



Instructors' and Learners' Perceptions of English Grammar
Instruction for Developing Language Proficiency:
A Mixed Methods Study within Saudi Arabia and Australia

By

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Abstract

From a global perspective, English grammar teaching and learning has been a heated topic extensively discussed among Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers and scholars. This perennial debate has questioned the role of grammar in learning English, how effective available grammar teaching approaches are, in addition to when and how to introduce grammar for developing language proficiency. Little attention has been paid to perceptions of grammar and grammar instruction from the perspective of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors and learners.

Due to the lack of such research in the Saudi educational context, this study has aimed to highlight two important aspects of the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) process, instructors' and learners' perspectives, which despite their integral role have rarely been addressed. Indeed, the researcher was keen to explore current perceptions, including beliefs and preferences, in relation to grammar teaching and learning. The focus of this investigation is on the most current held beliefs and preferences of the role of grammar in learning English, as well as a specific focus on the explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit grammar instruction approaches.

The importance of this study is that it has provided the opportunity for instructors and learners from two different contexts, EFL in Saudi Arabia and ESL in Australia, to share their perceptions and discuss their beliefs about the effectiveness of grammar and grammar instruction, as grammar is still an integral component of any English language curriculum in Saudi Arabia across all levels. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed via online questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, and classroom observations addressing three main groups: Saudi University Instructors including non-Saudis (SUIs=267), Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia (SULSAs=1,768), and Saudi University learners in Australia (SULAs=420).

In this study, the quantitative data provided a demonstration of the most commonly held current beliefs about grammar instruction. The qualitative data added a valuable rationale in relation to the issues raised in the questionnaire. Such a combination contributed to an understanding of the contextual complexities which played a part in shaping the participants' beliefs and preferences as well as their classroom practice. The results of the research showed that Saudi universities' English language instructors had very similar beliefs and preferences in relation to grammar and grammar instruction as the Saudi learners who were studying in Saudi universities as well as Saudi learners who were studying in Australian universities. It also revealed that their beliefs and preferences regarding grammar teaching were not necessarily translated into practice, due to a number of constraints which were mainly shaped by learning needs and expectations as well as educational contextual factors.

The findings of this project contribute to an understanding of some of the current commonly-shared beliefs and preferences among instructors and learners about grammar learning and teaching which affected classroom practice. This thesis will assist educators, stakeholders, and policy-makers to participate in enhancing the process of English language teaching in a broader context in which a focus on instructors' and learners' perceptions is needed.

Key terms: grammar instruction, explicit grammar instruction, integrated grammar instruction, implicit grammar instruction, instructors' beliefs, learners' beliefs, learning and teaching perceptions, ESL context and EFL context.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Dedication

To all my beloved ones with no exceptions.



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“We bring our own ideologies,
our own experiences as learners
into.....
teaching.”

Quoted from one of the instructors.



Acronyms

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
FoF	Focus on Form
FoM	Focus on Meaning
FoS	Focus on FormS
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
L1	First Language/Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
MoE	Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SULAs	Saudi (Nationality) University Learners in Australia (in plural form)
SULA#	A Saudi (Nationality) University Learner in Australia + the number assigned to the participant
SULSAs	Saudi (Nationality) University Learners in Saudi Arabia (in plural form)
SULSA#	A Saudi (Nationality) University Learner in Saudi Arabia + the number assigned to the participant
SUIs	Saudi Universities' Instructors (including non-Saudis) in plural form
SUI#	A Saudi University's Instructor (including non-Saudis) + the number assigned to the participant



Introduction

Across the globe, grammar teaching and learning has been a heated topic of debate among researchers and educators for decades involving much controversy in relation to facilitating Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Azar, 2007; Celce-Murcia, 2015; Ellis, 1997, 2002, 2005a, 2006, 2015; Harmer, 1987, 2007; Hinkel, 2017, 2016; Krashen, 2002; Krashen & Terrell, 1988; Larsen-Freeman, 2003, 2015; Long, 1991, 2014; Long & Robinson, 1998; Nunan, 1998, 1999; Schmidt, 1993, 2012; Skehan, 1996, 2006; Thornbury, 1999; Truscott, 2015; Ur, 2016). Grammar teaching for developing English language proficiency has been questioned in many ways, including its effectiveness and how to approach and deliver it to maximise second language (L2) learning outcomes (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Ellis, 2002, 2006; Hinkel, 2017, 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; McKay, 2016; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Ur, 2011a).

The main debate in this area has focused on the most beneficial approaches for SLA including teaching of grammar in an implicit way through a naturalistic approach as opposed to teaching it through an explicit, isolated or integrated, instructional approach. The evidence suggests that L2 grammar related research for promoting language acquisition has been addressed widely and extensively among SLA scholars and researchers, mainly focusing on learner performance and language acquisition (Azar, 2019; Borg, 1999b; Burns, 2016; Celce-Murcia, 2015; DeKeyser, 2003; Ellis, 2002, 2005c, 2006, 2008b; Halliday, 1982, 2014; Hinkel, 2016; Krashen, 2003, 2004, April, 2009; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Skehan, 2006; Spada, 2013; Spada, Jessop, Tomita, Suzuki, & Valeo, 2014; Ur, 2011a, 2011b). However, related perceptions of grammar instruction by instructors and learners have not been explored deeply enough to settle the debate on the efficacy of explicit and implicit grammar instruction. Moreover, very limited research had been



conducted to investigate perceptions of grammar and grammar instruction thoroughly in EFL context such as Saudi Arabia (Ahmad, 2018; Alhaysony & Alhaisoni, 2017; Alsowat, 2017).

This project, therefore, explores current perceptions surrounding the beliefs and preferences related to grammar teaching of both university-level instructors and learners in Saudi Arabia and Australia. This exploration will contribute to an understanding of current teaching practices and will provide a number of insights for further language development within the Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context and in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) pedagogy.

In this introductory chapter, the researcher will present the overall setting of the project and will address its significance, context, objectives, and research questions, finally concluding with an overview of the thesis.

1.1 Grammar instruction for developing language proficiency

Research in teaching English as a second, and as a foreign, language is developing rapidly in addressing current challenges related to the successful acquisition of English (DeKeyser, 2003; Ellis, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2005c, 2008b; Krashen, 2002; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014; Lightbown, 2000; Long, 2014; Nunan, 1999; Ortega, 2014; Truscott, 2015; VanPatten & Williams, 2014). The fact that English has become the world's lingua franca is a major driving force towards the advancement of English language teaching (ELT) and learning research (Cogo, 2012; Crystal, 2003; Onsman, 2012; Sewell, 2013).

As with many other countries around the world, the popularity of the English language has increased significantly in Saudi Arabia for political, economic, and educational purposes (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alhamdan, Honan, & Hamid, 2017; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Elyas & Picard, 2010; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). Due to its international status, English language usage in Saudi Arabia has expanded to become a necessary method of communication in the government sector, including in commerce, diplomacy, higher



education, healthcare, and tourism, and also in the private sector, where English proficiency is viewed as an important skill for job seekers (Al-Hajailan, 1999, 2003; Alzahrani, 2017; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Mahib ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013; Nurunnabi, 2017; Picard, 2018).

As stated earlier, teaching English grammar to attain language proficiency has been a worldwide controversial topic among SLA researchers and scholars that had been started with the early teaching of English. Despite the fact that some scholars reject the role of grammar in facilitating language learning and proficiency, the explicit teaching of grammar still holds a central position in most ESL /EFL courses (Folse, 2016; Hinkel, 2016). In Saudi Arabia, the teaching of grammar is an integral part of any English course.

At the university level, students study English grammar for the first two years (Ahmad, Hussain, & Radzuan, 2017; Alhaysony & Alhaisoni, 2017). The delivery of English grammar in Saudi universities differs depending on the curriculum. However, explicit grammar instruction is common and, in some disciplines, a standalone grammar course is featured (Al-Hajailan, 2003; Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Assalahi, 2013; Elyas & Badawood, 2016; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018; 2014).

In relation to research into perceptions about grammar teaching in Saudi Arabia, there is a considerable shortage of studies addressing English grammar and grammar instruction, which is the primary focus of this study (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Alsowat, 2017). Alsowat (2017) conducted a systematic review of Saudi English language-related studies carried out over the past 10 years. He found that grammar was one of the least addressed topics compared to language skills, as only six studies related to grammar teaching had been reviewed (Alsowat, 2017). As suggested by Alsowat, “more research is required at all education levels to investigate the problems that Saudi EFL students face in learning grammatical rules and structure” (2017, p. 41). Accordingly, there is a lack of studies on both



grammar learning and teaching in general in Saudi Arabia and on studies that investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of grammar teaching in particular.

Driven by this scarcity of research, the aim here is to explore perceptions, including beliefs and preferences, of grammar and grammar teaching and learning grammar from the perspective of EFL (in Saudi Arabia) and ESL (in Australia) university learners and instructors. Such exploration lead to draw comparisons about beliefs and preferences in relation to grammar teaching and learning. The research has found few studies focusing on beliefs and preferences about grammar teaching in Saudi Arabia and the majority are limited to teachers' beliefs only (Al-Beiz, 2002; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Aljohani, 2012; Dajem, 2012; Mohammad & Khan, 2017).

In one study by Ahmad et al. (2017), learners and teachers were both addressed, but in a quantitative exploration that focuses on stated beliefs on grammar teaching as reported by the teachers and learners where the focus of the learners' questionnaire is to inform the teachers about their practice. The researchers (Ahmad et al., 2017) acknowledged that the “[a]ddition of qualitative measures such as classroom observations and interviews could provide a better picture of teachers' practices and the perceptions underpinning these practices” (p. 141).

Moreover, studies that have been undertaken on the Saudi perspective have rarely addressed both learners and instructors, or males and females, at the university level using mixed exploratory quantitative and qualitative research methods, despite English experiencing growing educational popularity in Saudi Arabia.

1.2 Addressing instructors' and learners' perceptions

Studying perceptions, beliefs, and preferences has been a leading topic of interest in recent times in relation to classroom practice (Barcelos, 2003; M. Borg, 2001; Borg, 1999a; S. Borg, 2001; A. V. Brown, 2009; Burns, 1992; Ellis, 2008a; Horwitz, 1985, 1999; Kagan, 1992; Kalaja, Barcelos, Aro, & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2015; Richardson, 1996; Schulz, 2001). In this



project, perceptions refer to stated beliefs and preferences that are currently held towards grammar instruction among instructors and learners (M. Borg, 2001; Pajares, 1992). The complexity of finding a proper definition of what Ellis (2008a) called “mini theories” led the researcher to choose the term perceptions to refer to both beliefs and preferences. This is based on Freeman (1996) justification which says, “the issue is not the pluralism of labels, but the recognition of the phenomenon itself” (p. 32).

Research on teachers’ and learners’ beliefs and preferences in SLA flourished in the early 1970s in the United States of America (Barnard & Scampton, 2008; M. Borg, 2001; Borg, 1999a; Horwitz, 1985, 1999; Richardson, 1996). It has been established that pedagogical practice is greatly influenced by teachers’ beliefs. Teachers have also been seen as thinkers (Richards, 1998) who theorize and act upon their assumptions, a practice in which teaching becomes a “thinking activity and teachers as people who construct their own personal and workable theories of teaching” (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004, p. 244). On the same page, learners’ beliefs in language learning have centred around the idea that learners are viewed as “individuals approaching language learning in their own unique way” and that their own beliefs and expectations greatly influence their learning, as Horwitz argued (1985; 1999, p. 558).

The relationship between belief and practice has received considerable attention from ELT researchers in relation to promoting the experience of language learning through understanding and evaluating the nature of the belief-practice relationship though still not well developed (Borg, 1999a, 2003b; Kalaja et al., 2015; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

The researcher has, therefore, focused on the perceptions of grammar instruction as revealed within explored beliefs and preferences. Two aspects will be addressed, both the instructors’ and the learners’ beliefs and preferences about grammar teaching and learning for developing English language proficiency. Exploration of the perceived beliefs and preferences



of instructors and learners have had only limited attention and insufficient in-depth investigation for the purpose of improving the learning process (M. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003b; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Burns, 1992; Ellis, 2008a; Horwitz, 1985; Pajares, 1992). This lack of focus is more evident in the EFL context and, in particular, in teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP), the focus of this project, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), especially in Saudi Arabia, where the need for improving learning outcomes is greater to contribute in improving the persistent low level of English language proficiency (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alsowat, 2017; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018; Picard, 2018).

Several aspects may influence instructors' and learners' perceptions of grammar teaching, including the purpose of the learning, as well as context, beliefs, previous experiences, and different expectations (Azar, 2019; AzarGrammar, 2012, October 30; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Ellis, 2002, 2006; Lapp & Fisher, 2011; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Nunan, 1998; L. Scott, 2011; Ur, 2011a). The exploration of instructors' and learners' perspectives in this study aims to add improvements to the Saudi English curriculum so that educators can use the findings. The study also highlights the compatibility of SLA approaches in the Saudi EFL context by incorporating perceived beliefs and preferences from two groups who experienced EFL and ESL learning contexts. The ESL context will be explored in Australia where the targeted Saudi university learners have been pursuing their higher education. The EFL context on the other hand addresses the Saudi university learners in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of conducting this investigation is to contribute to the understanding of English grammar instruction preferred by Saudi students who have learned English both inside and outside of Saudi Arabia, to get the most benefit from the differently employed methods.



The primary actors within the teaching context are *instructors* and *learners* who play an integral role in the language learning process, and who can therefore depict the reality of classroom practice. English language instructors in Saudi Arabia and learners often have only a limited contribution to the development of plans and policies, despite their primary role in implementing educational goals into real classroom practice as influenced by their beliefs and preferences, learners' needs and expectations, and other contextual factors (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Alsowat, 2017; Asiri, 2017; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017). Having said this, the voices of instructors and learners are rarely heard and explored as a means to enhance the learning experience, specifically in relation to English language curricula. To further explore such tensions, the researcher on this project has focused on instructors' and learners' perceptions of English grammar teaching, in particular, within their perceived role of promoting language proficiency.

Instructors and learners need to be an important focus of pedagogical research in which the opportunity is given to them to reflect upon, and better communicate their thoughts on the current learning context. According to Basturkmen (2012); Basturkmen et al. (2004); Ellis (2008a), research on teachers' and learners' beliefs and 'within-classroom' practices should receive more attention due to their influential roles in shaping the outcomes of the learning experience.

Basturkmen (2012) reviewed the research on the level of correspondence between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practice. Such studies have revealed contradictory results between beliefs and teaching practice that can be found in: 1) theory vs. teachers' beliefs; 2) teachers' beliefs vs. learners' beliefs; and 3) teachers' and learners' beliefs vs. context-specific requirements. Basturkmen indicated that the lack of correspondence between teachers' and learners' perceptions could not be generalised due to the limitations of many of these study designs. In the review, most of the studies employed case study methods which, due to their



in-depth qualitative exploration, are difficult to conduct for larger samples. Thus, the specific case studies explored correspond to their specific context, which could not be generalised to a larger population, as Basturkmen (2012) explained. This reveals the need to employ mixed research methods to attain a broader exploration of teachers' and learners' beliefs that utilising quantitative method gives the researcher a tool to be able to generalise a sample to reflect the population.

Nevertheless, related research has confirmed that there are other compelling factors that have contributed to the discrepancies within the findings that are strongly related to the context of the teaching (Basturkmen, 2012; A. V. Brown, 2009; Burns, 1992; Burns & Borg, 2015; Horwitz, 1999; Hu & Tian, 2012; Kagan, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Further investigation is needed to reveal the complexity of EFL grammar teaching-related beliefs within specific educational contexts through different research methods. Shifting the ELT research focus to teaching practice contributes to an understanding of the dynamic relationship between teachers and learners, which has lead researchers, such as Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001) to advocate for post-method pedagogy. Kumaravadivelu has argued that it is time for teachers to move beyond the limitations of prescribed educational methods. This is due to the influential role of teachers in addressing needs within each specific context. Post-method pedagogy, as stated by Kumaravadivelu, must adhere to three main conditions. It needs to:

- (a) facilitate the advancement of a context-sensitive language education based on a true understanding of local linguistic, sociocultural, and political particularities;
- (b) rupture the reified role relationship between theorists and practitioners by enabling teachers to construct their own theory of practice; and



(c) tap the sociopolitical consciousness that participants bring with them in order to aid their quest for identity formation and social transformation (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 537).

Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001) explained that post-method pedagogy is not a well-defined approach, unlike the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) or the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, but rather, it serves as “a search for an alternative to method” that instructors can consider to better address the very specific context needs which “must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). The importance of raising this issue strongly connects to the present study, where the instructors and learners were given the opportunity to share their beliefs and preferences about current grammar teaching methods which as literature confirmed greatly influence the teaching practice. Moreover, this will provide insight into how to better teach grammar for this particular group (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2003; Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015).

In reference to the relationship between theorists and practitioners, it has been noted that there is a mismatch between SLA research and L2 pedagogy. Spada explained that this mismatch should be emphasised in relation to context, as a one size fits all approach is not applicable (Spada, 2013). Recognizing the teaching context in post-method pedagogy expands the role of language classroom practitioners, instructors, and learners, as moving from receptive doers to more interactive roles in which they have more flexibility to enhance the learning process (H. D. Brown, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001).

In this sense, another important dimension appears in relation to non-native English language instructors, as well as ESL/EFL adult learners. The beliefs and preferences of non-native English language instructors was greatly influenced by their successful SLA



experiences, which consequently contributed greatly in shaping their teaching approach. Adult ESL/EFL learners, specifically at the university level, also reached a stage where they became aware of their own preferences and how to meet their own individual needs and purposes. This salient fact, if addressed properly, could pave the way to bridging the gap between theory and teaching practice reconnecting them to needs and expectations within specific contexts. Accordingly, exploring beliefs and preferences specifically in relation to instructors and learners has been gaining popularity in English language teaching research, but has not yet received much attention in the Saudi EFL context (Ahmad et al., 2017; Al Asmari, 2014; Al-Beiz, 2002; Al-Osaimi & Wedell, 2014; Al-Roomy, 2015; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Aljohani, 2012; Alqahtani, 2015; Asiri, 2017; Assalahi, 2013; M. Borg, 2001; Burns, 1992).

In this sense, Richards and Rodgers explained the relationship between instructors and learners by stating that “successful learners create their own learning pathways, and effective teachers seek to recognize learners’ approaches to learning, to help them acquire effective learning strategies and to build a focus on the learner into their lessons” (2010, p. 331). Motivated by this principle, the researcher has perceived the significance of examining instructors’ and learners’ perceptions, including their beliefs, preferences, and attitudes which contribute to shaping their identities within the classroom, and which probably influence their practice in one way or another. Establishing a comparative investigation of beliefs and preferences is important for bridging the gap between instructors and learners. This will contribute to enhancing the learning experience by avoiding the negative consequences of learners’ expectations not being met, as in Horwitz’s findings (1985). If a mismatch between instructors’ and learners’ perceptions exists, this will also have a negative impact on the motivation of the learner, as indicated by Schulz (2001). Within the ELT curriculum and sphere of instruction, it is important that the researcher investigates current practice to better understand established beliefs and to work within these, rather than imposing ineffective



strategies that do not have a close link to reality (Ahmed, 2013; Burns, 1992; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Long & Robinson, 1998; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Skehan, 2006; Spada, 2013; Ur, 2011b).

1.3 An overview of ELT in the Saudi context

According to Kachru's (2006) three concentric circles model, Saudi Arabia is within the expanding circle in which English is still taught as a foreign language and has not been used as an official means of communication. Over the last five years, Saudi Arabia has experienced major changes and planned developments that have enabled wider engagement with the world, starting with the Saudi National Transformation 2020, followed by Saudi Vision 2030 (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017).

The national transformation program 2020 was established in 2015 with a five-year plan. This transformational plan targeted 24 governmental sectors which the ministry of education considered one of the important targets. The plan will be evaluated in 2020 to assess its outputs and reinforce the proposed improvements approaching the 2030 vision. Concerning English language, the ministry of education established an English language centre to promote the level of English proficiency among English language teachers and facilitate learning English to help fulfil the educational and job markets requirements. According to the 2018 report released by MOE (Ministry of Education, 2018c), the ELC has accomplished 30% of the objectives. Promoting ELT and EFL/ESL learning has had a stronger focus within recent Saudi national educational reforms, expanding to include teachers, researchers, and students across all disciplines (Alzahrani, 2017; Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018; Nurunnabi, 2017).

English language education was first introduced into Saudi Arabia along with the establishment of primary and secondary schools in 1932, but this was limited to the intermediate and secondary levels (Al-Hajailan, 1999; Al-Shammary, 1984). Since then, the English language curriculum has experienced many major changes in adapting to contextual

needs (Al-Seghayer, 2005, 2017; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Alshahrani, 2016; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Elyas & Badawood, 2016; 2014) In 2004, English became a compulsory subject in the country's primary schools, starting from year six; this decision was seen as a proposed improvement to Saudi student language levels, assuming that introducing English in the early stages of education would improve learning outcomes (Al-Seghayer, 2005; Almenieci, 2005). In 2011, the Ministry of Education (MoE) expanded the program to commence from year four, effective from 2011 onward, although English classes were still limited to 45 minutes four times a week (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). In early 2019, English courses were introduced to a number of selected schools for early primary years one, two, and three, in order to test proper implementation for all primary year levels in the future.

At the university level, the English language has been introduced into several public and private universities in a range of disciplines (Al-Kahtany, Faruk, & Zumor, 2016; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). Several Saudi private and public universities have already replaced Arabic with English as the medium of instruction. The promotion of the English language has been progressively supported in programs aimed at both educators and learners (Al Khateeb, 2015; Al-Seghayer, 2015; Albaiz, 2016; Elyas & Badawood, 2016; Nasser, 2015).

Another contributing factor to the enhancement of EFL is related to the ongoing scholarship program initiated by King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz in 2005 (Ministry of Education). The program has substantially influenced the perceived importance of improving English fluency in Saudi Arabia. Thousands of students annually are granted fully-funded scholarships to study primarily in English-speaking countries to pursue their education (see Figure 1.1). Recently, the MoE restricted the scholarship universities list to only those with high global rankings in mostly English-speaking countries (Picard, 2018). Furthermore, most higher education programs in Saudi Arabia also require a reasonable English language proficiency level to access the recent research in the field.

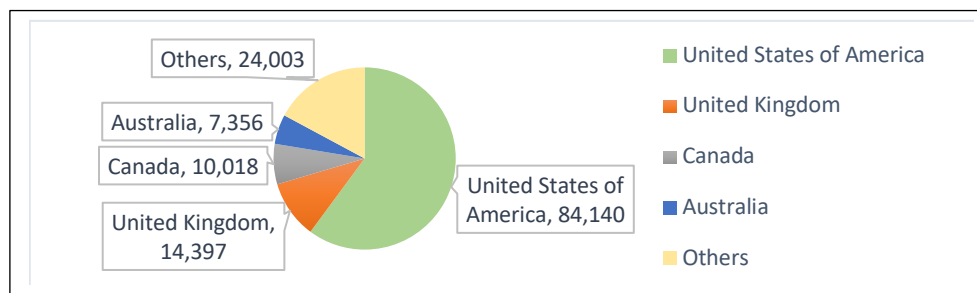


Figure 0.1 Number of Saudi Students Studying Abroad
(Extracted from the MoE census report for 2016/2017)

Developing English language proficiency is a goal set by the Saudi education system to help learners acquire knowledge and expertise in the sciences, the arts, and in economic development; this objective also fulfils national and international purposes (Al-Hajailan, 1999; Al-Seghayer, 2005; Al-Shammary, 1984; Elyas & Badawood, 2016; Elyas & Picard, 2010). Language learning outcomes, however, remain disappointing despite the efforts and developments described above (see Figure 1.2) with several barriers existing in the development of English teaching in the Saudi curriculum (Al-Seghayer, 2005, 2017; Alrabai, 2016; Alshahrani, 2016; Alsowat, 2017; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Elyas & Badawood, 2016; Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018).

Al-Seghayer (2017) identified the four main constraints: administrative, curricular, pedagogical, and beliefs about language. These constraints represent the major issues in the Saudi EFL context. Although these four factors may hinder the development of English teaching in Saudi Arabia, other significant factors have contributed to the increased demand for learning English. In 2005, the Saudi Ministry of Education introduced a compulsory intensive English program in the preparatory year for all public universities in Saudi Arabia (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017). Several programs have also been introduced for the Saudi community to develop English competency, mainly for educational and vocational purposes.



Within the higher education sector, there has been significant investment in research to promote the widely recognised Saudi national transformation in line with the MoE and Saudi Vision 2030 objectives. Currently, Saudi Arabia is initiating comprehensive widespread changes to promote the country's economy on a global scale. According to the educational objectives of Vision 2030, at least 5 Saudi universities should be ranked among the top 200 worldwide. As English is the language used in the majority of research studies, the need to improve English teaching practice has greatly increased (Alzahrani, 2017; Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018; Nurunnabi, 2017). To accelerate English proficiency, the MoE has recently announced a new program, "English for all" (Ministry of Education, 2018b). In its early stages, the program targets teachers across all disciplines providing them with well-known online platforms, including the British Council, National Geographic Learning, Education First, Voxy-TETEC, and Rosetta Stone. The program has also been made available to all secondary and university students at special discounted prices. These investments in promoting English language learning highlight its growing importance as an objective within Saudi Vision 2030.

Evidently, English has become crucial for most jobs and university entry and a must in several Saudi universities to pursue higher education. English is mostly learned in Saudi Arabia for academic and professional purposes and the proficiency level is therefore expected to be higher than ever before.

1.4 Research questions

This study aims to provide an opportunity for Saudi university-level English language instructors (including non-Saudis) and Saudi university-level learners to reflect on their own preferences and beliefs in relation to how grammar should be taught, which will effectively contribute to the language learning process. As previously explained, grammar is still considered a vital component of the English language curriculum in Saudi Arabia. Therefore,



this study focuses on the instructors' and learners' beliefs and preferences on the role of grammar in learning English, developing EAP, and how to approach it. The relationship between beliefs, preferences, and classroom practice, from the perspective of instructors and learners, warrants a more specific investigation to better address how current grammar instruction can be developed to promote language proficiency from the viewpoint of both instructors and learners. The project, then, posits the following four research questions that will guide the overall investigation and the data collection process across the three target groups of Saudi Universities' Instructors (SUIs), Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia (SULSAs), and Saudi University Learners in Australia (SULAs):

Research Question 1: What are the current beliefs about grammar and grammar instruction held by SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs?

Research Question 2: How do SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs perceive the importance of grammar instruction for EAP?

Research Question 3: How do SUIs perceive explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit grammar instruction compared to SULSAs' and SULAs' perceptions for developing EAP?

Research Question 4: What are the characteristics of the Saudi EFL context which SUIs and SULSAs indicate as influencing their beliefs about grammar and practices of grammar teaching and learning?

1.5 Research objectives

The present study aims to explore beliefs and preferences in relation to the teaching of English grammar to both Saudi EFL university-level instructors and learners in Saudi Arabia, and Saudi ESL university-level learners in Australia. The initial target sample for ESL Saudi university learners was to include learners who are studying in United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Canada and Australia. Unfortunately, the process to get access



to those learners was difficult and only a few responses had been received. Based on the supervisory team consultancy, the focus had been reduced to Saudi ESL learners in Australia to represent the ESL context. The learning context is an important dimension of the study, as learners' views are from two different contexts (Saudi Arabia and Australia) but with similar education backgrounds (all having had their pre-university education in Saudi Arabia). This will allow the researcher to assess the influence of the context to the learner's beliefs of English language learning across the three groups. It also provides significant information about teaching grammar within EAP programs in Australia compared to the EAP in Saudi Arabia.

The study aims to discuss these perceptions, comparing them to similar empirical studies on beliefs, as well as empirical findings in SLA research. The study also focuses on understanding the learning needs of university-level adult learners and instructors with experience in the field who are aware of the importance of developing their English for their current academic purposes. The aims are outlined below as follows:

- ◆ To identify current beliefs and preferences of English grammar instruction from a Saudi perspective.
- ◆ To compare beliefs and preferences of instructors and learners in relation to English grammar instruction within Saudi Arabia.
- ◆ To compare the beliefs and preferences of instructors and learners to SLA theory and research.
- ◆ To compare the beliefs and preferences of instructors and learners to similar empirical studies in ESL and EFL contexts with a specific focus on the Saudi EFL context.
- ◆ To compare the beliefs and preferences of learners studying English within their native Saudi Arabia to those studying English abroad in Australia.
- ◆ To support suitable and effective teaching of English grammar in the Saudi context and to promote the development of English language proficiency based on the rationale provided by the participants.

1.6 Significance of the research

The learning outcomes of Saudi students have been considered disappointing and student proficiency is considered to be low (Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2015; Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). This outcome makes English language education a problematic issue, as Saudi universities generally require a certain level of English proficiency for admission, as evidenced by an official English language test result such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or the Standardized Test of English Proficiency (STEP) (see Figure 3.2 in Chapter 3 for further details). According to the world's largest English language proficiency index (EF EPI) for 2018, English proficiency in Saudi Arabia is considered very low as it ranked 83 out of 88 countries. Figure 1.2 presents a screenshot of the recent EF English Proficiency Index for Saudi Arabia in 2018.

Image removed due to copyright restriction.

Figure 0.2 EF English Proficiency Index (2018)
Screenshot from: <https://www.ef-australia.com.au/epi/regions/middle-east/saudi-arabia/>



Given this context, although English language instructors and learners should have a say in determining their preferences based on their perceptions, this aspect has rarely been addressed in the literature. Exploring the beliefs and preferences of the most active participants in the learning process, i.e. instructors and learners, is vital to obtaining a clear picture of in-class practices that will enable an assessment of curriculum objectives and outcomes. Accordingly, research on instructors' and learners' perceptions of the current practice of English grammar instruction in Saudi Arabia is very limited, thereby leading to ambiguity in assessing the current and future education goals of English teaching (Assalahi, 2013).

Focusing on the beliefs of teachers and learners is a new phenomenon that requires further investigation due to its beneficial role in assessing and addressing educational issues surrounding the learning environment (Ahmad et al., 2017; M. Borg, 2001; Borg, 1999a, 2003a; Burns, 1992; Ellis, 2008a; Horwitz, 1985; Pajares, 1992). This study focuses on adult learners for two main reasons. The first is related to their experience of learning English in the schooling system and then at the university level. Between these two contexts, a huge gap in language proficiency forces university language education to start teaching English at the basic level. The second reason is related to the successful attempt to raise language competencies for university-level students, which is specifically evident for university students majoring in English-related courses or who are undertaking their degree in disciplines in which English is the medium of instruction.

The growing demand for learning English encourages, if not forces, educators and researchers to contribute to the development of the learning process. Recognizing the importance of providing high quality English teaching will enable the current and the next generation to connect effectively with the global community in different contexts and for different purposes. In Saudi Arabia, the task of increasing English language competency is constrained by several factors that have held back progress and maintained a low rate of



proficiency over a lengthy period. Researchers have investigated the related constraints, including their various dimensions and the influence of educators and stakeholders in developing the curriculum (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018; Picard, 2018).

Accordingly, exploring their views and observing their teaching practices will contribute to developing English language proficiency in Saudi Arabia in several ways. For educators, the findings of this project will provide ideas about how ELT can be improved to address the low proficiency outcomes of nine years of compulsory teaching of English language in primary and secondary schooling, by acknowledging the most widely-held beliefs and preferences of instructors and learners towards grammar teaching, which is considered one of the most challenging aspects of learning English, especially in the EFL context. For English language instructors, the outcomes of this research will provide a better understanding of how grammar is, or should be, taught to develop English language proficiency in Saudi Arabia. Instructors will also gain a deeper understanding of learners' current perceptions of grammar instruction. Additionally, the participants will be given the opportunity to express themselves and share their valuable ideas, as they have been through nine years of English learning in school and can therefore, with their university English-language instructors, draw the closest picture of reality. These findings will also broaden the discussion on how to improve the quality of grammar teaching, particularly in the Saudi EFL classroom.

To the researcher's knowledge, studies that have targeted both instructors and learners are very limited (Ahmad, 2018). The researcher developed this study to investigate beliefs and preferences about grammar and grammar teaching to address a number of important issues that have not received appropriate attention. Firstly, while some studies targeted both learners and instructors, they did not investigate their perceptions employing identical data collection instruments. Some studies used different methods for instructors and learners (e.g. a

questionnaire with instructors but an interview for learners) or the same method for instructors and learners but focused on different topics/themes (e.g. a questionnaire for instructors and learners but with different questions for each group). The present study employed the questionnaire and the interviews with identical topics investigated in the questionnaires, discussed in the interviews, for both instructors and learners, and observed in the classrooms.

Valeo and Spada (2016) study has a primary influence in shaping the current project. The researcher, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three, has replicated most of the Likert-scale items used in this study, which had previously been developed and validated by the same team in Spada, Barkaoui, Peters, So, and Valeo (2009). Consent was obtained from Nina Spada, and the researcher extended the study to investigate instructors' and learners' beliefs and preferences about the explicit isolated and the explicit integrated approaches while also adding the implicit instruction approach. In Valeo and Spada (2016), learners' and teachers' beliefs were explored according to similar concepts using closed-ended and open-ended questions, but with no observations or interviews being conducted. Moreover, as in Valeo and Spada (2016), the researcher targeted Saudi university-level EFL instructors and learners in Saudi Arabia as well as Saudi ESL university learners in Australia.

Three research methods have been employed starting with questionnaires and then interviews which were followed by in-class observations, with all being focused on the same concepts. Moreover, this study can be distinguished from other Saudi-related studies as it has embedded two contexts, with more than one Saudi university being included to achieve greater geographical distribution, and the study not being limited to a single gender, as the majority of Saudi studies have targeted either an exclusively male or female sample due to the gender-segregated education system.

1.7 Overview of the thesis chapters

This thesis consists of six chapters, which are structured as follows:



Chapter 2 presents a literature review of the main concepts and topics related to grammar instruction within SLA and to the frame of the current study. This is followed by a review of related grammar teaching studies, specifically in the EFL and ESL contexts, including in Saudi Arabia. A discussion of the literature on the beliefs of instructors and learners in relation to language teaching will also be undertaken.

Chapter 3 explains the overall research methodology from initial planning to data collection and analysis. It explains the research design, the participants, the sampling procedure, data collection instrument development, pilot testing, ethical issues, and the data analysis procedure.

Chapter 4 reports upon, and discusses, the quantitative and qualitative findings of the first and second research questions across the three participant groups that focus on current beliefs about grammar from a Saudi perspective.

Chapter 5 reports upon, and discusses, the quantitative and qualitative findings of the third and fourth research questions across the three participant groups. The third question focuses on explicit, implicit, and integrated preferences and beliefs about grammar instruction. The fourth question outlines the characteristics of the Saudi EFL context which the participants suggest influences their beliefs about grammar and the practice of grammar teaching and learning.

