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Theory into Practice: Exploring Pre-Service Teachers' Application of Elaboration Strategies to Teach English Grammar

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Abstract: The major concern in teacher education has been the relationship between theory and practice among pre-service teachers. The study explored how pre-service teachers employed an information processing theory memory strategy of elaboration in the classroom to facilitate meaningful learning of English grammar. Participants included 10 pre-service teachers who were purposefully selected because they were undergoing teaching practice in 9 secondary schools in Malawi. Prior to data collection, informed consent was sort from participant in order to ensure and provide voluntary participation as part of ethical consideration. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations using interview schedules and observational schedule. The data was analyzed thematically and results presented in form of texts and tables. In line with this, the study unveiled a number of elaboration strategies used by pre-service teachers of the University of Livingstonia, Malawi. These strategies include; Construction of sentences with words, activating prior knowledge, question and answer technique, paraphrasing and summarizing. Results also show that elaboration strategies such as activation of prior knowledge help learners to master English grammar. The implications of this study are that teacher training institutions should strengthen their methodology courses through peer teaching in order help pre-service-teachers have first-hand experience of how to apply theoretical knowledge to actual classrooms. Another implication is that teacher preparation should incorporate lengthy practice teaching to enable pre-service teachers to improve their competency in applying theoretical knowledge.

Keywords: Construction of sentences, question and answer, paraphrasing, prior knowledge, summarizing.

Introduction

Translating theory into practice has for a long time an issue of concern in teacher education (Shuell, 2021). Institutions that prepare teachers for all levels of education including primary, secondary and tertiary struggle to ensure that theoretical knowledge they impart on the pre-service teachers is actually translated into practice. Several teaching and learning theories if appropriately applied in real classroom context would lead to meaningful learning. Some of these theories are categorized as cognitive theories under which information processing theory falls. Information processing theory is a theory that models a computer in how information is encoded, stored and retrieved from memory (Weinstein

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& Acee, 2018). Therefore, it is a theory that explains how information is actually acquired, stored and retrieved from memory. In essence, it explains how learning of new information occurs. According to the information processing theory, there are several strategies that can easily and effectively influence learning. These include rehearsal, elaboration and organization. This study explored how pre-service teachers used elaboration strategies in the classroom during teaching practice. Tam, Jarrold, Baddeley, and Sabatos-DeVito (2010), contends that elaboration strategies are used to relate new information to information that is already in existence. Elaboration enables learning of new information by linking it to previously learned concepts in the long-term memory.

The use of various elaboration strategies for teaching in Malawian secondary schools has been extensively explored. For instance, Manda (2023) in his study on the implementation of active learning strategies that enhance active learning of secondary school English grammar concluded that teachers used active learning strategies such as questions, role plays, stories and other teacher-centered techniques to teach English grammar. Manda further concluded that these strategies enabled students to practice the English language in the classroom. Findings another study by Altinyelken and Hoeksma (2021), on use of active teaching and learning strategies to improve learning outcomes in secondary schools in Malawi reveal that participants viewed use of active learning strategies positively and as beneficial to students. Other studies in Malawi involving active teaching strategies include those by Harushimana and Hara (2022); Sanga (2011). These studies on active strategies used by teachers have mainly focused on how they are used by in-service teachers. There is thus still a gap in how pre-service teachers use elaboration strategies to teach English grammar during teaching practice to demonstrate their theoretical knowledge. Thus to fill this existing gap, this study explored how pre-service teachers translate theory into practice by using elaboration strategies to teach English grammar in Malawian secondary schools during their teaching practice. The study was guided by the following research questions: 1) what elaboration strategies do pre-service teachers use to teach English grammar to secondary school learners? 2) How do elaboration strategies help learners to master English grammar?

