table 4: Impact on language learning outcomes.

Frequency of impact	French (n=1000)	Percentage (%)	English (n=1000)	Percentage (%)
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Always affected	200	20	100	10
Often affected	350	35	200	20
Sometimes affected	300	30	400	40
Rarely affected	100	10	200	20
Never affected	50	5	100	10

Table 5: Impact on overall proficiency.

Level of impact	French (n=1000)	Percentage (%)	English (n=1000)	Percentage (%)
Very significant	250	25	200	20
Significant	400	40	300	30
Moderate	200	20	300	30
Slight	100	10	150	15
Not significant	50	5	50	5

Table 6: Strategies for overcoming challenges.

Strategies	French (n=1000)	Percentage (%)	English (n=1000)	Percentage (%)
Regular practice	600	60	500	50
Mnemonic devices	450	45	300	30
Interactive learning tools	500	50	450	45
Group study	300	30	350	35
Tutoring/ Extra classes	250	25	200	20

Table 7: Effectiveness of Digital tools.

Effectiveness Level	French (n=1000)	Percentage (%)	English (n=1000)	Percentage (n=1000)
Very effective	300	30	250	25
Effective	400	40	350	35
Neutral	200	20	250	25
Ineffective	70	7	100	10
Very ineffective	30	3	50	5

Table 8: Helpfulness of Teachers

Helpfulness Level	French (n=1000)	Percentage (%)	English (n=1000)	Percentage (%)
Very helpful	400	40	350	35
Helpful	350	35	400	40
Neutral	150	15	200	20
Unhelpful	70	7	30	3
Very unhelpful	30	3	20	2

3. Results and Discussion

These tables summarize the quantitative results of the study, providing a clear view of the data collected from 1000 respondents. The demographic analysis reveals a diverse sample of TVET students including variations in age, gender and school. This diversity ensures a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by different student groups.

Challenges of verb conjugation identify common difficulties faced by students in French and English. For instance, in French, students struggle with irregular verbs, multiple conjugation patterns and gender agreement. This corroborates O'Neill (2012) submission. Additionally, French verbs must agree in number and gender with their subjects, adding another layer of complexity. In English, the main challenges include irregular verbs and tense consistency.

Impact on Language learning outcomes showed a significant correlation between verb conjugation proficiency and overall language skills. Students who master verb conjugation tend to perform better in other areas of language learning, including reading, writing and speaking.

Effective strategies for overcoming verb conjugation challenges includes regular practice, the use of mnemonic devices and interactive learning tools such as language apps, helped in retaining conjugation rules. The role of teachers in providing clear explanations and personalized feedback is also highlighted. Some students benefitted from additional tutoring and extra classes focused specifically on French and English verb conjugation.

Qualitative analysis after which a pre-test, interview, teaching, post-test was conducted showed the challenges in verb conjugation, especially French verb conjugation. Students expressed frustration with the numerous irregular verbs and the need to memorize multiple conjugation patterns. Howard (2011) states that French, with its complex conjugation patterns including variations based on tense, mood, and subject pronoun often poses greater difficulty for learners.

The requirement for gender agreement adds another layer of complexity, leading to confusion and errors. English verb conjugation, simpler than French, irregular verbs still pose a significant challenge, especially for those not exposed to English from a young age as noted by David Crystal (2012), English relatively straightforward conjugated may be easier initially but still requires a solid understanding of irregularities and context usage. Lightbown (2014) highlighted those intricacies of French conjugation requires a higher cognitive load and more intensive memorization which can be particularly taxing for TVET students who may have limited exposure to the language. Also, students who struggled with verb conjugation reported lower confidence in speaking and writing French. There was a noticeable correlation between difficulties in verb conjugation and poor performance in other language skills such as reading comprehension and listening. Meanwhile, English issues with verb conjugation is less severe than in French but still affected by overall language performance, particularly in written assignments. Students often hesitated to participate in class discussions due to fear of making grammatical errors.

Based on the objectives of this study, the discussion of the findings aligns with existing literature, confirming the complexity of French verb conjugation compared to English. Conversely, the relative simplicity of English verb conjugation allows for quicker mastery, enabling students to focus on the aspects of language learning. This advantage could be leveraged by integrating more advanced language skills early in curriculum for English learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following pedagogical strategies:

1. Regularly, incorporating interactive exercises and digital tools to make learning engaging may help students in better understanding and retain verb conjugation rules.
2. Providing regular and personalized feedback through digital tools will address individual challenges.
3. Developing specialized teaching materials that address the unique difficulties of French and English verb conjugation.
4. Contextualized language use should incorporate integrating language learning with vocational subjects to provide practical and relevant contexts for language use as supported by the theories of Context Based Instruction (CBI) advocated by scholars like Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989).
5. Group study sessions and collaboration can provide peer support and allows sharing learning experiences to foster a supportive learning environment where student can learn from each other's strength.

The significant impact of verb conjugation proficiency on overall language skills underscores the need for focused teaching strategies that provide clear explanations and additional resources for practicing verb conjugation.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed significant insight into the linguistics challenges and underscored the importance of understanding the distinct nature of verb conjugation in both languages and its effect on TVET students' proficiency and learning outcomes. Verb conjugation in French and English presents unique challenges due to their inherent grammatical structures. French, with its complex conjugation patterns including variations based on tense, mood, and subject pronoun poses greater difficulty among TVET students while English, simpler in comparison still demands attention to irregular verbs and auxiliary constructions which can confuse learners. However, to improve language acquisition among TVET students, it is crucial to implement targeted instructional strategies which include group activities, digital platforms such as language learning apps and online resources has been increasingly recognized in facilitating language acquisition. Godwin Jones (2011) submits that tools offer immediate feedback and allow for individualized learning paths which are particularly beneficial for mastering complex conjugation rules. Also, peer tutoring can enhance students' linguistic proficiency and overall academic success.

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<https://byjus.com> Definition of verb conjugation.