Chapter 6 provides an overall summary of the findings, the implications for teaching practice, and directions for further research in the Saudi EFL context.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, an overview of the project has been presented, including the importance of addressing instructors' and learners' beliefs and preferences within the ELT research field. The chapter has also demonstrated the recent widespread enhancements to the Saudi English language context, which have had a significant influence on the current and future practice of



English language teaching. Also, the objectives of the study have been specified highlighting the significance of the research and the research questions that have led the exploration of perceptions about grammar instruction, through comparing instructors' and learners' perceptions about teaching English grammar in the classroom setting. Finally, an overview of the thesis chapters has been presented in order to provide a clear overview of the study.





2 Review of the Literature

2.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter presents the literature on the teaching and learning of English grammar, focusing on the most current approaches within two broad contexts: the English as a Second Language (ESL) context and the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. In this chapter, the researcher will briefly review the different theories related to the effectiveness of various methods of grammar instruction, specifically in the second language acquisition (SLA) field, including the Saudi Arabian English for Academic Purposes (EAP) perspective. The study primarily focuses on instructors' and learners' views, and investigates their preferences and beliefs related to current practices of grammar instruction that they perceive assist in developing English language proficiency. Furthermore, there will be a focus on relevant current empirical studies conducted in the EFL- and ESL-related contexts similar to this project, which are limited to instructors' and learners' perceptions. The aim of discussing these studies, therefore, is to shed light on instructors' and learners' beliefs and preferences in relation to a range of grammar teaching approaches.

2.2 Definition of grammar

The acquisition of grammar in any language, including English, has been extensively explored by researchers in the field of SLA. Linguists and researchers continue to debate the adoption and development of different methods to facilitate the proficient learning of a second language (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Ellis, 1985, 1991; Halliday, 2014; Hinkel, 2016; Krashen, 2009; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Nunan, 1999; VanPatten & Williams, 2014; Williams, 1998). As the present study is related to English grammar teaching and learning, the researcher will examine the most discussed issues



around grammar teaching and learning, related to the scope of this study, to obtain a deeper understanding of the proposed study, and then to relate these to the beliefs and preferences of Saudi learners and instructors of English. In this project, the literature on the teaching of English grammar will be limited to the ESL/EFL fields to specifically address adult learners who are learning English for academic purposes. Different theories have been proposed a range of effective methods to attain formal language proficiency; but before addressing these, the researcher will briefly define the terms ‘grammar’ and ‘grammar teaching’ from the SLA perspective. This section will assist with an understanding of the current reported perceptions of grammar and grammar teaching according to the instructors and learners who participated in this study.

Grammar as a term can simply refer to the rules and linguistic structures shaping a particular language (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word *grammar* was originally related to the teaching of Latin and Greek. Eventually, the term was applied to other languages as represented in Ben Jonson’s 16th century book entitled *The English Grammar*. Jonson described grammar as “the art of true and well-speaking a language: the writing is but an Accident” (1909, p. 3). Grammar, as Jonson discussed, consists of two main parts; etymology which refers to “the true notation of words”, and syntax representing “the right ordering of them” (1909, p. 3). Such an old-fashioned definition of grammar in the early teaching of English, emphasised the importance of grammar not only in developing correct structure, but also in delivering specific meaning in both writing and speaking. Currently, a comprehensive linguistic definition of grammar is:

That department of the study of a language which deals with its inflectional forms or other means of indicating the relations of words in the sentence, and with the rules for employing these in accordance with established usage; usually including also the



department which deals with the phonetic system of the language and the principles of its representation in writing (Oxford English Dictionary).

English grammar, in particular, is also viewed as a system of syntax that eventually defines the order and patterns by which words and phrases are arranged within a sentence that create meaning (Ellis, 2002; Nunan, 1998; Swan, 2002; Ur, 2011b).

English grammar, therefore, involves mastering these complex linguistic aspects of the language that require making an array of decisions involving when and why to use one form of grammar and not the other (Lapp & Fisher, 2011). The definition of grammar, apparently, varies among scholars as it is influenced by their views of the role of grammar in developing the language learning process. In teaching practice, grammar is often related to formal accuracy where its primary role in conveying meaning is disregarded (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Ur, 2011b). Thornbury provided a definition of grammar which more likely reflects the sense of the SLA field:

Grammar, after all, is a description of the regularities in a language, and knowledge of these regularities provides the learner with the means to generate a potentially enormous number of original sentences (Thornbury, 1999, p. 15).

To Thornbury, grammar represents the “the regularities in a language” and getting to know them will enable learners to produce their own sentences enormously. The writer also connected grammar to meaning, stating that “[g]rammar communicates meaning - meanings of a very precise kind” (Thornbury, 1999, p. 3). Grammar, according to Thornbury, is like a tool that enables the written and spoken messages to be conveyed meaningfully despite the absence of face-to-face communication. He stressed the importance of grammar, particularly



in the context of writing, whereas in oral communication, broken language, or as he described it, “baby talk”, simple words can be enough to deliver the intended meaning (Thornbury, 1999, p. 3). Gramming, as defined by Larsen-Freeman means “... the ability to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately” (2003, p. 143). In this sense, using correct grammar in communication sounds more articulate and skilled.

Recently, a number of definitions have reasserted the role of grammar in delivering meaning rather than viewing it only as an isolated set of rigid rules to enhance formal accuracy. Grammar, then, is best viewed as a means to describe the regularities of language, deliver meaning, and enable learners to produce language genuinely. This definition would reflect the role of grammar according to the ESL and EFL learning and teaching experience where the exposure to the target language is limited and would not establish a solid base for learners to negotiate the different linguistics aspects.

2.3 Definition of grammar instruction

Shifting the attention to grammar in practice, the term “grammar teaching” refers to an explicit approach that illustrates and explains grammar rules and structures directly in a way that learners are conscious about them (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Ellis, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Thornbury, 1999; Ur, 2011a). This depicts the traditional view of grammar teaching as explained by Ellis, which had been “viewed as the presentation and practice of discrete grammatical structures” (Ellis, 2006, p. 84). Therefore, grammar teaching is considered as the analytical presentation of language structures and rules that aim to help learners attain accuracy in using the target language (Nunan, 1998). Ellis (2006), for instance, introduced a definition of grammar teaching that reflects the same idea of shifting learners’ attention to a particular grammatical structure “to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalise it” (p. 84). Accordingly, the definition of grammar instruction is mostly linked to the teaching of “rules



and formal correctness rather than to meaning” (Ur, 2011a, p. 507). Teaching grammar is always linked with learning grammar as the process involves both instructors and learners.

On the other side of the coin, grammar learning is a significant aspect of SLA for adult learners who seek accuracy in learning the language. Grammar and the development of accuracy have proven to be two of the challenging features of a second/foreign language to master and of significant concern for learners (DeKeyser, 1998). According to DeKeyser, the complexity of learning grammar could be related to the grammatical form itself or in the approach to teaching it. This difficulty relates to a number of factors discussed by researchers and practitioners, which vary according to the learners’ level, purpose, and context (Ellis, 2006; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Nunan, 1998; Skehan, 2006; Thornbury, 1999). The variety of forms and usage, for instance, sometimes triggers confusion among ESL/EFL learners. According to Truscott (2015), this confusion could be related to the level of consciousness in learning the target language. Adult learners are aware that there are rules to memorise and practice in order to be accurate and to develop their language acquisition. In this sense, they have a level of consciousness about the grammar rules which can impede their communication (Ellis, 2002; Truscott, 2015). This impediment also affects them in expressing complex thoughts, because it is difficult for ESL/EFL students to construct grammatically-correct sentences. They find it difficult to piece together the rules of the grammar they learn on a regular basis (Ellis, 2006).

As suggested by Larsen-Freeman (2003), grammar can be considered as the fifth language skill in its role in conveying meaning and maintaining accuracy. Larsen-Freeman introduced the term “grammaring” to reflect the concept of considering grammar as the fifth language skill in addition to the other four language skills of writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Treating grammar as a skill helps educators to overcome the difficulties in applying grammatical rules while using the language. She suggested that “skill development takes practice, and learning grammar takes practice”; however, the practice is not limited to drills



and boring exercises (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). The grammaring approach offers learners the opportunity to use their grammar knowledge and implement it as another skill, alongside the four basic skills, to acquire the language. The grammaring approach could be present in a successful language class, and yet it may be underestimated or go unnoticed as an official approach to teaching grammar.

Indeed, English grammar instruction receives much attention and is often challenged theoretically within current SLA research, which consequently influences the role of grammar, language pedagogy, curriculum development, and textbook design. In the following sections, a brief overview of the place of grammar instruction in SLA-related research, theory, and findings will be presented to provide a clearer overview of how current grammar teaching practices have been developed. This overview also serves the purpose of this study in contextualising perceptions of effective grammar teaching according to the viewpoints of instructors and learners.

2.4 Grammar in SLA research and language pedagogy

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a term related to learning and acquiring a second language (Ellis, 2006, 2008b; Lightbown, 2000; Ortega, 2014; VanPatten & Williams, 2014). The second language in the SLA field refers to learning any additional language other than the mother tongue within a context in which this language is considered as a second or foreign language (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). SLA first emerged as a sub-field of linguistics and eventually developed to become an independent field of study with increased research to support it (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Hinkel, 2016). SLA is considered to be a young sub-discipline compared to other areas of linguistics, as it has only become popular since the late 1960s (Cummins & Davison, 2007; Ellis, 1985, 2008b; Gass & Mackey, 2012; Krashen, 2009; Lapp & Fisher, 2011; Lightbown, 2000; Long & Doughty, 2009; Nunan, 1999; Ortega, 2014). For more than half a century, SLA researchers mainly presented theories that can be categorised



within two main contexts, instructed second language acquisition and naturalistic second language acquisition. According to DeKeyser, “Second language acquisition – naturalistic, instructed, or both – has long been a common activity for a majority of the human species and is becoming ever more vital as second languages themselves increase in importance” (2003, p. 4).

English Language Teaching (ELT), as a crucial part of the SLA field, experienced great popularity in the early 21st century, in accordance with a rapidly increasing number of second and foreign language learners (Ellis, 2006; Lightbown, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2010; VanPatten & Williams, 2014). The reasons for this development were primarily linked to World War II, immigration, and the internationalisation of education. Since this time, there has been significant development in the field of language teaching led by linguists and others who have introduced several language teaching approaches. This began with grammar-based methods, known as structural approaches in the United Kingdom (UK) and Audiolingualism in the United States of America (USA) (Richards & Rodgers, 2010).

One of the leading topics in SLA is the role of consciousness and level of awareness in acquiring the second/foreign language, which is directly linked to the teaching of grammar. This has raised some debate in relation to teaching and learning processes (Ellis, 2002; Robinson, 1997; Schmidt, 1993, 2012; Truscott, 2015). Raising consciousness about the language has been always linked to the explicit teaching of the formal aspects of the language, and the degree of explicitness in teaching grammar, in particular. Theories and hypotheses related to teaching grammar in any language involve a perennial debate on the use of explicit and implicit approaches like the swing of a pendulum (DeKeyser, 2003; Ellis, 2005c, 2012; Spada, 2013). Implicit and explicit grammar teaching were both introduced in the early teaching of English. Explicit learning, according to Brown (2007), is a process in which



learners are conscious and aware of the presented linguistic item. This is in direct contrast to implicit grammar teaching.

Grammar teaching through explicit instruction adopts an analytical presentation of grammar rules and provides related practice. Accuracy and appropriateness of producing the language are important aspects of explicit grammar instruction (Basturkmen, 2018; Celce-Murcia, 2015; Ur, 2011a, 2016). Implicit grammar instruction, on the other hand, exposes learners to the language in use, with no intended explicit explanations of the form. So, implicit instruction emulates the natural first language acquisition experience, known also as the natural approach, proposed by Krashen and Terrell (Krashen, 2002, 2009; Krashen & Terrell, 1988; Terrell, 1977, 1982) in which learners are immersed in a rich communicative language context (DeKeyser, 2003; Ellis, 2012). Within these two broad learning contexts, a number of grammar teaching approaches have emerged and developed to serve different learning settings and groups.

Ellis, a pioneer researcher in this field, conducted extensive research on form of instruction and focused on related theories, practices, implementation, and expectations (1997, 2005c, 2008b). Explicit and implicit instruction is articulated in Ellis's (2012) words as:

Explicit instruction directs learners not just to attend to grammatical forms but also to develop conscious mental representations of them. Learners know what they are supposed to be learning. Implicit instruction aims to attract learners' attention to exemplars of linguistic forms as these occur in communicative input but does not seek to develop any awareness or understanding of the 'rules' that describe these forms (p. 275).



Based on the above quote, explicit and implicit instruction have different roles in presenting the language; this aspect has been the subject of negotiation among researchers and practitioners regarding when, how, and why they should employ one method and not the other. Therefore, linguists and educationalists often adjust, refine, and develop educational teaching methods for the teaching of grammar and the English language as a whole to ESL/EFL students to provide an optimal environment for learning the language.

In reviewing the literature, the researcher will consider the position of grammar and grammar instruction within a number of SLA theories and pedagogical approaches that have contributed greatly to determining the role of grammar in facilitating second language acquisition. A brief description of current approaches will be presented to locate the role of grammar within each of them, and subsequently, to relate these approaches to the Saudi participants' beliefs and preferences within the ESL and EFL contexts. There is a specific focus on CLT and GTM or traditional methods, as these have been popular in the historical trajectory of English teaching in Saudi Arabia. A discussion of the applicability of these language teaching approaches assists with defining and understanding current beliefs about, and preferences for, grammar instruction as explored in this project. Below is a chart of the most commonly discussed grammar teaching concepts related to this project, developed by the researcher to provide an overview of the following sections (see Figure 2.1).

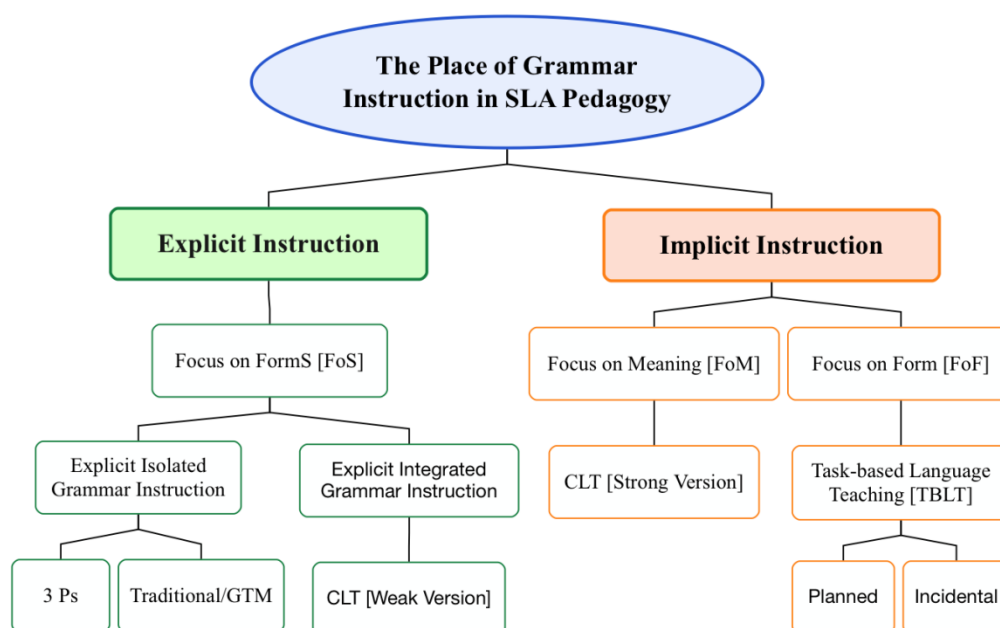


Figure 2.1 An Overview of the Most Commonly Discussed Concepts of Grammar Teaching in SLA

Most of the employed and proposed various approaches to grammar teaching can be categorised under three main umbrellas: Explicit isolated grammar instruction, explicit integrated grammar instruction, and implicit grammar instruction (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; DeKeyser, 2003; Ellis, 2005c, 2012; Spada, 2013).

2.5 Explicit grammar instruction

In addressing the history of language teaching, Kelly (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2015) expressed that grammar has been predominantly, although not exclusively, taught explicitly. As the teaching of English has primarily been influenced by the history of teaching Latin and Greek, explicit grammar teaching was considered to be a crucial requirement of any successful program in the 1960s and 1970s (Barbour, 1901; Celce-Murcia, 2015). Considering that the teaching of Greek and Latin was the most prominent example of second or foreign language pedagogy, it was noted that the learning process within each of these had implicit and explicit



instructional components, as stated by Kelly (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2015). Below is a brief review of the theories underpinning explicit grammar teaching followed by a section on related explicit grammar pedagogical approaches.

Instructed second language learning refers to the classroom setting, the opposite of a naturalistic setting, in which formal instruction of the target language is valid. Based on recent records of SLA research findings, a significant number of SLA-related studies have confirmed the benefit of explicit grammar instruction which has been considered optimal if it addresses the learners' needs appropriately (Ellis, 1991, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Long, 2014; Nassaji, 2017; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Robinson, 1997; Skehan, 2006; Spada, 2013). Grammar teaching in instructed SLA is an important aspect of acquiring the language. Research in instructed SLA is intense due to the popularity of English teaching globally as a foreign or second language. Several hypotheses have shaped and promoted instructed SLA employing L2 approaches which supports explicit grammar teaching as an integral component (Basturkmen, 2018; Ellis, 1991, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006; Lightbown, 2000; Robinson, 1997; Spada, 2013). Two of the most influential hypotheses related to explicit grammar teaching, the *Noticing Hypothesis* and the *Teachability Hypothesis*, will be discussed below followed by a review of grammar instruction in current practice.

The Noticing Hypothesis was developed by Schmidt (1993, 2012). Schmidt and Frota (1986) supported the validity of explicit knowledge in L2 learning and thus introduced the *Noticing Hypothesis*. They claimed that learners can master a second language by paying attention to the differences between a learner's inter-language and a target language (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). In this way, the learner acquires the target language as a result of being aware of the contained forms. This contradicts the implicit instruction hypotheses which suggest that learning is a natural, unconscious process. Thornbury (1999) described the Noticing Hypothesis as a supporting argument for explicit grammar teaching, which he called "the



advance organiser argument.” This argument was initially derived from Schmidt’s (1993, 2012) own experiences in learning Portuguese as a second language. His learning journey started with formal intensive classes that focused on grammar. He then left formal schooling and experienced the language through real-life usage. By this time, he had developed the ability to notice and pinpoint language functions which would not occur without formal prior knowledge. Therefore, in this case, prior knowledge of grammar was, to him, like an “advance organiser” (Thornbury, 1999).

In response to Krashen’s Natural Approach (will be discussed in the implicit grammar instruction section) concerning the status of formal grammar instruction, Lightbown and Pienemann (1993) stated that Krashen dismissed their studies and others showing the benefit of explicit teaching of grammar, since he believed that learning does not necessarily lead to acquisition. In short, Pienemann’s *Teachability Hypothesis* or learnability hypothesis shows some possible benefits of formal instruction for learning a second language (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014). Pienemann’s hypothesis consists mainly of the learner being able to acquire certain features of second language only when they are cognitively ready or when these features are teachable (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Nunan, 1999; Ur, 2011a). This hypothesis is similar to Krashen’s natural order hypothesis in that there is less focus on instruction (2009). However, Pienemann’s hypothesis emphasises the positive role of instruction when the learner is ready (Ur, 2011a). Therefore, the Noticing Hypothesis and the Teachability Hypothesis have provided a theoretical justification for, and have contributed to, the development of explicit grammar pedagogical approaches.

Explicit grammar instruction has been the subject of much research on in-class practice and learners’ performance. Norris and Ortega (2001) conducted a meta-analytic review of studies (1980 to 1998) on the effectiveness of L2 explicit instruction. It emerged that explicit language instruction has a more valuable and durable impact than implicit teaching and



learning, especially for adult learners (Norris & Ortega, 2001). The research reveals a general tendency towards the benefit of explicit teaching of grammar over the indirect, implicit method. Ellis (1991) conducted an extended review of a number of studies to investigate the influence of formal instruction in second language acquisition. These studies had a range of different outcomes, but also tended to have similar conclusions, indicating that “learners who receive formal instruction outperform those who do not; that is, they learn more rapidly and they reach higher level of ultimate achievement” (Ellis, 1991, p. 171). Sheen (2003) conducted a comparative study on two sixth-grade language classes. The students had been familiar with an implicit learning approach from grade four. The researcher chose one class and introduced one hour of weekly explicit grammar instruction. The results indicated that the class receiving explicit grammar teaching outperformed the meaning-based class (Sheen, 2003).

Valeo (2015) conducted an experimental study on 36 adult ESL immigrant learners to determine “the effect of FFI [Form Focused Instruction] that includes explicit grammatical instruction on language learning” and on “content learning”. The employment of this approach varies according to the level of explicitness in teaching grammar and in giving feedback. FFI can be completely explicit in presenting grammar rules with explicit corrective feedback. In Valeo’s (2015) study, the focus was on adult learners who were learning English for specific purposes related to job recruitment. The 36 participants were divided into two classes in which the language learning was “content driven” but taught differently. The first group was called the form-focused group as they received explicit grammar teaching within the content-based syllabus in addition to the implicit form of instruction. Learners’ errors were addressed explicitly in relation to content and form. On the other hand, the second group was labelled the meaning-focused class in which learners were exposed to the form implicitly through doing tasks and activities based on content. They were assessed on this content and given implicit corrective feedback on grammar. The intervention lasted for 10 weeks and then all the classes



received the same instruction for another 12 weeks, although the nature of the instruction was not specified by the researcher (Valeo, 2015).

Regarding linguistic acquisition and grammatical accuracy, the results (by comparing the means followed by a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA)) showed that the form-focused group gained slightly more knowledge compared to the meaning-focused group; however, the difference was not statistically significant. Interestingly, the form-focused group outperformed the meaning-focused group in content learning three units' tests. The results for this part were considered statically significant using the same analysis procedure by comparing the means followed by ANOVA. This indicates that explicit formal knowledge helped learners understand the meaning of the content. Indeed, advocates of explicit grammar teaching (Azar, 2007, 2019; Celce-Murcia, 2015; Hinkel, 2017, 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Ur, 2016) argue that understanding the rules of grammar facilitates second language acquisition.

Having said this, the following section will review explicit grammar instruction-related pedagogical approaches in current practice. It should also be noted that the discussion of the related approaches will be limited to the Saudi ELT context due to the extensive literature on explicit grammar instruction that cannot be comprehensively reviewed in this study.

2.6 Explicit grammar pedagogical approaches

Based on the brief review above of the theoretical grounding of how grammar is seen, the focus will now shift specifically to current teaching approaches that have been influenced by these theories and hypotheses. Teaching English grammar has been among the most controversial issues surrounding learning English in EFL/ESL contexts. The ongoing debate between language practitioners also calls into question if the explicit formal instruction of grammar, in particular, leads to language proficiency or not (Azar, 2019; Ellis, 2006, 2012; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Long, 2009; Schmidt, 2012; Spada, 2013; Swan, 2002; Ur, 2011b). Researchers and educators, accordingly, have been divided into two main groups; those

supporting explicit grammar teaching through presenting and practicing rules (Azar, 2019; H. D. Brown, 2007; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Celce-Murcia, 2015; Hinkel, 2016; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Nunan, 1998; Swan, 2002; Thornbury, 1999; Truscott, 2015; Ur, 2016), and those against it, who advocate implicit grammar teaching through meaningful input with or without minor recourse to rules (Halliday, 1982, 2014, 2016; Harmer, 1982, 1987, 2007; Krashen, 2003, 2004, April, 2009). Each group has worthy theoretical justifications to improve real classroom practice.

Explicit grammar teaching is often demonstrated through a sentence-level approach in which the focus is on a context-free sentence construction and formation process (Celce-Murcia, 2016; Hinkel, 2016). In the early 19th century, teaching English grammar explicitly was primarily associated with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in teaching Latin and Greek. Explicit teaching usually refers to the “focus on formS” concept, a method with predetermined linguistic items/forms in a syllabus that is delivered explicitly in isolation, or which can be integrated within communicative language activities (Ellis, 2005c, 2012, 2015; Ur, 2011a).

So, grammar is taught explicitly through two main approaches, isolated and integrated (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Reppen & Richards, 2016). Both are conducted mainly through the presentation of rules, and declaring of formal knowledge, which can then be applied to produce language. The difference between explicit isolated and explicit integrated approaches is related to when the grammar is actually taught.

2.6.1 Explicit Isolated grammar instruction

Explicit isolated grammar teaching starts with providing analytical explanations followed by examples of language in use from which rules can be generalised. In this approach, accuracy is well maintained to avoid forming “bad habits” (Celce-Murcia, 2015).



The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is a language approach that adapts analytical explicit and isolated presentation of the rules and structures, and requires repetition, memorisation, and translation from L2 to L1 (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). Grammar is taught explicitly in the GTM and leads the entire lesson. The emergence of the GTM was greatly affected by the logic and mathematics like presentation as taught in Latin and Greek. The GTM was proposed and developed by Karl Ploetz (1819–1881), a German scholar who specialised in language teaching (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Richards & Schmidt, 2013). The main principles of the GTM are that the language of instruction is the learners' mother tongue (L1) while there is no communication in L2 as the approach is based on the back and forth translation between the two languages with a focus on form. Consequently, learners can end up being unable to communicate in the L2 due to the lack of language usage.

The GTM is used by educators to focus on explicit grammar explanations which is followed by extensive practice without providing a meaningful context. It is similar to Burns' French learning experience, in which she similarly described it as the 3Ps approach (Burns, 2016). The 3Ps approach is the most widely used method for teaching grammar in the Saudi EFL context. The term stands for the Present, Practice and Produce strategy for different linguistic skills. In this approach, grammar is first presented followed by examples from a reading. Then, students practice the rules in drills. A vocabulary list is always part of the lesson so that students learn the meaning and can acquire some sentence-level practice (Nunan, 1998; Ur, 2016).

The GTM, or explicit isolated grammar teaching, is a popular approach in the Arab world and specifically in Saudi Arabia (Assalahi, 2013). Different grammar teaching methods have been introduced to the Saudi context, but the GTM is the most popular method that still exists in current practice with some variations applied to the original principles (Al-Seghayer, 2015; Almansour, 2016; Assalahi, 2013; Farooq, 2015). The GTM and the 3Ps approach

remain prevalent in Saudi-English language education, although some scholars have argued that the GTM is insufficient by itself for learning a foreign language as it neglects listening and speaking skills which hinder language proficiency (Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Assalahi, 2013).

Although considered to be an old fashioned and traditional method, there are constant renewed calls for explicit formal instruction due to the evidence in recent studies suggesting that teaching grammar explicitly has been shown to be a positive development in acquiring English (Beale, 2002; Celce-Murcia, 2015; Ellis, 2005b; Hinkel, 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014; Nassaji, 2017; Ur, 2016). However, the newly-proposed explicit language method calls for an explicit integrative model.

2.6.2 Explicit Integrated grammar instruction

Integrating grammar teaching in ELT has been promoted mostly by language practitioners. Integrated grammar instruction “[refers] to the relationship between teaching grammar (explicitly or implicitly) and developing learners’ communicative skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening” as Borg and Burns put it (2008, p. 481). Grammar is presented explicitly, but is embedded within various communicative activities (Ellis, 2015). There are several approaches which adhere to the integrated language teaching model and attempt to make grammar instruction part of a broader communicative context (Borg & Burns, 2008; Ellis, 2015; Spada et al., 2014; Valeo & Spada, 2016). Grammar is taught integratively in the CLT approach, specifically the weak version. The weak version of CLT is also known as shallow-end CLT (Thornbury, 1999), focusing on engaging learners within a range of communication-based activities that focus on both meaning and form.

Based on CLT and GTM research findings, it has been anticipated that a planned focus on the formal aspects of language within CLT and similar approaches is essential. This



emphasises the practitioners' call for a balance between communicative competence approaches and focus on forms approaches, thereby placing an equal focus on explicit and implicit grammar instruction (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Larsen-Freeman (2015) pointed out that grammar can be taught communicatively and should incorporate a focus on structure, meaning, and usage at the same time. Williams (1998) and VanPatten and Williams (2014) produced a thorough discussion of the form-focused approaches and the related options within this scope related to the degree of explicitness and the available approaches to integrate grammar instruction. The discussion was accompanied by an analysis of the classroom tasks regarding when and how to address grammar. Educators choice of explicit grammar instruction planned or incidental, is considered important (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Long & Robinson, 1998; VanPatten & Williams, 2014; Williams, 1998).

In an example of an integrative approach, Ur explained the main features of an effective grammar lesson in a video by ELT entitled *Active Grammar* (ELT, 2011, July 15), and that ELT should include clear explanations, practice opportunities, and checking. However, Ur indicated that there is not a typical order to follow, but rather the teacher can switch between them according to need. For instance, the teacher may start with the checking questions to gain a clear idea of the learners' prior knowledge to build upon. This proposed model is employed in a textbook entitled "*The Cambridge Active Grammar*" which has unique characteristics that stand out among other approaches, as Ur explained. It is a "content-based teaching" approach that provides learners with informative and interesting reading texts that have certain formal features.

As an experienced ESL teacher, Azar emphasised the need for both implicit and explicit methods to facilitate SLA, using an interesting term: "Do both". She introduced a new approach to learning English known as *Grammar-Based Teaching* (GBT) (Azar, 2019). According to Azar (2007), GBT is the foundation for developing and improving the four macro skills and



“provides information about English grammar accompanied by numerous and varied practice opportunities” (Azar, 2007, p. 6). Her views, as an ESL teacher, emphasize a combination of form and function when teaching English and that these are inseparable. Consequently, “mix and match” is the new trend in SLA and has generally been proposed by second language practitioners (Ur, 2011a, p. 518). Azar (AzarGrammar, 2012, October 30) emphasised the benefits of both grammar teaching and communicative teaching, describing the relationship as “a hybrid that works”. Moreover, Azar stressed the importance of building the learner’s vocabulary when learning English, considering it as more important than grammar. Her proposed goal for teaching grammar is not one of quantity, but instead “to create an interlanguage that is increasingly fluent and accurate in the use of English structures in meaningful communication.” She stressed the importance of both fluency and accuracy as premium goals for grammar teaching. Azar described the naturalistic movement as damaging, especially in ESL/EFL contexts where they cannot exclude grammar from classes (AzarGrammar, 2012, October 30).

In a joint seminar with Azar, Swan discussed “3 golden rules for successful grammar teaching” (AzarGrammar, 2012, October 30). Swan confirmed that grammar teaching is useful and can save a great amount of time. He clarified his point by providing examples from second language learners other than those learning English; for instance, a second language Spanish learner who spent three years of intensive listening and practicing Spanish, but who could not figure out how to form the comparative and the superlative in Spanish. The issue was addressed when the learner “looked it up in Quick Fix Spanish grammar”. Swan stated that lots of grammar is not encouraged, yet excluding grammar teaching entirely is also not acceptable (Swan, 1985, 2002).

Swan (2012, October 30) argued if grammar comes from comprehensible input, this view would not be applicable for migrants since they are immersed in the second language



context for years but are unable to develop grammatical accuracy. Swan emphasised that grammar teaching is not one single thing, but that it varies according to different factors such as the type of learners, allocated time, language level, purpose of learning English, and other contextual linguistic factors. Therefore, educators should know what grammar point should be taught, for whom, and why (Swan, 1985, 2002). Mother tongue is considered as one of the key priorities to be addressed. As educators, according to Swan, we need to be realistic in what we teach and strive to handle the issue realistically instead of leading a revolution against a certain method. He explained his point briefly: “we should be asking, I think, how we should teach this point? To this person with this mother tongue in this situation, and if so, how we should teach that particular point under those circumstances” (AzarGrammar, 2012, October 30).

One of the popular L2 teaching approaches that often connects to integrative models is Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT). However, in a recent review, Ellis categorised this approach under implicit grammar instruction (Ellis, 2015). Approaches in which explicit grammar instruction were rejected in favour of implicit language learning were then adopted as an alternative to explicit grammar teaching, in attempting to mirror the first language acquisition experience (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Schmidt, 1993; VanPatten & Williams, 2014). Implicit grammar instruction is discussed below with emphasis on the place of grammar within its related language approaches.

2.7 Implicit grammar instruction

Implicit language instruction theorists have advocated zero grammar teaching for both L1 and L2 learners, and instead, providing full communicative immersion in the language (Hymes, 1972; Krashen, 1998, 2009; Robinson, 1997). The leading theories and hypotheses related to implicit grammar teaching stem from the naturalistic second language acquisition perspective, of which the Natural Approach was one of its applications proposed by Krashen and Terrell (1988); Terrell (1977, 1982). The Natural Approach was developed in the 19th



century and came as a reaction to the traditional GTM. Such approaches call for providing intensive communicative language input emulating L1 acquisition and rejecting the explicit study of grammar and error correction.

Krashen is a prominent scholar in the field of SLA whose theories and hypotheses have had great influence on teaching methodologies, despite being considered challenging to apply with EFL adult learners (Gulzar, Gulnaz, & Ijaz, 2014; Krashen, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2009; Krashen & Terrell, 1988; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993). Krashen, through his five SLA popular hypotheses, attempted to prove that none of the previous and current SLA and grammar instruction methods worked well, thereby demonstrating three main factors that he believes are important to language acquisition: motivation, self-esteem, and zero anxiety (Krashen, 2009). These factors, according to Krashen, work as the “affective filters” which consequently may facilitate or prevent the delivery of meaningful messages.

Implicit grammar instruction, then, was primarily influenced by Krashen’s Monitor Model or Input Hypothesis, which includes five popular hypotheses: 1) Comprehensible Input; 2) Acquisition-Learning Distinction; 3) the Monitor Hypothesis; 4) the Natural Order Hypothesis; and 5) the Affective Filter, in addition to Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Hypothesis (Lightbown, 2000; Spada, 2013; VanPatten & Williams, 2014). In the following sections, a brief description of each will be given focusing on the place of grammar teaching to provide the grounding for implicit grammar instruction.

Krashen’s (1998) first hypothesis, “*comprehensible input*” refers to the idea that learners should be exposed to content that is understandable for them, but which should contain language beyond their ability. He believes that there is only one way to learn a language and that all humans learn the same way (Cummins & Davison, 2007; Krashen, 2009). Learners should be provided with fairly extensive comprehensible linguistic input that is a little higher than their level to motivate and challenge them. This hypothesis focuses on understanding and



delivering underlying messages through communication. Krashen (Krashen, 2002, 2003, 2009; Krashen & Terrell, 1988) believe that the only way in which learners can acquire language is when they receive comprehensible input in a comfort learning zone:

These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are “ready”, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production (Krashen, 2009, para. 27).