Research Problem

How pre-service teachers translate theory into practice has been a major problem regarding teacher education. Research has shown that pre-service teachers who undergo teaching practicum after having undertaken theoretical experiences in particular institutions find challenges applying the knowledge to actual classroom settings during their teaching (Allen, 2009). Despite the existence of extensive literature on the gap between theories in practice regarding pre-service teachers, little is known on how pre-service teachers apply elaboration strategies of the information processing theory to facilitate meaningful learning of English grammar in Malawian secondary schools. Thus the study explored how pre-service apply elaboration strategies to teach English grammar during their teaching practicum in secondary schools in Malawi.

Significance of the Study

Results of this study are significant because they inform teacher education institutions on how to improve the methodology courses in order ensure pre-service teachers apply theoretical knowledge in actual classroom settings. Additionally, the results recommend that methodology lecturers in teacher education institutions incorporate peer teaching in their courses to enable pre-service teachers to experience actual teaching. On a broader note, results of this study have the capacity to inform the ministry of education on how it would produce quality teachers to enhance the quality of education in Malawi.

Literature Review

Elaboration Strategy

Elaboration is one of the information processing strategies that aid transfer of information from short-term memory to long-term memory in the process of encoding. In addition, elaboration strategies help learners to link new information with previous knowledge based on the principle that previous learning influences retention of new information in order to facilitate meaningful learning (Akpan, Notar, & Beard, 2019). The strategy is based on structuring information from simple to complex as known information is linked to new content. Elaboration has been defined in various ways by numerous scholars. Elaboration is a cognitive strategy that involves any enrichment of information that simplifies the relationship between new information to be learned and associated information previously learned. Another definition by Richardson et al., (2012) is that elaboration is the ability to connect new and previous information in order to enable recall of the new content. In this case, when new information is presented, the learner relates it to what he or already knows, learning occurs easily. Thus, elaboration can be understood as a process of relating the newly presented information with existing knowledge in the individuals' schema. It is a cognitive information processing theory strategy that can be used as a teaching approach by teachers and a learning strategy by students. Using the elaboration strategy, the teaching and learning process allows learners to be active participants and teachers' role is that of a facilitator. This in turn facilitates a deep learning (Reigeluth, 2018).

Empirical Evidence on the Use of Elaboration Strategies

Use of elaboration strategies for teaching and learning has been widely explored especially that which concern how in-service teachers use the for teaching and how students use them for learning. A variety of elaboration strategies have been found to be used by students and in-service teachers for teaching and learning different secondary school subjects including English language (Pires, Daniel-Filho, de Nooijer, & Dolmans, 2020). Other studies suggest that elaboration enhances understanding in learners when they are engaged to construct their own meaning and connect new information to previously learned knowledge.

A study by [Tam et al. \(2010\)](#) explored how student-teachers used elaboration strategies for learning social studies. Tay concluded that elaboration strategies enabled them to link new and previous information hence enabled meaningful learning. [Al-Safar and Al-Halawachy \(2020\)](#), in their study concluded that use of elaboration strategies for teaching has a positive influence on enhancing understanding and learning of a second language. Therefore, they suggest that it should be adopted as a teaching and learning strategy of English in different areas, including grammar. Another study by [Bartsch, Loaiza, Jäncke, Oberauer, and Lewis-Peacock \(2019\)](#) concludes that elaboration improves long term memory since it is strengthened when it is linked to new learning as it serves as rehearsal. Elaboration strategies such as summarizing, using prior knowledge have been found to enhance deep and meaningful learning ([Pires et al., 2020](#)). Furthermore, [Salwah and Ashari \(2016\)](#) in their study on effectiveness of elaboration on improving achievement concluded that use of elaboration strategies improves achievement.

Research mentions a variety of elaboration strategies that are used by students for learning as well as in-service teachers for instruction. These include note taking, paraphrasing, summarizing, question and answer, making analogues, finding similarities, using practical examples, creating mental images, constructing sentences with words, making comparisons, inferring, and supporting memory among others ([Schlichting & Preston, 2014](#); [Tam et al., 2010](#)). Elaboration strategies such as interpreting, summarizing, making analogues and note-taking help when effectively used help students to retain information in long-term memory through linking new information to existing information. These strategies also enable students to integrate the new learning with previously stored information. This enhances meaningful learning because learners create symbolic structures that add meaning to new content.

