Strategies for Word Order Variation Repair between English and Tshivenda at a Rural University

Farisani Thomas Nephawe

Department of English, Media Studies and Linguistics at the University of Venda, South Africa

farisani.nephawe@univen.ac.za

APA Citation: Nephawe, F. T.(2022). Strategies for Word Order Variation Repair between English and Tshivenda at a Rural University. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies. 4*(4).300-313. http://doi.org/ 10.36892/ijlls.v4i4.1065

Abstract

Competence in rules for arranging appropriate word order in sentences avoids ambiguity and misinterpretation in communication. Nevertheless, non-native English speakers experience difficulties in word order due to variations between English and Tshivenda. This paper examined strategies for word order variation repair between the two languages. A qualitative research approach was adopted to obtain an in-depth understanding of the use of word order in written essays. An action research method was utilised as it is a critical classroom-based inquiry for identifying and improving the teaching and learning of a particular grammatical aspect. Data were collected from 15 purposefully selected Module 1141 English Communication Skills students at the University of Venda, South Africa. A pilot study was conducted on the use of word order by 10 students who were not part of the study group but shared similar characteristics with them. After utilising discourse critical analysis, it was revealed that learners experienced difficulties regarding declarative, interrogative and negative sentences. However, after employing scaffolding strategies, the students' performance was preternatural because the lowest challenge was misformation, with only 8%, while misordering had 11%. Therefore, scaffolding strategies are recommended in teaching and learning English word order.

1. INTRODUCTION

Languages of the world take different forms of syntactical structures in grammar. However, these grammatical structures are not merely an assemblage of words but the rules and patterns (Ganai, 2022) that connect one word to another. According to Hahn and Xu (2022), about 40% of the world's languages have a subject–verb–object' word order. On the other hand, about 40% have a 'subject-object–verb' order. The differences in word order occur among different languages and convey meanings of phrases, clauses and sentences quite differently. Liden (2022) postulates that word order entails the arrangement of words according to the grammar of a particular linguistic structure.

Also, it involves determining the relationship between different words of a language. This relationship becomes possible if syntactically related elements are handsomely placed together. Nonetheless, linguistic unconventionality in communication occurs if a certain language's word order is ignored in the context of the sentence. Moreover, word order can noticeably affect the

meaning of a given sentence. Therefore, appropriate word order is indispensable for writers to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas (Romani, 2020).

English consists of a large variety of relative constructions with different syntactic structures. It uses particular word order to enhance appropriate meaning as most other languages do. Changing its basic order can change the meaning of a sentence, for example, *The letter lady is writing' instead of 'The lady is writing a letter'.

The subject+verb+object (SVO) word order is usually followed in English declarative sentences (Assaiqeli, Maniam & Farrah, 2021). Shi and Pongpairoj (2020) claim that the English language's rule of thumb is that the subject should always precede the verb and be followed by the object. To them, the canonical word order pattern occurring in English is the default unmarked configuration that classifies it under the typology of SVO languages (Assaiqeli et al., 2021). In English, word order is prevalently accepted if it is congruent with its grammatical rules. Shi and Pongpairoj (2020) claim that disregarding the SVO pattern leads to sentence unconventionality in the language. Liden (2022) adds that gibberish sentence construction occurs if this pattern is disregarded, as in *'Store to the went I' instead of 'I went to the store'.

Tshivenda, the language mostly spoken in the Limpopo Province, South Africa, contains a different word order from English because of the prevalent different cultural backgrounds. This variation is noticeable in the repetition of a subject noun phrase (NP), interrogatives and negatives between the two languages. In Tshivenda, it is permissible to say or write *Musidzana o tuwa* (The girl she is gone). Also, interrogatives are not formed by either subject-verb inversion or a fronted wh-word (*Q),* as in English. Because of these differences, Vhavenda, in their uncertainty, transfer the knowledge of their first language (L1) word order to English. Consequently, they say or write what they do not mean or may mean different things when they say or write something in English (Nephawe & Lambani, 2021).

