The impact of EFL teachers' cognition on teaching foreign language grammar

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Abstract

This study examines differences in non-native EFL teachers' beliefs about grammar and teaching grammar. The differences were sought across teachers' work environment-private school versus state schools-, degree, gender, and teaching experience. A sample of 130 EFL teachers teaching at junior high school, high schools, and private language institutes were randomly selected. The sample consisted of EFL teachers with different degrees, teaching experience, and gender. A grammar belief questionnaire consisting of five main categories (25 items) was administered. The results showed significant differences between school teachers and institute language teachers in their cognition and practice. The observed differences were also significant for teachers with BA degree, MA degree and teaching experience. However, teachers' beliefs did not significantly differ in genders. All in all, the results showed that teachers' characteristics influenced *some* aspects of their cognition and teaching practices as related to grammar. The implications for teaching and teacher education are discussed, in this article.

Key Words: Teachers' cognition, beliefs, work setting, grammar.

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1. Introduction

Teaching is a multidimensional activity that involves social, educational, pedagogical, linguistics, personal, and cognitive dimensions. In the last twenty five years, in general education the cognitive dimension of teaching has been recognized as central to successful teaching. The last decade has witnessed steady growth in the study of teachers' cognition. Researchers have paid more attention to the study of teachers' belief about teaching, learning, learners, and the impact it has on teaching practices, activities, and learning outcomes (Tillman, 2000; Shavelson, and Stern, 1981; Burns, 1992; Eisenhart et. al., 1998; Fang, 1996; Richardson, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Reynold, 1992). Research into teachers' cognition has not been restricted to one or few specific disciplines or content areas. The impact of teachers beliefs on their teaching is being studied across disciplines and educational setting as diverse as general education, mathematics (Ernest 1989; Shuck 1997; Karaagac and Threlfall; Raymond, 1997), second/ foreign language learning, (Farrell, and Patricia, 2005), reading (Beach, 1994), and chemistry (Brisco, 1991). It has been studied in pre-service and in-service contexts, different educational levels: kindergarten, elementary schools, high schools and adult education.

During 1980s and the years after, researchers investigated a number of different aspects and dimensions of teachers' cognition. The main focus was on studying the way teachers think about their own work, their mental processes in planning and carrying out their teachings, the kind of decisions made in the course of teaching, and how these beliefs may change over time. Some of the research areas in teachers' cognition include studying teachers' cognition in general and how they construct their conceptions and theories of teaching (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Leinhardt, 1990), teachers' understanding of the teaching process (Peterson & Comeaux, 1987), teachers' belief about teaching, students, teachers, and the learning process as well as their own efficacy in inducing change in their students (Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan & Tippins, 1991; Tamir, 1991). Another area of research in teachers' belief is examining the instructional thoughts, actions, and decision making in the classroom (Fogarty, Wang, & Creek, 1983; Magliaro & Borko, 1986). Changes in teachers'

beliefs that occur as a result of professional growth and teaching experiences have also been examined (Bullough, 1991; Calderhead, 1991).

2. Nature of teachers' beliefs

Teachers' beliefs are not easy to define. Nor are they easy to operationalize and study. Kagan (1992) views them as tacitly held assumptions and perceptions about teaching and learning. Pajares (1992) and Richardson (1996) view them as personal constructs of teachers that can help understand their decisions and teaching practices. The belief system consists of the information, attitudes, values, theories, and assumptions about teaching, learning, learners, and other aspects of teaching. Some of these beliefs are quite general while some are very specific. According to Johnson (1994) teachers' beliefs influence their judgment and perception, the classroom activities they use, and it can contribute to the improvement of teaching practices and teacher education programs. The belief system is argued to serve as a base for the activities and practices teachers use in the classroom. It guides teachers in the course of the practices they have in the classroom. Hampton (1994) contends that teachers' beliefs can determine the way they approach their teaching. In brief, research findings show that teachers have complex thinking and interpretation of teaching and the context upon which they reflect, decide, and act was a wide and rich mental context (Elbaz, 1983; Clandinin, 1986).