Acquisition-learning distinction is the leading hypothesis proposed by Krashen for adult second language learning. According to this idea, acquiring a second language occurs through two different “systems” which are independent of each other. The first one is the “acquired system” while the second is the “learned system” (Krashen, 2009). The acquired system refers to the stage in which the learner is immersed in subconscious language learning activities, which is a similar process to how children engage with their mother tongue. This stage involves closer contact with the language, thereby providing intensive communication and promoting meaning (Truscott, 2015).

The learned system depicts the directed and structured learning resulting from formal instruction. The learner in this stage is conscious about the knowledge provided and has the opportunity to learn the rules or the formal aspects of the language explicitly (Krashen, 2009). Therefore, in the acquisition phase, the learner acquires grammar by the “feel of appropriateness”, and then in the learning stage, they will learn “about the language” (Krashen, 2009). According to Krashen, as expressed in most of his hypotheses including the Monitor Hypothesis as the most influential one, “learning” is not as important as acquisition (VanPatten & Williams, 2014). Krashen then justifies how acquisition is related to learning by describing



the influence of the two factors in “the monitor hypothesis” (VanPatten & Williams, 2014). The monitor hypothesis conveys the idea that there is a monitoring function that is a result of what the student learns about a specific grammar rule. As Krashen believes, the initiation of utterances by the learner is greatly affected by the acquisition system which plays a vital role in the process. On the other hand, the learning system performs the monitoring role, or the editing role, which is considered as the second stage of acquiring language (Krashen, 2003). The ‘monitor’ has the role of a “filter” in which most of the output is created, edited, and corrected. Although learning and acquisition are seen as different concepts, Krashen confirmed that acquisition is far more important in his view, as it provides both accuracy and fluency which all happen in an unconscious way. He believes that “formal grammar instruction has a very limited impact on second-language competence” (Krashen, 2003).

English grammar teaching and learning have been also influenced by Krashen’s *Natural Order Hypothesis*. The natural order hypothesis emerged as a result of a number of previous studies conducted on morpheme order, which suggested that second language grammar is acquired in a natural sequence in which instruction makes no effective difference (Krashen, 2009, p. vii). This theory implies that the process of learning and acquisition of grammatical structures is guided through a predictable natural order. Therefore, some structures are more easily acquired than others, thus making them easier to learn than others (Pawlak, 2006).

To summarise, as the purpose of teaching grammar is to encourage learners to use the language accurately and appropriately, Krashen’s theories question the value of instruction in promoting language proficiency (Ur, 2011a). These theories are of interest to, and have an influence on, educators and scholars in second language pedagogy, thereby creating ongoing conflict between explicit and implicit language learning (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Ellis, 2002,



2006; Hinkel, 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Nunan, 1999; L. Scott, 2011; Skehan, 2006; Thornbury, 1999; Ur, 2011a, 2011b).

Similar to Krashen's work, Chomsky believes that humans are born with an innate set of linguistic forms that enable them to develop language. However, he differentiated between L1 and L2 acquisition needs which represent a huge difference. Despite this, his views of innate ability or what is known as "linguistic competence" have had an impact on SLA pedagogy and were considered by earlier linguists and educationalists as a basis for promoting communicative competence, which led to the development of CLT (Cazden, 2011; Halliday, 1982, 2014, 2016; Harmer, 1982, 1987, 2007; Hymes, 1972; Jack, 2006; Schachter, 1988; Skehan, 2006).

The *Universal Grammar* (UG) hypothesis emphasises that the brain has a built-in Linguistic Acquisition Device (LAD) which help with recognition and structuring of the linguistic form of the input language (Jack, 2006). Chomsky emphasized that his hypothesis applied more to children's L1 acquisition than to L2 adult learners, although it did have some positive implications. Therefore, Chomsky's cognitive hypothesis argues that language acquisition happens when the learner is exposed to the language in a meaningful way so that they will infer the rules and can then reapply them in different linguistic contexts using the hard-wired set of inborn structures (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Schachter, 1988). Language teaching for Chomsky does not exist as a stand-alone approach. He believes that the role of language teachers and textbooks is like a dictionary that can help the learner to switch on the innate language systems existing in their brains:

What teaching texts do is they basically teach you the irregularities. So, you learn the inflectional forms because they don't come from Universal Grammar. But you don't



learn the rules for forming constructions, because nobody knows them. And to the extent that anyone does know them, they wouldn't help (Jack, 2006, p. 95).

Therefore, exposure to language texts, for instance, helps learners to distinguish the irregularities within their innate device which gets them accustomed to the new system. Chomsky, however, pointed out that his hypothesis was not related to language education programs, and would perhaps be difficult to apply in the second language teaching context, as its focus was on humans' innate linguistic abilities (Burns, 2016; Celce-Murcia, 2015). It is worth referring to Chomsky's linguistic theories, universal grammar, and transformational generative grammar, as well as Krashen's five hypotheses, because of the impact that they have had on developing implicit language teaching and on the early development of CLT through Hymes' (Hymes, 1972) communicative competence theory (Burns, 2016; Cazden, 2011). However, when interviewed by Jack (2006), Chomsky stressed the difference between first and second language acquisition, saying that "It can certainly be done. It can be done effectively. But it's not the same as a child who is immersed in the system of linguistic interaction where it just becomes part of them" (Jack, 2006, p. 94).

The key point that emerges here emphasises the relationship between theory and practice and, as Chomsky stated, his theory does not apply for educational programs specifically dealing with L2 acquisition. However, this influence has helped to generate communicative competence-based language teaching approaches that vary in the degree of delivering explicit grammar instruction.

2.8 Implicit grammar pedagogical approaches

In the late 19th and the 20th centuries, new movements in language pedagogy emerged, shifting the attention to language usage rather than the explicit teaching of grammar rules. Such approaches depict natural first language (L1) acquisition. The *Direct Method* was an example



of the early implicit language teaching methods developed by members of the International Phonetics Association in 1886 (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Hinkel, 2016). The direct method mainly focused on developing communication and oral skills for L2 learners, which is the opposite of the Grammar Translation Method. In the Direct Method approach, the use of L1 and explicit grammar teaching was strictly avoided. This approach promoted intensive exposure to the language by providing learners with meaningful materials which were closely related to Krashen's SLA repertoire discussed previously.

Implicit grammar learning, as opposed to explicit grammar learning, stresses an indirect and unconscious way of learning and delivering grammar. Some scholars and educators (Halliday, 2014; Harmer, 2007; Krashen, 2009; Long, 2009) who are in favour of implicit grammar teaching, believe that grammar does not need to be taught explicitly as it can be acquired unconsciously and naturally, as also expressed initially by Krashen. Implicit grammar teaching is based largely on Krashen's second language acquisition hypotheses, including the input hypothesis which suggests that grammar is "best taught through exposing learners to a large amount of comprehensible input without any deliberate explanation" (Ur, 2011a, p. 510). This is in line with the functional grammar approach proposed by Halliday in the late 19th century (Halliday, 1982, 2014, 2016). Halliday described the functional grammar approach as the most appropriate method for learning "that interprets language as a resource, and specifically as a *resource for meaning*". He explained that learners specifically need semantically-based grammar to replace the "formal one based on morphology and syntax" (1982, p. 202).

Further implicit language teaching methods were developed in line with communicative meaning-based approaches. Harmer (2007), for instance, briefly described two recent concepts in language teaching; Focus on Form (FoF) and Focus on FormS (FoS). FoF was initially introduced by Long (1991). According to Long, FoF, which is the opposite of FoS, mainly



occurs when students learn features of a language within communicative tasks in a spontaneous, incidental, and opportunistic way in which they will gradually build a sense of the rules (Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998; Sheen, 2003). With such an approach, grammar teaching is only necessary if grammar problems are obstructing communicative meaning. In other words, formal instruction is needed if incorrect grammar prevents the ability to get a communicative message across; otherwise, no attention should be given to other “trivial” grammatical errors (Harmer, 2007; Sheen, 2003; Ur, 2011a). Eventually, a third concept was introduced to language teaching which is Focus on Meaning (FoM) which is purely implicit and similar to total language immersion (Ellis, 2012).

As the present study focuses on ELT in Saudi Arabia, implicit grammar teaching has been introduced relatively recently through the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach that has been adapted and promoted as an alternative to traditional language teaching (Al Asmari, 2015; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alamin & Ahmed, 2012; Assalahi, 2013). The researcher has limited the discussion of various implicit grammar instruction approaches to the CLT, as it is the currently used introduced method, with a quick reference to Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

CLT emerged in the late 1970s as a reaction to instructed explicit language teaching approaches, such as the GTM. CLT was introduced earlier by Labov (1970), Hyme (1972), and Widdowson (1978) (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2015). Webbe was also one of the first advocates of CLT who believed that grammar can be acquired “by exercise of reading, writing, and speaking ... all things belonging to Grammar, will without labour, and whether we will or no, thrust themselves upon us” (as cited in Thornbury, 1999, p. 14). Dell Hymes (1972) was one of the first scholars to develop communicative competence as an approach to acquiring L2. This approach sought to engage learners in intensive meaningful situations focusing on semantic notions that moved learning away from form and structure (Cazden, 2011). CLT is



also strongly connected to Krashen's (2009) "comprehensible input" and Long's (1991) "interactionist hypothesis", as these theories place great emphasis on meaningful communication in the target language (Cummins & Davison, 2007).

Communicative language teaching has two versions, referred to as strong CLT and weak CLT (Burns, 2016; Howatt & Smith, 2014; Thornbury, 1999). The strong version of CLT, sometimes called deep-end CLT, has an exclusive focus on meaning with no attention on formal aspects, so it takes a zero grammar approach which represents the implicit mode of grammar instruction. In this version of CLT, grammar instruction is incidental and is not planned for unless there is a real need (Thornbury, 1999). The research has revealed that the outcomes of the strong version of CLT are positive for the development of learner comprehension, confidence, communication, and overall fluency (Cummins & Davison, 2007; Ellis, 2006; Krashen, 2009; Lightbown, 2000; Ortega, 2014; VanPatten & Williams, 2014). Sheen (2003), however, has argued against the value of the 'focus on form' approach. Based on his experience of teaching English in Saudi Arabia and other similar countries, Sheen stated that focus on form is theoretically oriented but lacks empirical support derived from real practice in the classroom (2003).

Interaction and the comprehensible input hypothesis have contributed to the strong version of CLT. The research on this version has revealed that second language learners develop a comprehensional knowledge that enables them to use the language confidently. Therefore, learners' oral and written production show a lack of grammatical accuracy. Studies have also demonstrated that learners still face difficulty in maintaining accuracy within written and spoken language (Beale, 2002; Li, 1998; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006).

The CLT approach calls for extensive exposure to a language in a meaningful setting that depicts real life situations with little emphasis on grammar teaching (Harmer, 2007; Nunan, 1999; Ur, 2011a). This is similar to the interactionist hypothesis proposed by Long



(1991), which asserts that through meaning negotiation, language learners can acquire both new language skills and structures. This is also related to Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis as the emphasis is on meaningful and natural interaction. Regarding CLT, Harmer (2007) also argued that in a communicative-based language learning environment, "language learning will take care of itself" (p. 52). Harmer (2007) concluded his argument by stating that students should have a desire and a purpose for communication to become successful language learners, which is a key issue that needs to be explored and receive some research attention, especially for the EFL context.

Another related implicit approach is known as the discourse-based approach. It is heavily emphasised in CLT in which it is considered to be an important linguistic level that promotes communication (Celce-Murcia, 2016; Ellis, 2006; Nunan, 1998{Celce-Murcia, 2015 #284}). According to Celce-Murcia, the discourse level approach can be employed for both L2 beginners and advanced learners, as they are provided with models to depict through oral practice and within a related context (2016). Grammar is taught implicitly based on the discourse level, rather than at the sentence/linguistic level. This means that the provided models are not grammar-based, but rather they represent "tendencies, templates, or heuristics that learners can use to their advantage if they are aware of them". In this approach, instructors are encouraged to change their style in targeting grammar instruction and to shift the attention away from how to use grammar at the sentence-level to knowing how to employ grammar rules to create a "coherent and cohesive discourse" (Celce-Murcia, 2016, p. 16).

Conversely, communicative language teaching disregards the explicit teaching of grammar rules, which are rarely addressed. CLT, within the Saudi EFL context, remains a disputed method for promoting English language proficiency in Saudi Arabia (Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2015; Farooq, 2015; Gulzar et al., 2014). In terms of teaching practice, the GTM and CLT have not been entirely adopted in the Saudi curriculum, as some of their aspects



are not applicable or have not been observed. The GTM in the Saudi EFL context does not represent complete adherence to back and forth language translation, and using Arabic is often discouraged in the curriculum but preferred by instructors and learners (Alshammari, 2011; Assalahi, 2013; Khresheh, 2012; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

Ellis recently advocates an approach to teaching English called Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Ellis, 2005a; Swan, 2005), a communication-based approach that relies mostly, but not exclusively, on implicit input. TBLT is about language activities and tasks that promote meaningful communication. This approach does not depend merely on exercises and drills that have fixed linguistic forms to be answered; rather, it requires learners to manipulate and use their own language (Long, 2014). Ellis (2005a) emphasised that the purpose of language teaching is communication encompassing the four language skills. Therefore, he believes that teachers should manipulate the teaching process to allow students to be more productive - this approach is highly recognised within implicit input. Explicit input is not disregarded in TBLT, but is limited to the grammatical forms that learners must focus on every now and then. However, he acknowledges the contextual factors that can hinder the applicability of TBLT, especially in large classes where the teacher has time for the implicit input but not the output. Moreover, advocates for TBLT, such as Skehan (2006), Long and Robinson (1998), and Willis and Willis (2007) have argued for “pre-planned” grammar instruction within the designed tasks so that the teacher can implement a grammatical structure that should “pop up” during activities.

Swan, in regard to TBLT, argued that the effectiveness of applying TBLT specifically for learning a new language within a context known for time and language exposure limitations, has still not been proven and has “no compelling empirical evidence” (2005, p. 376). He questioned the “sweeping assertion” that the traditional language teaching approach was a failure as there is no evidence confirming this claim. One of the key arguments stressed by



Swan rejects the idea of introducing language teaching methods as replacements to previously used ones. He believes that different language teaching approaches should be integrated as language activities tailored to the contextual and learning circumstances of each class around the world (Swan, 2002, 2005).

As the main purpose of all these variations is to promote language communication through a focus on meaning and comprehension, the research has indicated that learning through such approaches helps L2 learners to develop their linguistic communication ability, but that they also lead to a lack of language accuracy among learners (Basturkmen, 2018; Burns, 2016; Hinkel, 2016; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014; Qiyas.sa, n.d.).

The focus on meaning in language teaching has been popular among SLA linguists and researchers for quite a while; however, the need for an explicit grammar teaching focus has begun to emerge again (Barnard & Scampton, 2008). Implicit-based teaching approaches show, to some extent, an inability to promote language accuracy which has encouraged new calls for explicit grammar teaching (DeKeyser, 2003; Ellis, 2005c, 2008b; Hulstijn, 2005; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004; Sheen, 2003). One of the recent advancements in teaching grammar has been to consider it as a fifth language skill instead of as an additional linguistic aspect.

2.9 Teaching grammar as a fifth language skill

Larsen-Freeman discussed an alternative way to facilitate second language acquisition by introducing complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Complexity theory was first put forward in 1994 and was published on in 1997. This theory as Larsen-Freeman discussed was primarily related to the natural sciences but she found a “deep parallelism with language and its acquisition” (2011, p. 49). It seeks to investigate/ interrogate dichotomies within language learning and teaching, such as language versus culture, product versus process, grammar versus communication, form versus meaning, etc. Larsen-Freeman emphasised presenting grammar as a process rather than just as a set of rules. In discussion of the dichotomic pair “grammar as



a product versus grammar as process”, she introduced the term “Grammaring” which refers to the approach of teaching English grammar in a more dynamic way to enable learners “to use grammar structure meaningfully and accurately” (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, 2015). Larsen-Freeman argued that grammar should be treated as a skill that can be developed.

To summarise, based on the previous discussion of the development of current grammar teaching, three main approaches have emerged as the most popular in today’s classroom: focus on formS, focus on form, and focus on meaning, representing in a broader sense explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit instruction (Basturkmen, 2018; Christison, Christian, Duff, & Spada, 2015; Ellis, 2012, 2015; Hinkel, 2017, 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Nassaji, 2017; Spada et al., 2014; Ur, 2016). Grammar is taught in an explicit isolated way according to the Focus on formS approach. In focus on form, grammar is taught in a pre-planned implicit way which is limited to whenever a real need emerges, whereas in focus on meaning, indeed, the attention shifts entirely to meaning and communication.

From a practitioner point of view, Azar¹ has argued that there is a difference between a practitioner who teaches the language and an academic who focuses on theoretical knowledge. Azar (2007) indicated that grammar teaching has been the central component of English language classes and has had a positive impacting on learner development, thereby helping them to “discover the nature of the language, i.e. that language consists of predictable patterns that make what we say, read, hear and write intelligible” (p. 2). Hence, focusing on instructors’ and learners’ perceptions is an area worthy of investigation that has been lightly travelled specifically in relation to leaning English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as indicated in the literature (Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 2003a; Borg & Burns, 2008;

¹ Betty Azar is a well-known English language practitioner whose grammar books are well known among ESL/EFL students and are still heavily used in the Saudi university education.



Burns, 1992; Horwitz, 1985; Kagan, 1992; Kalaja et al., 2015; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991). To serve the purposes of the present study, the investigation of the perceived beliefs and preferences of grammar teaching has been developed to address three methods: 1) explicit isolated grammar instruction; 2) explicit integrated grammar instruction; and 3) implicit grammar instruction. In the following sections, the researcher reviews the nature of beliefs and discusses the related studies on the perceptions of grammar teaching and learning.

2.10 The nature of beliefs in L2 instruction

A belief is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as “the feeling of being certain that something is true”. From an educational psychology perspective, Pajares described a belief as a “messy construct” listing a number of concepts that can be applied to the meaning of beliefs, including “values, judgments, perspectives, implicit theories, opinions, perceptions, conceptions and repertoires of understanding” (Pajares, 1992). According to Pajares, the definition of beliefs is primarily influenced by its disciplinary framework; what works for educational research may not be applicable for other fields (1992). In this project, the focus is on both beliefs and preferences related to the teaching and learning of English grammar.

With a focus on beliefs within education, a number of definitions and concepts have been proposed to better define the term. Accordingly, beliefs have been defined within the educational context by (Richards & Schmidt, 2013) as “ideas and theories that teachers and learners hold about themselves, teaching, language, learning and their students” (p. 49). “Teacher cognition”, for example, is a currently popular concept that has been a subject of research for Borg (Borg, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; S. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003a, 2003b; Borg & Burns, 2008). According to Borg, it is important to explain the distinction between thoughts and behaviours in relation to the broad concept of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003b). Teacher cognition is a broad umbrella term which includes a range of concepts such as beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, identity, etc. Teacher cognition describes “the unobservable cognitive



dimension of teaching -- what teachers know, believe, and think” (p. 81). Furthermore, teacher cognition does not focus on internal beliefs, but instead, on what they know, what they believe and think, in addition to what they do, according to Borg’s study. It also incorporates their thoughts and feelings which all contribute to the shaping of the teacher’s identity. Belief as a concept has received considerable attention in recent educational studies that have provided different denotations of what it refers to (M. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003b). For the purpose of this project, the definition of beliefs adopts Basturkmen et al. (2004) definition: “statements [instructors and learners] made about their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what should be done, should be the case and is preferable” (p. 244).

The complexity of beliefs, however, lies in the difficulty in altering them. Beliefs are not easy to replace or change, which makes them important aspects to be explored, especially for educational purposes. Pajares (1992) described how rigid beliefs are:

Beliefs are unlikely to be replaced unless they prove unsatisfactory, and they are unlikely to prove unsatisfactory unless they are challenged, and one is unable to assimilate them into existing conceptions. When this happens, an anomaly occurs—something that should have been assimilable is resisted. Even then, belief change is the last alternative. (p. 321)

The final point here provides a strong justification for placing attention on the influence of beliefs, and for bridging the gap between teaching theories, beliefs, and practice. The research has indicated that instructors’ and learners’ personal theories and beliefs have a significant impact on their in-class teaching and learning (Borg, 1999b; Horwitz, 1985, 1999). Regarding the teacher’s role in the learning process, it is important to understand how they think and how their beliefs contribute to their in-class teaching. This perspective complements



Borg's description of teachers' beliefs as theories that contribute greatly to classroom instruction (Borg, 1999a, 1999b, 2003a). Teachers' beliefs are often described as "stable constructs derived from their experience, observations, training and other sources" (Richards and Schmidt (2013).

Extending the importance of addressing beliefs to include learners can be important to teachers, especially if it addresses adult learners who have well-defined beliefs about themselves as second language learners facing difficulty in learning the new language and trying to find ways to succeed. According to Richards and Schmidt (2013), learners' belief systems represent entrenched perceptions of various language areas that can influence their attitudes and affect progress in language learning. Most adult L2 learners' beliefs are determined by "relatively stable sets of ideas and attitudes about such things as how to learn language, effective teaching strategies, appropriate classroom behaviour, their own abilities, and their goals in language learning" (2013). The exploration of such beliefs is often guided by needs analysis. Regarding learners' beliefs, Horwitz (1999), an expert in this field, asserted the importance of investigating learners' beliefs as they "have the potential to influence both their experiences and actions as language learners." She argued that "it was important to understand learner beliefs about language learning in order to understand learner approaches to and satisfaction with language instruction" (p. 558). A compelling description of the role of beliefs in education was expressed by Pajares (1992):

I have argued that the investigation of teachers' beliefs is a necessary and valuable avenue of educational inquiry. For various reasons, this avenue continues to remain lightly travelled. Researchers who have wandered into it have found exploring the nature of beliefs a rewarding enterprise, and their findings suggest a strong relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their planning, instructional decisions, and



classroom practices, although neither the nature of educational belief acquisition nor the link to student outcomes has yet been explored carefully (p. 326).

Exploring instructors' and learners' beliefs in education is not a case of investigating their personality, but rather their stated beliefs and preferences within a specific educational context which, in this thesis, focuses on grammar teaching. The exploration of beliefs related to education requires sophisticated eliciting strategies to unpack the complex interplay of ideas, thoughts, attitudes, and knowledge of both instructors and learners. Employing different research methods in this field is increasingly encouraged to allow an appropriate space for a deep discussion that can unpack held unobservable beliefs, as pointed out by Kalaja, Barcelos, Aro, & Ruohotie-Lyhty (2015), who stated that "more sophisticated or sensitive research designs should be considered in looking for their interrelationships" (p. 13). Borg (2003b) also asserted that exploring teachers' beliefs is complicated and cannot be limited to classroom observations, as practice does not always reflect beliefs. Allowing teachers to talk is one of the keys to gaining access to their beliefs that have been rarely addressed in-depth, especially in language teaching. Therefore, combining different methods such as interviews, observations, and surveys would contribute greatly to understanding what instructors and learners believe, think, prefer, and do (Barcelos, 2003; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Kalaja et al., 2015).

Instructors and learners are at the centre of the learning process, acting in different roles according to several factors including the curriculum, educational goals, and the teaching and learning context. ESL/EFL-related research has focused on the driving forces of learning: instructors and learners. Instructors' and learners' beliefs are integral factors that contribute to the learning process. Such beliefs are widely discussed among ELT researchers (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 1999a; Burns, 1992; Ellis, 2008a; Horwitz, 1985, 1999; Kagan, 1992; Kalaja et al., 2015; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). In the following sections, the researcher will



discuss the research related to beliefs about, and preferences for, grammar instruction among instructors and learners starting with the broader EFL/ESL context and finishing with Saudi-related studies.

2.11 Research on L2 grammar perceptions and teaching practice

Due to the recent attention shift to perceptions, including beliefs and preferences, the profession of teaching has become increasingly like a live thinking process in which teachers and learners are acting out vital roles in this process (M. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003b; Richards & Schmidt, 2013). The study of teachers' and learners' beliefs and preferences in SLA has increased rapidly over the last 15 years, where the focus has been on studying how their knowledge and beliefs can affect language teaching. Findings have shown that there are a number of multi-faceted discrepancies and similarities between instructors' and learners' which appear to be, in many aspects related to context, experience, expectations, needs, and the influence of theory. Such disparity encourages researchers and educators to further their research to facilitate language learning (Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Horwitz, 1985, 1999; Kalaja et al., 2015; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

2.11.1 Instructors' beliefs and preferences

Grammar teaching has been researched extensively in the SLA literature due to the ongoing conflict in views among theorists and researchers. In response, Borg argued that most SLA research has focused on the learning process which has primarily investigated performance but has placed only limited attention on issues related to practice, such as the beliefs and perceptions of the practitioners (Borg, 1998, 1999a; S. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003b). Borg, as a pioneer in this field, conducted extensive research on teacher cognition related to teacher development, exploring how beliefs contribute to real classroom practice (M. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003b). He explored a number of issues related to SLA focusing on the beliefs and



perceptions of teachers. One of the topics he explored concerned the role of teachers' beliefs in grammar teaching (Borg, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; S. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003a; Phipps & Borg, 2009). For the purposes of this project, the discussion of research from here is focused on perceptions of grammar instruction from instructors' and learners' perspectives, in order to obtain a clear picture of the issue of teaching grammar in the wider community of ESL and EFL contexts with a specific focus on the Saudi EFL context.

2.11.1.1 Non-Saudi ESL and EFL related studies

On integrating grammar into TESOL, Borg and Burns (2008) examined language teachers' beliefs and their reported practice regarding the integration of grammar teaching within language skills. They studied 176 English language instructors from 18 different countries. The study revealed that teachers strongly rejected the idea of presenting English grammar in isolation. They also reported that teachers based their assessment of effective teaching practices on their own teaching experience. In New Zealand and the UK, teachers' views on teaching grammar were found to be slightly different (Barnard & Scampton, 2008). Regarding English for academic purposes, teachers participated in a questionnaire that had been previously used by Burgess and Etherington (2002) in the UK (Barnard & Scampton, 2008). Both studies confirmed the importance of teaching grammar using a discourse-based method rather than through a decontextualised presentation, although they found that they had to explain grammar explicitly due to learners' expectations and needs (Barnard & Scampton, 2008; Cleary, 2004).

Furthermore, Burgess and Etherington (2002) conducted a study exploring EAP teachers' attitudes on explicit and implicit grammar instruction. They reported that the majority of teachers supported Focus on Form instruction (FoF) while also valuing the teaching of grammar in learning the language generally. Burgess and Etherington's (2002) conclusion confirmed the notion that the "EAP context demands high levels of grammatical accuracy and



communicative effectiveness from learners and thus is an area in which a Focus on Form approach would appear to be particularly appropriate” (p. 450). Burgess and Etherington’s (2002) study implied that students have a crucial role in shaping teachers’ beliefs and in-class practice to address their needs, wishes, and expectations. This point resulted in a growing interest in investigating students’ attitudes, beliefs, and preferences in addition to those of the teachers (Burgess & Etherington, 2002), which this project was also designed to do.

Emphasising the idea of the interference of contextual external factors on instructors’ perceptions, experienced Vietnamese EFL teachers in Phan’s study (2018) believed in the value of communicative activities but they tended to teach using GTM instead due to these contextual factors. This shows the incongruity between beliefs and practice, where most of teachers’ practices are shaped by their prior learning experience, teaching experience, educational background as well as learners’ abilities and the syllabus requirements. Another similar EFL study had been carried out in Oman by Al Maqbali, Mirza, and Shahraki (2019). Al Maqbali et al. (2019) investigated three teachers’ beliefs and observed their in-class practice over a period of three months, where each teacher had been interviewed and observed twice. The study revealed a strong tendency towards teaching grammar in a deductive and explicit way. Similar to the previous study by Phan (2018), teachers clarified that a number of external factors had influenced their teaching related decisions such as time constrains, the low language level of learners, and the difficulty of some grammar rules (Al Maqbali et al., 2019).

A recent related study has been carried out in the Indonesian EFL context by Sabbu (2019). Sabbu (2019) investigated beliefs of grammar teaching by interviewing three university teachers and observing their in-class practice. The findings revealed a congruence between what teachers believe in and what they do in class, as two teachers believed in explicit grammar instruction and adopted it in class, while the third believed in the implicit grammar instruction and implemented it in classroom practice. Further investigation on a larger sample was



identified as one of the main study limitations which contributed to limiting the generalisation of the findings. Toprak (2019) had also focused on university EFL teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching in Turkey. One hundred university EFL teachers shared their stated beliefs via questionnaires and then discussed them in the interview phase (Toprak, 2019). The study revealed an overall agreement of the centrality of grammar instruction to help learners attain proficiency. They also believed that practicing instructed grammar for learners will help achieve fluency. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers favoured the inductive indirect approach where learners are more engaged in communicative activities.

For beliefs versus practice as discussed above, ESL and EFL instructors were observed to attribute their in class practice approaches to their personal experience and other similar contextual factors rather than to SLA related theories (Al Maqbali et al., 2019; Phan, 2018; Sabbu, 2019; Toprak, 2019). Additionally, and unlike the present project, those studies (Barnard & Scampton, 2008; Borg & Burns, 2008; Burgess & Etherington, 2002) were intended for teachers from various EFL/ESL contexts. The researcher, thus, aimed to limit the focus to serve the development of grammar teaching within the Saudi EFL context and at the same time expand the investigation to include learners as well. In the following section, the researcher reviewed a number of Saudi EFL related studies focusing on the instructors first.

2.11.1.2 *Saudi EFL related studies*

The study of teachers' beliefs in the Saudi Arabian EFL context has corresponded of late to the increasing focus on perceptions. Teachers' beliefs and classroom practice is an emerging theme that is gaining popularity in Saudi EFL research. Several studies have attempted to focus on the relationship between teachers' stated beliefs about language and their in-class teaching practice. In this section, a brief review of a number of recent studies, though still limited in number, that have investigated the efficacy of grammar instruction in developing language proficiency from teachers' perspectives will be undertaken. Teachers' and learners'



beliefs, in the Saudi EFL context, have been considered as one of the constraints to a successful language learning experience (Al-Seghayer, 2014, 2017) Instructors and learners come to the classroom with certain beliefs about learning English. Little attention has been given to showing how such beliefs interfere in the learning process or what the possibility is of changing some beliefs that tend to hinder the development of language proficiency. Explicit presentation of grammar is the “centre of instruction” within the Saudi EFL classroom, as Al-Seghayer (2017) described it.

Assalahi (2013) conducted a qualitative study interviewing four English teachers in Saudi public schools to explore their current beliefs and practices in relation to grammar teaching. It has been reported that contextual factors contributed greatly in shaping teachers’ beliefs about a suitable approach to teaching English grammar. Although three of the teachers believed in explicit grammar teaching, time appears to have been an important reason behind their choice. One teacher was able to adapt meaning-based grammar teaching but ended up using it in revision classes specifically to meet the curriculum requirements within the allocated time. All the teachers admitted that the use of L1 (Arabic in this case) helped them to better explain grammar rules. As the teachers explained, training courses for Saudi English teachers tend to use a one-size-fits-all approach and this could be a reason for the lack of alignment between theory, beliefs, and classroom practices. Assalahi (2013) concluded that “factors like time, students’ age, students’ expectations, low levels, difficult grammar rules, and lack of materials exerted decision making by teachers to accept forms-focused instruction as a suitable grammar teaching method.”

To conclude, Assalahi (2013) explained the issue as follows: “It could be well said that teachers’ beliefs and practice ran defiantly against the CLA [Communicative Language Approach] endorsed by the imposed curriculum and professional development activities” (p. 597). CLA here refers to the Communicative Language Approach which is the same as CLT.



Assalahi described the implementation of the curriculum and professional development as “imposed” activities on the Saudi EFL context, which reflect a negative attitude toward such initiatives. The sample in Assalahi (2013) study is small and provided qualitative data only. Furthermore, Assalahi (2013) explored teachers’ beliefs and “reported practice” as narrated by the teachers but did not conduct observations himself. The study provides an evocative snapshot of the different contextual factors affecting grammar teaching in Saudi public schools; however, it still needs to be extended to include more viewpoints to better reflect current classroom practice. As such, the project of this thesis was designed to achieve a greater understanding of this issue trying to address the exposed study limitations that are related to the sample size, target sample (i.e. instructors & learners) observed and reported beliefs as well as in-depth analysis of the perceptions.

Aljohani (2012) also investigated the beliefs of 45 non-native tertiary-level English language instructors in Saudi Arabia in relation to grammar and grammar instruction. The results of his quantitative survey, although statistically small in terms of sample size, confirmed the fact that grammar is seen as an important area of language to be taught explicitly, but in “a meaningful context”. He opened his paper by stating a question worth asking: “When a teacher says that he or she adapts a communicative approach, does that really mean that the teacher appreciates its details?” The teachers, in Aljohani’s study, viewed grammar as an important aid for attaining language accuracy and worthy of allocating sufficient time to teach it (2012). The study also revealed that the teachers appreciated grammar explicit teaching accompanied by error correction and provision of feedback. They believed “that students should be corrected to help them learn grammar”, although the “[r]esults were insignificant regarding the time of correction” to facilitate language learning (Aljohani, 2012, p. 103). Another question to be investigated based in the current project would be, do teachers apply the teaching style they adhere to in real classroom practice or are they just beliefs? The small sample of the study



limited the general application of the results. Furthermore, it would have been more interesting if the beliefs had been discussed in-depth, or if the in-class practice had been observed to widen the scope of the investigation which the researcher in this present project intends to address.

Concerning grammar teaching, Alghanmi and Shukri explored university teachers' beliefs about grammar instruction and how those beliefs were reflected in teaching practice (2016). The related data was collected from 30 female university English teachers in three different stages. The first was via a closed-ended questionnaire followed by ten classroom observations, concluding with an open-ended questionnaire to confirm the findings on beliefs and real classroom practice derived from the first and second rounds of data collection. The teachers showed strong agreement on the importance of grammar instruction, to be taught in an integrated way focusing on form and meaning together. A number of other issues were explored regarding the use of L1 in teaching grammar, grammar and accuracy, grammar and communication, and acquiring the second language in the same way as the first language. The teachers expressed positive attitudes towards the role of explicit grammar in such approaches (Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016).

Within the classroom observation phase, the study revealed that teachers' beliefs were somewhat reflected in their in-class practice. Such a relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices is affected by six main factors, including "students' proficiency level, attitudes toward the language, needs, learning styles, classroom environment, and teacher development." Interestingly, all the observed teachers showed an interest in implicit grammar teaching during the interviews as they believed that it was the most effective method. In practice, however, they spent most of the class time explaining grammar explicitly and adopting the FoFs approach (Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016). Similar to Aljohani's findings, 70% of teachers in Alghanmi and Shukri's study also believed in the importance of teaching English grammar explicitly and allocating sufficient time for this purpose.



Alghanmi and Shukri's (2016) study is similar to the present project; however, this project was designed to explore beliefs and preferences about specific grammar teaching styles including explicit, implicit, and integrated. It also targeted different groups, learners, and instructors within two different contexts, and was not limited to one gender.