Several studies have consistently been conducted worldwide to mitigate the improper use of English word order. For example, Assaiqeli et al. (2021) studied English word order and found that some writers refrain from the basic canonical order of constituents and form deviant sentence constructions. Ravishankar, Abdou, Kulmizev & Søgaard (2022) studied the necessity of word order and found that a variety of English understanding tasks require appropriate information arrangement. Al-Smadi (2022) studied problems encountered by translators of scientific texts from English into Arabic and found that translators faced lexical and syntactic problems in word order and diction.

The current paper, therefore, aimed to identify strategies for mitigating word order variation between English and Tshivenda among Module 1141 ECS Vhavenda students at the University of Venda in Limpopo Province, South Africa, to discuss and evaluate this variation and establish its causes. Further, the paper attempted to answer the research questions 1) 'What are the strategies for word order variation repair between English and Tshivenda?', 2) 'To what extent does word order variation between English and Tshivenda affect Module 1141 ECS Vhavenda students?' and 3) 'What are the sources of word order variation between English and Tshivenda?'

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The paper was underpinned by Robert Lado's (1955) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) theory, which states that learning the target language becomes much easier when two languages are similar. However, if they are different, learning becomes difficult to understand. So is the difference between English and Tshivenda because learners transfer their first language (L1) knowledge word order into English in their quest to convey a comprehensive and meaningful message to their listeners or readers. The causes of difficulties, according to Robert Lado, may include inter-lingual transfer, intra-lingual transfer, over-generalisation, incomplete application of rules, fossilisation, inadequate learning, ignorance of rule restriction, and false concept hypothesised and simplification.

Besides, Pit Corder (1967) proposes steps for analysing students' difficulties in the use of English word order, namely, the collection of samples of learner language, the identification of word order variations, and the description and evaluation of challenges faced in English words arrangements. Additionally, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) suggest that a Surface Structure Taxonomy's category includes addition, omission, misordering and misformation (Maolida & Hidayat, 2021) be used in the classification and analysis of a particular area of difficulties in the language.

In English, word order occurs in various sentence constructions, including declarative, interrogative, imperatives (Nasution & Mulyadi, 2022), exclamatory, active and passive voice (López-Beltrán, Johns, Dussias, Lozano & Palma, 2022), direct and indirect speech (Li, Jongerling, Dijkstra & Zwaan, 2022) and sentences containing transitive verbs (Motamedi, Wolters, Naegeli, Kirby & Schouwstra, 2022), for example. Tshivenda word order is different from that of English because it "is not mutually communicative with any other language" (Paulos 1990:2). As it was impossible to examine all aspects of the two languages, the focus was on declarative, interrogative and negative sentences as regards their structure and functions posing a great source of variation.

2.1. Declarative sentences

In English declarative sentences, the subjects always come first, the verbs second, and the objects and adverbial phrases third (Assaiqeli et al., 2021). Although there are numerous declarative structures in English, in the present tense, subsequent sentence structures, for example, are noteworthy:

S   V   (O)   and   S   Aux   V   (O)
'John comes (home)'   'John is/was coming home.'

i) Repetition of subject NP

In Tshivenda, it is permissible to say:

Nne   ndi   do   da.
Me   I   Aux   come

*Me I shall come.

'I shall come.'

Moreover, in Tshivenda sentences indicated supra, there is a repetition of the subject in 'Me' and 'I'. Accordingly, Tshivenda accepts both *Nne ndi do da* (*Me I shall come) and *Ndi do da* (I shall come) but rejects *Nne do da* *Me shall come. However, English rejects *Me shall come and *Me I shall come (with the repeated NP) as the non-standard forms; in favour of 'I shall come.' because it is grammatically well formed.

In Tshivenda, this phenomenon is possible with other forms of subject NPs involving nouns, but not only pronouns, for example:

Munna   u   khou   da.
Man   he   Aux   coming

*Man he is coming.

'The man is coming.'

In the preceding example, there is a repetition of the subject in the nouns 'man' and 'he' because Tshivenda accepts both *Munna u khou da (*Man he is coming)* and *U khou da* (He is coming) and rejects *Munna khou da* (*Man is coming). However, English rejects *Man he is coming; and accepts 'The man is coming', or 'He is coming'.