There are different ways teachers may develop their beliefs. It can be socially constructed as a result of their own personal experiences and influences of the settings in which they work. Teachers' beliefs are built up over time. They are derived from teachers' training programs, pre-service programs, and prior learning and teaching experiences. Brog (2003) and Richards, Gallo and Renandya (2001) argue that teachers' beliefs are derived from their prior experiences, school practices, educational theory, reading, their individual personalities, and a number of other sources. Eisentein-Ebsworth and Schweers (1997) see teachers' views shaped by students' wants, syllabus expectations, and prior experiences. This knowledge may change over time as teachers interact with students and get feedback from them.

2.1. Teachers' beliefs about language teaching

Following the interest in general education and teacher education in teachers' cognition, researchers in second language acquisition took the idea and started to examine language teachers' pedagogical beliefs in second language learning (Breen, 1991; Cumming, 1993; Freeman & Richards; 1996; Johnson, 1994; Richards, 1998; Richards & Nunan, 1990; Woods, 1996).Teachers' belief is now viewed as a complex cognitive activity (Farrell and Patricia, 2005; Brog, 2003a, 2003b.; Mitchel and Hooper, 1992; Johnston, and Goettsch, 2000). Research into teachers' cognition has both provided good insights into teachers' cognition at the same time raised more questions about several issues of teachers' beliefs.

A more specific aspect of teachers' cognition in language teaching is teachers' beliefs about grammar and different aspects of grammar teaching. Some of the questions that have not been yet answered include how much time should be devoted to grammar? What grammatical points should be taught? How should grammatical points be sequenced? What activities are more appropriate for different contexts? Grammar has a contested nature and its teaching and learning has seen different days. Grammar teaching has always created uncertainties and raised complex and intriguing pedagogical, linguistic and curricular issues. With the emergence of a new method or theory grammar becomes the center of attention and with the demise of the theory or practice it would be totally abandoned. For times grammar was central to class activities and at times it was overlooked. With such fluctuation it is not difficult to imagine language teachers develop different views on grammar in the processes of becoming a teacher. In the late 1980s abandonment of focus on form was advocated by communicative movement. In the last decade the issue of focus on form has been a hot topic and raised many questions and challenges to applied linguists and language teachers.

2.2. Research into teachers' beliefs about grammar

There have been a number of studies on teachers' beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching. Ng & Farrell (2003) and Yim (1993) investigated the extent to

which teachers' theoretical beliefs influenced their classroom grammatical practices, and found evidence to suggest that what teachers say and do in the classroom are governed by their beliefs. Farrell (1999) examined the belief system of pre-service teachers of English grammar in terms of its influence on teaching practice, and found evidence to suggest that these beliefs may be resistant to change. Similarly, Richards, Gallo, and Renandya (2001) examined the beliefs of a group of in-service course teachers about grammar. The results showed that many teachers followed a communicative approach to teaching, while some of the respondents stated that they had firm belief in the importance of direct grammar teaching in language learning. They also stated that their EFL/ESL students asked for grammar teaching.

Research into the impact of formal grammar teaching has covered several aspects of grammar teaching. These include inductive versus deductive approached to the teaching of grammar (Shaffer, 1989; Dekeyser, 1995), feedback and correction of errors (Chaudron, 1977; Dekeyser, 1993), use of grammar terminology in grammar teaching (Berman, 1979; Garrett, 1986), and impact of grammar practice on L2 learning (Ellis, 1991; Johnson, 1994). In spite of large volume of research in this area results are inconclusive and as Borg (1999) discusses our understanding of the processes of grammar teaching as perceived by language teachers has still a long way to go.

Borg (2003) provides a comprehensive review of research into teachers' beliefs about grammar. Three main areas of research in teachers' beliefs about grammar include; studies of teachers' knowledge about grammar and grammar teaching, comparative studies of teachers' views and learners' views about formal instruction, and studies of the actual grammar teaching activities and practices that teachers implement in their classes.

3. Statement of the purpose

Teacher cognition as characterized by Borg (1999: P. 22) "consists of a set of *personally*-defined *practically* oriented understanding of teaching and learning which exert significant influence on instructional decisions"(Italics mine).