The use of various elaboration strategies for teaching in Malawian secondary schools has been extensively explored. For instance, [Manda \(2023\)](#) in his study on the implementation of active learning strategies that enhance active learning of secondary school English grammar concluded that that teachers used active learning strategies such as questions, role plays, stories and other teacher-centered techniques to teach English grammar. These can be seen as elaboration strategies as they support students connect what they learning to their already existing knowledge. Manda further concluded that these strategies enabled students to practice the English language in the classroom. Findings another study by [Altinyelken and Hoeksma \(2021\)](#), on use of active teaching and learning strategies to improve learning outcomes in secondary schools in Malawi reveal that participants viewed use of active learning strategies positively and as beneficial to students. In addition, a study by [Mbano, Chitundu, and Nampota \(2023\)](#) on strategies used by teachers concluded that teachers regularly used active learning methods of questions and answer. [Molande, Mtemangâ, Chikasanda, et al. \(2017\)](#) also investigated use of problem based activities to teach revealed that problem based learning activities are an effective approach hence recommended for teaching. In a study the degree of Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) programme develop teachers' classroom interactional competence in teacher training colleges, [Subuhana \(2023\)](#) observed that teachers mostly employed group work and presentations strategies for teaching. Other studies ([Kavute & Hara, 2021](#); [Mwelwa, 2020](#)), concluded that learner-centered approaches are still a challenge to implement by

teachers. It can be deduced that while elaboration strategies are used in order to allow students to actively participate in the lesson, they facilitate meaningful learning because they are learner-centered.

From literature reviewed so far regarding the use of the information processing theory strategies of elaboration it is clear that a majority focused on how in-service teachers use them to teach a variety school subjects and by students to enable memory. Therefore, there is still scarcity of literature on how pre-service teachers use elaboration strategies to teach English grammar during teaching practice in secondary schools in Malawi. This provoked the need for this study to be conducted in order to fill this gap. Thus the purpose of this study was to explore how pre-service teachers applied elaboration strategies to teach English grammar to secondary school students during their teaching practicum.

Methodology

Research design

In line with the objectives, the study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the elaboration strategies used by pre-service teachers to teach English grammar during their teaching practicum. Case study designs concerns rigorous exploration of an individual element i.e., a person, a group or a community. A single case study design was used and University of Livingstonia pre-service teachers comprised the single case. Qualitative case studies allow the researcher to collect in-depth and holistic view of the problem and information about a single phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Hence the study employed a qualitative single case design in order to collect data from participants in their natural settings.

Sample

Participants included 10 pre-service teachers purposefully sampled from a population of 130 University of Livingstonia student-teachers. The participants were include based on whether their major or minor teaching subject was English in 9 secondary schools in Northern Malawi. The schools were conveniently selected because that was where the participants were place for teaching practice.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and document analysis. These multiple data collection methods were used in order to provide in-depth and stronger evidence to support the results. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants and an audio recording device was used to record the interview. Classroom observations were conducted to collect the teaching and learning activities related to elaboration and on how the students benefitted from the activities. The researcher was a non-participant observer in the process of classroom observation. As for

the document analysis, English text books, lesson plans, as well as schemes and records of work were analyzed to capture that types of elaboration strategies that were planned for teaching English grammar. All data were well saved in a USB flash and stored safely from access by none but the researcher. Prior to data collection, informed consent was sought from participant and confidentiality was assured as all data were treated as confidential stored in USB flash folders only accessible by the researcher. Names of participants were also not disclosed or recorded anywhere. All types of data collected was triangulated to yield more trustworthy results.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data was done thematically after following steps by [Flick \(2013\)](#). Interview data was transcribed and categorized according to their sets. A software MAXQD 2022 version was then used for coding the transcribed data. While classroom observation and document analysis data were typed and categorized in line with research questions. All codes were assigned meaningful titles from which themes, patterns and relationships were identified ([Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019](#)). In the end, summaries of the major themes were made and presented through descriptions and tables before conclusions were made.