In the subsequent example, the subject NP is repeated in the same clause in Tshivenda:

Maluta na   musadzi wawe vho   ya   hayani.
Tom   CONJ   wife   POSS   they went   home.

*Maluta and wife his they went home.

'Maluta and his wife went home.'

In Tshivenda, the subject '*Maluta na musadzi wawe'* (Tom and his wife) is repeated as the third person plural pronoun *vho* 'they'. Nevertheless, in English, 'they' is omitted as shown in the above-mentioned example. Therefore, Vhavenda transfer the repeated subject NP and render the statement ambiguous, for example:

- *The woman she hates my mother.
  'The woman hates my mother.'
- *Those boys they work very hard.
  'Those boys work very hard.'

(ii) Position of possessive pronouns

In Tshivenda, the possessive pronoun comes after the noun, but in English, it is not, as in:

*Mulalo and cousin her they fought. (From Tshivenda)
'Mulalo and her cousin fought.'

*Women and husbands their came. (From Tshivenda)
'The women and their husbands came.'

iii) Double or modified NP

A subject NP in English may be compound, for example, 'The man and his wife or an NP modified by a prepositional phrase, for example, 'The man with his wife'. In Tshivenda, the two NPs *musadzi* (the man) and *munna wawe* (his wife) are often split before and after the main verb (Nephawe & Lambani, 2021). Therefore, English may accept both, for example:

- The woman and her husband visited the patient.
- The woman with her husband visited the patient.

In Tshivenda, this is as indicated follows:

Musadzi   o dalela mulwadze   na   munna   wawe.
The woman   she visited the patient   CONJ   husband   POSS

*The woman she visited the patient and her husband.
 'The woman visited the patient and her husband.'

This Tshivenda sentence is ambiguous because it could have one of the next three meanings:

- The woman visited the patient and her (i.e., the visitor's) husband.
- The woman visited the patient and the patient's husband.
- The woman and her husband visited the patient.

Often the last meaning is intended but it is frequently lost to the non-Tshivenda speakers.

2.2. Interrogatives word order

In English, there are several types of questions including polar questions, wh-questions, questions requiring a subject for an answer, declarative questions, alternative questions, tag questions and rhetoric questions (Paulos, 1991). Nonetheless, in this study, the focus was on the polar questions, wh-questions, and questions requiring subjects for the answer due to their acquiescence with the researchers' intention regarding an analysis of the word order between English and Tshivenda.

Both Tshivenda and English have the next two main types of questions:

- Polar questions requiring 'Yes'/ 'No' answers.
- WH-questions requiring fresh information as an answer.

a) Polar/Yes or No questions

In English, the operator comes after the subject NP in declarative sentences (Shi & Pongpairoj, 2020). Greenbaum (1991) claims that an operator is an auxiliary verb that gets moved around to form questions; does a few other special jobs in English sentences. However, in polar questions, the operator usually comes before the subject NP (Assaiqeli et al., 2021). Therefore, polar questions can be formed from the declarative sentences by using each of the following strategies as suggested (Greenbaum, 1991):

i) Putting an operator to the beginning of a subject using the word order SVO:

Statement	Polar question
S Aux V	Aux S V

'He   will   come.'   'Will   he   come?'

In Tshivenda, polar questions do not start with an operator. They are formed by a rising intonation on the final item in a sentence while in English is quite unusual (Greenbaum, 1991). Also, they require *Ee* (Yes) or *Hai* (No) for an answer. Besides, the structure for both the statement and the polar question is the same, for instance:

Statement   Polar question

S   Aux   V   (O)   S +   Aux +   V   (O)
U   do   la.   vhuswa   *U   do   la   vhuswa?*
He   will   eat   porridge   He   will   eat   porridge?

'He will eat porridge.'   'Will he eat porridge?'