However, instructional decision and practices that teachers use in teaching grammar may be influenced by different cognitive and contextual factors. Researchers have seldom examined the effect of these personal and institutional variables on teachers' beliefs. Some such variables include work setting and personal characteristics of teachers such as, educational level of teachers, gender, and work environment. Practical and contextual factors may influence teachers' beliefs and prevents them from doing what they think they should do in the classroom. There is not much known about the extent to which individual, organizational and educational factors play a role in shaping teachers' beliefs.

Teachers' beliefs about grammar may be influenced by teaching environment and the constraints put on teachers by school board, administrators, students, parents, and colleagues. Burns (1996) argued that one consideration in research into teachers' beliefs is the social and institutional context in which teaching is practiced. Borg (2003: 105) recommends further research about "the impact of contextual factors on the instructional decision teachers make in teaching grammar". Another issue is that language teachers attend different pre-service and in-service programs. This is in addition to the formal education they get at university. Studying possible impact of teachers' education on their belief can help better understand how teachers' pedagogical knowledge and belief development.

The rationale behind the study was that in the Iranian EFL context, teaching and learning grammar has always played a vital role. For years with the dominance of grammar translation method teaching and learning English had been nothing but teaching and learning grammar. The situation did not change much even with the emergence of more communicative approaches to language teaching. Grammar remained central to class activities. Language learning for majority of teachers and learners was nothing but grammar. Even today grammar courses are offered at different educational centers. It is part of learning experience of almost all language learners. Teachers are still under pressure to teach grammar, especially in schools. Students ask teachers to include grammar in their teaching to help them prepare for the National University Entrance Exam known as "Konkoor". The study can help

arrive at a better understanding the factors that may contribute to the development of the belief system or influence teachers' beliefs by examining belief of different teachers about grammar.

More specifically this study aimed at two objectives; i) to investigate the relationship between personal factors such as work experience, gender, and teachers' educational level on their beliefs, and ii) to investigate the relationship between teachers' beliefs about grammar and work setting. More specifically, the purpose was to compare beliefs of schools teachers' beliefs with private language institutes teachers' beliefs about grammar. The first aim deals with the influence of personal factors, while the second aim deals with influence of organizational and institutional factors.

3. 1. Research Question and Hypothesis

To this end, the following research questions were asked;

1- Is there any difference between school language teachers' beliefs and institute language teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching?

2- Is there any difference between beliefs of teachers with bachelor degree (BA) and master degree (MA) about grammar and its teaching?

3- Is there any difference between more experienced and less experienced teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching?

4- Is there any difference between male and female language teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching?

For all these questions a null hypothesis was formulated, predicting no difference between teachers' beliefs about grammar across the four variables stated in the research questions, that is, work setting, educational degree, work experience, and gender.

4.1. Participants

To collect the required data two groups of English language teachers teaching English in different state schools and private language institutes in Isfahan were

randomly selected. The state-school teachers taught English at junior high schools and high schools, while the institute language teachers taught conversation courses to students of intermediate level. School teachers taught the English textbooks assigned by the Ministry of Education, while language institute teachers taught books such as "Interchange" series. The series was also assigned by the institute administration and were not the teachers' own choice. The total number of participants was 130 EFL teachers. They were both male/female whose age ranged between 23-42 years. All institute teachers had university education, a bachelor degree or master degree, while 15 teachers of the state school teachers had only an associate diploma plus some in-service training. As to their teaching experiences, all participants had at least a minimum of 4 and maximum of 15 years of teaching experience. The average of teaching experience was 7.7 years. Table 1 presents frequency and percentage of the participants according to their work setting, degree, sex, and work experience. Two school districts of Isfahan were chosen for data collection. The schools teachers taught at 15 different schools, while the institute language teachers taught at 10 different private institutes of Isfahan. The data was collected during May-August 2006.

Table 1.Teachers' characteristics according to their teaching organization, degree, sex, and teaching experience

Teachers	Frequency &Percentage	Total
MA degree	38 (29%)	130(100%)
BA degree	92 (71%)	
School teachers	72 (55%)	130(100%)
Institute Teachers	58 (45%)	
Male	54 (41%)	130(100%)
Female	76 (59%)	
Work experience	87 (67%) Less than 5 years	130(100%)
	43 (33%) More than 5 years	

4.2. Instruments

The instrument that was used for collecting the required data was a 25-item 5-pont liker scale questionnaire. It was used for surveying and collecting teachers' beliefs about grammar. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher on the basis of the research questions, similar questionnaires, and the existing literature on teachers' beliefs about grammar. Teachers' beliefs were divided into five main categories, each with several sub-categories. These categories and sub-categories are presented in table 2.