Results and Discussion

The findings for the interview, classroom observations and document analysis were interpreted to on two scope to come up with conclusions. These areas were the types of elaboration strategies used by pre-service teachers to teach grammar and how the strategies help learners to master the grammar content.

Elaboration Strategies Used to Teach Grammar

In line with the research question, the results of the interviews, classroom observation and document analysis showed that pre-service teachers use five elaboration strategies to teach English grammar to secondary school students. These strategies include; construction of sentences with words, use of practical examples, activating prior knowledge, asking and answering questions and lastly paraphrasing and summarizing. The first elaboration strategy presented here is construction of sentences with words.

Construction of Sentences with Words

One of the elaboration strategies that the study found being used by pre-service teachers was encouraging learners construct their own sentences using words from the grammar content they have learned. [Baronia \(2020\)](#), mentions that sentences are the building blocks of coherent and efficient writing, and a critical ability that characterizes skilled writing is the creation of syntactically accurate and complex sentences. According to [Afifah \(2022\)](#), students' capability to construct grammatically correct sentences is not only reflected in

the speaking skill, the writing ability also matters. Grammar, plays an important role in constructing logical and easy to understandable sentences. Hence encouraging learners to construct their own sentences using the grammar content they have learned enhances meaningful learning on students since they connect new learning with their setting. During interviews, participants responded to the question, *“How do you encourage your students to construct meaningful sentences on the grammar content you have taught?”*

One of the participants labelled PT 9 said; *“I encourage them to use the grammar content to construct simple sentences. I usually tell them not to check the examples that I’ve given. They should stick to simple things, or vocabulary which they would also easily understand and not get confused”*.

Another participant PT8 added that; *“I encourage learners to construct sentences after teaching. I mostly give and mark exercises on sentence construction. I like making corrections of the wrong sentences that students have constructed. Students improve in the next exercise”*. The impression from the excerpts above is that the participants encouraged learners to construct sentences mainly through giving them exercises after teaching the grammar component. This was also witnessed during classroom observations where participants gave exercises to learners where they asked them to construct their own sentences from content of grammar that they had just been presented. Similar activities were also identified in the documents used for teaching grammar such as schemes of work, lesson plans and textbooks (see table 3). Thus, most participants gave exercises asking learners to construct sentences which the teacher graded and corrects errors.

These findings are supported by several research findings which conclude that encouraging learners to construct their own sentences during grammar lessons enhances meaningful learning and improves learners’ confidence in the use of basic grammar rules (Chambers & Yunus, 2017). In addition, a study found out that participants used exercises of different kinds including asking students to construct their own sentences when teaching of English grammar. Furthermore, Weber, (2018) maintains that grammar should be taught for constructing texts in the context in which they are used and the focus on should be on meaningful tasks.

Moreover, other studies indicate that encouraging learners to construct their own sentences helps them to retain the grammar content and improves writing (Baronia, 2020). If learning grammar has to be enhanced, the student should be able to construct meaningful sentences and understand how to apply grammar rules because they instruct how language should be structured. These interview finding also correspond with classroom observation and document analysis findings. In the next section, I discuss another elaboration strategy used by pre-service teachers, prior knowledge activation.

Activation Prior Knowledge

Results of the study showed that pre-service teachers use the strategy of activating prior knowledge when introducing new grammar content. According to Hattan and Alexander (2020), prior knowledge is the information which the learner previously stored in long term memory before new learning is provided. In other words, it is the information that is brought by a student to a new learning context. Prior knowledge may also refer to the

information a learner has already stored before beginning to learn new information. Otero and Nathan, (2008), indicate that prior knowledge comprises knowledge gained from formal learning settings and knowledge drawn from students' experiences. From these definitions, the study considered prior knowledge as the information a student has about a specific topic based on their previous learning. Participants responded to the question, how do you introduce new grammar lessons? A majority of participants articulated that they introduced new grammar lessons by first revising the previous lesson.