   In Tshivenda, the operator *do* (will) does not come before the subject *U* (He) whereas, in English, it does. Therefore, Tshivenda accepts *U do la vhuswa?* (He will eat porridge?) which can pose challenges to the other users of English because the question 'He will eat porridge?' may often sound like a statement – or an affirmation (Nephawe & Lambani, 2021). Additionally, Tshivenda rejects **Do u la vhuswa* (Will he eat porridge?) which is grammatically accepted in English.

ii)   Putting an operator at the beginning of a statement using the order Op +V+O:

   Statements   Questions

- He watches television.   Does he watch television?
- They attend classes.   Do they attend classes?
- Zwanga liked it.   Did Zwanga like it?

iii)   Putting a modal at the beginning of a statement using the order Mod +S+V(O):

   Statement   Question

- Mulalo can dance.   Can Mulalo dance?
- We may go home.   May we go home?
- She had cooked rice.   Had she cooked rice?

b)   WH-question

   In English, a 'WH-question' is an interrogative form of a sentence (Hahn & Xu, 2022) that begins with a Q using the word order Q+Aux+ S+ V(O) as in:

Statement   WH-question

S   Aux   V   Q   Aux   S   V

'She   will   go.'   'How   will   she   go?'

In this situation, the answer provided can indicate the lady's state of affairs such as reason, time and manner of going. Nevertheless, when the Wh-question is formed in Tshivenda, the

---

equivalent of (Q) including '*Mini'* (what)*, lini* (when)*,* and (how) usually comes at the end of a question whereas in English, it fronts the operator, for example,

English: 'What are you doing?'   Tshivenda: *Ni   khou   ita   mini?*
                                             You   Aux   doing   Q
                                             *You are doing what?

                                             'What are you doing?'

In Tshivenda, the order of Wh-questions is like that of the declarative sentences. The question word comes at the end of the sentence. However, in English, the auxiliary verbs and the subjects are reversed in the Wh-questions. The Q words generally start sentences as shown in the example mentioned above. Vhavenda transfers Tshivenda word order into English and they would say *You are doing what? This is not exactly ungrammatical in English but quite unusual.

In Tshivenda, the subject *'You'* comes before the auxiliary *'are'* making it structurally a declarative sentence represented by the word order S+Aux+V. In this regard, the forthright WH-question may receive a strange order of a question such as *You are doing what? (Nephawe & Lambani, 2021). Consequently, the Wh-questions can pose numerous challenges to non-native English speakers because the variability of the possible questioning is huge (Číhalová & Duží, 2022).

 English requires an operator at the beginning of a statement. Thus, the operator 'do' is used in its appropriate form to construct questions in both the polar and the Wh-questions, as in:

Statement	Question
• They play the piano.	Do they play the piano?
	'Where do they play the piano?'
• Tom enjoys music.	Does Tom enjoy music?
	'Where does enjoy music?'
• Ndinae played soccer.	Did Ndinae play soccer?
	'When did Ndinae play soccer?'

However, in Tshivenda, there is no equivalent of 'do', 'does' or 'did' as it is not affected by these transformations but often it is a source of misuse of English for Tshivenda as in:

Statement	Question
O renga zwienda.	*O renga zwienda?*
He bought shoes.	*He bought shoes? (non-standard)
	'*Did he buy shoes?'* (*standard*)
U renga zwienda.	*U renga zwienda?*
He buys shoes.	He buys shoes
	'*Does he buy shoes?'*

(Where subject *O* marks the past while *U* the simple present tense).
In this paper, it is evident that, in the preceding examples, Tshivenda has no operator. Consequently, in the use of English word order, Vhavenda finds something new and strange in

---

the marking of either or both the operator and verb. Therefore, Vhavenda, in their confusion, may use the following word order: *Did he bought shoes?*' (Non-standard) instead of 'Did he buy shoes?' Similarly, Vhavenda are likely to say *Does he buys shoes? (Non-standard) instead of 'Does he buy shoes?'

c) Questions requiring subject for an answer

In English, a question expecting the subject as an answer has the same form as the declarative sentence (Shi & Pongpairoj, 2020). It uses the word order S(Q) + Aux + V, for example:

'Who will come?'
'Who is coming?

Therefore, the appropriate answer may require subject such as Mulalo or subject NP like Naho and Wanga for an answer.