Teachers' attitudes to grammar instruction were also investigated by Dajem (2012). Dajem explored current attitudes toward grammar instruction in Saudi secondary and middle school from the point view of teachers. The study targeted 100 Saudi teachers, 50 from middle school and 50 from secondary school, who responded to a Likert-scale questionnaire via email and other online platforms. The focus of the study was to assess the importance of teaching grammar according to the Saudi teachers. In total, 41 middle and 39 secondary school teachers agreed on the importance of teaching grammar for all levels. The study also reported on preferred grammar instruction approaches among teachers between deductive (explicit) and inductive (implicit) grammar teaching. For the implicit approach, teachers showed a clear interest in applying the new inductive communicative strategies to enhance language learning, although some teachers revealed concerns related to the students not being comfortable with such approaches. The concerns related to the learners' expectations were merely assumed by the teachers. This fact makes it difficult to assess learners' attitudes or act on them. Therefore, it is one of the researcher's priorities to give learners an equal chance to share their preferences and beliefs in this current project.

Another study on Saudi teachers' perceptions was conducted by Al-Beiz (2002), who interviewed 57 secondary-level English language teachers on the effectiveness of employing the story-based approach, an innovative way of teaching grammar. The results suggested that teachers agree on the effective role of the story-based approach in facilitating comprehension and also in developing learners' formal language (grammatical knowledge). Al-Beiz (2002) stated that the reason for the effectiveness of this type of approach is to get learners engaged



and interested in the classroom so they develop grammar competence. Teachers in Al-Beiz's study raised a number of concerns in relation to implementing such an approach which would lead them to alter the curriculum. According to their explanation, they do not possess the authority to make changes to the curriculum which should adhere to the Saudi education curriculum description and guidelines. This is actually was identified as one of the major obstacles for conducting any development or educational change in the Saudi curriculum.

To conclude with, two recent studies on teachers' cognition in relation to grammar had been conducted by (Ahmad, 2018; Mohammad & Khan, 2017). Mohammad and Khan (2017) investigated university teachers' beliefs on the efficiency of using an inductive approach in teaching English grammar. The researchers used questionnaires and interviews to run the investigation. The findings revealed that most teachers strongly favoured the inductive approach where explicit grammar instruction is replaced by more meaning-based approaches depicting the FoF and FoM which will "help students acquire the critical thinking and self-directed learning skills" (Mohammad & Khan, 2017, p. 197).

Similar findings had been reported in Ahmad's recent study (2018). Ahmad (2018) investigated grammar teaching method and the associated difficulties from the perspective of university Arab and non-Arab native English teachers in the Saudi EFL context. Teachers' beliefs were reported via a questionnaire followed by multiple class observations to explore how beliefs were reflected in classroom practice. The findings indicated that the majority of teachers strongly believed in the innovative meaning-based grammar approaches such as task based, rule discovery and focus on function. However, Discrepancies had been noted between stated beliefs and teaching practice where most teachers inclined to traditional grammar teaching methods such as the 3Ps. Ahmad (2018) concluded the study expressing the need for further investigation on learners' perceptions regarding their teachers' practices and more qualitative exploration to investigate "the factors responsible for weak interplay between

teachers' beliefs and practices in grammar teaching" (p. 54) which this project promised to contribute in.

Based on the previous studies, it appeared strongly that Saudi language instructors are welcoming change and innovative teaching to help in increasing the language proficiency of Saudi learners and improve their learning process. Nevertheless, the top down policy of the educational change practiced by the Saudi Arabian MOE is assumed to be one of the major external factors to the low level of EFL proficiency that lasted for decades (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alnefaie, 2016). English language instructors as well as learners should receive adequate attention to include them as active parts of any curriculum change by at least hearing and understanding their educational concerns and valuable insights. The researcher in this project is trying to emphasise this.

2.11.2 Learners' beliefs and preferences

Different experiences and backgrounds make the research on learners' beliefs more complex, as it is difficult to assess the variables that contribute to each participant's views. Learners are rarely addressed in the research, despite the fact that their improved learning is the target of the teaching process (Loewen et al., 2009; Pazaver & Wang, 2009; Schulz, 1996). Here again, the reviewed studies started with the wider ESL and EFL communities followed by the Saudi EFL context's related research.

2.11.2.1 *Non-Saudi ESL and EFL related studies*

In one of the earliest studies on learners' beliefs, Schulz (1996) explored the views of foreign language learners' (N=824) and teachers' (N=92) about grammar and error correction. The results revealed that learners strongly appreciated grammar instruction and corrective feedback compared to the teachers. Based on this finding, Schulz suggested that teachers should "make an effort to explore students' beliefs about language learning" to "establish



pedagogical credibility” (1996, p. 343). However, it is important to note that these participants were learning and teaching different languages than English.

In a similar L2 learning investigation, Horwitz (1999) reviewed a number of studies using the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), targeting “American learners of French, Spanish, German, and Japanese, US university instructors of French, and Korean, Taiwanese, and Turkish heritage EFL students” (p. 557) to find out the influence of cultural differences across learner groups. The findings revealed that there were general commonalities in beliefs across the different groups of learners, as outlined in the BALLI framework. However, a discrepancy was confirmed in one of the categories that reported the beliefs, regarding “the primacy of grammar study” in L2. The majority of students strongly disagreed with grammar being the most important aspect of language to learn in SLA, whereas the EFL Turkish students had high agreement level (80%) with the statement.

In one of the few studies to look at learners’ perceptions in language learning, Pazaver and Wang (2009) studied a group of 16 Asian ESL students enrolled in a credit program in Canada. The study explored the learners’ experiences and perceptions of being taught grammar specifically. All learners had already studied English in their country before coming to Canada and they demonstrated a good command of English. Although the students came from similar backgrounds, the findings reflected different opinions regarding the importance of grammar instruction. The results were influenced by a range of variables such as learners’ language proficiency, current needs, and future career choices. Interestingly, most students agreed on the value of grammar instruction in the EFL context in Canada. They believed that there was no need for further grammar explanation because they were in a native English-speaking country where they could improve their communication skills anyway (Pazaver & Wang, 2009).

In a study by Loewen, Li, Fei, Thompson, Nakatsukasa, Ahn and Chen (2009), 754 foreign language learners who were learning 14 L2s, including English (154 participants),



completed a questionnaire about grammar instruction. The quantitative study showed a number of varied responses towards grammar teaching depending on the participants' backgrounds and previous experiences. However, a qualitative analysis revealed a positive attitude toward learning grammar to improve reading, writing, and speaking skills. Grammar was considered to be beneficial, but the attitudes toward studying it were, for a few of them, somewhat negative (Loewen et al., 2009). Interestingly, the learners did not want to learn the grammar by themselves, which contradicts the principles of implicit language learning (Loewen et al., 2009).

In a case study on Form Focused Instruction (FFI), Tomita and Spada (2013) found that focusing on form instruction helped students to be more engaged and productive within communicative activities. Tomita (Tomita, 2015) then explored one case in-depth from (Tomita & Spada, 2013) and found that the learner felt more comfortable and confident when provided with grammar rules or, at least, when they were instructed to use certain formal aspects. According to the learner, if she “was not provided with any particular grammar form, [her] mind went blank. [She] could not say anything” (p. 60).

Another interesting study on isolated and integrated grammar instruction is carried by (Spada & Lima, 2015). They investigated teachers' (ESL=47 and EFL= 53) and learners' (ESL= 294 and EFL= 175) preferences for isolated and integrated form-focused instruction. The target sample included ESL and EFL teachers and students who completed a self-reporting questionnaire. Learners in the ESL context show stronger agreement on the explicit isolated where the mean score is 3.8 responding to a five Likert scale points statements. Thus, they all maintain strong preferences towards integrated explicit teaching over isolated. From the qualitative responses, teachers and learners were able to qualify their preferences which resulted in shaping a number of factors that contributed to their perceptions. These factors



include “level of students, the type of course, the type of learner, and the type of language feature.” (Spada & Lima, 2015, p. 183).

The questionnaire was followed by an important data source addition which they called a “feedback study” (Spada & Lima, 2015). A sample was chosen to attend two different grammar lessons being taught; one employed integrated and the other isolated FFI. The participants were then asked to complete a questionnaire to indicate their preferences. The findings were very similar to what had been reported in the questionnaire. The majority favoured integrated over isolated instruction, and again, ESL learners showed a slightly stronger preference for isolated instruction. This can be explained in relation to the nature of the ESL context. The researchers assumed that this was related to the high levels of communicative engagement that ESL learners have outside of the classroom which made them prefer more isolated focused lessons (Spada & Lima, 2015). However, Loewen (2009) contradicted this view that ESL learners prefer a more intensive grammar focus. In Loewen et al. (2009) study, ESL learners “were less convinced about the need for grammar instruction and error correction and were more enthusiastic about improving communicative skills” (p. 101).

Petraki and Gunawardena (2015) conducted a study of 96 Sri Lankan students, interviewing 30 of them to investigate their perceptions of an effective grammar lesson. The findings confirmed that students held “positive attitudes to explicit grammar teaching.” In relation to grammar for accuracy, the students believed in the importance of grammar lessons to improve their English writing and speaking. The idea of “broken English” was also apparent here as a result of the lack of grammar teaching and learning. In another EFL context, Hendriani (2018) studied the preferred grammar teaching approaches of a sample of Indonesian university EFL students. The findings revealed that the majority (70.13%) preferred explicit grammar



teaching followed by exercises over other integrative methods. They were also in complete agreement on the importance of grammar in learning English.

Based on the findings of those studies, it has been noticed that there are differences that were related sometimes to the diversity of participants' backgrounds, target language and context. In the present study, the researcher limited the scope of the target sample to Saudi participants who are learning English for academic purposes and, broadly share the same cultural background, native language and prior learning experience.

2.11.2.2 *Saudi EFL related studies*

Research on learners' beliefs and preferences in the Saudi context was limited compare to the teachers' ones. To start with a broader beliefs of learning English, Alaraj shifted the attention towards university students' views on English language learning (2016). His study aimed to explore thoughts and feelings of new enrolled university students who had recently graduated from secondary school, regarding their English language acquisition. Alaraj conducted semistructured interviews with 300 students with the assistance of six interviewers, to give the learners more space to reflect on the issue. It seems that the analysis was a great challenge, but the researcher had simplified it to a general report of the trends shared by participants, which could be extended to more in-depth specified discussion. For instance, Alaraj reported that the majority showed a positive attitude towards learning English. Such positive learning readiness seems to be challenged by four critical factors as Alaraj explained; the need of "enough exposure and practice, serious and competent teachers, well designed and organized textbooks, a motivating environment and many other factors" (Alaraj, 2016, p. 489).

On grammar instruction beliefs, Almansour (2016) conducted a study on code switching between English and Arabic as a grammar teaching method. A pre and post experiments were done on two EFL university classrooms in addition to an investigation of students' attitudes regarding the proposed method. No significant difference was observed in



support of code-switching approach. However, students expressed their interest in code switching method as they found it useful for learning. In the following sections, a number of studies had been reviewed from different ESL/EFL contexts where both instructors and learners are included.

To start with, Valeo and Spada (2016) conducted a study to investigate both learners' and teachers' perceptions on the best timing of Form Focused Instruction (FFI). FFI was categorized into integrated and isolated approaches. "They differ in that isolated FFI occurs separately from communicative activities, whereas integrated FFI occurs during communicative activities" (Valeo & Spada, 2016, p. 1). Valeo and Spada (2016) explored teachers and learners' beliefs and preferences about two grammar teaching approaches, explicit isolated and explicit integrated, focusing on when to use them during the lesson. The findings revealed that the two groups had a preference for the integrative approach, but they also acknowledged the importance of isolated approaches. Context and individual needs were shown to have an impact on shaping the instructors' and learners' beliefs (Valeo & Spada, 2016).

Another Saudi study on grammar teaching beliefs, investigating both instructors and learners, was carried out by Ahmed, et al. (2017). In this study, the researchers quantitatively explored the currently-held beliefs of 70 Saudi and Arab university teachers and 80 adult students in relation to grammar teaching. The study revealed a disparity among teachers' and learners' responses, as the learners needed to respond to items that described their teacher's practice. This helped them to generate a comparison between what the teachers said and what had been reported by the students. Ahmad et al. found that the "beliefs of non-native EFL teachers are mostly not aligned with their students' perceptions about their teachers' grammar teaching practices" (Ahmad et al., 2017, p. 140) The study also indicated a shared positive



belief among both teachers and learners in the importance of grammar teaching, specifically in EFL contexts such as Saudi Arabia (Ahmad et al., 2017).

In relation to grammar teaching strategies, Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri run an experimental study on Saudi secondary school students to test the flipped classroom approach effect on grammar learning (2016) testing the performance as well as attitudes to the intervention. Students in the experimental group, were provided course related videos to be watched prior to the class and then they were engaged in a number of in class activities. The study revealed that students in the flipped classroom outperformed the ones who received traditional grammar instruction and showed positive attitude. However, the students' attitude about the flipped classroom in learning grammar were positive (Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016).

EFL learners and teachers' perceptions of explicit grammar instruction was studied recently in the Iranian EFL context by Mohammadi and Yousefi (2019). The research focused on the role of the language background in determining beliefs as the participants were divided equally among Persians and Azeris. The results proved that most of the held beliefs were affected by the linguistic background which contributed in revealing different beliefs as EFL Persian learners and teachers held positive beliefs toward explicit instruction compared to the Azeris EFL teachers and learners (Mohammadi & Yousefi, 2019).

Within the ESL context, Johansen (2019), in her Master's thesis, explored the grammar related beliefs of both teachers (N= 4) and students (N= 30) in an ESL Norwegian high school. One of the main research questions is related to the preferred grammar instructions that had been explored using questionnaire and then was analysed after engaging participants in grammar and language proficiency tests. The results showed that the group of participants who had high scores on the test preferred the meaning focused grammar instruction. On the other hand, the other group who had a low-test score showed a preference towards focus on form



and deductive approaches. According to Johansen's (2019) study, a correlation between grammar knowledge and preferences had been identified, however, it would be interesting to know how those learners who scored higher results were taught grammar previously. In the open-ended questions, the teachers revealed their tendency toward meaning focused instruction as they felt fed up with explicit grammar instructions which were the dominant teaching style for learners.

Getting to know learners' preferences and attitudes related to the purpose of this project to better understand the current attitudes towards different grammar teaching methods for the purpose of improving the language. Expanding on the previously reviewed studies is the goal of this project, where the researcher is trying to encompass instructors' and learners' perceptions of grammar teaching, discussing them in-depth and have an overall idea of what has been practiced currently within the Saudi university EFL classes.

2.11.3 Perceptions' research approaches and the existing research gap

The investigation of SLA-related beliefs has generally used three main approaches: 1) a normative approach using closed-ended questionnaires; 2) a metacognitive approach using interviews and self-reports; and 3) a contextual approach which combines more than one qualitative method such as interviews, diaries, and/or observations (Barcelos, 2003; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Ellis, 2008a). In the normative approach as Barcelos (2003) explained, the researcher often uses questionnaires with Likert scale items that would be analysed using descriptive statistics. A representative example of this approach in exploring learning beliefs follow the BALLI that had been developed by Horwitz (1985, 1999). Whereas the focus of the metacognitive approach is more on the "verbal accounts gathered through semi-structured interviews and self-reports" (Barcelos, 2003, p. 16). So, beliefs are discussed in a more elaborative way by the participants which reflect their own views of learning and teaching



related behavior. The contextual approach (Barcelos, 2003) combined different qualitative data collection methods to explore and understand beliefs with specific consideration to the context. The aim of this approach is not generalising finding but rather to gain a better understanding of the beliefs (Barcelos, 2003).

According to Barcelos, the contextual approach has gained more acceptance recently compared to the other approaches as it aims to achieve “a better understanding of beliefs in specific contexts” (p. 19). However, Barcelos concluded that recent studies have adopted an approach which combines multiple approaches, such as mixing the normative and the contextual in a single study. “These more grounded studies allow meaning to emerge from context” which contributes to an understanding of the relationship between beliefs and “actions in context” (p. 28). Therefore, the current project employs a mixed method grounded approach combining mainly the normative approach (using online questionnaire) with the contextual approach (using interviews and class observations) in order to gain an understanding of the specific Saudi EFL context.

Before concluding this section, Table 2.1 below summarises the reviewed studies according to their focus, sample, context, research methods and the analysis overall approach (i.e. normative, metacognitive, contextual or a combination of approaches) (Barcelos, 2003; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Kalaja et al., 2015). This table provides an overview of the conducted studies to investigate instructors’ and learners’ perceptions about various topics related to grammar, such as the value of grammar and grammar teaching, explicit and implicit grammar instructions, innovative grammar instructions, and grammar and corrective feedback. The table is divided into three main categories: studies on instructors’ perceptions, studies on learners’ perceptions, and studies on both instructors’ and learners’ perceptions. The studies in green font refer to those conducted in Saudi Arabia in which the researcher has looked to address the research gap.



Table 2.1 An Overview of the Related Reviewed Studies on Grammar Perceptions

	Study	Perceptions' Focus	Sample	Context	Methods	Overall Approach
Instructors' perceptions	Burgess and Etherington (2002)	Explicit and implicit grammar instruction	Instructors (University level)	UK (ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire + • an open-ended question 	Combined
	Borg & Burns (2008) Borg & Burns (2015)	Integrating Grammar & practice	Instructors (For adults)	18 (EFL/ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire 	Normative
	Barnard & Scampton (2008)	Grammar and grammar teaching	Instructors (University level)	New Zealand (ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Email interviews 	Combined
	Aljohani (2012)	Grammar and grammar teaching	Instructors (School level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire 	Normative
	Al-Beiz (2002)	Innovative grammar teaching	Instructors (School level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	Metacognitive
	Dajem (2012)	Grammar and grammar teaching	Instructors (School level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire 	Normative
	Assalahi (2013)	Grammar and grammar teaching	Instructors (School level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	Metacognitive
	Alghanmi and Shukri (2016)	Grammar teaching and practice	Instructors (University level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Class observations • Post open-ended questionnaire 	Combined
	Mohammad and Khan (2017)	Grammar teaching efficacy and difficulties	Instructors (University level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Interviews 	Combined
	Ahmad (2018)	Grammar teaching and practice	Instructors (University level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Class observations 	Combined
	Phan (2018)	Grammar teaching efficacy and practice	Instructors (University level)	Vietnam (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group discussion • Journaling, • Observations • Interviews 	Metacognitive
	Al Maqbali et al. (2019)	Grammar teaching	Instructors (School level)	Oman (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class observations • Interviews 	Metacognitive
	Toprak (2019)	Grammar teaching	Instructors (University level)	Turkey (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Interviews 	Combined
Sabbu (2019)	Grammar teaching and practice	Instructors (University level)	Indonesia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class observations • Interviews 	Metacognitive	
Learners' perceptions	Pazaver and Wang (2009)	Grammar teaching	Learners (University level)	Canada (ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	Metacognitive
	Lowen et al. (2009)	Form focused instruction & error correction	Learners (University level)	USA (FL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire + • Open-ended questions 	Combined
	Tomita and Spada (2013); Tomita (2015)	Form focused instruction & L2 communication	Learners (School level)	Japan (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study 	Metacognitive
	Petraki and Gunawardena (2015)	Grammar teaching	Learners (School level)	Sri Lanka (ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Interview 	Combined
	Hendriani (2018)	Grammar teaching	Learners (University level)	Indonesia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire + • Open-ended questions 	Combined
	Almansour (2016)	Innovative grammar teaching	Learners (University level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment • Questionnaire 	Combined



Table 2.1 (Continued)

	Study	Perceptions' Focus	Sample	Context	Methods	Overall Approach
Instructors' & Learners' perceptions	Schulz (1996); Schulz (2001)	Grammar teaching & error correction	Instructors & Learners (University level)	USA (FL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires similar for both 	Normative
	Spada & Lima (2015)	Isolated & integrated grammar instruction	Instructors & Learners (University level)	(Brazil EFL/ Canada ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire + • Open-ended questions 	Combined
	Valeo and Spada (2016)	Isolated & integrated grammar instruction	Instructors & Learners (University level)	(Brazil EFL/ Canada ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire + • Open-ended questions 	Combined
	Ahmad et al. (2017)	Grammar teaching	Instructors & Learners (University level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires 	Normative
	Alhaysony and Alhaisoni (2017)	Grammar difficulties (not about grammar instruction but has some relevance)	Instructors & Learners (University level)	Saudi Arabia (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Interview 	Combined
	Johansen (2019)	Grammar teaching	Instructors & Learners (School level)	Norway (ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires similar for both + • Open-ended questions 	Combined
	Mohammadi and Yousefi (2019)	Grammar teaching & error correction	Instructors & Learners (University level)	Iran (EFL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires similar for both 	Normative



Based on the above reviewed studies, further exploration is still needed to address the beliefs and preferences of both instructors and learners in relation to grammar teaching specifically in the Saudi EFL context. In Ahmad et al. (2017), for instance, learners' and teachers' beliefs were addressed, but the learner questionnaire did not address their beliefs about themselves, but rather addressed their beliefs about the teachers' practice. However, in Valeo and Spada (2016), learners' and teachers' beliefs were explored according to similar concepts using closed-ended and open-ended questions, but with no observations or interviews being conducted. The present study employed the questionnaire and the interviews with identical topics investigated in the questionnaires, discussed in the interviews, for both instructors and learners, and observed in the classrooms.

The gap that this project is intended to fill can be summarised in a number of points. Firstly, and to the researcher's knowledge, the exploration of instructors' and learners' perceptions, including beliefs and preferences of grammar instruction, has not been combined in such Convergent Parallel Mixed Research Method design. Learners and instructors are given an equal chance to share their perceptions via the questionnaire in the form of reported beliefs. Secondly, both groups are given a proper chance to discuss their perceptions and justify their preferences and are compared later across groups. The comparison, then, was further discussed in reference to the quick snapshot of the current in class practice. This project also limited its focus to grammar instruction for EAP purposes within the university level and targeted two different contexts (Saudi EFL and Australian ESL), where Saudi learners in Australia had a chance to experience. learning English for academic purposes in ESL context in addition to their prior EFL learning in Saudi Arabia. In addition to including learners' and instructors, this project also included both genders across the three groups, in contrast to many previous studies which focused on only one.



2.12 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has reviewed the literature on English grammar instruction from a range of different perspectives. The first one related to the broader concept of grammar and grammar instruction within SLA theoretical research divided into naturalistic and instructed settings. Then, the discussion moved on to viewing the position of grammar instruction within current related teaching approaches which were outlined as implicit, explicit isolated, and explicit integrated grammar instruction. The debate on grammar instruction among theorists and researchers has been shown to be extensive, with ongoing conflicting views. The scope of the present research aims to move the focus onto the practitioners and language instructors and learners. Investigating these perceptions of grammar instruction contributes to understanding and evaluating grammar related instruction methods for developing language proficiency.

The focus then shifted to the research on beliefs and, in particular, beliefs about grammar instruction according to instructors and learners in EFL/ESL contexts, and in particular, the Saudi EFL context. Based on the reviewed literature, there is a shortage of sophisticated investigation on beliefs and preferences about grammar instruction from the viewpoint of instructors and learners, despite their integral role in shaping classroom practices and learning outcomes. This is even worse in the Saudi EFL context, as it is greatly influenced by imported methods which often do not adhere to the specific contextual limitations. The researcher has not pointed out the pros and cons of these methods, but rather has looked to understand the needs of the Saudi Arabian context and the level of compatibility with various grammar teaching methods.

The exploration is led by instructors' and learners' views regarding current practices and how they appeal to their needs. Reviewing such research, then, is assumed to contribute to



the present study by enabling insights into the relationship between research, theory, beliefs, and classroom practices.



3 Methodology

3.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter outlines the procedures involved in the research, the methods employed, and the overall research design. The researcher will introduce the theoretical grounding related to the research design and will discuss the research methodology accordingly. The three main phases of the study will be examined in accordance with a Mixed Methods Research (MMR) *Convergent Parallel Design* (CPD). The first phase of the study is quantitative, employing online questionnaires, whereas the second and third phases are qualitative, employing interviews and class observations. In this chapter, the researcher will address the research methodology covering eight main sections: research design, the research site and participants, the sampling procedure, the research instruments, development of the instruments, the procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis.

3.2 Research design

The design employed in this project is MMR which uses a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches, to better understand the research enquiry. The research questions for this project are related to the exploration of perceptions, including beliefs and preferences, and also teaching practice which can be addressed appropriately by employing descriptive and interpretive data collection tools. Therefore, the research questions have been addressed using online questionnaires to quantitatively describe the scores, in addition to interviews and class observations to qualitatively interpret the emerging themes and observed practices (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Morse, 2010; 2010). The research is guided by the following four research questions:



Research Question 1: What are the current beliefs about grammar and grammar instruction held by Saudi Universities' Instructors (SUIs), Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia (SULSAs), and Saudi University Learners in Australia (SULAs)?

Research Question 2: How do SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs perceive the importance of grammar instruction for English for Academic Purposes (EAP)?

Research Question 3: How do SUIs perceive explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit grammar instruction compared to SULSAs' and SULAs' perceptions for developing EAP?

Research Question 4: What are the characteristics of the Saudi EFL context which SUIs and SULSAs indicate as influencing their beliefs about grammar and practices of grammar teaching and learning?

The researcher collected the data to answer each question using both quantitative and qualitative methods, which were conducted through the use of three different tools, as mentioned above, and which will be discussed later. Overall, each research question has been addressed through the use of questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The advantage of the mixed method design is its ability to “incorporate meaning and quantity into the same project” in either expanding the scope of the research or in addressing the questions that emerge within the research project (Creswell, 2012; Morse, 2010). In this study, perceptions about current grammar instruction were explored using MMR, to achieve a deep understanding of the instructors' and learners' beliefs and preferences.

MMR is a relatively new approach in research design that emerged in the late 1980s. Several terms have been used to refer to MMR including integrating, multi-method, synthesis, and mixed methods (Creswell, 2012, 2014, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; 2010). MMR is not equal to multi-methods research which consists of merely combining different research



tools. However, conducting MMR should be based on a clear purpose that creates some sort of a relationship between the used methods. According to Morse (2010), maintaining the research rigour within mixed methods design is a challenge that must be addressed. Any MMR study consists of one “core project” followed or accompanied by supplementary approaches that are related directly to the core research. Based on this study, the core project was conducted in the first phase as a quantitative online questionnaire, followed by interpretive semi-structured one-to-one interviews and class observations, to address and consolidate the specific concepts outlined in the questionnaire. Therefore, the qualitative phase was directed to answer and further the discussion of the same topics presented in the questionnaire. To provide a concise picture of the employed design, the researcher conducted the study as described by Morse (2010):

... although the two components are conducted separately, the supplemental component is imported for analysis (at the analytic point of interface) or into the results section to contribute to the narrative description of the results (p. 348).

Correspondingly, the researcher assumed that employing MMR would enhance the process of understanding the existing phenomenon (Creswell, 2015; Dörnyei, 2007). The distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches is not limited to only the surface differences of presenting numerical data and statistical measurement versus words, thoughts, and observations (Bryman, 2016). The quantitative method enables the researcher to access a larger number of participants to provide statistical evidence to support the research. The qualitative method, on the other hand, allows for a more in-depth discussion of the problem.



3.2.1 Convergent Parallel Design

In this research, the questionnaires, the semi-structured one-to-one interviews, and the in-class observations were conducted concurrently and separately, but then they were analysed convergently (Creswell, 2012). This approach is known as *Convergent Parallel Design* (CPD) and also as *Concurrent embedded* design in Mixed Methods Research (Creswell, 2012, 2014; D. Scott & Morrison, 2006). According to Creswell, CPD is considered to be the most popular among other mixed methods approaches. It does not mean using multiple methods in a simple sense. The key feature of this approach is to collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data separately and then combine the results to find similarities and build up comparisons. Using this approach, the researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data separately, analysed them, and then merged the overall data to find emerging comparisons or explanations. Each data set helped in explaining the results and allowed for a deeper understanding of the problem. Parallelism in this approach refers to the investigated concepts that need to be the same or have a parallel within each method (2010). Based on this study, the three main concepts of beliefs, preferences, and context were investigated in each phase. The challenging aspect of this design lies in the analysis stage where the researcher needs to find the proper method “to converge or to merge the data” (Creswell, 2014, p. 222).

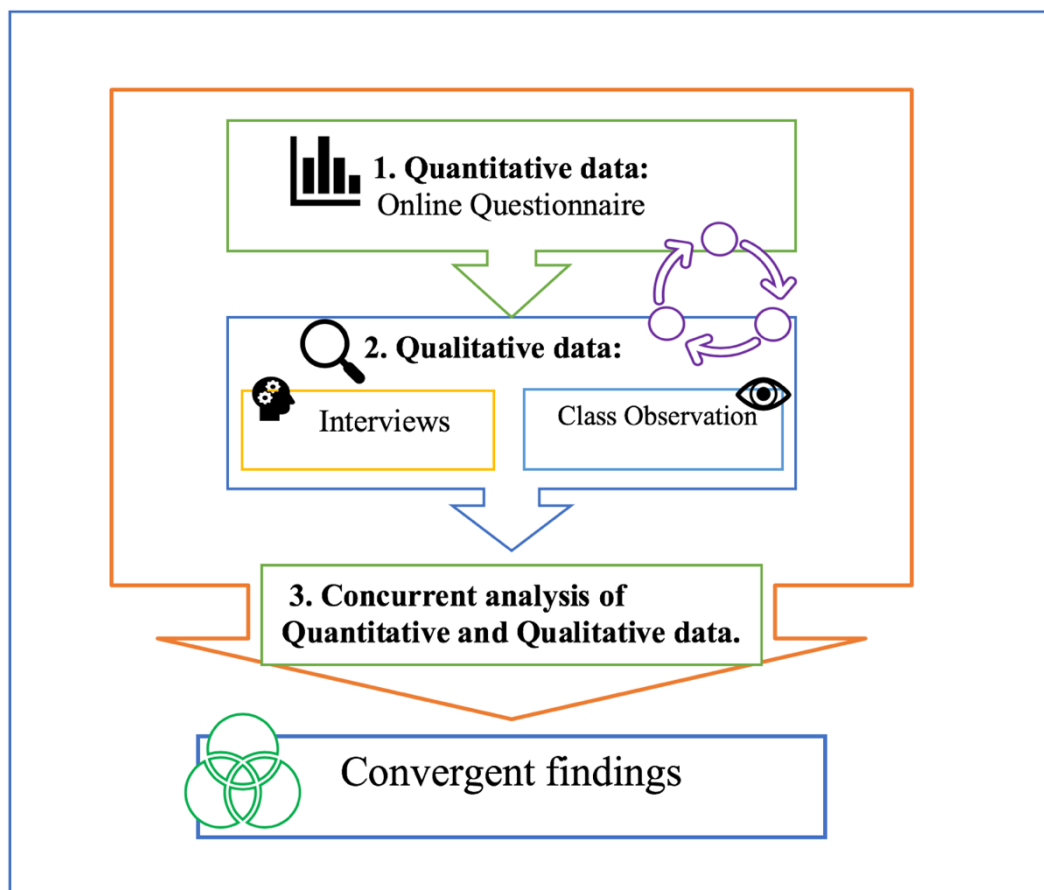


Figure 3.1 A Diagram of the Conducted Research Design

The three data collection tools employed were led by four research questions devised to investigate three main concepts: beliefs, preferences, and EFL context, in relation to teaching English grammar at the university level. Interviews and the class observations were arranged through the questionnaire; therefore, the online questionnaire was sent first, which included the invitation to participate in an interview. The instructors' questionnaire also included a permission request form to conduct the class observation. The data collection process, therefore, can be described as convergent as the researcher had conducted the interviews and the class observation while the questionnaire was still open for participation. The analysis stage commenced when all the data had been collected. The three methods worked together to develop a clear understanding of the current views of instructors and learners in relation to English grammar instruction from a Saudi perspective.

3.2.2 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

Maintaining the credibility of research findings relies on the overall process of data collection where the researcher has to assure the accuracy of findings which is described as the validity and reliability of research (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Validating research findings in the present project had been determined by the researcher using triangulation. Triangulation refers to the corroborating evidence derived from different sources such as individuals (instructors and learners), types of data (questionnaires, interviews and observations) or methods of data collection.

Employing MMR helps the researcher to gain more reliable data in different ways which generates more robust outcomes (Bryman, 2016; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2014, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mackey & Gass, 2012). The quantitative part of the study, the online questionnaire, contributed in presenting general scores on currently-held beliefs about English grammar instruction and preferences. Also collected were data about the Saudi EFL language learning context, derived from a relatively large sample (Creswell, 2015; Mackey & Gass, 2012). The qualitative part, then, allowed for deeper discussion and exploration of the same previously presented topics in the questionnaire which had been re-addressed via one-to-one semi-structured interviews. The participants had the opportunity to elaborate on their grammar instruction-related beliefs and preferences. The researcher used another qualitative method, in-class observations, to advance the understanding of how the beliefs and preferences related to in-class practice, particularly in relation to the Saudi EFL context. The class observations data has a minor role, though an important addition, in this project as the main purpose for conducting them is to give a general snapshot of the current practices in relation to grammar teaching within the Saudi university EFL context.

The target sample has been selected from two different contexts and among three different participant groups. Within the Saudi EFL context, eight Saudi universities in diverse

geographical locations had been selected in addition to the Australian ESL context sample. The researcher believes that having such diversity and a large number of participants contributed greatly to the validity and reliability of the collected data. Moreover, using qualitative and quantitative research methods with very similar discussed themes which were compared to three different groups gave a multi-level triangulation of the presented data.

Reliability is also demonstrated in the mode of collecting the data. Participants' time was greatly valued by the researcher. For the questionnaire phase, participants were given a free choice of participating using online surveys to be done in their free and suitable time. The interviews were also scheduled in accordance with the participants' preferred method and time where they had plenty of time to discuss their views (30+ minutes each). The data collection process lasted for six months.

Besides the triangulation strategy to validate the findings, the overall findings of the present research have also been audited externally, at the conclusion stage, by two academics at Flinders University who were not involved previously in the research and not part of the supervisory team. The first one is Dr Robert Muller a sociologist who had worked as a casual teacher in TESOL at Flinders. The other one is Earvin Alinsug, who holds a master's degree in education from Flinders University (2017) and has been an active researcher in the field since then. Their insightful inputs helped the researcher monitor and evaluate the data interpretation (Schwandt & Halpern, 1988 as cited in Creswell, 2012).

Using mixed methods research allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth analysis of the research questions (Dörnyei, 2007). The study reflects a triangulated design as three different methods were incorporated. Triangulation is also referred to as *convergent parallel design* under the mixed methods umbrella, which had been discussed earlier (Creswell, 2015). Such mixed methods design, however, required a considerable effort in both designing the

quantitative and qualitative tools and also in terms of allowing adequate time to implement the procedure and analyse the results.