One participant had this to say in response; *"Like when I previously taught nouns, now I want to teach about pronouns, I ask students what word they can use in place of a noun. I connect the two by repeating that a noun is a naming word, then they respond by making connection and this enables them to understand what a pronoun is. I also use question and answer technique"*. (PT4-semistructured interviews, 4/5/22, 10:01am). The above expression is, who argues that *"Prior knowledge cannot influence learning as long as it is stored only in long-term memory."* Learning theories such as information processing, cognitive learning and constructivism assume that meaningful learning occurs when new learning is linked to previous knowledge through strategies that activate prior knowledge during the teaching and learning process. Therefore, activating prior knowledge when introducing new lesson is likely to enhance learning.

Other participants gave more evidence of how they used prior knowledge to introduce new grammar lessons; *"I use previous lesson so that I teach from known to unknown. Then sometimes if there is no link between previous lesson and the new lesson am about to teach, I ask them questions about previous lesson so that they should not forget. In short, I use previous lesson to introduce the new lesson"* (PT 8-semistructured interview 26/4/22, 10:00am). In the same way, a participant labeled PT 9 said *"I first start with review of previous lesson and ask them to relate it to the new lesson"*. To further support the use of prior knowledge to teach English grammar, participant PT10 said; *"For example, if I taught about verbs, then my new lesson is types of verbs, I ask students about what a verb is"*. Then I introduce the types of verbs. *"Students easily connect and understand the new lesson because they have been reminded about what they already learned"*. (PT10: semi-structured interviews, 25/04/22, 9:05 am). Activating prior knowledge as seen from the results is a common strategy that pre-service teachers used when teaching English grammar. It is an important component of teaching and learning since enhances learning by linking existing and new knowledge making it meaningful to students. Past research also found that activating prior knowledge enhances meaningful learning in students since it enables them to integrate new information into previous knowledge and can enrich retention extensively (Shing & Brod, 2016). Therefore, pre-service teachers need to be aware of the students' previous knowledge concerning the content in order to effectively deliver new lesson. In addition, through activating prior knowledge, teachers can improve students' retrieval of what they learned previously (König, Bremerich-Vos, Buchholtz, Fladung, & Glutsch, 2020). Findings from classroom observation also show that participants introduced new grammar lesson by reviewing previous lessons through various techniques mostly through questions as the table below shows.

Table 1
Activation of prior knowledge

Strategy	Activity/Evidence of strategy use	Remarks
Activating prior knowledge	PT1: Teacher asks questions about previous lesson and recaps the lesson.	Students are reminded of previous lesson after the teacher asks questions about adverbs of manner before introducing the new lesson about adjectives.
Does the pre-service teacher introduce lessons from prior knowledge?	PT4: Introducing lesson from simple known content to complex unknown. PT2: Teacher asks questions from previous lesson on types of clauses.	Summary of previous lesson enables students to easily connect to new lesson. Teacher continues with new lesson on adverbial clauses.

Source: Researcher's fieldnotes

The table above clearly outlines the actual classroom practices of how participants used prior knowledge in teaching grammar. It shows how using prior knowledge when introducing lessons enhances learning of grammar, encourages active participation from students and aids retention. This evidence further corroborates with the interview information that provides evidence that most participants introduce new grammar lesson by inciting prior knowledge and integrating it with to be learned information. This enables learners to make connections and in turn, this enhances meaningful learning. [Schraw and McCrudden \(2013\)](#) mention that one of the best ways to facilitate learning of new information is actuating previous knowledge before teaching the new content. In fact, use of elaboration increases the meaningful learning of information through linking it to information that is already stored in memory. Other studies also agree that activating prior knowledge can enhance meaningful learning since students find it easy to understand once they make a connection with what they already know ([Shing & Brod, 2016](#)). Therefore, taking students' prior knowledge into consideration and understanding how it affects memory is imperative for enhancement of students' learning of grammar.