1. Negatives word order

In English, negatives are identified by the presence of the word 'not' in sentences. Negative statements can be formed from declarative sentences (Shi & Pongpairoj, 2020) using the following manner:

i) Placing negative 'not' after an operator:

'He is coming.'	'He is not coming.'
'They were singing.'	'They were not singing.'

ii) Placing indefinite pronouns at the beginning of a sentence:

I*ndefinite pronouns* do not specifically identify what it they referring to nor any specific person or object. Their examples include nobody, nothing, nowhere and none, as used in the following example:

Positive   Negative

'Everybody comes.'   'Nobody comes.'

In Tshivenda, negatives are formed by placing the equivalent of the negative word 'not' *(thi/ ha/ songo/ si)* before the auxiliary verbs. Furthermore, they are formed by putting modals including 'can' and 'must' or their past, immediately before the main verb, as in:

Positive   Negative

Ndi	*khou*	*da*		*A*	*thi*	*khou*	*da*
I	Aux	come		I	NEG	Aux	come
*I	am	come		*I	not	am	come

'I am coming.'				'I am not coming.'			
Munna	*khou*	*la*		*Munna*	*ha*	*khou*	*la*
Man	Aux	eat		Man	NEG	Aux	eat
* Man	is	eat		*Man	not	is	eat

'Man is eating.'   'Man is not eating.'

Ri	*le.*		*Ri*	*songo*	*la.*
We	eat		We	NEG	eat
We	eat.		*We	not	eat.

'We must eat.'   'We must not eat.'

Ndi	*zwone.*		*A*	*si*	*zwone.*
It	true		It	NEG	true
It	true.		It	not	true.

'It is true.'   'It is not true.'

In Tshivenda, NEG is placed before the operator *khou* ('am'/'is'/'are' and their past forms) or do ('will'/'shall'/'going to' and their past forms). However, in (1) supra, Tshivenda accepts 'I not am come' and rejects 'I am not coming.' In (2), it accepts *Man not is eat and rejects 'The man is not eating.' In (3), Tshivenda takes the subject *Ri,* roughly stands for the subject 'we' (+must). Tshivenda accepts 'We not eat' and rejects 'We must not eat.' In (4), the subject *Ndi* stands for the subject 'It' (+ is*).*

Tshivenda rejects 'It is not true' in favour of 'It not true.' In addition, it is noticeable that the subject *Ndi* in the positive sentence changes to *A* in the negative. On this basis, in Tshivenda, negation affects the subject or the subject NP whereas in English, it does not. Vhavenda transfer Tshivenda structure into English. They can say *They are not coming which is structurally ungrammatical. On the other hand, in English, it becomes a grammatical sentence: 'They are not coming.'

2.3. Scaffolding strategies

Scaffolding is a strategy for dividing a subject matter into considerable portions and making a provision or structuring it into pieces. Mahan 2022: (75) asserts that it is the "type of teacher assistance that helps students learn new skills, concepts, or levels of understanding that leads to the student successfully completing a task". Despite the challenges posed in teaching the L2, scaffolding students' learning is a possible way to overcome them (Holmes, Doherty & Flusberg, 2022). The next three strategies were selected due to their versatility towards building in-depth knowledge to students:

a) Tapping into existing knowledge

Students can be asked to share their understanding and experiences regarding the use of word order in English. Their lived experiences must be compared and shared among the many. The researchers' purpose is to assist the students to realise their potential and allow them to handle certain challenges on their own. The teachers progress from what learners know and supply them with new knowledge that can be used as a future reference.

b) Give time to talk

Students are given time to share the knowledge they have already acquired and the newly acquired ones with their peers during a classroom discussion because they understand the subject much better through talking. The students prepare several structured presentations beforehand to ensure active classroom participation.

c) Pause, ask questions, pause, review

During the assimilation of the new knowledge, students can read the portions they consider difficult and then engage in classroom discussions. The open-ended questions are prepared beforehand and used in the discussions. Teachers continuously supply their students with certain cues to establish in-depth knowledge.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach. An exploratory analysis was utilised to comprehend the problem's general nature and identify alternatives to the solution using relevant variables (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). An action research method was used as a critical classroom-based inquiry for identifying a specific problem and improving the mastery of word order. It entails practice, evaluation, and critical reflection based on the suggestions collected to avoid structural ambiguity resulting from incorrect word order (Makoelle & Thwalla (2019). As it was epistemological and context-based for solving problems relating to word order usage, the researcher compiled reports to validate the findings.