In the following sections, the researcher presented in detail the procedure undertaken, starting from designing the questionnaire through piloting, administration and analysis, where in each stage the validity and reliability are observed.

3.3 The research site and participants

The project targeted university-level education sector in which English is taught for academic purposes. The selection criteria for the participants included university-level English language instructors and learners in two different sites, Saudi Arabia where English is a Foreign Language (EFL) and Australia in which English is a Second Language (ESL) for the Saudi learners (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2012; Dörnyei, 2007). The participants were divided into three main groups and coded as follows:

- **Saudi Universities' Instructors as SUIs (EFL context)**
- **Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia as SULSAs (EFL context)**
- **Saudi University Learners in Australia as SULAs (ESL context)**

For the Saudi learners, both groups shared the same ethnic background being Muslims, Saudi, and their first language being Arabic. However, the instructors are all working in Saudi universities but with different backgrounds as shown in Table 3.2.

In Saudi Arabia, there are separate schools for males and females at all levels including in higher education, but the instruction and curriculum content are very similar (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Almeniei, 2005; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). The study targeted female and male participants on a voluntarily assured basis. The researcher chose the two different sites to gain a broader picture of grammar instruction beliefs and preferences in EFL and ESL contexts and, in particular, from a Saudi perspective. Accordingly, each site, the

Saudi EFL research site and the **Australian ESL research site**, will be described separately to clarify the different contexts and roles of the participants.

3.4 Saudi EFL research site

In Saudi Arabia, English is considered a foreign language that is mainly used within education institutions, hospitals, and for professional private sector jobs. Within the educational context, English usage is mostly limited to classroom interaction but is barely used outside of the classroom. English courses are mandatory for all Saudi university learners, specifically in the first two years of their bachelor's degree studies (Al-Kahtany et al., 2016; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Picard, 2018). English is the medium of instruction in several disciplines, other than English-related majors, such as medical studies, computer science, and health science. For the preparatory year, learners are required to complete intensive English courses that in some universities can be waived upon receiving a specific score in an official English test, such as TOEFL, IELTS, or STEP. STEP stands for Standardized Test for English Proficiency. This is offered to all Saudi secondary school graduates and higher levels by the Saudi National Centre for Assessment known as "Qiyas", as a criterion for the following conditions:

STEP serves as:

- An admission test for students applying for English departments in the universities.
- A verification tool for students' exemption from certain courses in English language programs (course waiver).
- A placement test for English departments applicants.
- A measuring instrument of English language proficiency for students seeking to apply for teaching positions, higher studies, businesses or any other professional field. (Qiyas.sa)

Figure 3.2 STEP Purposes Provided by the Saudi National Centre for Assessment

English language, therefore, is a compulsory requirement for the target learners' sample in this study. As discussed earlier in the literature, Saudi learners' language competency levels are persistently low, despite the students having over six years of public schooling in which English is taught four times a week with each session lasting for 45 minutes. Therefore, the target learners are aware of their English level and they have to choose between an official language test waiver or enrolling in a university English language course. Within the Saudi EFL research site, two groups of participants were approached to undertake the online questionnaire, one-to-one interviews, and classroom observations, Saudi universities' English language instructors (SUIs) and Saudi university learners (SULSAs).

3.5 Ethical issues

This research has addressed the ethics requirements for the PhD in Education (TESOL) in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Flinders University. The research proposal and instruments were submitted to the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) and given approval number 6752 with an Expiry Date: 27 July 2019. Official consent was then obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia to conduct the research in the selected universities and to contact Saudi learners in Australia through the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Australia. Being a lecturer in Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University (PNU), all the invitation letters were officially arranged within the Graduate Studies and Scientific Research Vice-Rectorate at PNU and had been issued to the selected universities (samples are attached in Appendix R). The researcher, then, obtained the related ethical approvals from the eight selected Saudi universities through their local Ethics committees. Upon which the access to the target sample had been granted.

Participants at all stages of the study were provided with a written consent form setting out the relevant information about the proposed study and the rights of the participants in the research. The researcher also provided the participants with binding assurances of

confidentiality and an undertaking that nothing the participants said or wrote would be used adversely against them. Informed consent from the volunteer participants is seen as an important part of ethical requirements. The participants were informed and assured via the *Letter of Introduction, Consent Form, and Information Sheet* that no information that could identify an individual would be obtained or published in this thesis and that the confidentiality of any information provided by them would be respected (see Appendices C, D, E, F, G, H & I). Furthermore, the participants were provided with a summary of the results of the study upon request.

Employing online tools for the questionnaire, interviews, and observations facilitated access to both females and males, thereby overcoming religious sensitivities in Saudi Arabia. During the data collection phase, the researcher, as a Muslim, could not distribute hardcopies of the questionnaire nor conduct face-to-face interviews and on-site observations with the opposite gender. This is due to both religious and contextual barriers, as the education system and many other sectors in Saudi Arabia and in its community abroad, are gender segregated. In response, the researcher used an alternative method of accessing the male group of participants through the use of technology. For the quantitative data, the survey was created through an online tool that also made it easy to distribute among the target sample. The researcher interviewed both males and females via Skype audio calls. Finally, the researcher also had the opportunity to attend a male university English class through Skype video live streaming.

3.6 Saudi EFL research participants

In this section, two groups out of the three will be described to set the context of the research. Table 3.1 below, presents the SUI and SULSA sample sizes and the total numbers approached for both the online questionnaires, the semi-structured one-to-one interviews, and the class observations. The SUIs and SULSAs were recruited from eight selected public Saudi



universities in different regions to represent the Saudi perspective: 1) Princess Norah Bin Abdulrahman University; 2) King Saud University; 3) Al Imam Mohammad Bin Saud University; 4) King Abdulaziz University; 5) Um Al Qura University; 6) Hail University; 7) Al Dammam University; and 8) Al Qassim University. The researcher selected these eight public universities from different cities to broaden the sample and to represent the most generally shared beliefs and preferences in the higher education sector.

Table 3.1 An Overview of the SUIs & SULSAs Participants and Sampling in the Questionnaire & Interviews

Groups	Population Pool	Questionnaires	Interviews	Class Observations
<u>SUIs</u>	Eight Public Universities in Saudi Arabia	Numbers approached: 433 English Language Instructors	Numbers approached: 50 SUIs	Numbers approached: 10 SUIs were contacted to arrange the observations
		Completed respondents: 267 Instructors	Completed respondents: 12 SUIs	
<u>SULSAs</u>		Numbers approached: 3580 learners	Numbers approached: 50 SULSAs	Six Classes Observed
		Completed respondents: 1768 Learners	Completed respondents: 12 SULSAs	

* The shading colours used in the tables and graphs remained the same throughout the thesis;

- ◆ light orange for SUIs (represent Harmony in its beautiful educational sense),
- ◆ light green for SULSAs (representing Saudi context as the Saudi flag is green) and
- ◆ light blue for SULAs (representing Australian context as the Australian flag is mostly blue).

The questionnaire was distributed online, and the completed returned responses included volunteered responses from other Saudi public universities including Taif University, Shaqra University, and Jazan University. These contributions may possibly be attributed to a cultural duty to assist others which may have motivated the participants and invitees to further

share and distribute the online surveys among their colleagues. The researcher decided to include the additional contributions, as all Saudi public universities are similar and the aim of the study is to investigate perceptions of most Saudi regions to better reflect the general Saudi perspective, rather than building up internal comparisons between Saudi universities.

3.6.1 Saudi University Instructors (SUIs)

Table 3.2 shows the demographic information of the English language instructors within the selected Saudi universities who participated in the online questionnaire and provided information about their education level, years of teaching experience, and the number of students in their classes.

Table 3.2 SUI Profiles from the Online Questionnaire

SUI Profiles (N= 267)			
		N	%
Education	Bachelor's degree	63	24%
	Master's degree	138	52%
	PhD	65	24%
Teaching Experience	5 or less years	121	45 %
	5 to 11 years	75	28 %
	11+ years	71	27 %
Country of Origin	Saudi Arabia	200	75%
	Arab countries	38	14%
	Native English-speaking countries	17	6%
	Asia	12	4%
Mother Tongue	Arabic	237	89%
	English	20	8%
	Other	10	3%
Gender	Female	171	64%
	Male	96	36%
No. of Students Per Class	30 or less	123	46 %
	31 to 50	112	42 %
	51 to 70	25	9 %
	70+	6	2 %

As shown in Table 3.2, the total number of completed responses from the online questionnaire was 267 male (36%) and female (64%) SUIs. All of these are current university instructors teaching in English-related courses in undergraduate level including the preparatory year and postgraduate students. In relation to the English specialisation background, the data showed that the majority (52%) held a master's degree, (24%) a bachelor's degree, and (24%) a PhD. The majority of SUIs are highly educated in English related disciplines and their perceptions are of a value to explore due the specialised expertise. The teaching experience of the sample population was largely distributed between five years and less (45%) and above 11 years (41%).

The average number of students per class was mainly distributed between 30 or less (46%) and 31 to 50 (42%). The number of students per class is an important contextual factor that helped to provide a general view of how English classes look in the Saudi context. All the instructors were majoring in English language-related disciplines such as translation, English language literature, linguistics, and teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. According to the Saudi education system, any instructor or lecturer coming from these disciplines is eligible to teach the English language if assigned.

The English language instructors in the selected Saudi universities were from 17 countries. The researcher grouped these into the following categories: 1) Saudi Arabia; 2) Arab Countries (Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Libya, Algeria, Tunis, Jordan, and Yemen; 3) Native English-speaking countries (Australia, the USA, the UK, and Canada); and 4) Asia (Pakistan, India, and Malaysia).

3.6.2 Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia (SULSAs)

The second group from the Saudi EFL research site is Saudi learners who were enrolled in the eight selected public universities in Saudi Arabia, coded as SULSAs. They all speak

Arabic as a native language. They are graduates from a number of different disciplines, but they all study the English language for academic purposes courses. All the learners, including the SULSAs and the SULAs (discussed in the next section), took English classes for academic purposes to fulfil their future career needs and to further their studies. Table 3.3 presents the demographic information of the participating SULSA learners from the online questionnaire.

Table 3.3 SULSA Profiles from the Online Questionnaire

SULSA Profiles (N=1768)			
		N	%
Academic Level	Preparatory year	403	23%
	First/ Second year	393	22%
	Third/ Fourth year	559	32%
	Above/ Graduate	413	23%
Gender	Female	1237	70%
	Male	531	30%
Specialisation	Business & Law	346	20%
	Education, Psychology, & Social Work	197	11%
	Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences	86	5 %
	Medicine & Public Health	283	16%
	Science & Engineering	468	26%
	Languages	388	22%

3.7 Australian ESL research site

Australia, alongside the United States, UK and Canada, are the leading countries in increasing the enrolment of international students where English is considered their additional language. For the purpose of this project, Australia is the representative of the ESL context for Saudi learners. According to the international students' data for 2019 provided by the Department of Education in Australia, there are 622,050 international students, where 5,117 among them are Saudi (International Education, 2019). Figure 3.3 is a screenshot from the

Australian government international education website which shows the Saudi learners registration records.

Image removed due to copyright restriction.

Figure 3.3 The Saudi enrolled students' data for 2019 provided by the Department of Education in Australia.

A screenshot from: <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/DataVisualisations/Pages/nationalitySummary.aspx>

In Australia, English for Saudi learners is a second language as the learners are obliged to use English both within and outside of the classroom for essential daily life interactions. Australia is one of the countries approved by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education (MoE) for all offered scholarship programs. Over 5,000 students are currently enrolled in education programs across Australia. According to the 2019 data, the vast majority of Saudi learners are

enrolled in higher education and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) which prepare learners linguistically for university level study (International Education, 2019).

The Saudi MoE census report for 2016/2017 (1438/1439AH) stated that there were 7,356 enrolled Saudi students in Australia; 1,163 of these were newly enrolled, while 1,080 were successful graduates in different disciplines and degrees at the university level (Ministry of Education). As English is the primary language of Australia, Saudi learners are offered up to two years of English language programs to enable them to pursue their education or training programs. Saudi university learners are required to have a high command of academic English to enable them to pursue their higher education. Most Australian universities accept proof of an international official language test such as IELTS or TOEFL with a specified required score depending on the program's requirements. They also provide pathways intensive language programs (e.g. ELICOS programs). Upon successful completion, learners will start their university education (Phakiti, Hirsh, & Woodrow, 2013). The focus of those programs is on developing academic English where a great emphasis is on the four main skills: reading, listening, writing speaking as well as grammar. Learners are expected to master the language where some ESL language support is provided by most universities (e.g. Learning Centre and Writing Centre) though varied in mode and efficacy (Arkoudis & Starfield, 2007).

No specific universities were selected for the study as the research invitation email was sent through the Saudi Cultural Mission in Canberra as the official representative of all Saudi students in Australia who were enrolled in several public Australian universities.

3.8 Australian ESL research participants

The researcher in this section gives as description of the second group of the Saudi university learners (SULAs). The Saudi university learners were geographically diverged and

were not condensed in a certain university or area as this is one of the Saudi scholarship regulations.

3.8.1 Saudi University Learners in Australia (SULAs)

The participants in this research site were all Saudi university learners. The researcher did not address language teachers in Australia or observe language classes in general, as the study specifically focuses on the Saudi perspective. Therefore, Saudi University Learners in Australia, coded as SULAs, are the third group of research participants. Table 3.4 presents an overview of the SULAs' participation as the third group of participants and provides an account of numbers of participants approached for the quantitative and qualitative phases.

Table 3.4 An Overview of the SULAs Participants and Sampling in the Questionnaire & Interviews

Participant Group	Population Pool	Questionnaire	Interviews
SULAs	Saudi University scholarship holders in Australia	Numbers approached: 545 learners.	Numbers approached: 50 SULAs
		Completed respondents: 420 learners	Completed respondents: 10 SULAs

The purpose of recruiting SULAs from Australia for this study was to gain an understanding of the shared beliefs and preferences among Saudi university learners experiencing the ESL and EFL contexts, to better address teaching practice and learning in Saudi Arabia. In conducting the present study in Australian universities, the researcher was also keen to investigate Saudi learners within the Australian ESL context. SULAs, SUIs, and SULSAs all shared the same ethnic, language, and cultural background. The only difference is that the SULAs had the opportunity to learn English in an official English-speaking country for academic purposes. This fact distinguishes SULAs from SULSAs in the interview phase.

The 10 SULA interviewees were enrolled in Australian universities and had successfully passed the English academic pathway course which usually ranges from one to two years fully paid within the Saudi scholarship programs. Table 3.5 provides the SULA profiles extracted from the online questionnaire.

Table 3.5 SULA Profiles from the Online Questionnaire

SULAs' Profile (N=420)			
		N	%
Academic Level	English year for scholarship holders	115	28%
	Preparatory year	22	5%
	First/ Second year	82	20%
	Third/ Fourth year	45	11%
	Above/ Graduate	156	37%
Gender	Female	105	25%
	Male	315	75%
Specialisation	Business & Law	98	23%
	Education, Psychology, & Social Work	27	7%
	Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences	15	4%
	Medicine & Public Health	71	17%
	Science & Engineering	192	46%
	Languages	17	4%

The present study will contribute to the field by providing significant insights from the fairly large sample investigated; the mixed methods approach produced a total of 2,455 complete responses on the online questionnaires, 34 one-to-one interviews, and six classroom observations. Also, despite the complexity and difficulty of conducting this study in relation to gaining access to both males and females, the researcher attempted to work efficiently using technology, including live stream videos and online questionnaires to reach both male and

female voices, whereas most existing studies focus only on one gender for cultural and religious reasons.

3.9 Development of the research instruments

This section will explain the initial stages of developing the research instruments, including the online questionnaire, the one-to-one semi-structured interviews, and the in-class observations. The researcher replicated several Likert scale items about grammar instruction from Spada, Barkaoui, Peters, So, and Valeo (2009), and from Valeo and Spada (2016) which focused on the preferred timing of isolated and integrated grammar instruction. Permission was obtained from Nina Spada via email. Some of the questionnaire items serve the purpose of this study in addressing the explicit isolated and integrated grammar instruction. Some items were used but modified to suit the purposes of the present study. Moreover, the researcher introduced new items focusing on implicit grammar instruction, grammar and accuracy, English language usage in context and first language interference (see Table 3.9). Further discussion in the below sections.

3.9.1 Replication in research

Replication in research, by definition, means to repeat a previous study aiming to compare and enrich the original findings, to signify that others' research can be reproduced in different ways and contexts (Porte, 2012). Firstly, the researcher acknowledges that the first phase of the study was partially adapted from a research paper by Spada et al. (2009), which developed a questionnaire to investigate ESL learners' preferences of isolated and integrated teaching of English grammar and then tested the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items. The focus of this study was on the preferred timing of isolated or integrated grammar teaching for learners during a lesson. The developed questionnaire was then employed in a recent study by Valeo and Spada (2016) who expanded their focus to include EFL learners

alongside ESL learners. Inspired by the topic, the researcher for the present study emailed Nina Spada and permission was granted to adapt the questionnaire and generate a number of modifications to suit the purposes of the present project. A full list of the adopted and modified items will be presented in the following section (see Table 3.9).

Replicating research does not mean always repeating the original study in the same form; it could instead be an extended study introducing different variables or methods to test the robustness and applicability of the study in a different context, with different participants, or for a modified purpose (Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2012; Polio, 2012). Porte (2012) addressed the issue of replicating research in applied linguistics and pointed out that replication in SLA is crucial to maintaining validity and consistency in related research.

3.9.2 Development of the research instruments

This section discusses the development of the online questionnaire and the related pilot testing for validity purposes. It also presents a description of the development of the interviews' and class observations' instruments.

3.9.2.1 The online questionnaire

According to Mackey (2012), explicit and implicit learning and the awareness of learning a second language are “ripe” topics to be replicated in SLA that had been previously been approached qualitatively. Through questionnaires, the participants are approached to respond to the researcher's questions related to the proposed study in a consistent and well-defined way (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014; Gillham, 2007). The questionnaire aimed to explore instructors' and learners' beliefs and preferences about grammar instruction from a Saudi perspective by exploring two different contexts using predetermined items (Dörnyei, 2010). The questionnaire items addressed a number of issues concerning grammar efficacy, current beliefs, perceptions, and preferences for grammar instruction. The researcher



developed two versions of the adapted questionnaire, one for instructors and one for learners (Spada et al., 2009), which were identical in their core content, but different in addressing the participants as either an instructor or a learner (see Appendices A & B).

After the biographical information page in the questionnaire, three main sections followed. Each section had several statements or questions that focused on one theme. The first group of statements were about different grammar instruction preferences and beliefs in six-point Likert scale statements, ranging from strongly disagree (1), to disagree (2), somewhat disagree (3), somewhat agree (4), agree (5), and strongly agree (6), to record the variation among preferences and to systematically allow for further future quantitative analysis (Cohen et al., 2011; DeVellis, 2012). The researcher excluded the neutral option (N/A) for two reasons; firstly, to obtain concrete answers for all statements as all answers are valuable to the proposed study, and secondly, some respondents tend to rely on neutral answers because they do not want to commit to the statements; therefore, excluding the neutral option would encourage them to seriously consider and select the other options (Barnard & Scampton, 2008; Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012; Dörnyei, 2010) (Dörnyei, 2010).

As closed questions do not offer respondents the opportunity to freely express or document their answers, the participants were also provided a space in the questionnaire to add their comments or feedback after the closed-ended statements, which were then used for further investigation (Dörnyei, 2010). The questionnaire concluded with an open-ended question that lead to a further exploration of the influence of Arabic on learning English grammar.

The second group of questions in the survey were multi-response questions (Table 3.6, 3.7, & 3.8) on beliefs and preferences about grammar instruction and language usage in context. The participants could choose more than one answer if applicable, as follows:



Table 3.6 Multiple Response Question No. [12]

Learning English grammar helps in: (choose all applicable)

Answer Choices
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic Writing
<input type="checkbox"/> Conversation and communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Expressing their ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve their English language
<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding reading texts
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above

Table 3.7 Multiple Response Question No. [13]

I prefer to teach/learn English grammar through: (choose all applicable)

Answer Choices
<input type="checkbox"/> Comparing it to Arabic grammar
<input type="checkbox"/> Playing games in class
<input type="checkbox"/> Step by step explanation
<input type="checkbox"/> Doing Lots of exercises
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading a text
<input type="checkbox"/> Conversation
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing
<input type="checkbox"/> Listening to a clip/video...etc.

Table 3.8 Multiple Response Question No. [16]

I use English, where I live now, mostly in: (choose all applicable)

Answer Choices
<input type="checkbox"/> University
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet
<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping
<input type="checkbox"/> Restaurants
<input type="checkbox"/> With friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Home
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals
<input type="checkbox"/> work
<input type="checkbox"/> Travelling

As stated earlier, the researcher partially adapted a questionnaire from Spada et al. (2009) that shared issues of interest and decided to replicate and modify it to address the present study research questions. The questionnaire was intended for learners of the English language in different contexts. However, English instructors have also been included in the present study in a parallel investigation with the two groups of learners which gives breadth to the exploration. In regard to the Likert scale items, the researcher, with the assistance of expertise in the TESOL field developed 29 items grouped into seven sections: 1) explicit isolated grammar instruction Items, 2) explicit integrated grammar instruction Items, 3) implicit grammar instruction/strong version CLT, 4) explicit grammar instruction for accuracy and proficiency items, 5) Implicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items, 6) English language usage in context, and 7) first language influence.

Working together, they made some modifications to the original questionnaire by changing the words between instructors and learners; for example, “I like to learn ...” for learners and “I like to teach ...” for instructors. The modifications also refocused the statements on explicit, implicit, and integrated notions instead of highlighting the timing. The purpose of adapting some of the study items, therefore, was to guide the researcher in addressing the main concepts of explicit isolated, explicit integrated and implicit grammar instruction and their variations. In Table 3.9 below, the researcher presented the 29 final version of the employed Likert scale items in the present study in the first column. The second column has a list of the 17 items adopted from Spada et al. (2009).

Table 3.9 Adopted and Modified Likert Scale Items Grouped in Seven Sections

Adopted items modified for instructors and learners	
(1) Explicit & Isolated Items	Spada et al. (2009) Original Items
1. I like to explain the grammar rule following it with practice.(I) 1. I like my teacher to explain the grammar rule first following it with practice. (L)	NA
2. I find it easier for students to learn grammar when I teach it by itself. (I) 2. I find it easier to learn grammar when the teacher teaches it by itself. (L)	3. I find it easier to learn grammar when the instructor teaches it by itself.
3. I like to stop students to correct their errors as soon as they make them. (I) 3. I like my teacher to stop me and correct my mistakes as soon as I make them. (L)	4. I like the teacher to correct my mistakes as soon as I make them.
4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar. (I) 4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar. (L)	9. I like lessons that focus only on teaching grammar.
5. I like teaching grammar for students by explaining as well as practicing exercises. (I) 5. I like learning grammar by seeing the explanation as well as practicing exercises. (L)	6. I like learning grammar by seeing the explanation and doing practice exercises.
9. I find it helpful for students to learn a grammar point before reading it in texts. (I) 9. I find it helpful to learn a grammar point before reading it in a text. (L)	20. I find it helpful to learn a grammar point before I read it in a text
11. My students expect me to provide them with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice. (I) 11. I expect my teacher to provide me with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice. (L)	NA
(2) Explicit & Integrated Items	
7. I find it hard to teach grammar through different activities like reading, conversation or in class games. (I) 7. I find it hard to learn grammar through different language activities such as reading, conversation or in class games. (L)	11. I find it hard to learn grammar through reading or listening activities.
12. I prefer to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in class games. (I) 12. I prefer my teacher to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in class games. (L)	18. I like learning grammar during speaking, writing, listening or reading activities.
13. I like teaching grammar by using English within written/oral communication. (I) 13. I like learning grammar by using English within written/oral communication. (L)	7. I like learning grammar by using language.
15. I prefer to integrate grammar teaching as I work on different skills and activities. (I)	12. I prefer to learn grammar as I work on different skills and activities.



15. I prefer my teacher to integrate grammar teaching while I work on different skills and activities. (L)	
17. Students learn better when I teach grammar while we read a text. (I) 17. I learn better when my teacher teaches grammar while we read a text. (L)	14. I find it helpful when the instructor teaches grammar while we read a text.
18. I like to correct students' errors after an activity/lesson is completed. (I) 18. I like my teacher to correct my mistakes after an activity/lesson is completed. (L)	15. I like the teacher to correct my mistakes after an activity is completed.
(3) Implicit Grammar Instruction/CLT	
16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need. (I) 16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need. (L)	5. I prefer lessons that focus on communication and teach grammar only when necessary.
19. Students can learn grammar while reading\ listening to a passage. (I) 19. I can learn grammar while reading/listening to passage. (L)	16. I can learn grammar while reading or listening to a passage.
20. I prefer to let the students learn grammar through various language activities without explaining. (I) 20. I prefer to learn grammar through various language activities without explaining. (L)	NA
(4) Explicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items	
6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to use English more accurately. (I) 6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to learn using English more accurately. (L)	10. Doing grammar exercises is the best way to learn to use English more accurately.
8. I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of students in English. (I) 8. I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of my English. (L)	17. I believe my English will improve quickly if I study and practice grammar.
10. I believe that teaching English grammar is important to improve academic English. (I) 10. I believe that studying English grammar is important to improve my academic English. (L)	NA
(5) Implicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items	
14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help my students to improve their Academic English quickly. (I) 14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help to improve my Academic English quickly. (L)	NA
21. Doing communicative activities for students is a good way to learn English language more accurately. (I) 21. Doing communicative activities is a good way for me to learn English more accurately. (L)	19. Doing communicative activities is the best way to learn to use English more accurately.



22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar. (I) 22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.(L)	NA
(6) English language usage in context	
23. I think students need more time to practice English. (I) 23. I need more time to practice English. (L)	NA
24. I use English often outside the university. (I) 24. I use English often outside the class/university. (L)	NA
25. I rarely use English outside the class / university. (I) 25. I rarely use English outside the university /class. (L)	NA
26. I think students have enough time to practice English in class. (I) 26. I have enough time to practice using English in class. (L)	NA
28. I think the class duration is enough for students to practice English. (I) 28. I think the class duration is enough for me to practice English. (L)	NA
(7) First Language Influence	
27. I think my students expect to learn English grammar the way they learnt Arabic grammar. (I) 27. I expect to learn English grammar the way I learn Arabic grammar. (L)	NA
29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on teaching English grammar. (I) 29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on learning English grammar. (L)	NA

* Note: (I) refers to instructors' questionnaire items and (L) refers to learners' version.

3.9.2.2 The online questionnaire pilot test

Pilot testing or pre-testing is considered to be an important step before conducting any research, allowing the researcher to refine, edit, and recognise any possible issues that might arise during the data collection stage (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2012; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012; Fowler, 2014). In the quantitative part of the study, the researcher decided to conduct the pilot test to ensure that the replicated and modified instrument was compatible with the proposed new context and also to validate the instrument's effectiveness within the target population, in terms of clear and familiar terms and concepts. The primary development of the instrument

was undertaken with the supervisory team checking every item and related concepts. Concerning the translation, the researcher did an initial check of the correct English to Arabic translation with the co-supervisor as Arabic is his mother tongue. After this, the pilot test questionnaire used both Arabic and English language for each entry, which was tested and distributed for learners. Further, the researcher aimed to check the overall procedure including the questionnaire design, the cohesion of the steps, the suggested timing, and also any technical issues, as the questionnaire was designed and distributed electronically using the Survey Monkey® online tool. Therefore, the pilot test focused mainly on the clarity of the statements. This included removing any ambiguity caused by the translation. The learners' version questionnaire was distributed with the Arabic translation under each question and item. The validity of the translation was also checked by four TESOL colleagues.

3.9.3 Pilot testing

Prior to the actual distribution of the questionnaires, they were tested for validity by colleagues specialising in TESOL and experienced EFL teachers (23 completed responses) and also learners (42 completed responses), for suitability and clarity. The questionnaire links were sent to the participants via Survey Monkey®. The respondents were provided with a dedicated space to add their comments and a clarity checkpoint to tick. According to their recommendations, some modification were applied to questionnaire and the statements in the to improve the content and the face validity (Creswell, 2012; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012). In developing and adapting the 29 Likert-scale items, the researcher looked for the appropriateness of the items to the Saudi EFL university-level instructors and learners and aimed to use general, clear, and easy to understand concepts not specifically representing technical TESOL terms (Mackey & Gass, 2012). The questionnaire items were also refined and checked to address the following guidelines suggested by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012):

- Aim for short and simple items.
- Use simple and natural language.
- Avoid ambiguous or loaded words and sentences.
- Avoid negative constructions.
- Avoid double-barrelled questions.

Regarding the overall design and time appropriateness, the researcher chose to employ the Survey Monkey® online questionnaire tool as it offered a variety of functions that enabled the researcher to design, manage, and track the questionnaires effectively. During the pilot test, the researcher noted the average time spent on completing the questionnaire and then applied some internal functions such as “skip questions” to redirect the participants automatically based on their input and responses to only what was relevant to them. One example of skip questions used in the employed questionnaire was related to the place of study, as they were asked to choose between Saudi Arabia and Australia. If the participant chose Saudi Arabia, they were then asked to choose their university from the list which would not appear if they chose Australia. Employing such techniques helped both the researcher and the participants to efficiently complete the questionnaire, which saved considerable time and effort for both. The layout, colours, and font size were also considered.

3.9.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview usually acts as an extension of previous data to allow for further explanation in a flexible way (D. Scott & Morrison, 2006; Silverman, 2010). The purpose of conducting interviews is to gain in-depth information through a mutual semi-spontaneous discussion about a predetermined topic, sometimes with pre-set guided questions (Cohen et al., 2011). The interview questions were not based on the data collected via the questionnaire, but rather were designed around the same topics covered, to provide the participants with the opportunity to elaborate on the main themes raised in the questionnaire.

Therefore, SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs were given the opportunity to elaborate on the main themes raised in the questionnaire through a semi-structured interview. A list of questions was prepared by the researcher that reflected on the same topics as in the questionnaire. Below are some of the general guiding questions and topics that the researcher used to lead the discussion, although the list is not finite or exhaustive:

Table 3.10 Interview Questions and Discussed Topics

Interview Questions	Discussed Topics
1- What do you consider grammar?	◆ English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia.
2- How important is learning and teaching grammar in regard to language proficiency?	◆ The Saudi context in relation to teaching English.
3- How do Saudi English teachers and learners prefer to teach English grammar?	◆ Different approaches toward teaching and learning grammar.
-Which of the following three lessons do you prefer in teaching and learning grammar:	◆ Views and beliefs about English grammar.
1. Explicit Isolated.	◆ In class participation.
2. Explicit Integrated.	◆ Class duration.
3. Implicit.	

For interview question three, each participant was provided with the following description:

"I will give you 3 options for a grammar lesson presenting for instance the simple past tense and I want you to choose the most preferred one to you and tell me your reasons for the choice:

1. Explicit Isolated Grammar Instruction:

Explicit teaching of the rule > examples > practice

The instructor will present the past tense rule for example followed by some examples, and then concluding the lesson with text reading or listening to a related audio. At the end, lots of practice is provided.

2. Explicit Integrated Grammar Instruction:



Reading or listening activity > discussing the related info> explicit teaching of the rule > practice it

The instructor will start the lesson with a story to be read and the story has the past tense. After reading the story or listening to it, a discussion of the events only will be provided. At the final stage, the instructor will explain the rule and ask learners to practice.

3. Implicit Grammar Learning:

The purely implicit teaching of the grammar rule

The instructor will spend the whole class on reading a story or listening to an audio clip which is in the past. With the learners, they will discuss the events, talk about the characters, and write about the story itself without giving direct attention to the grammar rules. So, the instructor will just let the learners listen, read and write without explicitly explaining the past tense rule.”

The above three lesson options were developed to represent the most current broad types approaches of form-focused instruction in SLA in accordance with Ellis (Ellis, 2006, 2015) proposed model. The first one is focus on forms (represent explicit isolated lesson option one) where full attention is given to the grammar rule which he described it as “structure-of-the-day approach”. The second is planned focus on form which focuses on meaning with a predetermined grammar teaching within the communicative activities (represent explicit integrated lesson option two). The third one is called incidental focus on form as the primary focus will be on the meaning within a variety of communicative based activities and grammar is rarely addressed (represent implicit lesson option three).

Within the qualitative phase, the above-mentioned research questions were the critical component or “steering wheels” of the interviews, as the participants had been provided with the opportunity to elaborate on the questionnaire topics.

3.9.3.2 Class observations

Observations are an insightful live procedure in qualitative research that enable the researcher to investigate, notice, and record the natural setting (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014). This research used a structured observation in which the investigator was aware of what to observe (Cohen et al., 2011). As part of a structured observation, an observation checklist was generated based on the questionnaire items to be observed during the class, as the purpose of conducting the observation was to compare the recorded perceptions from the questionnaire to real classroom practice (Appendix K).

3.10 Sampling

The sampling procedure depends on different factors that must be addressed before commencing data collection (Cohen et al., 2011). The question of how large the sample should be is frequently asked by researchers, although there is not a single answer (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2012). The sample size depends on several factors, including whether the research is quantitative or qualitative (Cohen et al., 2011; Silverman, 2010). The correct sample size also depends on the purpose of the study.

Based on the principles of the present study, the researcher intended approached the sample from the entire target population as all English language instructors as well as Saudi university learners within the selected population were approached via the local Information Technology (IT) departments (Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2012; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012; Dörnyei, 2010). Upon receiving the required ethical approval, all IT departments contacted in each university and in the Saudi Cultural Mission (SACM) in Australia had been

provided by the researcher' questionnaire email invitation. The invitation email, then, had been forwarded to the instructors and learners within each institution. All English language instructors and ESL/EFL learners in the selected contexts were assumed to have an equal chance to participate as they were all invited via their official university emails to launch the online questionnaire anonymously. The criteria for the selected samples based on complete responses in the questionnaire. Figure 3.4 presents the overall research procedure showing the employed data collection methods, the phases, and the drawn samples.