Table2. Categories and subcategories of teachers' beliefs about grammar

1) **Meaning of grammar**	2) **Importance of grammar**
Structural view	How much time
Communicative-functional view	How important for SL learning
Both form and meaning	
3) **Approach to teaching**	4) **Feedback and error correction**
Meaning based/ from based	Importance of providing feedback
Inductive/deductive teaching	Teacher feedback and correction
Both form and meaning	Self correction and feedback
	Peer feedback and correction
	Immediate feedback
	Global/ local errors
5) **Teaching activities and practices**	
Variety of activities, use of teaching aids, assignments, oral and written form, use of games, use of tasks, use of drills and exercises	

The questionnaire also included an open-ended question asking the participants to write some of the most important beliefs about grammar teaching that may direct them in their day-to-day grammar teaching. The five main categories of belief about grammar in the questionnaire were as follows; 1) meaning of grammar, 2) importance of grammar, 3) approach to teaching grammar, 4) feedback and

correction of grammatical errors, and 5) teaching activities and practices used in grammar teaching. For "meaning of grammar" category the focus was on finding the meaning of grammar to EFL teachers. The second category was concerned with finding the amount of importance teachers put on teaching grammar. As to the approach to teaching grammar the main concern was to know about teachers' beliefs about issues of teaching grammar such as form focused structural view, communication emphasis view, implicit-explicit teaching, and deductive-inductive teaching. With regard to feedback, the teachers were asked to express their thoughts about providing feedback and error correction, kind of feedback, learners should receive when they commit errors; self correction, peer correction, and teacher correction. And finally in the fifth category teachers' beliefs about actual presentation and practice activities they use in teaching grammar were sought, more specifically, formed- based, meaning-based, or task-based activities.

All the participants were required to express the degree of their agreement-disagreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for "strongly disagree", to 5, for "strongly agree" with 3, for "no opinion"). See the Appendix for the questionnaire.

4.3. Procedures

The questionnaires were distributed among institute and school language teachers in the schools and institutes where they taught. Teachers took the questionnaire either before or after their class time. They were required to mark their response to the option that best explains their beliefs. Most of them answered the questionnaire in site, while 20% of the teachers used the liberty of answering the items at home. The response rate was quite acceptable with this group of respondents, 65%. Teachers' beliefs as stated in the questionnaire were then scored and summarized on the basis of the five main categories of beliefs.

5. Results and discussion

As the data was collected by a questionnaire on a Likert scale, it could allow

calculation of mean score for each single item of the questionnaire and the five main components of teachers' beliefs about grammar. The mean score for each category along with results of independent group t-test are reported for each of these five categories separately.

5. 1. Work setting: State school teachers versus private school teachers

One variable that could influence teachers' beliefs was assumed to be the work setting. To obtain the results, school language teachers' responses were compared with institute language teachers' responses for the five categories of belief. Table 3 shows results of descriptive statistics and t-test for the five categories of state school teachers and institute and school teachers' beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching.

Table3. Results of descriptive statistics and t-test for school and institute language teachers' beliefs about grammar

	School Ts. Mean score 72	SD	Institute Ts. Mean score 58	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Meaning of grammar	12.23	±1.17	10.44	±2.08	.578	128	.700
Importance of grammar	7.70	±1.12	6.81	±1.28	-1.455	128	.178
Approach to teaching grammar	15.66	±1.51	19.81	±2.14	2.880	128	*.020
Feedback and error correction	11.81	±2.11	13.02	±2.17	-1.322	128	.245
Teaching practices and activities	22.92	±2.34	27.43	±3.03	2.745	128	*.015

As the results in the table show teachers beliefs were more or less similar and not very different in three categories. The significant differences observed were in the "teaching approach" teachers adopted and consequently the "teaching practices and activities" they used in their classes. These two features were related to practical aspects of teaching grammar. The difference indicates that school language teachers

and institute language teachers adopt different approaches and use quite different practices and activities in the classroom. These two components are logically more related to one another than other categories. The differences were non-significant for the other three categories. The reason for the observed significant difference can be explained by the obligations set by private language institutes in teaching grammar. In schools, teachers have to meet certain obligations by simplifying activities. Even motivation of learners is not the same. In private institutes students are more motivated and willingly participate in English classes while in schools students see it a subject matter to pass rather than a way for learning a foreign language.