3.1. Sample and Sampling Criteria

The convenience sampling criteria were employed to sample nine respondents over the others as they were readily approachable. The reason for using convenience sampling was that the sampled students fit the respondents' profile the researcher intended to investigate. Also, they were part of the target group who shared similar characteristics with the members of the entire population despite not having been part of this research. The respondents were part of the population of 865 Module 1141 ECS students registered in the 2022 academic year at the University of Venda in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The respondent has been studying English from as early as Grade 4. Further, purposive sampling was utilised because the researcher wanted to understand the approaches for using English word order. Similarly, another 10 respondents were selected to participate in the pilot project to gain validity and reliability of the written essays.

3.2. Data Collection Procedure

Fifteen purposively selected respondents wrote an essay titled 'Appropriate word order in English matters' to understand the underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations (Shousha, Farrag & Althaqafi, 2020). As the approach was more cross-sectional than longitudinal, the essay was written within 25 minutes after which the researcher collected the scripts. Initially, data were collected from 10 respondents who were not part of the study group because the researcher wanted to test the effectiveness of the writing that was to be written. Before investigating the project, the characteristics and the size of the entire treatment group were considered. The researcher was convinced that the best respondents were sampled according to the word order attributes (Biden, 2022).

3.3. Data Analysis Procedure

A discourse analysis was used to assess the use of word order in the respondents' essays because of its vigorous assessment and description of the meanings. An inductive thematic

analysis approach was utilised to derive meaning and create themes from data **without any preconceptions** (Crosley, 2021). Further, reflexive thematic analysis was used due to its flexibility purposes. Notwithstanding the unnecessity of a codebook, the researcher could still change, remove, and add codes in this paper when working through the findings obtained from the written essays.

Results from the participants' essays were interpreted meaningfully by comparing the word order frequency of occurrence. A pen and paper, a document processor, and Delve Software were used in coding, sorting and analysing the findings to develop a strong information base. The researcher utilised all suggested steps for applying Thematic Analysis: familiarisation with data, creation of initial codes, collating codes with supporting data, grouping codes into themes, reviewing and revising themes and writing the findings using word order.

3.4. Ethical considerations

The researcher conformed to all ethical consideration protocols, including informed consent, participant harm, anonymity, and confidentiality. In this research, participation was voluntary; and participants were not remunerated. In addition, the obtained grades were not for promotional purposes to the next grade. Also, permission to conduct the research was obtained from the University High Degree Committee and Research Ethics Committees at the University of Venda.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The deliberate explanations attempting to answer the research questions concerning examining the variation of word order between English and Tshivenda languages among Module 1141 ECS students at the University of Venda in Limpopo Province, South Africa, are worth noting. The structure and function between the two languages were quite unfamiliar. It was established that using some of Stephen Pit Corder's (1967) steps for analysing difficulties experienced by the Vhavenda in the use of English word order assisted the researcher in obtaining an informed study finding. In addition, Dulay's et al. (1982) Surface Structure Taxonomy categories, namely, misordering, misformation, and addition, enabled the researcher to categorise challenges faced by the respondents in the use of English word order.

It was revealed that respondents experienced only 11% difficulties because, in the misordering category regarding the English word order, one respondent wrongly arranged the given title into 'Word order in English matters appropriate' instead of the correct title constructed by the researcher in this paper. Also, the other word order difficulty was demonstrated in the sentence 'Used all is subjects English in' instead of 'English is used in all subjects' in the same category. This finding supports Maolida and Hidayat's (2021) suggestion in this regard. Regardless the presence of a minimal distance between misformation and misordering categories, the respondents experienced 8 % difficulty in the former because they wrote inappropriate English word order such as 'Order like word English I' instead of 'I like English word order'. This finding is congruent with Liden's (2022) suggestion that students may construct 'nonsensical' sentences regarding the English word order.