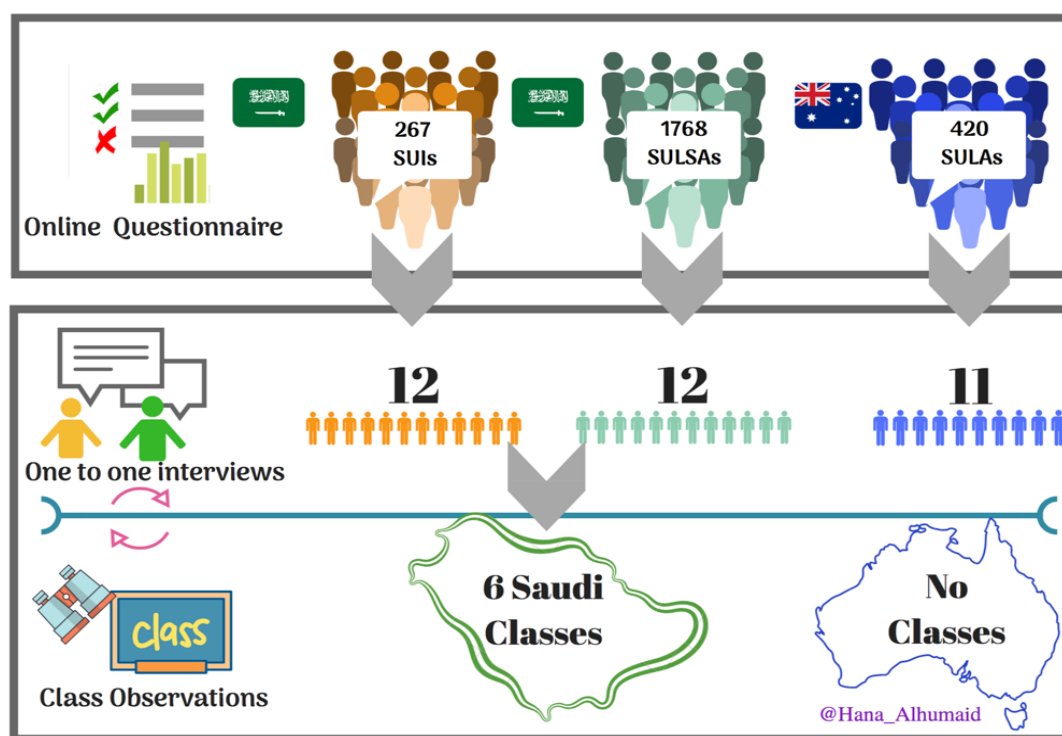


Figure 3.4 The Research Overall Procedure

For the SUIs, 433 teachers launched the questionnaire and 267 returned the questionnaire completed. Meanwhile, 3,580 SULSAs launched the web-based questionnaire with 1,768 having a completed response, while 420 out of 545 SULAs completed the questionnaire. From the questionnaire, the interviews and class observations were arranged. In the following sections, a description of the sampling within each stage will be explained.

3.11 Procedure

This section explains the conducted procedures of the study addressing the online questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and the class observations.

3.11.1 Online questionnaire

All English language instructors in the eight selected Saudi universities were invited to participate voluntarily, including Saudi and non-Saudi teachers. Due to the nature of staffing in Saudi Arabian universities, there is a considerable number of foreign and Arab English language teachers, so their inclusion in the study was essential. They all have a strong educational background being university instructors. The researcher also invited both females and males to participate.

Web-based or online questionnaires produced using Survey Monkey® were distributed among the instructors and learners using 29 rating scale statements, multiple responses questions, closed-ended questions, and ended with one open-ended question “How (if at all) has the way you learnt Arabic affected your learning of English grammar?” that was excluded for irrelevance to the scope of the present study (see question number 18 in Appendices A & B). Participants were asked to complete the survey online and to return their completed surveys anonymously. A full information sheet was provided as the opening page of the questionnaire in which the participants agreed to participate by clicking “proceed” (see Appendices A & B). Both versions start with biographical information questions that include questions about education level, gender, age, institution, and learning/teaching experience. This information helped the researcher to define the sample from the chosen context. The adapted questionnaire was translated into Arabic as the purpose of the study is more about gaining an understanding of the issue than testing the participants’ linguistic abilities.

As mentioned above, there are two versions of the questionnaire: one for the instructors, the other for the learners. The researcher conducted the questionnaires in an organised online context, exploring instructors' and learners' beliefs and experiences of learning and teaching English grammar from a Saudi perspective. The questionnaires were distributed via the official participants' email list using Survey Monkey®, a website that generates and administers online questionnaires. This enabled the researcher to easily access a large population (Creswell, 2014; Fowler, 2014), including female and male participants, which is difficult to achieve in person given the cultural and gender sensitivities of Saudi Arabia's Islamic religion.

Furthermore, web-based questionnaires are now a universally used tool due to advances in the technology used in the education sector, especially in universities (Fowler, 2014). For example, this is a commonly-used technology in the Saudi Arabian education system. Teachers and students in the universities are mostly contacted via their university email addresses. Therefore, the researcher used this instrument to invite the targeted population.

For the Saudi EFL context, instructors and learners received email invitations from the Deanship of Scientific Research at each university to voluntarily participate in the questionnaire. Upon approaching the questionnaire link, anonymity was maintained as the researcher set the Survey Monkey® questionnaire tool to be anonymous. However, an invitation for interview participation question were included where the participants can indicate their interest in participating by providing contact information. Participants answered the questionnaire in their spare time and in a flexible way. In the ESL context, another official email invitation was sent to Saudi learners in Australia via the Saudi Cultural Mission in Canberra; this email directed them to the same questionnaire with the same defined instructions. The average time spent completing the questionnaire was from 10 to 15 minutes.

The researcher benefited from using this method to collect and analyse the data as Survey Monkey® administered the questionnaire, kept track of any progress made, and

transferred all the data to the appropriate analytical software, in this case, the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Survey Monkey® generated a direct link to the questionnaire to be easily distributed among the target sample group via email. Such a survey does not require program installation as it provides a direct link for participants to log on and start the survey anonymously.

3.11.2 Semi-structured interviews

At the end of the questionnaire, an invitation for all participants to participate in a one-to-one interview was provided, in which the participants indicated their interest. The instructors were also provided with a request to undertake a class observation in the questionnaire. An email invitation, consent forms, and information sheets for the interviews were sent to the list of emails extracted from the questionnaire responses. The researcher provided the participants with a choice between face-to-face interviews or an online live-streamed interview to suit their circumstances. The researcher also reassured the participants, especially the learners, that there was no right or wrong answers to the interview questions, as the main aim was to obtain information about what they preferred and viewed as a good way of teaching and learning grammar.

Out of 363 Saudi learners who were interested in participating in an interview, the researcher interviewed (12) SULSAs and (10) SULAs. In total, 12 SULAs were invited and were allocated a timeslot, but two of them could not make it and the researcher could not get more willing SULA participants. For the teachers, out of 274 invitations, only 35 agreed to participate in the interviews and class observations. In total, the researcher interviewed (12) SUIs. The total number of participants was 34 see Table 3.2 for their profiles. The selection criterion was based on the availability and the number of participants for each group; this was enough to reach the saturation stage as the interviews lasted from 30 to 50 minutes each.

Saturation had been defined as “the point when additional data do not seem to develop the concepts any further but simply repeat what previous information have already revealed” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 127). This means that the data collected were enough to address the research questions. All participants were assigned with the codes SUIs (for instructors), SULSAs (for learners in Saudi), and SULAs (learners in Australia), and a participant allocation number (rather than name identification) to maintain the agreed upon confidentiality.

During the interviews, all participants were given the choice of communicating in either English or Arabic. All the instructor participants (SUIs), were interviewed in English as per their preference. For the learners, seven out of 12 SULSAs preferred English, as did seven out of 10 SULAs. However, they all used a mixture of Arabic and English, and the researcher gave the participants the freedom to code switch, as the purpose was to let the participants express themselves with ease.

Concerning the mode of the interviews, all learners were interviewed via Skype/Facetime audio service. The researcher was also able to interview four SUIs face-to-face in their university offices. The interviews were semi-structured with several predetermined questions based on the questionnaire items that helped the researcher to guide and further the discussion on the participants’ questionnaire responses. The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 to 50 minutes, as the participants’ availability was limited, and the interviews were conducted according to their circumstances.

The participants were asked about their preferred ways of teaching and learning English grammar giving them the opportunity to elaborate on their preferences in accordance with the scope of the study as stated earlier in Table 3.10. The responses to these questions were extensive indicating that the participants were interested in sharing their beliefs, experiences, and suggestions. Almost 13,000 words were transcribed in relation to this question, but the researcher attempted to summarise and group the responses into several shared themes among

the participants. The researcher used interview question three, as described previously (see Appendix J), to sum up the findings in which the participants were asked to choose one preferred grammar lesson from three options that had been explained to them, which was then reported on and discussed. The three lessons question mirrored the three Likert scale grouped items (1, 2 & 3) for preferences and beliefs on grammar instruction between explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit communicative grammar teaching approaches.

Table 3.11 provides the biographical information about the interviewees reporting on their age, education levels, and specified codes used in the project analysis. The table also presents the nationality for the instructors where two of them are not Saudi. For SUI3, her native language is Arabic, but her nationality is Canadian as indicated. All learners are Saudi.

Table 3.11 Biographic Information of Interviewees Recruited from the Online Questionnaire Labelled with Codes

SUIs (N=12)	Country of Origin	Age	Qualification	SULSAs (N=12)	Age	Level	SULAs (N=10)	Age	Level
SUI1	Saudi Arabia	25-34	Master	SULSA1	21-24	Bachelor	SULA1	25-27	Bachelor
SUI2	Saudi Arabia	35-44	Master	SULSA2	21-24	Bachelor	SULA2	21-24	Master
SUI3	Canada	45-54	PhD	SULSA3	18-20	Bachelor	SULA3	31-34	Master
SUI4	Saudi Arabia	55-64	PhD	SULSA4	21-24	Bachelor	SULA4	25-27	Master
SUI5	Saudi Arabia	25-34	Master	SULSA5	21-24	Bachelor	SULA5	31-34	Master
SUI6	Saudi Arabia	25-34	Master	SULSA6	21-24	Bachelor	SULA6	28-30	Master
SUI7	Saudi Arabia	35-44	PhD	SULSA7	35-44	Master	SULA7	31-34	PhD
SUI8	Jordan	35-44	PhD	SULSA8	18-20	Bachelor	SULA8	35-44	Master
SUI9	Saudi Arabia	25-34	Master	SULSA9	28-30	Bachelor	SULA9	35-44	PhD
SUI10	Saudi Arabia	35-44	Master	SULSA10	21-24	Bachelor	SULA10	21-24	Bachelor
SUI11	Saudi Arabia	35-44	Master	SULSA11	21-24	Bachelor			
SUI12	Saudi Arabia	35-44	Master	SULSA12	21-24	Bachelor			



3.11.3 Conducting the class observations

The researcher did six onsite observations in English language classes within the selected universities, aiming to discover how real classroom practices related to the instructors' and learners' preferences about grammar instruction. Consent forms were obtained from the instructors and the universities to conduct the observation. Before each observation, the researcher received a copy of the lesson plan to be conducted by the teacher. During the observation, the researcher primarily focused on the teaching practice related to English grammar in accordance with the list of items in the observation checklist that were specified for grammar instruction adapted from the questionnaire. Additionally, the researcher observed the overall nature of the lesson, student-teacher interaction, the class setting, The role of the researcher was to sit back and observe both how the teacher taught the grammar lesson according to the provided lesson plan, and also the learners' engagement during the lesson without any interruption or interference from the researcher. The whole class was under observation.

In total, six classes were observed as arranged by the instructors who indicated their consent. The researcher was able to interview as well as attend the classes of three of the instructors; SUI4, SUI6, and SUI9 only. The other three teachers observed were not interviewed due to logistical difficulties. Below in Table 3. 12, an overview of the conducted class observations including the class duration, learners' level, gender the number of learners per class and SUIs' country of origin.

Table 3.12 An Overview of the Observed Classes

	Country of Origin	Class Duration	Learners' Level	Gender	No. of Students
SUI4's Class	Saudi Arabia	2 hours	Beginners	Males	32
SUI6's Class	Saudi Arabia	2.5 hours	Beginners	Females	29
SUI9's Class	Saudi Arabia	50 minutes	Beginners	Females	32
SUI13's Class	India	1.5 hours	Beginners	Females	28
SUI14's Class	Saudi Arabia	2.5 hours	3 rd year	Females	22
SUI15's Class	Saudi Arabia	2 hours	Beginners	Females	33

The researcher conducted these onsite observations in English language classes within the selected universities in Saudi Arabia only, aiming to discover how real classroom practices were related to the instructors' and learners' preferences for grammar instruction. The observations were in person for the five female classes and via Skype streamlined video for one male class. Since the Saudi education system is gender-segregated, the researcher arranged to have access to the male university via technology. SUI4 class was in a male university that the researcher attended via stream line video offered by Skype. A rubric had been generated by the researcher which depicted the same items investigated in the questionnaire. The rubric was used to explore how beliefs and preferences were applicable in real classroom practice.

3.12 Data analysis

The research design employed was mixed methods CPD, and the results were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The collected data were analysed simultaneously but separately. Afterwards, the data collected and analysed from the questionnaire, and the interviews and observations were integrated for further analysis and discussion in Chapters Four and Five.

3.12.1 The quantitative data analysis: the questionnaire

The quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics software version 25. The results were presented using descriptive statistics due to the fact that the researcher's goal

is to present the data according to the scores representing perceptions of current grammar instruction in each group (SUIs, SULSAs, and SULSAs) and how the scores differ from each group. The researcher deemed it important to present each score according to the sample of the university EFL instructors in Saudi Arabia (SUIs= 267) and the Saudi university EFL learners in Saudi Arabia (SULSAs= 1,768) alongside the Saudi university ESL learners in Australia (SULAs= 420). The presentation of the data through descriptive statistics highlighted the scores distribution of the participants and the relevant demographic in line with the research objectives.

As discussed earlier in the literature, there are three approaches to analyse perceptions, which are: the normative approach, the metacognitive approach, and the contextual approach, in addition to the recent trend of combining multiple approaches (Barcelos, 2003; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Ellis, 2008a; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Kalaja et al., 2015). The researcher employed a combination of the normative and the contextual approaches. The quantitative data, according to the normative approach, is mostly analysed using descriptive statistics which can provide an appropriate “general picture of the kinds of beliefs about SLA students may have”(Barcelos, 2003, p. 14). Researchers, accordingly, “have mainly described and classified the types of beliefs about SLA students may have and have made assumptions as to how this could influence students behaviour” (Barcelos, 2003, p. 14).

Moreover, the present study extended the quantitative exploration by including rich qualitative data using semi-interviews (N= 34) and class observations (N= 6) which were analysed by using the contextual approach. In this approach, perceptions including beliefs and preferences were discussed in depth with the participants during the interviews relating them to an important aspect which is the context they live in (Barcelos, 2003; Kalaja et al., 2015). As Barcelos (2003) indicated, the contextual approach “allows researchers to see the paradoxes or contradictions” of the participants’ perceptions. Additionally, having two contexts in this

study helps refine the overall picture of the explored perceptions which correspondingly served the specific purposes of this study.

Reliability testing were done on all groups through measuring the Cronbach alpha . Cronbach alpha is high upon calculating the overall score of the three groups ($\alpha = .779$). Interestingly, participants classified as; SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs presented high scores on the reliability testing ($\alpha (267) = .797$, $\alpha (1768) = .778$, $\alpha (420) = .786$ respectively). Hence, all items were retained for data presentation and further analysis due to the strength of the reliability score. The questionnaire will gain consistent score even with repeated administration.

The descriptive analysis included measures of central tendency, the spread of the scores, and the relative ranking of the scores (Creswell, 2012). Due to the large amount of data collected via the three methods, the quantitative data was limited to presenting percentages, means, and standard deviations. For the Likert-scale items, the researcher calculated the three level of agreement (Strongly agree + Agree + Somewhat Agree) and the same procedure was done for the level of disagreement (Somewhat Disagree + Disagree + Strongly Disagree) in addition to the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for each item This allowed the researcher to combine the three group results in a single table. Full descriptive statistics are displayed in Appendix P. The quantitative data presented a snapshot of the current trends that were discussed in the interviews in which all three data sets complemented each other.

3.12.2 The qualitative data analysis: interviews and observations

The qualitative data derived from the interviews and class observations were analysed thematically using NVivo version 12 to facilitate the coding of themes and the organization of the researcher's thoughts while maintaining the depth of the participants' narratives.




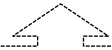

For the interviews, the researcher used the guiding questions to start exploring the main themes related to English grammar teaching and learning. Exploration of the themes was guided by these questions, as the researcher identified themes within each question, extracting them from lengthy responses that required a multistage analysis using NVivo software. Significant themes related to the research questions emerged during the analysis stage and were reported according to the three groups of participants SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs. The development and refinement of the themes went through several steps starting from the transcription stage, coding, analysis, and then generating an interesting list of the most related and shared themes across the three groups. In analysing perceptions, beliefs, and preferences, the researcher paid great attention to the descriptive utterances and the use of metaphors by the participants to describe their perceptions about grammar and grammar teaching to capture the accuracy and nuances of what had been said (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Ellis, 2008a).

The researcher started to code concepts and themes that had emerged from the responses to each question (Bryman, 2016; Silverman, 2010). It is worth mentioning that NVivo had been used for analyzing the qualitative data as well as discussing the results. Initially, the researcher coded the related literature in NVivo according to the topics of the study. This helps greatly in relating and discussing the results by merging the two projects and draw the connections.

Using NVivo software, the researcher linked the beliefs and preferences and any other related concepts within the transcripts to nodes that had been created based on interpretation. The coding process of the transcripts was undertaken line by line, assigning each idea to a node or a theme. Nodes are like containers that the researcher uses to collect related details, so basically, the nodes represent themes. By the end of the analysis, the researcher had generated a lengthy list of themes and sub-themes that had been re-categorised to assist with answering the research questions. There was ongoing refining and relisting of the themes using NVivo

software to best answer the research questions. Therefore, similar nodes had been merged together and narrow ones linked to broader ones in trying to generate a more focused list of shared themes. The challenge was to present the themes across the three groups as the researcher tried to find a suitable structure for the data. Table 3.13 outlines the final developed themes based on the analysed data.

Table 3.13 Themes Exploration in the Qualitative Phase

Final themes generated from the coded interviews
<p>1. Grammar and language proficiency</p>  <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grammar as the basis of the language ● Grammar in relation to accuracy ● Grammar in relation to meaning ● Grammar in relation to writing ● Grammar as a secondary skill </div>
<p>2. Preferred grammar instructions</p>  <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit isolated grammar instruction ● Explicit integrated grammar instruction ● Implicit grammar instruction ● Stated rationale for chosen approaches </div>
<p>3. Characteristics of Saudi context influencing perceptions</p>  <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course requirements ● Learners expectations ● L2 usage ● L1 interference ● Time as an approach determiner </div>

**(A full list of the coded themes within and beyond the study frame is attached in Appendix L)*



In the qualitative analysis, the researcher considered the value of the lengthy narrative responses by both the learners and the instructors. Therefore, reporting the findings was done through coding themes and providing a large amount of narrative analysis (Atkinson, Delamont, & Coffey, 2004; Bryman, 2016; Riessman, 2008; Silverman, 2010). Despite the benefits of coding qualitative data, it can threaten the validity of narrative responses which can result in the “fragmentation of data”. In this study, the participants were very engaged with the topic which resulted in long semi-structured interview responses. They gave detailed reasoning for their choices and preferences showing great interest in developing current teaching practice. According to Riessman (2008), “[m]any investigators are now turning to narrative because the stories reveal truths about human experience” (p. 10). Such narrated stories are basically the research participants’ extended answers to specific questions. SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs were fully engaged with the topic and such willingness to share their views should be welcomed in qualitative research.

It is important to point out that the qualitative data was an extension of the quantitative data, as they both targeted the same concepts with the former giving a detailed view of the quantitative snapshot. Thus, the quantitative and the qualitative data will be discussed simultaneously, where applicable, under each category to better establish the comparison. Having such breadth and depth in the collected data, the job of the researcher becomes more complicated in finding the most appropriate way of presenting the data. The researcher decided to employ a side-by-side data analysis and discussion in which she reported the quantitative statistical results followed by the thematic qualitative reporting and then converging the discussion. This approach allowed the researcher to determine the connections between the three data sets and the three participant groups (Creswell, 2014).



3.13 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has described the research methodology starting from the design to the piloting, the sampling procedure, and the data analysis. The rationale behind choosing MMR with the CPD was also discussed. Including both the EFL and the ESL context is assumed to have provided a more comprehensive view of Saudi perspectives on grammar instruction to better understand the external factors that shape their beliefs and preferences for different grammar instruction, if any exists.

In upcoming **Chapters Four** and **Five**, the researcher will report on, and discuss in an integrative way, the data derived from the online questionnaire, the one-to-one semi-structured interviews, and the in-class observations conducted with the Saudi University Instructors' (SUIs), Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia (SULSAs), and Saudi University Learners in Australia (SULAs). The integration of these methods and groups means that all the sources of data were combined in the process of reporting and discussing the findings according to each research question. This allowed for the construction of a comparison across the three groups of participant responses, which is the primary goal for the research project in line with the *Convergent Parallel Design*. The organization of the discussion is thematically based in addressing the research questions.



4 Research findings: Current beliefs about grammar

4.1 Overview of the chapter

Chapter Four examines, and reports upon, *current beliefs about English grammar* across three groups of participants in this study, Saudi Universities' Instructors (SUIs), Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia (SULSAs), and Saudi University Learners in Australia (SULAs), thus providing a broad quantitative descriptive snapshot as well as in-depth qualitative exploration which were undertaken concurrently. The chapter will focus mainly on the perceived beliefs of the importance of grammar and grammar instruction in developing English language proficiency in the Saudi EFL context. These beliefs will be investigated and reported upon in answering the following two research questions:

- ◆ **Research Question 1:** What are the current beliefs about grammar and grammar instruction held by SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs?
- ◆ **Research Question 2:** How do SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs perceive the importance of grammar instruction for EAP proficiency?

The first part of the chapter will address the first research question listed above to investigate beliefs about grammar as an aspect of language and preferences for grammar instruction from a Saudi perspective. The major *current beliefs related to grammar* in general have been analysed and discussed to better understand the most popular current perceptions of grammar in teaching practice among the participants. The data for this question was derived from multiple response question number [12] (see Table 3.6, Table 4.1, or Appendices A and B) of the questionnaire (reported in percentages), and from the one-to-one interview question

(1): “*What do you consider grammar?*” Answers to this question have been analysed and coded into a number of major themes (check the full list of interview questions in Table 3.10).

The second part of the chapter focuses on discussing how SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs perceive *the importance of teaching grammar for EAP proficiency* in relation to various linguistic and communicative skills. The data that have been discussed were extracted from the related Likert-scale items: group four (6, 8, and 10) and group five (14, 21, and 22) as seen in Table 3.9, in addition to data from the one-to-one interview question (2): “How important is grammar to language proficiency?”

4.2 General beliefs about grammar (QUAN)

One of the primary purposes of this project is to explore current perceptions about grammar teaching and learning in the Saudi EFL context from the viewpoint of Saudi university instructors and comparing these views to Saudi university learners. There is a strong evidence showing that beliefs and perceptions of instructors and learners have a significant impact on the learning experience, from planning the lesson through to the assessment stage (Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 1999a, 2003a, 2003b; Burns, 1992; Horwitz, 1985; Richardson, 1996). Thus, the researcher was keen to investigate current beliefs about the importance of grammar in language learning and development according to the Saudi perspective. This topic was explored through an online questionnaire and a series of interviews.

Starting with the questionnaire data, the SUI, SULASA, and SULA participants were given the opportunity to select multiple responses to question 12, “learning English grammar helps in: ...” This question revealed the currently held beliefs about the value of learning and teaching grammar in relation to the following range of linguistic skills: 1) academic writing, 2) conversation and communication, 3) expressing ideas, 4) improving English, 5) understanding reading texts, and 6) none of the above (as presented in Table 4.1 below). Responses to this question show how beneficial grammar is according to the participants’ beliefs. In this sense,

responses to the question do not refer to “liking” the grammar, but rather, in stating a fact that someone can believe in or reject.

Table 4.1 Responses to Question Number [12] on the Questionnaire

Learning English grammar helps in:						
	SUIs (N= 267)		SULSAs (N= 1768)		SULAs (N= 420)	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1) Academic Writing	94%	247	76%	1341	95%	396
2) Conversation and communication	73 %	193	73%	1296	69%	291
3) Expressing ideas	65%	172	60%	1064	58%	242
4) Improving English language	82%	217	81%	1424	74%	312
5) Understanding reading texts	72%	190	61%	1083	60%	249
6) None of the above	3%	7	1%	19	1%	5
	Answered	264	Answered	1768	Answered	420
	Skipped	3	Skipped	0	Skipped	0

It is evident from the data provided in the above table that all the participants strongly believe in the importance of learning grammar to improve basic and academic linguistic skills. It is also apparent that there is almost complete rejection of the idea that grammar has no positive role in any of the targeted linguistics facets, as the percentages for “6) None of the above” item were 3% for SUIs, 1% for SULSAs, and 1% for SULAs. It is interesting to note that SULSAs’ choices for the role of learning grammar to help in academic writing amounted to 76%, which was slightly less than SUIs at 94%, and SULAs at 95%. Moreover, grammar seemed to be less viewed as a facilitator for the learners to express their ideas than the other available options (academic writing, conversation and communication, improving English language, and understanding reading texts), with the SUI response rate being 65%, SULSA at 60%, and the SULA rate at 58%. SUIs and SULSAs had similar views in relation to the benefit of grammar instruction to improve the English language in general, whereas 74% of SULAs agreed with this. This is still a high percentage, but less than SUIs at 82%, and SULSAs at

81%. Overall, the responses showed a positive relationship between grammar and other language skills which reflects the general attitude among the participants towards grammar in learning English.

The overall responses show that all three groups strongly agree on the positive benefit of grammar learning in L2 acquisition, which was confirmed by the very low response rate for ‘grammar does not help with the listed language aspects’. In the same sense, EAP university teachers in Burgess and Etherington’s (2002) study also expressed a clear rejection of viewing grammar as an add-on language aspect, with over 85% disagreement. Burgess and Etherington (2002) reported that more than 60% of EAP teachers considered grammar to be a “framework or a basic system for the rest of the language” (p. 440). This was further confirmed in a study conducted by Barnard and Scampton (2008) which used Burgess and Etherington’ (2002) questionnaire. This finding was also validated in Alghanmi and Shukri’s (2016) study in which 30 teachers showed full agreement with a statement that described grammar as a fundamental element of L2 acquisition. Moreover, most of the university Iranian teachers in Toprak’s(2019) recent study believed that grammar has a central role in improving English language proficiency. On the other hand, four ESL Norwegian teachers in Johansen’s master’s project (2019) believed that teaching grammar for high schoolers “was highly unnecessary” (p. 44) where they tend to decrease the time of grammar instruction within their classes. The justification provided from those four teachers was mainly related to their unpleasant prior ESL experience as they had studied grammar intensively in high school, secondary school and university. As Johansen discussed, the findings were limited to the four teachers’ participants in a single high school. This makes it hard for the findings to be generalised but there is a clear tendency towards improving grammar instruction based on their described negative ESL previous experience regardless of its effectiveness.

Instructors in Saudi universities (SUIs) and learners in Australian universities (SULAs) showed strong belief in the importance of grammar for academic writing at over 93%, whereas learners in Saudi Arabia (SULSAs) had a less strong belief at 76%. A possible explanation for the strong beliefs of SULAs in grammar for academic writing could be related to their need to improve their academic English, as they are pursuing their higher education in Australia. Interestingly, this contradicts Pazaver and Wang (2009) findings in relation to the importance of grammar in the Canadian ESL context. They found that Asian ESL learners expressed the importance of grammar instruction, but not in a context where English is an official language. They were accustomed to explicit grammar teaching in their countries of origin in which English is a foreign language. However, learners' needs appeared to play an important role for SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs as they require a high-level command of EAP, specifically in writing, to succeed in higher education in Saudi Arabia and Australia, which may explain their views. This point can be further asserted by looking at the SULAs' responses in relation to the positive benefits of grammar to "improve English" generally, which had 74% agreement compared to SUIs at 82% and SULSAs at 81%.

Having said this, it is worth noting that grammar is an important aspect of language according to the SUIs, which is consistent with university teachers' views within the Saudi EFL context in Ahmad et al. (2017) study, who confirmed that university-level English teachers: "all seem to share the conviction that grammar is an important linguistic aspect that needs to be given due importance in EFL teaching" (p. 133). This could explain the general agreement across the three groups in relation to grammar being useful for the five language activities provided.

The above quantitative results have shown that grammar is strongly considered as an important aspect of L2 acquisition. This is one of the present study's confirmed findings from the quantitative phase. Very similar beliefs about grammar and its role in language learning

also emerged in the qualitative phase. The examination of these related beliefs provided explanations and rationales from the SUI, SULSA, and SULA interviewees, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.3 General beliefs about grammar (QUAL)

Shifting focus to the *qualitative data*, the researcher began the interviews by asking the participants about their general attitude towards the word grammar: “*What do you consider grammar?*” The responses to this question across all the groups were similar to some extent. The description of grammar among the participants ranged from being an integral part of the language to a complete rejection of it, although those who rejected it were in a minority. Some of the participants considered grammar to be a core skill of any language that helps the learner to better communicate and use the language in a meaningful way. Others regarded it as a hindrance to learning the language. The responses to this question revealed initial overall perceptions about English grammar from a Saudi perspective. The researcher generated a synopsis of all the responses to the first question from the interview “*What do you consider grammar?*” in Table 4.2 to create a general starting picture of all the main themes discussed, followed by a detailed response report.

Table 4.2 An Overview of the Responses to the Interview Question (1): “What do you consider grammar?”

Coded Perceptions of Grammar Among Interviewees	SUIs (N=12)	SULSAs (N=12)	SULAs (N=10)
1) Grammar as a language basis:			
- Grammar as a gate to learn the language/code	(1-2)	--	(10)
- Grammar is the basis for any language	(10-11)	(1-2-4)	(6-7-8-10)
- Grammar is important	(2-7)	(6-9)	(3-4-7)
- Grammar is the important rules of the language	(3-12)	(3-11-12)	(1-4-9)
2) Grammar to develop accuracy:			
- Grammar is important for accuracy	(2-10)	(9-10-11)	(7)
3) Grammar to convey meaning:			
- Grammar is related to conveying meaning	(8-9-12)	(7)	(7-8)
- Important for proper communication	(6-8)	(7)	(3)
4) Grammar for writing:			
- Grammar is mostly important for writing	(10-11)	(3)	(2-5-7)
5) Grammar as a secondary skill:			
- Not important for beginners/secondary skill	(3-4)	--	--
- Grammar is not important	--	(8)	--
- Can be acquired through practice	(5)	(7-8-10-12)	--
6) Grammar as a barrier:			
- Grammar is difficult/ a problem	--	(5)	(5-9)

* Note: the numbers in the brackets within each column represent the participant's code (i.e. SUI2=2)

According to Ellis, analysing beliefs using metaphors allows the researcher to capture a sense of truthfulness by examining the metaphors that the participants used in their responses (2008a). Therefore, the researcher in this study paid greater attention to how the participants used adjectives and metaphors to represent their perceptions, which were categorized as in Table 4.2 and throughout the discussion.

The responses to the interview question, as shown in Table 4.2, revealed a number of interesting views about the word “grammar” among the participants. The recorded beliefs showed that the majority found grammar an important part of learning the language, describing

it as “the basis” of, and “the gate” to, language learning. The importance of grammar is highly regarded for all the interviewees, except for SULSA8 who considered it as not being important. Some of the responses revealed interesting positive views in relation to the relationship between grammar and developing effective which facilitate conveying of meaning. It is also interesting to note that four SULSAs, being EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, believed that grammar can be acquired through practice, while one SUI confirmed this as well, whereas none of the SULAs mentioned it, although they had the experience of learning EAP as ESL learners in Australia where they have plenty of practice opportunities.

The interviewees’ responses according to each theme listed above were reported and analysed across the three groups and will be reported on in the following sections in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their beliefs.

4.3.1 Grammar as the language basis

Considering grammar as the basis of language and as an important skill in learning English are the prevailing responses to the question: “What do you consider grammar?” Such instant responses revealed strong beliefs about the vital role that grammar plays in L2, according to SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs.

4.3.1.1 SUI interviewees’ perceptions

In relation to beliefs about grammar, nine SUIs described grammar as the basis of language and as a significant skill to be developed by learners to be able to master the language, whether for the purpose of written or spoken communication, and to facilitate meaning. The other three SUIs considered grammar to be a supplementary skill that learners might need at advanced levels only.

For instance, SUI1 described grammar as a gateway that leads to understanding and to proper writing saying:

I consider grammar as...the gate to write and understand English more. If you don't know grammar you cannot form a sentence. you cannot even write a sentence. And if you read something maybe you can understand it but you will not know each element of these words, are they an adjective are they an adverb, how can I know if it is an adjective or an adverb,...or the tense when its happen, yeah. I think grammar is important even some said if I know how to talk in English, I do not need grammar, I agree with that in some ways but not all the time you have to know grammar (SUI1).

To SUI1, the understanding of grammatical terms is also considered essential where she emphasised the importance of being aware of the grammatical terms and tenses that will help in enhancing reading comprehension. The idea of viewing grammar as a “leading door” or as a guide to mastering the language were also present in SUI2’s response. SUI2 believed that learning grammar will make the learner feel safe, supporting this idea by describing grammar as a “secured door” and a “safe path” in learning English:

I think learning grammar is very important for the learner to have a chance to learn about the correctness, the acceptance about the sentence...I thought it has lots to do with learning a foreign language because it will give me a feeling of secure. It's like I will get secured to produce correct English or acceptable, maybe...I really thought of grammar as a secured door or a safe path. If I go through, if study more about it, if learn it, if I do the homework related to it, I will be producing-- or I will use not just to practise, I would-- well, it's part of practice, the practice in the foreign language (SUI2).

Grammar to SUI2, therefore, is an important skill that promotes acceptance and correctness in using the language. SUI2 considered grammar as a needed skill that one can use

as a tool to improve her/his language. He also believed that learning grammar will enable producing language confidently, relating his ideas to learning a foreign language.

Having said that grammar is considered to be a gate to language learning, SUI7 highly recommended teaching grammar, especially for Arabs. He believed that Arabic as a mother tongue greatly affects Saudi people's way of valuing English grammar or grammar in general. SUI7 explained his view:

Grammar in my viewpoint is the best way to teach Arabs how to make a sentence ... this is my viewpoint, although some others are talking about new methods, they call them communicative methods of teaching grammar. They start with the sentence and ask their students to write sentences. I think this is an idea or point of view and it is inapplicable in our society in particular²(SUI7).

SUI10 also believed that grammar is “essential” and a very important “tool” for learners. Grammar, to her, helps learners to be confident and to promote their learning, particularly after they go beyond the critical period in which the natural acquisition of L2 is no longer valid, as she stated. Her students always ask about grammar during her office hours or via email, which reflects the high demand of learning grammar that could not be confirmed to be based on learners' beliefs or liking but could be related to external factors such as exams and grades. Learners' perceptions, thus, regarding grammar were discussed in the next section.

² For the SULSAs' and SULAs' interview extracts, grammatical errors were not corrected for those conducted in English for the purpose of sharing the level of language competencies.