5.2. Degree/ educational level

An individual variable that could contribute to teachers' cognition about grammar was the education of teachers and the university degree they had. As most teachers who participated in the study had different university degrees and education, their thoughts about grammar and grammar teaching could be influenced by their educational experiences and the pedagogical knowledge they had accumulated in the course of their education. Results descriptive statistics and t-test of teachers' belief with bachelor degree and master degree are reported in table 4.

Table4. Results of descriptive statistics and t-test for the BA and MA teachers' beliefs about grammar

	BA Ts. Mean score (92)	SD	MA Ts. Mean score (33)	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meaning of grammar	13.75	±2.41	16.71	±2.55	.479	128	*.011
Importance of grammar	5.65	±1.58	6.32	±1.25	-1.225	128	.645
Approach to teaching grammar	13.34	±2.45	18.88	±2.21	-.518	128	*.021
Feedback and error correction	14.13	±2.38	16.28	±2.45	1. 139	128	.127
Teaching practices and activities	21.33	±2.63	25.11	±3.41	.968	128	*.024

The results showed that for three categories the observed differences were significant; "meaning of grammar", "approach to teaching grammar", and the "teaching practices and activities used". MA teachers favored a more balanced view of grammar as both form and meaning, while BA teacher had a more structural view of grammar. For approach to teaching grammar, MA teachers had a more inductive view, while BA teachers had a more deductive and form based view. Finally, MA teachers used a variety of activities, games, extra materials, and tasks in teaching grammar, while BA teachers used more exercises in teaching and practicing grammar. For "importance of grammar" and "feedback" the observed differences proved to be non-significant.

The findings can be justified by the effect of education and training on teachers' beliefs and practices. Though teachers may be influenced by the teaching and leaning experiences they have, studying different views of grammar and the role it plays in language learning provides a chance for teachers to reflect more on grammar and how it should be taught. These findings can also be interpreted in the light of change in teachers' belief over time. Beliefs are not necessarily constant. They develop as a result of different factors and are subject to change. The findings can indicate education can influence teachers' beliefs.

5.3. Work experience

The next variable that was assumed to be relevant in the development of teachers' belief was their work experience. In this section, beliefs of more experienced and less experienced teachers are reported. Table 5 presents the results of descriptive statistics and t-test for the more experienced and less experienced teachers.

Table5. Results of descriptive statistics and t-test for the more experienced and less experienced

teachers' beliefs about grammar

	Exp. Ts. Mean score (43)	SD	Less Exp. Ts. Mean score (87)	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2-ailed)
Meaning of grammar	11.72	±2.12	11.14	±1.58	.289	128	.114
Importance of grammar	6.02	±1.05	5.81	±1.45	1.102	128	.435
Approach to teaching grammar	14.34	±2.31	10.75	±2.38	.508	128	*.020
Feedback and error correction	13.33	±2.95	11.13	±2.21	-.432	128	.110
Teaching practices and activities	21.21	±3.14	18.46	±2.74	-.782	128	*.022

Exp. Ts.= experienced teachers

As the table shows work experience proved to influence teachers' belief in two categories. More experienced teachers and less experienced teachers significantly differed in "importance of grammar" and "teaching practices and activities used". Less experienced teachers viewed grammar as more important than more experienced teachers. This reflects the appeal of less experienced teachers to grammar as an area to teach language. This may also reflects the effect of learning experience teachers had in their language learning, while more experienced teachers may have found the confidence to think otherwise and treat grammar differently in their teaching.