The respondents faced only 4% of challenges in English word order because they constructed inappropriate sentences like 'We as students we like English' instead of 'As students, we like English' or 'We like English as students' in the additional category. This finding is in line with Greenbaum's (1991) suggestion that students can experience difficulty repeating the subject NP in the English word order. The respondents were challenged by only 2% of the English word order difficulty because they formed the sentence 'Students prefer

English Tshivenda' instead of 'Students prefer English to Tshivenda' in the omission category. They omitted the preposition 'to' in this sentence. This finding supports Nephawe and Lambani (2022), who suggest that students sometimes confuse using English prepositions.

The paper established that 'scaffolding strategies' such as tapping into the students' prior knowledge about the correct use of English word order, giving students time to talk about it and continuously pausing, asking questions, pausing and reviewing students' understanding of this word order in such areas as declarative sentences, the interrogative sentences and the negative sentences are worthwhile. Moreover, the robust use of the scaffolding strategies in addressing disparity or deviation between English and Tshivenda is necessary in revamping this word order at its best.

Word order variation repair in declarative sentences between English and Tshivenda languages regarding the repetition of subject NP, the position of possessive pronouns and the double or modified NP attempted to illustrate the necessity of using informed knowledge in this regard. Based on the word order variation repair in the interrogative sentences between the two languages regarding 'Yes' or 'No' questions, detailed deliberations such as putting an auxiliary verb to the front of a statement, putting an operator at the beginning of a statement and placing a modal at the beginning of a statement were strongly highlighted. Wh-questions and questions requiring subjects to answer are useful to everyone because they as a source of information. Also, the word order variation repair in negative sentences showed a disparity between English and Tshivenda mitigatable by placing a negative 'not' after an operator and indefinite pronouns, including nobody, nothing and nowhere at the front of sentences.

5. CONCLUSION

After the scaffolding strategies for mitigating the word order variation between the English language English and the Tshivenda language were utilised, the researcher established that the participants became competent in the use of English word order. And the findings from that place contribute to the body of knowledge in the use of English word order because not only these students benefited from the paper but also the entire non-native English-speaking communities worldwide. The causes of difficulties experienced in the use of English word order might either have been caused by factors including inter-lingual interference, intra-lingual interference, over-generalisation, ignorance of rule restriction, inadequate learning, false concept hypothesised or simplification.

However, after the difficulties experienced in using English word order were recorded, quantified and grouped according to their frequency of occurrence, it was revealed that the highest scores were registered in the misordering category with 11%. Nevertheless, the misformation category scored the lowest, with only 8% of difficulties. Thus, the scaffolding strategies were a prerequisite in the correct use of the English language word order because the researcher managed to alleviate variation that has consistently been existing between the two languages. Module 1141 English ECS students registered in the 2022 academic year at the University of Venda in Limpopo Province, South Africa demonstrated the power of using scaffolding strategies in learning English word order.

It was only after having utilised the strategies for word order variation between English and Tshivenda that the researcher could make the following recommendations. 1) frequent learning

of the declarative sentences, the interrogative sentences and the negative sentences, 2) recurrent use of scaffolding strategies in the teaching of English word order to the students, 3) stern implementation of the declarative sentences, the interrogative sentences, and the negative sentences into English language syllabus to mitigate variation existing between English and Tshivenda, and 4) incessant research on the current topic.

REFERENCES

Al-Smadi, H.M. (2022). Challenges in translating scientific texts: Problems and reasons. *Journal of language teaching and research*, *13*(3):550-560.

Assaiqeli, A., Maniam, M. & Farrah (2021). Inversion and word order in English: A functional perspective. *Studies in English language and education, 8*(2): 523-545.

Biden, A. (2022) How to conduct and analyze semi-structured interviews. Online available at:https://evalcareers.com/magazine/how-to-conduct-and-analyze-semi-structured-interviews/[Accessed on 5 August 2022].

Číhalová, M. & Duží, M. (2022). Modelling dynamic behaviour of agents in a multiagent world: Logical analysis of Wh-questions and answers. *Logic Journal of the IGPL.* jzab034.

Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learner's errors. *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *5*(1-4):161–170.

Crosley, J. (2021). What (exactly) is thematic analysis? A plain-language explanation & definition (with examples). Online available at:https://gradcoach.com/what-is-thematic-analysis/[Accessed on 7 August 2022].