4.3.1.2 *SULSA & SULA interviewees' perceptions*

The overall views on the role of grammar in learning English across the three groups were very positive. One commonly shared view was that grammar is the basis of learning English. The exact description of grammar to what SUIs reported previously is confirmed here. Grammar, to SULSAs and SULAs, was also linked to accuracy and correct usage of the language in speaking and writing. Grammar, moreover, was described as a tool that helps learners enhance their written and spoken communication.

Starting with the SULSA responses, SULSA1, SULSA2, and SULSA4 for instance, considered grammar as the basis of any language (not restricted only to English or Arabic), and they also believed that without grammar, no-one would be able to write or speak accurately. SULSA3 and SULSA11 also related grammar to the accurate building of complete sentences. Similarly, SULSA2 believed that grammar forms “the basic rules for practicing English or for grasping the sense of the language.”

In relation to learning English for academic purposes, SULSA6 and SULSA7 stressed the importance of grammar in the academic field as, to them, having good grammar enables students to get good marks and to develop their research skills.

The SULA responses to “*What do you consider grammar?*” are noteworthy views about grammar in relation to their experience of learning English in two different contexts, with the first being in the Saudi EFL context and the current one being in the Australian ESL context. Interestingly, all the SULAs appreciated learning grammar explicitly and considered it an important skill that is not separate from language learning.

Viewing grammar as the rules governing the language is echoed again in the SULAs’ responses. For example, SULA4 responded to the question with a somewhat lengthy answer. SULA4 strongly believed in learning grammar and expressed a positive attitude to traditional ways of teaching it, as described below:

Grammar is the rule of the language that carry the language itself. I do not know if that makes sense for you but without it, we cannot speak. We cannot convey the things that we want to convey to other people. So, it is important because many sentences rely on grammar to make you understand ... I think it is very important to understand and to know the grammar and I personally take it in a traditional way. I studied in Saudi Arabia from Egyptian teachers, so, I memorise everything by my heart and I know how to use everything and not grab it naturally (SULA4).

SULA4 was aware of different language learning approaches but admitted that traditional teaching helped her to improve due to the explicit grammar teaching approach. SULA4 mentioned that explicit grammar teaching was also employed in the intensive English language course prior to university admission in Australia. SULA6 shared the same views about grammar as SULA4 explaining that grammar is the basis of any language that needs to be understood and followed to be able to apply to the generation of sentences. SULA10 also expressed the importance of grammar:

For English language, grammar is the basic. The most important thing for me is to learn grammar first and then it'll be easier to build the vocabulary and make sentences. Grammar for me is like a code to solve a problem, so, if I know this code, I will be able to make sentences and build up vocabulary (Interviewee SULA10).

Learning grammar for SULA10 is unquestionably important, acting as a code to solve language problems. Besides acknowledging the importance of grammar as the basis of language and as the language code, SULA5 expressed the dark side of grammar in relation to

the difficulty that has been always associated with learning grammar. SULA9 also confirmed that grammar is “the most challenging part of language, it has some level of difficulties and challenges.” The difficulty seems to be in applying grammar rules, especially in the written form.

After reporting the related responses for each group, it is necessary to draw and highlight the overall connections across the three groups in regard to viewing grammar as the basis of the language. The learning of grammar is most likely appreciated by SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs as an integral part of the language that helps them greatly in developing their language academically while, at the same time, acknowledging the difficulty of teaching and learning grammar. For the sake of clarity, these difficult aspects of grammar do not contribute to, or undervalue, its crucial role in developing the language, as discussed by the participants.

Grammar has been viewed across the three groups as the “basis” or a “gate” of the language and even a “code” to understand the language. This finding reflected the centrality of the grammar role in learning English. Viewing grammar as the basis of the language is consistent with the findings of most reviewed ESL and EFL studies such as Alghanmi and Shukri (2016); Barnard and Scampton (2008); Burgess and Etherington (2002); Dajem (2012); Hendriani (2018); Loewen et al. (2009); and Toprak (2019) in which university teachers expressed strong beliefs in the importance of grammar for learning English. In relation to beliefs and practice, holding such beliefs about “grammar” in general among SUIs, the instructors, supports the important position grammar has in language learning which has a clear influence on their in-class practice and on their learners while teaching or assessing them, as suggested by the research. English language teachers in Alghanmi and Shukri (2016) study adopted more FoS (focus on forms) approaches and expressed the need to allocate more time to teaching grammar (70% agreement).

Considering grammar as an important part of the language could be related to the influence of the contextual factors such as L1 learning experience. The findings of the current project confirmed the positive view of grammar that is often related to Arabs in particular, and noted also in Saudi EFL studies, seeing it as an important aspect of the language which helps in developing English proficiency (Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Assalahi, 2013; Dajem, 2012). As indicated by SUI7, “grammar in [his] viewpoint is the best way to teach Arabs”. This has been also supported by the previous research which indicated that Chinese and Arab students have a positive attitude towards learning English grammar (Loewen et al., 2009; Valeo & Spada, 2016). It is assumed that such beliefs are somehow related to first language curriculum interference which, in this case, is Arabic. The prior learning experience of Arabic language could contribute to shaping the participants’ beliefs about the importance of English grammar. The teaching of Arabic grammar in the Arabic curriculum follows the sentence-level analytical approach. Explicit instruction is the primary approach that is used to provide declarative knowledge of the target structure starting from year four in the Saudi curriculum. Having such language learning experience without doubt brings the second language learner to the class with a set of static beliefs and expectations.

Viewing grammar as an integral component of learning English is confirmed firmly across the three groups, SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs, and within the quantitative and qualitative investigations. The consistency of beliefs among the groups and within the different learning contexts and the different learning roles revealed the strong connection between grammar and learning a language where the relationship between them is viewed as a positive one. The discussion has been furthered to touch on the role of learning grammar to develop language accuracy that will be discussed in the following section.

4.3.2 Grammar to develop accuracy

A relationship between accuracy and grammar was noted among the participants in response to the question: “What do you consider grammar?”. Below is a review of their impressions of grammar that appear to be related to accuracy³ or “correct English” in response to the aforementioned interview question.

4.3.2.1 *SUIs interviewees’ perceptions*

In discussing the relationship between language accuracy and the teaching of grammar, the interviewees’ responses to the first interview question highlighted this relationship. They shared the belief that grammar has a role in developing language accuracy. SUI2, for example, explained how grammar is important: “I think learning grammar is very important for the learner to have a chance to learn about the correctness; the acceptance”. SUI10 also expressed her belief in the importance of grammar stating that “it is definitely important to have good grammar, so it is English or not English”. This comment clarified how definite the interviewee was about the position of grammar in language. It also means that the lack of grammatical accuracy in English makes it “not English”.

4.3.2.2 *SULSA & SULA interviewees’ perceptions*

From the learners’ perspective, SULSA10 expressed his opinion stating: “well, I have learnt English in general from movies and games. I text message native speakers. I feel that my language is not formal and [not] grammatical[ly] correct.” SULSA11, however, explained that

³ Grammar and accuracy was investigated through Likert scale items [in section 4.3 within *Grammar and EAP proficiency*].

“ without it, [she] can’t build a correct statement or sentence.” SULA7, from the Australian context, viewed grammar as “something that’s very important for others to understand [her], to make right sentence or correct sentence.” It is interesting to note that grammar appeared to be connected to the sentence-level, whether producing it verbally or in the written form.

In analysing SUIs’, SULSAs’ and SULAs’ perceptions, it appeared that grammar and accuracy were strongly linked together. The abovementioned participants believed in the importance of learning grammar to attain accuracy starting from the basic sentence level. It is interesting to notice the strong belief in the role of learning grammar to develop language accuracy where a number of participants stressed on the idea that having correct grammar = good English. The positive relationship between teaching grammar and developing accuracy has been similarly confirmed in a number of Saudi and non- Saudi EFL studies (Ahmad, 2018; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Aljohani, 2012; Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015). In these studies, teachers as well as learners believed in the value of grammar knowledge and that this leads to accuracy. The idea of developing ‘broken English’ is similarly confirmed with the Sri Lankan learners in Petraki and Gunawardena’s study (2015) where “the majority of students admitted to feelings of embarrassment and shame if they did not learn grammar and would end up learning ‘broken English’” (p. 76).

One possible explanation could be related to the nature of teaching English grammar explicitly which could explain why grammar is connected to accuracy. Learners in such classes are constantly checked for the correctness of their language usage and their exams/tests focuses on checking the understanding of grammatical structures. A positive note on this connection can be attributed to new calls for explicit grammar teaching to promote language proficiency in SLA, as implicit instruction, to some extent, has failed to do so (DeKeyser, 2003; Nassaji, 2000; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004).

4.3.3 Grammar to convey meaning

Across the three interviewed groups, SUIs, SULAs, and SULAs, grammar was viewed as a tool that facilitates meaningful and accurate communication. In the following sections, related insights and rationales from the participants on grammar to convey meaning will be explored.

4.3.3.1 SUI interviewees' perceptions

Grammar to convey meaning is another important shared theme among three SUIs, SUI8, SUI9, and SUI12. These three participants believed that grammar helps in conveying meaning and getting the intended message delivered. SUI8, for instance, believed that grammar “touches most of us, not only rules, but a way to convey meaning.” SUI8, thus, stressed the idea of improving grammar teaching to be more contextual and authentic. SUI9 described grammar as “the rules that tie the words together so that it makes sense.” Grammar to SUI9 “is not about making our life difficult, it is there to give meaning.” SUI12 also considered grammar as “the rules that students used to put together in a meaningful way in that particular language and in this case English.” In answering this question, SUI6 also showed a keen interest in improving grammar teaching to help students produce grammatically correct sentences and to communicate properly.

Comparable findings to this study have been previously reported in relation to the importance of teaching grammar to promote language competency and communication. In Alghanmi and Shukri (2016) study, the teachers believed that learners could not acquire English without grammar instruction. Moreover, 66.7% of the teachers believed “that mastering rules enables students to become more competent in communication” (p. 74). Similarly, learners in the Sri Lankan EFL context justified their belief in the effectiveness of

learning grammar to its integral role in helping learners “to understand the meaning of language” (Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015)

Overall, proper meaningful communication is strongly linked to grammar from the SUIs’ points of view. The SUIs showed a definite tendency to facilitate grammar teaching by connecting it to a meaningful context. They believed that grammar is there to facilitate meaningful communication through clearing all the misconceptions that may occur in the absence of correct usage of the language. However, they expressed a need to make the teaching of rigid rules easier by placing them in an authentic context in which the learners get the opportunity to grasp these rules cognitively.

4.3.3.2 SULSA & SULA interviewees’ perceptions

Meaning connected quite strongly to grammar, according to the SULSAs and SULAs, which indicated a shared belief on this issue with the SUIs, the instructors. SULSA2, for instance, stated that grammar represents “the basic rules for practicing English or for grasping the sense of the language.” In the same sense, grammar has been viewed as a tool to “structuring well-understood sentences” as SULSA7 explained. SULSA7 shared an experience with the African community within the Saudi context to illustrate his views about grammar:

I have dealt once with some African guys. When they try to speak Arabic with me, they do not always call me with the pronoun of a male. They say [ENTE]. They switch pronouns between male and female. So, this is a problem ... it is the same situation. If we speak English without being aware of grammar, we will speak that free grammar language which is very bad language. It could be used, but in very very narrow ranges and to run a very short conversation (SULSA7).

The word “Ente” in Arabic means “you”, but is also used to refer only to females. Hence, SULSA7 and SULSA9 linked the importance of grammar to the ability to speak accurately and to construct sentences in a perfect way. As SULSA7 clarified: “I look at grammar as a way to structure well-understood sentences so you can communicate your ideas clearly with less ambiguity as possible.”

Within the Australian ESL context, SULA3 illustrated a similar view: “Grammar is one of my priorities in writing rather than speaking and communication in which I care much about delivering the meaning”. SULA8 described grammar as “the language itself. Without grammar, nobody can understand you properly”, while SULA1 mentioned that:

Grammar helps us in speaking when we want to talk about the past, present and future. So, it will be clear for us if we learn grammar from the beginning, which will make it easy if we want to talk in different tenses and so on ... Grammar for me is the rule which facilitates any verb I use whether in past, present or future. This is grammar for me (SULA1).

For SULA1, grammar is a facilitator to speaking the language and to use tenses appropriately. Moreover, the idea of appropriateness is raised here, where SULA3 believes that grammar teaches “the proper way to communicate with people” and SULA4 confirmed that “without it, we cannot speak. We cannot convey the things that we want to convey to other people.” Together, these results provide important insights into the importance of grammar on a semantic and syntax level, where learners seek the help of grammar to choose the proper tenses which assist in delivering meaning.

As discussed previously, SUIs defined grammar as a means of facilitating meaning and establishing proper communication. The same views were shared by the SULSA and SULA learners who believed in the benefit of grammar teaching and learning to grasp the sense of the language. Describing grammar as the “language itself” clearly indicated the position of grammar in L2 learning for SULA8. Learners believed that grammar learning will equip them with the basic tools to enable them to elaborate on the language and generate their own ideas with the proper verb tense, as explained by SULA1.

Grammar and meaningful communication, therefore, seem to be linked positively in the interview data as skills that complement each other in an integrative way. This actually confirms that grammar for L2 is not seen as a set of arbitrary rules, and this was also confirmed by a number of SLA scholars and practitioners when they attempted to define grammar (Azar, 2007, 2019; Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Thornbury, 1999; Ur, 2016). It is also consistent with the findings of Ahmad et al. (2017); Aljohani (2012); and Assalahi (2013) which revealed that Saudi EFL learners and instructors seek the integration of meaning-based activities and grammar teaching within the Saudi English classroom to develop language proficiency. Moreover, it is interesting to note that a number of responses described grammar as an important “skill”, which corresponds quite nicely to Larsen-Freeman’s proposed concept of the fifth language skill, “grammaring”, that promotes the role of grammar in conveying meaning (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

4.3.4 Grammar for writing

Grammar and writing was another major theme which emerged from the interviews. This theme had also been noted in the discussion of the responses in the previous sections, specifically in relation to grammar conveying meaning. Here again, the three groups appeared to hold very similar beliefs in relation to the value of grammar for developing writing skills.

4.3.4.1 SUIs interviewees' perceptions

SUI10 and SUI11 extended the importance of grammar to developing writing skills. SUI10 discussed the difference between spoken and written language. She believed that grammar is more important in writing than speaking, “because the spoken language is different from the written language; like, in written language, we must use this grammar stuff.” Her comment implied the level of formality that writing should have without which the underlying message of the written text would not be clear. Such formality is developed through teaching grammar.

4.3.4.2 SULSA & SULA interviewees' perceptions

SULSAs and SULAs held very similar beliefs to the SUIs' in relation to the role of grammar in promoting writing. SULA5, SULA2, and SULA7, for instance, linked the importance of grammar to writing, stating that grammar is essential for speaking, but not as important as for writing, and this perceived opinion was the same as that expressed earlier by SUI10. Another similar view was from SULA3: “Grammar is one of my priorities in writing rather than speaking and communication in which I care much about delivering the meaning”.

A study conducted on Sri Lankan EFL students revealed the same beliefs in relation to improving writing skills through grammar teaching (Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015). As Petraki and Gunawardena reported, learners believed that grammar teaching helped them avoid broken English in both writing and speaking skills. Additionally, learners in Loewen et al. (2009) also expressed a positive attitude to grammar in developing their writing, speaking, and reading skills. This revealed the positive attitude towards grammar teaching methods.

Taken together, these views suggest that the majority of SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs value grammar in language teaching, as they associate it with the basis of any language that enables learners to communicate in a meaningful and accurate way.



4.3.5 Grammar as a secondary skill

A number of interviewees expressed slightly different views from the above, instead describing grammar as a secondary skill and as a rejected component of language learning. This is the focus of the following sections.

4.3.5.1 SUIs interviewees' perceptions

Some SUIs viewed grammar as a set of rules that should perhaps be avoided in the early stages of learning a language. For instance, SUI3 considered grammar as the “rules that organise the speech and structure”, although not “really” necessary for beginners. SUI 4 also shared the same view that teaching grammar should be avoided for beginners. SUI 4 encourages building confidence in the early stages of language learning, and delaying any explicit grammar teaching, introducing it later for advanced levels.

Both SUI3 and SUI4 are advocates of implicit language learning specifically for beginners focusing on the four language skills, listening, reading, writing, and speaking, rather than the explicit teaching of grammar. SUI 4 believed that teachers should “build confidence first, then things will follow.” Grammar teaching was viewed here as a hindrance to beginners and a discouraging teaching approach.

An interesting response was shared by SUI5 who explained that grammar means two separate things to him. One is related to the curriculum that teachers are obliged to teach. The other is related to his views and personal opinion against explicit grammar teaching. He advocates for a new style of instruction that is derived from the curriculum itself as well as his own views. He explained this view saying: “I am trying to merge what the textbooks, what the curriculum requires, and my personal opinions. So, trying to find a way in-between.” Grammar to him “is something that can be acquired through practicing other skills like reading, [and] writing.” Grammar according to the above views is preferred to be taught implicitly, especially

for beginners. Similarly, Alghanmi and Shukri (2016) reported that most teachers “do not believe in the effectiveness of explicit teaching”, and they also do not see their role in the class as “simply to explain rules” (p. 77).

It has been perceived that the difficulty of grammar rules can affect beginners greatly and threaten their comfort zone. This is consistent with the Natural Approach of L2 acquisition proposed by Krashen and Terrell (1988) which stated that immersing learners in the language away from its complicated rules will help learners gain more confidence in progressing. This view will also be discussed in light of the learner interviewees’ responses in the following section.

4.3.5.2 SULSA & SULAs interviewees’ perceptions

Only a small number of respondents had negative attitudes towards the role of grammar in developing language. For example, SULSA12 described grammar as a part of the language that she “never remembered”. Instead, she credited her success in learning the language to reading:

But to be honest, in high school or maybe in middle school, I started to read a lot in the Internet, stories and such and this really improve, and it is the main things that improve my English, but this grammar never, never stay in my mind (SULSA12).

SULSA12 believed in reading to improve her language instead of spending sufficient time on studying grammar rules that “never stay” in the learner’s minds. SULSA12 then reclarified her point stating that “grammar is not totally unuseful. [It is] useful but maybe just to go through them [i.e. the rules] and read them to ensure the information and to make information clear in our minds maybe”. SULSA8 had similar views on grammar considering

teaching to be a tiresome procedure. SULSA8 believed that grammar will develop easily and indirectly while reading. SULSA5 stated that the topic is interesting, but explained that students suffer a lot because of grammar. SULSA5 rejected the idea of teaching grammar, describing it as “hell”. SULSA5 explained the rejection of grammar teaching as follows:

I hate grammar so much, so so much, because its make me, I can't speak fluently, I am just thinking about how I am gonna put this and put that and how can I get that verb and that ... it is just very frustrating (SULSA5).

SULSA5's complete rejection of grammar teaching, although the only such opinion, revealed some negative views about grammar teaching. This is worth investigating as she had a strong command of English and the whole interview was conducted in English. Her negative feelings towards grammar teaching were linked to the intensity of grammar courses that she had taken every semester:

In college, we focus so much on grammar, like so so much, like there is in the first level, we took a whole book about grammar and it is not easy grammar, grammar for beginners something like that, no. It is grammar that is rare, even English speakers they don't use (SULSA5).

She concluded by stating that:

Grammar is important especially in academic, and now we have to know this grammar, but I think it is not this is important since they are just focus on grammar, you have to have a balance between things, not only grammar, grammar (SULSA5).

As she explained, her negative views were mainly about the explicit isolated approach of teaching English grammar in which the whole class was devoted to rules, explicit explanations, and repetitive drills which had also been used in teaching a French course, as she mentioned. SULSA10 had similar views about grammar, telling his own story of learning English with no grammar teaching:

Well, I have learned English in general from movies and games. I've text message native speakers. I feel that my language is not formal and grammatically correct, I knew how to speak fluently. Grammar is as a told you something I don't know, I just know English like that (SULSA10).

SULSA10 was curious about himself as he can speak English fluently and "I knew grammar rules, but [he didn't] know how to explain [them]." He explained that grammar knowledge enhances his confidence to speak, which distinguishes the level of English between learners who have acquired the language from the ESL context to those who have learned it formally in language institutions where the latter excel, in his opinion.

Similar to Loewen et al. (2009) study, for learners, the qualitative data revealed some negative attitudes towards grammar and learning grammar, which is similar to a number of reported responses within the interviews, and specifically for SULSA5, SULA5, and SULA9, who described grammar as a barrier and a problem in learning English. However, they did not deny the benefits of grammar, and yet they still held very negative attitudes that could have been caused by the intensity of the grammar courses and the associated approaches. As with Loewen's findings, although learners expressed negative attitudes towards grammar, they rejected the idea of learning grammar by themselves (2009).

4.3.6 Concluding remarks for Research Question 1

In summary of the findings in response to Research Question 1, the data that responded to this question were derived from quantitative question number 12 (see Table 4.1) and the qualitative interview question: “What do you consider grammar?” (Table 4.2). Based on the combined results (QUAN and QUAL), grammar-related beliefs were mostly clustered around the idea that grammar is the basis of language. This salient shared belief makes grammar constantly appear to be important for establishing meaningful communication, spoken or written, and developing language accuracy. However, the qualitative interview responses viewed the importance (in Table 4.2) from a different angle, although the majority of responses were in parallel with the Quan data. A number of participants believed in the importance of grammar for learning English, but they linked it to an appropriate level for L2 learners, who they believed should receive grammar instruction when they are advanced learners rather than as beginners. Moreover, the qualitative data revealed the opinions of the minority who responded to question 12, believing that grammar has no significant role in L2 or should be considered to be a secondary skill.

Holding such strong positive beliefs about learning grammar explicitly should not be ignored by educators. SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs shared very similar beliefs about grammar as a stand-alone part of English language learning, and such beliefs can be affected by contextual factors. The participants’ responses and the observational data in Chapter Five showed how the context contributes to shaping their beliefs and determining their choice of approach.

To conclude this section, the findings confirmed that all groups maintained similar shared percentage ranges for the linguistic aspects that they believe grammar can help to improve, including reading, writing, communicating, expressing ideas, and improving English in general (Table 4.2). These findings were also confirmed by the analysed responses to the

qualitative interview question “*What do you consider grammar?*”, with grammar being seen to play an integral role in providing the basis of the language, communicating meaning, developing writing, and attaining accuracy. To summarize the main findings for Research Question 1, here are the main key points that had emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data and were similarly shared across the three groups of participants, SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs:

- Grammar is considered to be an integral component of L2 learning that helps in developing academic as well as communicative language skills.
- Grammar is defined as a means of facilitating meaning and establishing proper communication.
- Grammar’s role in developing writing skill is a dominantly agreed on concept among the participants, whereas the role of grammar doesn’t seem to be highly important for developing speaking skill compared to writing.
- The importance of grammar for learning English has not been doubted by the vast majority of participants within the EFL and ESL context. They, however, are questioning and negotiating the grammar teaching methods to best teach it.
- The researcher assumed that Saudi learners within the Saudi context were not engaged in a variety of activities as they indicated which may affected their belief in the benefit of grammar for academic writing that was scored less than instructors and learners in Australia.
- SUIs’ reasoning for the stated beliefs and practices appeared to be detached from SLA theories as they tended to refer to their personal experiences in learning English as well as their cumulative experience of teaching it. Moreover, (two instructors) referred to the teaching related theories but expressed their rejection of them.

- The negative beliefs about grammar learning and teaching were developed as a reaction to the teaching style and were discussed in the light of the choosing the appropriate learners' level.

The research question in the following section were posed to explore further views and perceptions about the importance of grammar in relation to language proficiency and preferred teaching/learning approaches.

4.4 Grammar for language proficiency (QUAN)

In this section, the focus shifts to beliefs about grammar instruction to develop EAP proficiency in particular. This continues the exploration of beliefs moving from the general perception of grammar and how it is perceived by SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs in language learning. Data was reported on from both the online questionnaire and the one-to-one semi-structured interviews. The primary question answered here is:

- ◆ Research Question 2: How do SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs perceive the importance of grammar instruction for EAP proficiency?

Language proficiency, thus, is the ultimate goal for EAP learners and educators. Here, the researcher is interested in investigating beliefs about the relationship between grammar and language proficiency. The data related to this research question was extracted from the questionnaire Likert scale items, group four (6, 8, & 10) and group five (14, 21, & 22), and interview question number two, “How important is learning/teaching grammar to academic language proficiency?”

Based on the interview responses to the first question, “What do you consider grammar?”, the majority of SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs expressed the view that grammar is an integral part of learning any language, including English. The researcher then discussed the findings of the second question which is related to the importance of grammar to attain



language proficiency, specifically in relation to EAP. Teaching and learning grammar as a means to achieving proficiency in English is an issue of interest that the researcher is seeking to explore in the present study. Table 4.4 below presents the descriptive statistics of SUI, SULSA, and SULA responses, indicating their agreement on the six statements listed on a Likert scale of 6 points. The responses ranged from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. The researcher has calculated the averages of the Likert-scale points into a single table for the purpose of easy comparison. The first three statements (6, 8 & 10) explored the beliefs of the effectiveness of explicit grammar teaching and activities in achieving accuracy and language proficiency. The other three statements (14, 21 & 22) tested the beliefs of the effectiveness of implicit language teaching and activities on accuracy and language proficiency.



Table 4.3 Explicit and Implicit Grammar Teaching to Accuracy and Language Proficiency Statements

Group four (6,8 & 10) and group five (21, 14 & 22)

Instructors' (SUIs)Version	Learners' (SULSAs & SULAs) Version
(4) Explicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items	(4) Explicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items
6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to use English more accurately.	6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to learn using English more accurately.
8. I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of students in English.	8. I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of my English.
10. I believe that teaching English grammar is important to improve academic English.	10. I believe that studying English grammar is important to improve my academic English.
(5) Implicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items	(5) Implicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items
21. Doing communicative activities for students is a good way to learn English language more accurately.	21. Doing communicative activities is a good way for me to learn English more accurately.
14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help my students to improve their academic English quickly.	14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help to improve my academic English quickly
22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.	22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.

Table 4.4 Explicit and Implicit Grammar Teaching to Accuracy and Language Proficiency (Likert scale items 6, 8, 10, 21, 14, 22)

Explicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items												
	SUIs (N= 267)				SULSAs (N= 1768)				SULAs (N= 420)			
	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD
6	80%	20%	4.6	1.3	90%	10%	5.0	1.2	89%	11%	4.9	1.1
8	82%	18%	4.5	1.3	90%	10%	5.0	1.2	87%	13%	4.8	1.2
10	96%	4%	5.2	0.9	95%	6%	5.3	1.0	95%	5%	5.3	1.0
Implicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items												
	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD
21	96%	4%	5.2	0.9	95%	5%	5.3	1.0	97%	3%	5.3	0.9
14	97%	3%	5.3	0.9	94%	6%	5.3	1.0	95%	5%	5.3	0.9
22	57%	43%	3.7	1.5	49%	51%	3.4	1.6	40%	60%	3.1	1.5

*Note: SUIs= Saudi Universities' Instructors, SULSAs= Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia and SULAs= Saudi University Learners in Australia. (A) refers to Agreement and (D) to Disagreement. (M) refers to the Mean and (SD) refers to the Standard Deviation.

It is apparent from Table 4.4 that all three groups had very similar beliefs about the effectiveness of explicit and implicit grammar teaching activities for language accuracy and proficiency, which is an interesting observation. In response to statement number six, related to explicit grammar teaching, “*Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to use English more accurately*”, 80% of SUIs agreed compared to 90% of SULSAs and 89% of SULAs. In relation to accuracy, all teachers (N=45) in Aljohani (2012) study believed that grammar instruction helps to improve accuracy. The teachers’ views in Aljohani (2012) are consistent with the majority of the participants’ preferences in the current study, favouring a focus on grammar and meaning. These findings also reflect Azar’s concept of “do both” in employing explicit and implicit grammar teaching to achieve optimal language learning outcomes (Azar, 2007, 2019).

For statement number eight, very similar results were apparent which confirms that SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs hold strong beliefs on the effectiveness of practicing grammar rules to be proficient in English (in this case). The agreement response rate went even higher at 95%+ across the three groups in response to statement number 10: “I believe that teaching/studying English grammar is important to improve academic English”. Similarly, learners in Schulz (2001) study also indicated the beneficial role of learning grammar in accelerating the development of the communicative competence. Burns and Borg (2015) had similar results in relation to the belief of the importance of grammar exercises for developing fluency, which received the highest level of agreement among other beliefs of the role of grammar according to TESOL adult teachers. In addition, Borg and Burns found that teachers do not strongly believe in limiting grammar practice to only older learners. However, this does not necessary indicate that they prefer it for beginners, as the results in this regard also showed mild levels of agreement.

Referring to L2 grammar studies, explicit grammar teaching, isolated or integrated, has been proven to have positive long-lasting results on L2, as indicated by (Norris & Ortega, 2001; Sheen, 2003). According to Sheen's (2003) study, the findings indicated that learners who were taught grammar explicitly outperformed those who had been engaged in meaning-based classes. In addition, Ellis stated that learners who receive formal instruction, achieve higher results more quickly. That said, this might also explain the shared positive beliefs about explicit grammar instruction to develop language proficiency, including accuracy and fluency.

On the other hand, data extracted from the implicit grammar teaching statements showed a higher level of agreement for statement numbers (14 & 21) compared to the explicit items (6 & 8) across the three groups. They all strongly believed that doing communicative activities would contribute to developing the learners' academic English and would enhance accuracy as well with a shared response rate above 93%. However, the response rate dropped to 57% for SUIs, 49% for SULSAs, and 40% for SULAs in regard to statement number 22: *"I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar."* These results indicate that all the groups appreciate communicative activities for developing English competence, but this does not mean replacing explicit grammar teaching and rules practice.

As an overall finding, Borg and Burns (2015) confirmed that all the surveyed teachers of adult learners had a preference for "some explicit grammar work" (p. 171), which is in line with the findings of the present study, regardless of how intensive this might be. This is also consistent with the findings of other studies, such as Alghanmi and Shukri (2016); Aljohani (2012); Barnard and Scampton (2008); Burgess and Etherington (2002); and Schulz (2001). Sabbu Sabbu (2019), also, had similar findings in regard to the importance of explicit grammar instruction in Indonesian EFL context. Two teachers out of three in Sabbu's study, who had 10 years teaching experience, similarly believed that EFL learners need to be taught grammar explicitly in order to master the language (2019).

Comparing statement number 10, “I believe that teaching English grammar is important to improve academic English” to statement 22, “I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar” shows how perceptions of grammar teaching and learning are firmly connected to the idea of being helpful in developing English proficiency. Such strong beliefs with very similar response rates across the three groups can be considered a positive sign for curriculum developers to reflect upon.

As indicated in the quantitative data, SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs strongly believed in the role of grammar to achieve proficiency which is consistent with EAP teachers beliefs in Barnard and Scampton (2008); Borg and Burns (2008); Burgess and Etherington (2002); and Burns and Borg (2015). Similar results were reported by Barnard and Scampton (2008) who found very similar attitudes to acquiring the language through both explicit and implicit approaches among EAP teachers in New Zealand. Barnard and Scampton (2008) explained that “[t]hese findings are not necessarily contradictory” (p. 66) as it has been further discussed in relation to a number of issues such as declarative vs. procedural knowledge, conscious knowledge, structure comparison and using authentic texts. Therefore, explicit instruction and language exposure appeared to be equally important for the students as reported by their teachers (Barnard & Scampton, 2008). In this project, it can be inferred clearly from the results of statement number 10 and statement number 22 that the three groups strongly believe in grammar teaching as an approach to improving EAP, scoring 95% and above across the groups.

The link between teaching and learning grammar and developing language proficiency has been shown to be inextricable. This link was strong across the three groups as indicated in the quantitative data (Table 4.4) and in qualitative question number two (as in Table 4.5). However, the participants showed stronger beliefs in implicit communication activities to accelerate their language learning as well as to develop accuracy. Agreement on implicit activities was 94% and above across the groups compared to the explicit isolated grammar

activities which ranged from 80% to 90%. The level of agreement for both types of activities was high, but the higher level for implicit activities is worth noting. This does not indicate that the groups favour implicit over explicit activities, but instead, could imply that they are looking for integration with more emphasis on communication-based activities.

In regard to statement 22, “I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar”, the agreement level dropped to half. This was very noticeable among both instructors and learners as well as among the other statements related to explicit and implicit activities. In the questionnaire, the participants beliefs in relation to advocating for zero grammar teaching in learning English was not very positive, but was still quite considerable.

From a Saudi perspective, these findings were in parallel with Aljohani’s (2012) study, as all the teachers in his study agreed that grammar instruction and practice help to improve accuracy, and this was backed up by Alghanmi and Shukri (2016); and Dajem (2012) findings. The majority of teachers in Alghanmi and Shukri (2016) study believed that “grammar instruction, with concentration on forms, can develop learners’ language accuracy” and “mastering the rules enables the students to become more competent communicators” (p. 76).

4.5 Grammar for language proficiency (QUAL)

To answer Research Question 2, “How do SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs perceive the importance of grammar instruction for EAP proficiency?” qualitatively, the participants were asked the following question: “How important is learning/teaching grammar to academic language proficiency?” The responses to this question were rich in the sense that the participants were not satisfied with giving a short answer, but rather, they told relatively lengthy and interesting stories about L2. Crediting Riessman (2008) narrative approach in qualitative studies, the researcher gave emphasis to the participants’ stories as they “reveal truths about human experience” (p. 10). The researcher discussed their responses in detail to

provide a broader picture of the shared ideologies and concepts in the Saudi EFL context. To start with, Table 4.5 summarises the overall responses to the question across the three groups.

Table 4.5 Overall Responses to Interview Question (2): “How important is grammar for EAP proficiency?”

How important is grammar for EAP proficiency?	SUIs (N=12)	SULSAs (N=12)	SULAs (N=10)
1 Yes, it is very important.	(1-2 - 4 - 6 -7 - 8 - 9 - 10-11-12)	(1- 2 - 3 - 4 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11)	(2 - 3 - 4 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10)
2 Yes, it is important but for advanced levels.	(3)	(5 - 12)	
3 Yes, it is important but after vocabulary.			(1 - 5)
4 No, it is not important.	(5)		

* Note: the numbers in the brackets within each column represent the participant code (i.e. SUI2=2)

As recorded in the table, the responses to this question were divided into four main perceptions: 1) grammar is important for EAP proficiency; 2) grammar is important but should be introduced for advanced levels; 3) vocabulary is more important and grammar is next; and 4) grammar is not important. In the following sections, the researcher will report on these data for each group as expressed by the participants.

The majority of participants responded with a firm yes to interview question 2; however, four interviewees gave a conditional response. Some believed that investment in developing language skills is a higher priority, while others believed that developing learners’ vocabulary knowledge is more important. On the importance of vocabulary for language proficiency, most teachers in Alhaysony and Alhaisoni (2017) study stated that “grammar cannot be neglected, even though vocabulary may play a more important role” (p. 188).