Unlike novice teachers entering teaching who need training in the techniques and procedures to use in presenting a lesson, more experienced teachers by gaining experience and knowledge begin to develop an individual approach or personal method of teaching, one that draws on an established approach or method but that also uniquely reflects the teacher's individual beliefs, values, principles, classroom realities, and experiences. This may lead to a modification of the techniques and procedures used at the beginning adjusting them to the realities of the classroom.

5.4. Gender

The last factor that was investigated in relation to teachers' belief about grammar was teachers' sex and its effect on their cognition. Results of descriptive statistics and t-test for both male and female language teachers are reported in table 6.

Table6. Results of descriptive statistics and t-test for the male and female teachers' beliefs about grammar

	Female Ts. Mean score (76)	SD	Male Ts. Mean score (54)	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meaning of grammar	11.35	±2.33	12.67	±2.65	-.179	128	.624
Importance of grammar	5.47	±1.28	6.45	±1.05	1.225	128	.415
Approach to teaching grammar	11.92	±2.45	10.84	±2.13	-1.218	128	.121
Feedback and error correction	16.52	±3.87	14.87	±3.35	-.439	128	.825
Teaching practices and activities	25.32	±3.13	23.68	±3.34	-.968	128	.074

As seen in the table, male and female teachers had almost the same thoughts about all aspects of grammar and grammar teaching and the observed differences were minor and non-significant. The findings indicate that gender has nothing to do with teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching. This may be interpreted in terms of the common teaching learning experiences of both male and female teachers have had. This makes sense in the context of a central educational system where school policies, textbooks, syllabus specifications, and other aspects of language teaching and learning are decided by one decision making body. These experiences may include learning and teaching experiences, educational experiences, and even more personal experiences of the teachers.

Results of this study show that teachers' beliefs about grammar are not independent of the individual characteristics of teachers and the external factors in which teaching and learning occur. There are a host of social, environmental,

psychological, and individual variables that may influence development of beliefs of language teachers. The results are in harmony with Beach, 1994; Brisco, 1991; Carlgren & Lindbald, 1991; and Konopak & Williams 1994. These studies found that factors and forces such as availability of resources needed for teaching activities and practices, parents' expectations from teachers, principal's requirements, students' language ability, curriculum obligations, school policies, and school and classroom layout all influence the choice of teaching activities used by teachers.

The findings are also supported by Richards (1996), Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishler (1998) who argue that part of teachers' beliefs are shaped by studying and knowing the established practices. Attending in-service programs and getting involved with formal university education provides what Lortie (1975) termed an "apprenticeship of observation" through which student teachers have more chance to study and observe how language or a specific component is taught. The results also support Richards & Renandya (2002) who concluded that attending in-service courses and other teacher development programs –in addition to some other activities as a main source of change in teachers' beliefs.

Finally, this study shows that some external factors, including classes population, teaching facilities, students' motivation, and background, and time factor may influence teachers' beliefs. Teachers have little or no control over these factors and they may affect the implementation of beliefs. This supports views of Eisentein-Ebsworth & Schweers, (1997: P 255) who argue "in articulating their rationales, teachers referred to various factors shaping their views, such as student wants, and syllabus expectations. However, it was their experience as teachers and learners which emerged as a particularly powerful influence on their views about grammar teaching (p. 255)".

6. Conclusion

This study examined the extent to which some organizational variables such as work setting, and personal characteristics of teachers such as their educational level, gender, and work experience may influence their cognition about grammar. The

results of the study showed that *some* personal characteristics of teachers such as their educational level and work experience influenced *some* aspects of their beliefs about grammar but not all their belief. However, gender as another characteristic of teachers had no effect on teachers' beliefs. As to the effect of expectations and pressure of work setting, the same results were obtained. Private language institute teachers as compared with state school teachers had different beliefs about some aspects of grammar and grammar teaching. The same results were obtained for more experienced teachers as compared with less experienced teachers.

The findings have some implications for teachers' education and useful applications for L2 teacher educators to develop an understanding of EFL teachers' beliefs and help student teachers develop their existing knowledge more effectively. The results add to build up a knowledge base needed for any teachers' education program. The findings suggest the possibility of changing teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching. It is more likely that the same change would occur for other aspects of language learning and teaching. As teachers with different degree and university education had different views and beliefs about grammar, this suggests that program developers and teacher educators who are planning teacher development programs should include theories, models, techniques, procedures, and skills that are well supported by theoreticians and research findings.