Questions and Answer Technique

Another elaboration strategy that the study unveiled was asking questions and responding to students' questions. Rahman, and Mahmud, (2020) state that asking and responding to questions is one of the common joint practices that teachers of English use to teach all the language skills including grammar and vocabulary. [Shanmugavelu, Ariffin, Vadi-velu, Mahayudin, and Sundaram \(2020\)](#) indicate that question and answer is an important technique that a teacher uses in the process of classroom teaching and learning. Questioning is a significant activity in teaching since it can be a mode of assessing retention of prior knowledge in order to link it with new information. Thus, planning questions that encourage critical thinking, is important. The aim of asking questions and responding to students' questions is to authenticate that students have understood what the teacher has taught as well as to encourage students' active participation in the lesson.

Participants gave several reasons for the importance of asking questions and respond to questions from learners. They responded to the question Would you tell me why you think it is important for learners to ask questions during lessons? One of the participants PT1 articulated that *"As a teacher, I may overlook what students have missed, hence it is important for them to be a given chance to ask questions to find out what they have not understood"*. If

they did not understand, I repeat". Similarly, another participant PT6 said, "It is important for learners to ask questions and for the teacher to respond because they may get things right if they ask for clarification for the teacher to emphasize the important points in the content".

Making the point clearer, a participant PT10 commented that, *"We have to plan for questions at the end of the lesson. It is important because students get clarification and learning occurs. It also helps me to assess what students have learned"*. Likewise, PT8 further elaborated by pointing out that; *"The fact that one asks questions means that he or she has at one point has not understood the content or that they have understood but in a different way. Hence questions help me to clarify. Asking and answering questions makes teacher to clarify the content"*. (PT8-semi-structured interview-26/4/22, 10:29am). These findings were also established by [Shanmugavelu et al. \(2020\)](#) who concludes that when teachers ask questions, they engage students in thinking about the content of a lesson and instantaneously get feedback for them to assess and determine the effectiveness of their teaching. Thus, question and answer technique is a way of getting feedback from students on the effectiveness of the teaching. Carless, Salter, Yang, and Lam, (2011) argue that feedback is essential to students' learning at all levels of education and in any subject. Moreover, it is also important for teachers and students to ask questions because it motivates students and promote critical thinking as well as improve the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

These expressions by participants clearly show that questions are important for giving feedback, reviewing the lesson and checking comprehension which other literature also confirm. [Astrid et al. \(2019\)](#) in [Fadilah and Zainil \(2020\)](#) also found that teachers ask questions in order to assess and get feedback on students' understanding. Furthermore, question and answer is a way for teachers to maintain active participation and interaction among student. Some participants indicated that when they allowed questions in class, the class is lively because everyone participated actively. PT 3 had this to say in response to the question on the importance of questions; *"When I ask questions, students are free to talk and exchange dialogue with peers and the teacher. This makes them pay attention"*. A participant PT 7 also articulated that *"...Your learners are actively involved in the lesson when you ask questions and they pay attention"*.

This is confirmed other scholars who concluded that questions enable establishment of interaction between teachers and students and eventually, this enhances learning of grammar in content. Active participation means that in the process of learning, teachers create an atmosphere where students express their ideas ([Husni, 2020](#)). Such activities enhance learning because the environment is conducive. Munsaka (2020) argues that a conducive environment is important for students to retain information learned. When teachers allow students to ask questions, they are actively involved in the learning process as they will be aided to have a clear understanding and this will in turn help them retain the lesson content.

Therefore, the impression that is given from the interview findings is that participants use question and answer technique to teach grammar because it allows active participation and enables critical thinking among learners. It can thus be concluded that teachers' questions have a vital role in teaching since they encourage active participation in the teaching and learning process making learning more interesting and meaningful to stu-

dents. During classroom observation, the research was interested in establishing if participants allowed learners to ask questions and if the teacher answered questions from learners. It was observed that learners were active since they were allowed to ask questions and to respond to questions as the table below shows.