Dulay, H., Burt, M. & Krashen, S. (1982). *Language two*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Ganai, Y.M. (2022). The problems faced by English teachers and students in rural/tribal areas. *Towards Excellence*, *14*(1).

Greenbaum, S. (1991). *An Introduction to English Grammar*. Harlow: Longman.

Hahn, M. & Xu, Y. (2022). Crosslinguistic word order variation reflects evolutionary pressures of dependency and information locality. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *119*(24):e2122604119.

Holmes, K.J., Doherty, E.M. & Flusberg, S.J. (2022). How and when does syntax perpetuate stereotypes? Probing the framing effects of subject-complement statements of equality. *Thinking & Reasoning*, *28*(2):226-260.

Kalu, F.A. & Bwalya, J.C. (2017). What makes qualitative research good research? An exploratory analysis of critical elements. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, *5*(2), 435–436.

Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures. Applied linguistics for language teachers*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Li, J., Jongerling, J., Dijkstra, K. & Zwaan, R. (2022). The influence of utterance-related factors on the use of direct and indirect speech. *Collabra: Psychology*, *8*(1): 33631.

Liden, D. (2022). What is word order. https://www.languagehumanities.org/what-is-word-order.htm[Accessed on 6 August 2022]**.**

López-Beltrán, P., Johns, M.A., Dussias, P.E., Lozano, C. & Palma, A. (2022). The effects of information structure in the processing of word order variation in the second language. *Second Language Research*, *38*(3):639-670.

Mahan, K.R. (2022). The comprehending teacher: Scaffolding in content and language integrated learning (CLIL). *The Language Learning Journal*, *50(1)*:74-88.

Makoelle, T.M. & Thwala, S. (2019). Action research and initial teacher training. *Action Research in South African Education: A Critical Praxis*, p.99.

Maolida, E.H. & Hidayat, M.V.C. (2021). Writing errors based on Surface Structure Taxonomy: A case of Indonesian EFL students' personal letters. In *International Conference on Education of Suryakancana (IConnects Proceedings)*, pp.336-344.

Motamedi, Y., Wolters, L., Naegeli, D., Kirby, S. & Schouwstra, M. (2022). From improvisation to learning: how naturalness and systematicity shape language evolution. *Cognition*, *228*, p.105206.

Nephawe, F.T. & Lambani, M.N. (2021). Exploring Speech Act of English and Tshivenda representatives and directives. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, *26*, p.372.

Nephawe, F.T. & Lambani, M.N. (2022). Use of question-and-answer method in teaching English prepositions to primary school learners. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, *4*(3):109-125.

Nasution, J. & Mulyadi, M. (2022). Word order in Angkola Language: A study of syntactic typology. Language Literacy. *Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching*, *6*(1):167-176.

Nordquist, R. (2020). "Nobody, no one, and none: How to choose the right word." Onlive available at: thoughtco.com/nobody-none-and-no-one-1689448[Accessed on 7 August 2022].

Paulos, G. (1990). *A Linguistic Analysis of Venda*. Pretoria: Via Africa.

Ravishankar, V., Abdou, M., Kulmizev, A. and Søgaard, A. (2022). Word order does matter (and shuffled language models know it). *arXiv preprint arXiv:2203.10995*.

Romani, B. (2020). Word Order Rules in English – A comprehensive guide. https://www.scientific-editing.info/blog/word-order-rules-in-english/[Accessed on 1 August 2022].

Shi, C. & Pongpairoj, N. (2020). Third language acquisition of English word order in written production by L1 Yi and L2 Mandarin learners. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, *13*(1):20-38.

Shousha, A.I., Farrag, N.M. & Althaqafi, A.S. (2020). Analytical Assessment of the Common Writing Errors among Saudi Foundation Year Students: A Comparative Study. *English Language Teaching, 13* (8):46-62.

AUTHOR'S BIO

Farisani Thomas Nephawe, PhD, is a Lecturer of English of ECS in the Department of English, Media Studies and Linguistics at the University of Venda, South Africa. He earned his MPhil in Second Language Studies at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, and PhD in English at Univen. Further, he is an emerging publisher in the accredited journals. His scholarly interests include English Language Teaching, Pragmatics, and Communication skills. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6746-2766