In the light of the findings, educational bodies are encouraged to include teacher development programs to improve their teachers' education either by in-service programs or more professional education in colleges and universities. Such programs can provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their conceptualization of their work and bring about professional development. The results also indicate that teachers' beliefs no matter how they are formed and conceptualized may not be fully implemented and realized in the classroom due to restrictions and pressure from work environment. Teachers are not free to have their best choices. The choices are made on the basis of several personal variables and organizational constraints. If there is going to be any innovation and creativity involved in teaching, there are requirements involved. Teachers should be educated

and to do so institutes and organizations should provide the means for implementing what teachers know about their profession. A teacher being restricted by the requirements of the institute where he is working may not make use of all his potential or the most appropriate techniques, tasks, and activities. Both teachers and educational bodies are responsible for enriching these resources.

As the results showed, a more experienced teacher has a whole different set of devices and resources available to him. A less experienced and less educated teacher may not have much in her repertoire to use. Any dialogue and exchange of information between more experienced and less experienced teachers may alleviate the differences and help less experienced teachers develop a thorough and better understanding of their work.

The findings also suggest the necessity of continuous in-service training and education. Teachers' education is an ongoing process that allows teachers familiarize themselves with new trends and reflect on their beliefs and practices. This also allows teachers discuss their views and ideas about different aspect of language teaching and get feedback about their teaching. This enables teachers correct themselves and improve their understanding of their profession.

There were some limitations to the present study. The main limitation was that there was lack of observation of teachers' actual activities in the classroom. The study can be enhanced by observing teachers in the classroom to see how all these factors play out in their classes. Such a study may provide further qualitative evidence for the findings of the present study. It is quite possible that more information can better illuminative the area. If teachers' claims about teaching activities are documented by direct observation, the results may enjoy more validity.

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Appendix

Questionnaire of teachers' beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching The following questions seek to find out your views and ideas about grammar and its teaching. I would be grateful if you carefully read each item and provide an answer.

Teaching at: Private institute□   High school□   High school Junior high school □

Age: ……

Sex: Male □   **Female** □

Work experience: ….

1) What are some of your important ideas about grammar, its importance, and the way you teach it?

....
....
....
....
....

2) Read the following statements and choose the answer that bests explains your view.

	Strongly agree	agree	no idea	disagree	strongly disagree
Meaning of grammar					
1-Grammar is rules of sentence formation.	□	□	□	□	□
2-Grammar improves learners' accuracy.	□	□	□	□	□
3-Grammar is correct use of tenses.	□	□	□	□	□
4-Grammar provides the means for using language.	□	□	□	□	□
5- Grammar is both form and meaning.	□	□	□	□	□

	Strongly agree	agree	no idea	disagree	strongly disagree

Importance of learning grammar

	Strongly agree	agree	no idea	disagree	strongly disagree
6-Learning grammar is a very important component of language learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7-I spend a lot of time on teaching grammar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Teaching approach

	Strongly agree	agree	no idea	disagree	strongly disagree
8-I prefer to use examples instead of rules.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9-I ask students to focus on form by doing drills and exercises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10-I teach grammar in texts/ dialogues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11-I prefer to state and describe the rules then provide more examples.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12- I think both form and meaning should be taught together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Feedback and error correction

	Strongly agree	agree	no idea	disagree	strongly disagree
13- Providing feedback and correcting errors is very important to learning grammar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14-Sudents themselves should think about the errors they makes and find the correct forms for themselves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15- Students should help each other by discussing and correcting their errors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16- It is better that teachers correct and explain students' errors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17- I prefer to correct errors/provide feedback for most errors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18- I prefer to immediately correct errors immediately provide feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly agree	agree	no idea	disagree	strongly disagree
Teaching activities and practices					
19- I usually limit the class to the textbook and do not use other materials.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20- I use a variety of tasks and activities for more practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21-I assign some exercises for further practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22-I use both oral and written language in teaching grammar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23- I use objects, pictures, and other teaching aids in teaching grammar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24-I use games in teaching grammar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25- I use grammatical tasks such as role play and problem solving.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