Table 2
Participants asking and answering questions

Strategy	Activity/Evidence of strategy use	Remarks
Question and Answer Does the pre-service teacher ask and answer questions about the materials being taught?	PT8: The pre-service teacher asked questions and responded to different questions from students on types of adverbs.	Students actively participated by asking questions to which the pre-service teacher responded.
	PT3: The pre-service teacher answered questions from students and asked questions on types of nouns.	Students were attentive to response about the difference between countable and uncountable nouns and responded to questions from the teacher.
	PT7: The pre-service teacher asked questions and allows students to ask where they did not understand.	Student actively answered questions in groups.

Table 3 shows that most of the pre-service teachers asked questions, and responded to questions from learners on the grammar component they taught. The table shows that asking and answering questions improves students' attention and active participation in addition to critical thinking skills. Through questions, learners also have a chance to practice the use of the language. [Shanmugavelu et al. \(2020\)](#) mentions that "Questioning is one of the most effective ways of teaching". When students are attentive, meaningful learning is achieved since students are able construct their own learning which enables encoding and retrieval. Thus pre-service teachers should utilize the elaboration strategy of question and answer in order to enhance meaningful learning of grammar content. The next section discusses findings of how pre-service teachers used the elaboration strategy of paraphrasing and summarizing.

Paraphrasing and Summarizing

Apart from the above elaboration strategies, the study findings show that pre-service teachers use the strategy of paraphrasing and summarizing the content when teaching English grammar to secondary school students. Paraphrasing and summarizing are some of the important practical elaboration strategies. Paraphrasing is using one's own words or putting content in one's own words ([Davis-Duerr, 2016](#); [Kletzien, 2009](#)). On the other hand, summarizing is a process where the individual lessens the section of the contents by reducing wide information into broad statements. In other words, summarizing involves paraphrasing and organizing most important ideas from the lesson. Paraphrasing and summarizing are very useful teaching strategies because they ensure that ideas are expressed in one's own words making it easy to understand. Thus paraphrasing can be understood as a pioneer to summarizing. Summarizing lessons offers a vital input

to students' understanding of information and meaningfully transmitting it to long-term memory.

Participants responded to the question, Why is it important to paraphrase and summarize the lessons? A participant PT 4 had this to say "Summarizing reminds students in this regard what has been learnt and also it's like you intensify retention of information". Another participant PT3 mentioned that, *"Paraphrasing enables me to clarify information to students. It enables the students who did not understand to get a clear understanding of the lesson enabling them to learn how to use that grammar"*.

The findings from the excerpts are in line with several previous lesson which conclude that paraphrasing and summarizing the lesson is important because it enables learners to take note of the important points from the lesson (Davis-Duerr, 2016; Papoyan, 2021), in addition indicated that summarizing supports students in explaining the meaning of information and in storage of the in their own ways making meaningful learning easier.

Thus, summarizing enables students to understand what they learned. More participants mentioned that paraphrasing and summarizing lessons was important because they enabled and gave an opportunity to students to coherently follow the lesson and clear their doubts. One of the participants, PT9 specified that *"When I summarize the lesson, those students who missed a concept will now follow and ask where they did not understand"*. In addition, PT8 said *"Summarizing helps the students to remember what was taught and to understand something better"*. Davis-Duerr (2016) confirmed that when the lesson is summarized, students are able to understand and explain the meaning of information. This further encourages storage of the information in the long-term memory. Similarly, Papoyan (2021), established that summarizing the lesson supports students to swiftly find out the most important main points of the lesson thus, creating a strong understanding of the complex material.

To further confirm the importance of paraphrasing and summarizing lesson, a participant, PT 4 pointed out that; *"Ok, in terms paraphrasing I think it makes language easier for them to understand. It simplifies the language for students to understand better. Aaa... I think summarizing acts as consolidation of the lesson. I think someone can who is a slow learners can pick out something which they did not understand"*. (PT4-semi-structured interview, 25/4/22, 12:33pm). The extracts above from interviews with participants' show that indeed paraphrasing and summarizing the grammar lesson are important strategies because they enable students to plainly understand what has been taught. Additionally, paraphrasing and summarizing enhance retention of information to long term memory since the lesson is simplified. Recent studies also confirm the importance of paraphrasing and summarizing mentioning that it enables logical assessment of lessons (Reigeluth, 2018). Therefore, pre-service teachers should understand how best they can paraphrase and summarize lessons to enable students to easily grasp the most significant ideas of the grammar being taught as well as to improve the use grammar in sentence construction. These strategies enhance learning since the enable students to link information which influences meaningful learning. The classroom observation revealed similar activities by participants. The participants were observed summarizing their lessons and paraphrasing where possible in order to make learners capture the central points of the lesson. Document analysis evidence also established that elaboration strategies were planned and used to teach English

grammar to secondary school learners.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the elaboration strategies used by pre-service teachers to teach English grammar to secondary school students. Specifically, the study aimed to explore how pre-service teachers used the elaboration strategies. Findings from this study indicated that pre-service teachers used the elaboration strategies such as encouraging learners to construct their own sentences using the grammar content, activation of prior knowledge, question and answer and paraphrasing and summarizing (Conderman, 2020).

The study also found out that pre-service teachers used elaboration strategies through several learner-centered activities. For the strategy of construction of sentences, the study revealed that pre-service teachers gave exercises to learners to construct sentences using grammar content they had taught. This enabled meaningful learning in students because they were able to put the content into practice. Pre-service teachers activated students' prior knowledge through asking questions about the previous lesson and students experiences outside the school. Activating prior knowledge was found to enable learners to connect the existing knowledge with the new information thereby facilitating retention. Question and answer techniques was also used as pre-service teachers encouraged learners to ask questions during the lesson and responded to students questions. The strategy enabled learners to pay attention to the lesson and encouraged active participation. It also helped the pre-service teacher to evaluate the teaching enabling them to improve. Furthermore, pre-service teachers paraphrased their content and made summaries of the lesson. In line with these findings, pre-service teachers need more practical work to help them translate theory into practice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that pre-service teachers should use elaboration strategies to teach English grammar. Apart from enhances students' learning, use of elaboration strategies would effectively prepare the pre-service teacher apply theoretical knowledge in the actual classroom. Therefore, institutions of higher learning should ensure that pre-service teachers have enough theoretical knowledge of learner centered strategies that they would put to use. Broadly, the study recommends that the ministry of education monitor the quality of teacher training through monitoring teacher education institutions in terms of quality delivery of knowledge. Further studies should focus on how the use of elaboration strategies influence achievement in English grammar. In addition, studies should focus on challenges that pre-service teachers face when applying theoretical knowledge of information processing theory to teach Secondary school students in order to find long lasting solutions. In doing so, the government through ministry of education will be moving towards fulfillment of the Malawi 2063 agenda pillar 5 on human capital development which partly states... "We shall be a highly knowledgeable

Table 3
elaboration strategies from document analysis

Document Type	Author(s)	Teaching/Learning Activities	Topic	Strategy(s)	Teaching/Learning & Assessment Resources
Textbook Excel and Succeed	Kadyoma F. (2017) Excel and Succeed Senior Secondary English Students Book 3; Nairobi, Longman	· Question and Answer · Brainstorming · Constructing sentences using pronouns · Familiar examples	Nouns	· Construction of own sentences · Practical examples · Note taking · Summarizing	· Class exercises · Lists of sentences
Schemes and Records of work	Pre-Service Teachers (April-May, 2022)	· Question and Answer · Discussion · Brainstorming · Summarizing	Adjectives	· Paraphrasing and summarizing · Prior knowledge	· Newspapers · Short stories
Lesson Plans	Pre-Service Teachers (April-May, 2022)	· Question and Answer · Discussion · Pair work · Group Discussion	Adverbs	· Construction of sentences · Cooperative learning	· English textbooks

people with relevant quality education that incorporates a strong element of academic excellence..." (MW2063, p. 27). These ambitions are stated in other policies such as sustainable development goals (SGDs) as well as in the visions 2020. Thus through quality teacher training, human capital shall be maintained since quality teachers will improve quality, relevant and accessible education.

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