One participant in the qualitative phase rejected the positive connection between grammar learning and attaining language proficiency. Some studies, as in (Petraiki & Gunawardena, 2015), reported the same views by a minority of their participants. The study

reported that 17% of students expressed a negative attitude towards grammar lessons. However, some students clarified in the interviews that their view was mainly because of the teaching practice as they wanted more creative methods to address grammar instead of treating it like maths (Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015). In the following sections, the beliefs of the three groups will be thoroughly discussed, starting with the SUIs followed by the SULSAs and SULAs.

4.5.1.1 SUI interviewees' perceptions

SUI1 believed that learning grammar is important for learners to achieve proficiency in English, unless the purpose is just to “talk” because, as he expressed, “everyone can talk in English without being careful about his/her grammar.” On the other hand, SUI3 and SUI4 stated that teaching the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking is far more important than teaching grammar, particularly for beginners. However, they believed that grammar is important for attaining proficiency, which should be introduced or touched on at advanced levels only. SUI3 explained this view as follows:

Grammar is related to language proficiency but not at the beginning. Not for beginner levels. It is related to advanced levels. After like pre-intermediate, you can introduce grammar explicitly but before that, you do not need to introduce grammar explicitly. You have to teach it implicitly (SUI3).

SUI3 clarified that grammar should be taught in an implicit way for beginners and then be introduced to promote language proficiency. Similarly, SUI4 explained the relationship between grammar and language proficiency as follows:

Of course, there is a relation. I will give you an example which will help you in your research by the way. If you remember when Aramco⁴ company opened back in the 60s at the eastern province in Saudi Arabia, hundreds of workers worked with them. What happened was one of them is my uncle and another is my cousin. They work as drivers or crane drivers. What happened within two years, they master speaking English fluently. They spoke with the Americans in that time fluently, but they could not write a letter (i.e. alphabet letter) and do not know how to write their names even. And even their English was perfect and the grammar itself was correct. So, listening and speaking with native speakers correct your grammar automatically so communicating with others will help you master your English and the grammar of English as well. But if you are taught grammar, sometimes it going to be difficult because some people find it difficult to memorise rules or to apply the rules (SUI4).

As can be seen, SUI4 perceived significant benefit in listening and engaging in oral communication which, in his story, was with native speakers. SUI4 believed that employing such strategies would definitely take care of language acquisition and accuracy. SUI5 also shared the same view that learners need to practice English through developing the four skills, while grammar should be introduced implicitly. SUI5 gave the same example about the experience of the Saudi Aramco staff in learning the language by communicating. He concluded the story by saying that “they did not receive much formal education in English and yet they can speak proficient English.” SUI5 went on to stress an important issue about instructors as human beings:

⁴ Aramco is the Saudi Arabian Oil Company known as Aramco (Nurunnabi, 2017).

We bring our own ideology, our own experiences as learners into teaching. And the thing I have experienced personally, and from those around me, that you can master or acquire a language without explicit grammar education, without being exposed to much of present perfect or all that stuff. Personally, I am not against explicit teaching of grammar, but at the same time, implicit teaching for grammar needs to be emphasised during our lectures (SUI5).

The favouring of communication-based approaches over explicit grammar teaching is echoed in Dajem's (2012) study. She reported that teachers are interested in employing implicit approaches as they believed in the benefits, but they raised some concerns in relation to learners' expectations. Those concerns are related to learners' feeling where new teaching methods could make them feel uncomfortable as they were used to learn in certain way that they already had believed in. However, the majority of teachers in Dajem's study preferred to teach grammar explicitly and at the sentence-level for beginners (2012). This was also confirmed in Burgess and Etherington (2002) results in which teachers "would not feel comfortable with a syllabus which delayed teaching grammar until later in the learning process" (p. 440). On the other hand, the third teacher in Sabbu's (2019) case study shared her/his belief of the effectiveness of impact instruction over the explicit though expressed a doubt that learners may need it: "I prefer to use the implicit way in teaching grammar although the students may need the explicit way. I am still considering they are beginners" (p. 19)

The idea of language immersion is discussed above, as the participants believed that a learner could acquire the language through communication, but acknowledged that in order to reach a high level of proficiency, explicit, isolated or integrated, grammar teaching was needed. So, to the participants, grammar is like a polishing tool that can help language learners to refine their language. However, the communicative environment that they mentioned is not always

available in the current Saudi EFL context, as extensively surveyed by (Al-Hajailan, 2003; Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2005, 2014, 2015, 2017). This represents one of the challenges that educators are attempting to resolve amid other contextual factors, including time and textbook limitations.

Apart from the above responses, several SUIs reported the benefits of grammar teaching from a different angle that was not focused on within the discussion on linguistic communicative immersion. SUI6 and SUI12 linked the learning of grammar to fluency in a positive way. SUI12, for instance, confirmed that grammar is important “regardless of the way you teach it.” She explained that “fluency would not be really fluency if the person just puts words together”; however, grammar influences fluency and people’s perceptions. SUI12 related grammar knowledge to presenting “the best manner you need to linguistically communicate in the way the person in front of you understands.” To her, lack of grammar knowledge makes the person sound “funny and less intelligent” whether in an academic context or in daily life. Grammar here seems to be related to self-image and social judgement.

Furthermore, SUI7 described the relationship between grammar and language proficiency as an “inextricable relationship” which was also confirmed earlier. He firmly believed in the importance of teaching grammar for language proficiency. The irony is that SUI7 provided a similar “Aramco” story that had been narrated by SUI4 and SUI5, but highlighted a different perspective:

I taught someone who came from the United States who has spent with his father ten years there. That boy studied in the United States from year one in elementary school till the third year in high school and he came and joined the faculty of language and translation. I taught him listening at the beginning and I asked him to lead the class because he is better than me to be honest. He was more than excellent. He was American

like person but when I asked my colleagues in two semesters after, how was that X guy? He told me he is so terrible. I told him it is impossible. He is American like person. He showed me his paragraph since he is teaching him writing. I saw the most terrible paragraph at that time written by one of our students in the faculty. No punctuation marks at all. No rules. The subject will be connected to the verb. The words are connected to each other. They are not separated and when I compare his paragraph with the students who joined the faculty and came from the scientific institute in Saudi Arabia, I found out that those learnt and wrote better than this person (SUI7).

According to this story, it is evident that language skills within this Saudi university were taught separately, with each skill being a stand-alone course in isolation of the other skills. Here, again, the idea of immersing language learners in the communicative language context improved their spoken language but not their writing. This story also informs us that the instructor, for one entire semester, did not have the opportunity to assess the learners' other skills such as writing, as illustrated in the quote. This reflects the nature of the courses and the syllabus for teaching English in the Saudi context. Such stories related to learning English were conveyed on a number of occasions by the interviewees. The researcher has reported only the ones which are related to views and beliefs about learning and teaching English grammar.

SUI8 also believed that there is a positive relationship between grammar teaching and language proficiency, stating that if teachers "didn't really focus on the grammar, (they) couldn't reach the purpose as a whole proficiency achievement." However, the response to this question, according to SUI8, should not be limited to the importance of teaching grammar, but rather, it should be about knowing how to teach grammar and how to engage students in the learning process.

SUI10 and SUI11 confirmed that the relationship between teaching grammar and language proficiency is very solid. According to SUI10, grammar teaching to attain language proficiency is very important, particularly for understanding reading. SUI11 discussed the difference between developing spoken language and developing the language for academic purposes. As SUI11 pointed out, teaching spoken language in terms of memorising expressions and using them is easy compared to teaching grammar that is needed for academia. SUI11 explained that grammar is an issue for the students, as English is not their first or even their second language. She continued to clarify that English for Saudi students is still a foreign language in which they struggle to understand the rules, and they often raise exceptions to the rule in the classroom, questioning the teacher about the reasons for these exceptions. SUI11 expressed that English is a fast-growing language which has lots of exceptions that emerge along the way. She explained that her students are always arguing about the exceptions to the grammar rules that cause confusion, and they wish to have a “whole book for all the exceptions”. This fact, in addition to learning English in a foreign context, forces teachers to focus on teaching grammar to be able to use the language properly.

4.5.1.2 SULSA & SULA interviewees' perceptions

The relationship between grammar and language proficiency was examined with the SULSAs and the SULAs through one-to-one interviews. All the participants agreed that in order to reach language proficiency, good grammar is needed and that the intensity of the exposure to grammar varies with each person. Ten SULSA participants believed strongly that grammar is a necessity, especially in learning English for academic and educational purposes. Their reasons for such a need are interesting to investigate. The positive relationship between grammar and language proficiency also appeared strongly among SULAs, despite the fact that they had the experience of being ESL learners in Australia. The majority believed that grammar is very important, especially when learning English for academic purposes or to become

proficient in the language. Building language learners' vocabulary is another important emerging theme within this group. Most participants acknowledged the benefits of increasing vocabulary knowledge before attempting to study grammar.

Starting with the SULSAs' responses, the majority stated that there is a positive relationship between grammar and language proficiency, especially for developing the language for academic purposes. SULSA1 explained that grammar is not needed "outside the academic fieldwork", giving an example of visiting a restaurant or meeting someone on the street. SULSA4 stated that he believed in reading as a skill to develop the language, but that studying English grammar gives the student the reasons to use a particular form that cannot be learned through reading texts. SULSA 6 stated that the academic field forces them as students "to be very clear with the grammar" as they need to be able to do research and presentations. SULSA6 and SULSA8 also believed that grammar is important for the academic field rather than for daily life. SULSA10 explained the importance of grammar as a definite part of the language that works side-by-side with other aspects and skills of the language:

If for example other than learning in universities and institutes, I will know the language, but I won't be confident to talk since I don't know much vocabulary, some grammar rules also I won't know them. All these things complete each other (SULSA10).

However, SULSA10 also stressed the role of context in learning the language: "if you talk a lot and spend your holidays abroad, you can excel in English. I feel if he/she does not speak the mother tongue and talk in English daily, for sure he/she will be proficient." To excel could be related to the spoken communicative language of daily life, but when it comes to writing, grammar appeared to be the dominant tool to develop the language.

Overall, learning grammar is linked firmly to learning the language for academic purposes in which one would not be proficient unless they mastered English grammar. Valeo and Spada (2016) argued that L2 learners could benefit from the early introduction of the language structure which “helps learners develop strong form-meaning mappings necessary for language acquisition” (p. 2). In this way, learners would be equipped with a strong foundation that would facilitate their communication and help advance their grammatical knowledge in the later stages of language learning. Additionally, SULSA2 argued that communication would not be enough to be proficient in English, as knowing the tenses such as the past participle requires the study of grammar. Interestingly, SULSA2 stated that students themselves often criticise instructors and doctors, including PhD holders, who commit grammatical mistakes while speaking. In this case, students are apparently aware of, and alert to, grammar mistakes within communication, which may help us, as educators, to address this issue differently.

As an opponent of teaching grammar, SULSA5 believed that practising the language should be encouraged instead of focusing on grammar, which should be introduced in the later more advanced stages:

You know I am now studying French as you know we have to study French besides English, so, they are making the same mistake, the same mistake, they are focusing on grammar so much even in French. You know I studied now one course and now I am in the second. Each course is three hours and a half each week. So, the whole semester we did not listen for one word. They did not even play an audio or something for French or make us exercise for listening or reading. They are just focusing on grammar, grammar even in French. Now I am studying the second course, I cannot make one

sentence in French but if you give me a paper full of questions about grammar, I will do it all, but I cannot speak like it at all (SULSA5).

SULSA5 believes in the benefits of grammar, but is against the idea of having an entire focus on grammar while disregarding other important language skills such as listening and speaking. This style of teaching gave her knowledge about the linguistic rules, but this was not enough to enable her to speak or write in English. It is clear that grammar instruction needs pedagogical change to develop language proficiency through various teaching styles which can integrate the language skills and match them to the different learning styles within the EFL classroom.

The value of learning vocabulary prior to grammar was mentioned by a number of interviewees. They believed that building vocabulary should come first before it is possible to introduce grammar. SULSA 11, for instance, believes that learning grammar is “extremely important” without which you “couldn’t build a meaningful sentence”. From her experience, she said that in the university, the instructors started teaching the students English by building up their vocabulary, and later, they were exposed to grammar teaching. SULSA 12 shared the same view of grammar as SULSA11. She explained that grammar is important to language proficiency, but memorising the rules is not effective as she could not recall the rules when needed, especially the verb tenses such as present perfect.

Shifting attention to the SULAs who had the experience of learning English for academic purposes in Australia, learning grammar was also strongly connected to developing language proficiency. Moreover, building learners’ vocabulary was an interesting theme that emerged in the SULAs’ responses in answering the question about the importance of grammar to language proficiency. Some of the participants prioritised improving vocabulary knowledge

over learning grammar. SULA1, for instance, explained the importance of vocabulary as a prior step to learning grammar:

If you do not have vocabulary, you do not have a language generally. It is the beginning of all things to learn more words, regardless of grammar, trying to understand the topic whether in listening, reading and so on. The second step or stage is the grammar. Grammar helps me a lot in reading; for example, tenses and other many rules which affects the meaning which means when I learn grammar, it will help me to understand the meaning in a better way (SULA1).

Vocabulary, hence, represents language input by providing lots of listening and reading materials as well as activities. In this way, learners enhance their vocabulary knowledge before attempting to get to know the structure. SULA5 also reported that “mastering English grammar is important, but is not as important as vocabulary”, as the university she enrolled in offered her “an editor to check up [her] grammar for free in the library and he gives me feedback on the writing, but I think academic vocabulary is more important.” So, grammar to her is the job of the editor. The value of building vocabulary has also been reported by the EFL learners in (Alhaysony & Alhaisoni, 2017) study. Learners preferred to put their primary focus on learning vocabulary over grammar as “they feel that grammar rules are not important to learn” (p. 196). From a practitioner’s point of view, Azar also considered studying vocabulary as far more important than grammar, although her extensive body of work is mostly on grammar teaching (Azar, 2007, 2019).

Thus, the majority of SULAs acknowledged the positive role of learning grammar in enhancing language proficiency, and these views were similar to SUIs and SULSAs. For instance, SULA2, SULA6, and SULA7 asserted that there is a relationship between learning

grammar and language proficiency, as the learner cannot be proficient without learning grammar. SULA2 suggested that “it should be a relationship, because if you learn the language, which I mean the grammar of course, you will excel in writing and the language in all its aspects.” However, she also believes that grammar is not as important as experience when it comes to speaking. To her, grammar is extremely important within the university context; for instance, in writing essays or reports. SULA3 also confirmed that grammar is important and “has a great role especially in writing and mostly in using tenses.” To these participants, grammar is much more related to writing in the academic field. One can predict that the ESL context here has a role in shifting the SULAs’ attention to the importance of vocabulary, as they live in Australia where the need for language proficiency is very high to enable them to participate in daily life activities. It is also worth noting that SULAs believe that grammar strongly conveys intended meaning, particularly for academic writing. This could be explained within their existing needs, as all of them studied, or had been enrolled in, intensive English language courses that prepared them for university courses.

Together these beliefs provide an important insight into the value of grammar instruction for learning the language. Some participant views confirmed that the purpose of learning English is the main determinant in choosing the right content and method of teaching English grammar. For example, SULA6 had the same view in relation to the purpose of learning the language:

I think that grammar is essential and very important if you want to be professional English speaker; otherwise, if you want just to speak English, I do not think it is that important because you learn from speaking and listening more than reading and understanding the grammar (SULA6).

He continued by explaining that the necessity to learn grammar is more related to the purpose and position requirements in relation to employment, as a mechanic's language needs are different from a doctor's needs, although he also strongly believed that grammar "is very important to understand." As stated earlier, SULA7 and SULA9 confirmed the positive relationship between grammar and the attainment of language proficiency, linking it to mutual understanding between speakers. According to SULA7, learning grammar enables learners to meaningfully write and speak, as she asserted that one "couldn't write academic essay without understanding of grammar. [You] can't speak with others, till they understand us, without the understanding of grammar." Similarly, SULA8 agreed that the importance of English grammar is more likely linked to language need and job position requirements, explaining that "it is important to a person who is working in the academic field." Likewise, SULA10 suggested that one could learn the everyday language or the "slang" if no grammar had been introduced, but would not be able to "reach the academic level that I am searching for."

Interestingly, SULA8 also considered grammar knowledge, especially for communication, as a "kind of politeness when you are talking with people using grammar; that shows your respect to the others", especially in using proper tenses and avoiding misunderstandings. Personal image, being polite, and showing respect are interesting themes related to grammar knowledge noted among Saudi language learners.

Social acceptability and maintaining a decent self-image were among the emergent perceptions connected to language proficiency and correct usage of grammar. As reported previously, several participants indicated that having grammatically accurate language presents the learner in a good way without which one could be sometimes described as "less intelligent". This finding reinforced Swan's argument listing social acceptability as a good reason for teaching and learning grammar (2002). According to Swan, "in some social contexts, serious deviance from native-speaker norms can hinder integration and excite prejudice – a person who

speaks ‘badly’ may not be taken seriously, or may be considered uneducated or stupid” (p. 152).

Grammar accuracy was also linked to “the best manner” through which learners need to communicate with others. From these interesting explanations, SULSA7 believed that learning grammar helps to “level up” the language so that it is not only limited to that “free grammar language” that resembles what Thornbury (1999) described as “baby talk” that anyone can do to communicate verbally, but which is not possible in writing.

Learning English grammar has been linked to another important aspect of successful language learners. SULA4 related learning grammar to the enhancement of learners’ confidence. She explained that Saudi language learners in particular need language knowledge to help them to be confident in the early stages of learning the language. She mentioned an interesting example related to the IELTS test, as this was required by her to get a job in Saudi Arabia:

Recently, I studied for IELTS because I want to get a job now, and they require to have IELTS again. In the graph section, they asked us to describe it, and one of the sources or the books that teach me how to answer that question give me, you have to say noun plus verb plus object ... So, when I put the English rules in front of me and I play with the language of change that will give me more confidence to play with language and say yes, this is the right way. I am now confident about my grammar. No-one will mark me down in that area (SULA4).

From this example, the IELTS test requires grammar knowledge, and is quite popular in Saudi Arabia as proof of language proficiency as well as in the global context as an official test of language proficiency. In relation to official tests, such as the IELTS and TOEFL, Hinkel (2017) confirmed the primacy of grammatical accuracy upon which the test-takers will be

judged. The priority for language accuracy is stated explicitly as “one of the main criteria for measuring L2 proficiency as a broad construct” (p. 371). This fact makes learners understand the need to learn the language structure as it is tested through official English language tests.

4.5.2 Concluding remarks for Research Question 2

Based on the findings of Research Questions 1 and 2 reported in this chapter, it is evident that the Saudi perspective confirms the importance of learning grammar, as Richards (2002) indicated that “[p]eople now agree that grammar is too important to be ignored, and that without a good knowledge of grammar, learners’ language development will be severely constrained” (p. 145). He continued to explain that the current central issue should be shifted to how to effectively teach grammar, bearing in mind learners’ needs (2002), which will be explored in the following chapter. Learning grammar to attain proficiency has been acknowledged as a key issue for ESL and EFL learners to consider (Basturkmen, 2018). Moreover, Basturkmen confirmed that grammar teaching is vital in L2 classrooms across the globe, and that many TESOL teachers use explicit approaches to teach grammar (2018). This can explain the affirmative role that grammar has in the Saudi context. Borg and Burns also stated that having some formal instruction is accepted now and more such approaches have been proposed accordingly (2015). Six main findings of Research Question 2 can be summarised as follows:

- Grammar instruction for attaining language proficiency is a strongly shared belief among SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs.
- Explicit as well as implicit grammar instruction are generally seen effective for developing English language proficiency.



- Implicit grammar instruction that is based mainly on communicative activities gained slightly higher agreement among participants for the purpose of developing language proficiency.
- Appreciating communicative activities for developing English competence does not mean replacing explicit grammar teaching and rules practice.
- Correct usage of grammar as part of language proficiency is interestingly linked to social acceptability, confidence, and maintaining a decent self-image.
- Building learners' vocabulary knowledge has been prioritised by some of the participants over learning grammar to develop the language in general.

Furthermore, the findings revealed congruous perceptions across the three participant groups that can be noted as a positive step in promoting language learning that corresponds to these shared beliefs. In the interviews, the majority stated that they believe in the effectiveness of grammar instruction, which was expressed by some interviewees as the comfort zone, but not as Krashen's zone (2009). Others expressed the possibility of learning the language in the way that Krashen had proposed with no grammar, but they gave a prompt recognition of the contextual barriers that do not support implicit acquisition. SUI10 explained that such methods require a lot of time that is just not available in the Saudi context.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has reported on and discussed the data related to current beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching for the purpose of developing EAP proficiency according to Saudi university instructors and learners in different contexts - the Saudi EFL and the Australian ESL contexts. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were discussed along with the related qualitative data derived from the interviews.



In answer to Research Question 1, the responses showed that most currently-held beliefs about grammar and grammar instruction were very similar across the three groups. Grammar has been widely perceived as the basis of the language through which language proficiency can be achieved. Such beliefs are not congruent with natural L2 acquisition advocates' theories, such as Krashen and Terrell, who believe that grammar instruction has only a minor positive influence. It was also reported by a small number of interviewees that the inclusion of grammar instruction should be delayed for beginners, which contradicts the recent research in the field, as discussed in the answer to Research Question 2. The overall findings asserted that instructors and learners were very close in their perceptions of the value of teaching grammar for developing EAP proficiency, without which learners could not attain proficiency in all the language skills.

All in all, grammar appears to play an important role in the Saudi EFL context. In the following chapter, Chapter Five, the focus will shift to beliefs and preferences on how grammar should be taught effectively.

The next chapter addresses the third question that focuses on explicit, implicit, and integrated grammar approaches related preferences and beliefs. It also answers the fourth question which outlines the characteristics of the Saudi EFL context which the participants suggest influences their beliefs about grammar and the practice of grammar teaching and learning.



5 Research findings: Preferences and beliefs about grammar instruction: Explicit isolated, explicit integrated, or implicit

5.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter presents and discusses the data related to research questions three and four, following the same structure used in Chapter Four. The focus of this chapter is on current preferences and beliefs pertaining to grammar instruction reported by the three groups of participants in this study, namely the SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs, and how the Saudi context contributes to shaping their beliefs and preferences as reported by the participants. This chapter will complete the investigation in answering the following research questions:

- ◆ Research Question 3: How do SUIs perceive explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit grammar instruction compared to SULSAs' and SULAs' perceptions for developing EAP?
- ◆ Research Question 4: What are the characteristics of the Saudi EFL context which SUIs and SULSAs indicate as influencing their beliefs about grammar and practices of grammar teaching and learning?

To answer the research questions, the researcher reported on and discussed the data derived from the online questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and class observations.

5.2 Grammar Instruction: Beliefs and preferences

Preferences for, and beliefs about, grammar instruction will be explored in this chapter with a specific in-practice focus. In the following sections, data from the questionnaire, interviews, and class observations will be incorporated to address the three main grammar instruction approaches; explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit, with each explored in a separate section of this chapter.

5.2.1 Explicit isolated grammar instruction (QUAN)

Starting with the quantitative data, explicit isolated grammar instruction was explored. Explicit isolated grammar instruction is associated with Focus on formS (FoS) approaches as discussed earlier in the literature (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter two). The most representative related approaches in the Saudi EFL context are Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Present-Practice-Produce (3Ps) model (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Althaqafi, 2018; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018; Picard, 2018). In this section, the researcher explored the current beliefs and preferences with specific focus on presenting grammar in isolation of other skills and activities. This was followed by a thorough qualitative rationale. Seven questionnaire statements representing the explicit isolated instruction are shown in Table 5.1 below; these were analysed using participants' responses on the 6-point Likert scale.

The majority of the explicit isolated grammar instruction items in Table 5.2 received a high agreement level across SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs. This showed the strong beliefs in, and preferences for, the explicit isolated grammar teaching. The level of disagreement within the SUIs group was 39% and below. However, consistent high agreement levels were found between the SULSA and SULA learners where the highest level of disagreement was 21%.

Table 5.1 Explicit Isolated Grammar Instruction Statements

Instructors' (SUIs)Version	Learners' (SULSAs & SULAs) Version
(1) Explicit Isolated Items	(1) Explicit Isolated Items
1. I like to explain the grammar rule following it with practice.	1. I like my teacher to explain the grammar rule first following it with practice.
<i>2. I find it easier for students to learn grammar when I teach it by itself.</i>	<i>2. I find it easier to learn grammar when the teacher teaches it by itself.</i>
3. I like to stop students to correct their errors as soon as they make them.	3. I like my teacher to stop me and correct my mistakes as soon as I make them.
4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar.	4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar.
5. I like teaching grammar for students by explaining as well as practicing exercises.	5. I like learning grammar by seeing the explanation as well as practicing exercises.
<i>9. I find it helpful for students to learn a grammar point before reading it in texts.</i>	<i>9. I find it helpful to learn a grammar point before reading it in a text.</i>
<i>11. My students expect me to provide them with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice.</i>	<i>11. I expect my teacher to provide me with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice.</i>

*Note: items in italics refer to beliefs where others to preferences.

Table 5.2 Explicit Isolated Grammar Teaching (Likert scale Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 & 11)

	SUIs (N=267)				SULSAs (N=1768)				SULAs (N=420)			
	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD
1	82%	18%	4.6	1.4	94%	6%	5.3	1.1	93%	7%	5.3	1.1
2	67%	34%	4.1	1.4	83%	17%	4.8	1.4	81%	19%	4.6	1.4
3	61%	39%	3.9	1.4	93%	7%	5.3	1.1	90%	10%	5.3	1.2
4	70%	31%	4.1	1.4	82%	18%	4.6	1.4	87%	13%	4.7	1.2
5	97%	8%	4.9	1.1	91%	10%	5.0	1.1	92%	8%	5.0	1.1
9	73%	27%	4.3	1.3	79%	21%	4.5	1.4	79%	21%	4.4	1.4
11	82%	18%	4.4	1.1	80%	20%	4.5	1.4	79%	21%	4.4	1.3

*Note: SUIs= Saudi Universities' Instructors, SULSAs= Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia and SULAs= Saudi University Learners in Australia. (A) refers to Agreement and (D) to Disagreement. (M) refers to the Mean and (SD) refers to the Standard Deviation.

Instructors (SUIs) and learners (SULSAs and SULAs) participating in this study show high preference to explicit explanations of grammar rule accompanied by practicing exercises, whether after grammar instruction as in item 1 or alongside grammar instruction as in item 5. To start with, statement number one: “I like (my teacher) to explain the grammar rule first following it with practice”, showed a high agreement level among the SUIs (82%), SULSAs

(94%), and SULAs (93%) compared to the other statements. Statement number five, which is similar to statement number one “I like teaching (learning) grammar by explaining as well as practicing exercises”, gained the highest level of agreement across the three groups (SUIs 97%, SULSAs 91%, and SULAs 92%). Each group likes to have an explicit explanation of the grammar rule which would then be followed or accompanied by practice.

The presentation of grammar in these statements corresponds to the convention of GTM and 3Ps approaches which are the most commonly-used methods in the Saudi EFL context (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017; Picard, 2018). Such strong positive beliefs in the isolated grammar instruction reported in Table 5.2 could be influenced by the participants’ (SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs) prior learning experience. In Mitchell and Alfuraih (2017), Alfuraih, the head of the English department at the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, conducted a survey (2017) that was sent electronically to schools around the Kingdom for the purpose of developing practice. Over 800 Saudi teachers declared that they use the GTM in their classes which could be a proper explanation of the strong positive perceptions revealed among the present study participants. It can be inferred that language instructors could feel more comfortable with what they were used to be taught previously where the chosen approach could have been affected by a number of internal and external factors that were discussed in the qualitative phase.

Similar to the SUIs’ positive perceptions of explicit isolated grammar instruction, Burns and Borg (2015) confirmed that all the surveyed teachers of adult learners had a preference for “some explicit grammar work” (p. 171), despite the fact that the participants were geographically diverse, and did not represent a specific context. Further, this was also in consistent with Schulz (1996, 2001) findings in which teachers and learners valued the teaching of grammar in language learning. The teachers in Schulz’s (2001) study showed slightly lower levels of agreement compared to the students regarding grammar teaching, which is similar to

SUIs' results here. Such differences between instructors' and learners' perceptions, though minor in this case, would affect the outcomes of the learning process if not addressed appropriately (Horwitz, 1999; Schulz, 1996). In this regard, Schulz made a recommendation for teachers to work on students' expectations to avoid generating negative attitudes from the students (Schulz, 1996).

Indeed, the level of learners' interests and expectations in the present study are worth noticing as they are different from what was reported in Schulz (1996, 2001). In statement number 11: "my students expect me to provide them with the grammatical terminology before practice", the SUIs showed strong agreement to the expectations from their learners. SULSAs and SULAs had their response to SUIs' expressing their expectation in the learners' version of item 11: "I expect my teacher to provide me with the grammatical terminology before practice". SULSAs, and SULAs had almost the same high level of agreement compared to SUIs which is about 80%. Here the learners' expectations were well understood by the instructors. This is a positive outcome which can help both sides and could be counted as a step forward in considering development in the Saudi English Language Teaching (ELT) field.

Error correction is often viewed as an integral component of explicit isolated grammar teaching for EFL and ESL instructors and learners (Ahmad, 2018; Ahmad & Radzuan, 2015; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Barnard & Scampton, 2008; Schulz, 1996). Therefore, the researcher was interested in knowing if Saudi instructors and learners shared the same perceptions of error correction. Preferences for error correction were almost identical among the learners, with SULSAs rated at 93% and SULAs at 90% agreement in preferring their teachers to stop them as soon as errors occurred (statement number 3). For this statement, the SUIs (the instructors), did not prefer prompt error correction as much as the learners did, with only 60% agreement on this item. The learners, the SULSAs and SULAs, shared the same positive view of corrective feedback that was reported by FL learners in Schulz (1996, 2001).

It was interesting and encouraging to see learners being motivated to learn through different methods and being willing to receive corrective feedback. This finding was consistent with results from Alghanmi and Shukri (2016); Aljohani (2012); and Assalahi (2013) in which teachers encouraged constant and immediate correction to avoid fossilisation and to accelerate learning as indicated.

Also interesting in the data (in Table 5.2) was the low level of agreement for statement number nine: “I find it helpful (for students) to learn a grammar point before reading it in texts” compared to statement number one: “I like (my teacher) to explain the grammar rule following it with practice.” Statement number nine represents a perception whereas statement number one represented a preference. This could explain the lower level of agreement as expressing beliefs may not always represent one’s preference (Kalaja et al., 2015). All groups strongly agreed on liking the idea of presenting grammar followed by practice, but in stating beliefs, uncertainty could appear as in this case.

In total, 83% of SULSAs and 81% of SULAs found it easier to learn a grammar rule by itself; however, only 67% of the SUIs, the instructors, agreed with this statement. The SULSAs’ and SULAs’ responses most closely matched the focus on formS methods, including GTM and 3Ps, in which the primary focus is on presenting the grammar rule in isolation, compared to the SUIs. Alghanmi and Shukri (2016) reported stronger beliefs for teaching grammar in isolation. The percentages of agreement ranged from 80% to 90% for teachers who favoured the traditional method in presenting grammar (i.e. GTM and 3Ps). In contrast, EFL Turkish teachers in Toprak’s (2019) study reported Only 8% of teachers who favoured teaching grammar separate from other skills.

The overall responses to the explicit isolated grammar instruction items revealed a shared prevailing agreement of believing in and preferring isolated teaching of grammar, across the three groups. However, the instructors appeared to be slightly different with lower

agreement level regarding “explaining the grammar rule and follow it with practice” (item no. 1), viewing the isolation treatment of grammar rules as easier to learners (item no. 2) and in liking grammar focused lessons (item no. 4). To touch on the related rationale for the reported quantitative perceptions, the researcher furthers the discussion of explicit isolated grammar instruction in the next section based on the qualitative data derived from the interviews.

5.2.2 Explicit isolated grammar instruction (QUAL)

In the one-to-one semi-structured interviews, the participants had the opportunity to elaborate on their expressed preferences and beliefs in response to interview question 3: “How do you prefer to teach/learn English grammar?” They were provided with three lesson options, depicting explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit grammar instruction, and needed to nominate their preference and give a rationale for their choice (interview question 3; see Appendix J or Table 3.10). The three lessons options were developed in accordance with the three types of form-focused instruction proposed by Ellis (2006, 2015): 1) focus on forms → explicit isolated, 2) planned focus on form → explicit integrated, and 3) incidental focus on form → implicit grammar teaching.

In response to interview question three, the researcher summarised the responses to the three lesson options corresponding to explicit isolated, explicit integrated and implicit grammar instruction in Table 5.3. This will help the reader in gaining a broader picture of the responses.

Table 5.3 Overview of the Responses to Interview Question (3)

	SUIs (N=12)	SULSAs (N=12)	SULAs (N=10)
1st Option (Explicit Isolated)	(6 - 7 - 9 - 10 - 11)	(1 - 4 - 6 - 9 - 10)	(1 - 2 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10)
2nd Option (Explicit Integrated)	(1 - 2 - 4 - 8* - 12)	(2 - 5 - 8 - 11 - 12)	(3)
3rd Option (Implicit)	(3* - 5)	(3 - 7)	

Note: the numbers in the brackets within each column represent the participant' code (i.e. SUI2=2). Numbers with (*) refers to the non-Saudi instructors as SUI3 is Canadian and SUI8 is Jordanian (see Table 3.11 For further details).

The majority of the interviewees preferred option one (explicit isolated) and option two (explicit integrated) rather than option three (implicit). The SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs discussed their preferences, providing evocative insights based on their beliefs, experiences, and their needs. The responses to this question by the SULSAs and SULAs, the learners, were quite inspirational as they were able to judge, compare, and suggest. This demonstrated their considerable interest in developing their learning as well as the current teaching practice. For the purposes of this section, the discussion has been limited to *Explicit Isolated* grammar instruction.

5.2.2.1 SUI interviewees perceptions on explicit isolated grammar instruction

Five out of 12 Saudi university instructors (SUI9, SUI10, SUI11, SUI6, and SUI7) preferred to teach grammar in an explicit isolated way within the Saudi EFL context. All the interviewees had the opportunity to elaborate on their choices. Most of the instructors based their preferences for the explicit isolated approach on the course specifications (e.g. textbooks) and the associated limitations, which greatly influenced the learners' needs and shaped their expectations. These are the main influential aspects that contribute in determining instructors' beliefs about, and preferences for the explicit isolated instruction which will be discussed in this section.

To start with, SUI6⁵ had been teaching a grammar course based on Azar's⁶ (Azar, Koch, & Hagen, 2011) grammar textbook as required by the university course specifications. The nature of the book encourages explicit grammar teaching; each chapter starts with a chart explaining the rule explicitly followed by related exercises. So, the grammar rules are presented first in a chart and then a series of examples are provided representing the related grammar rules. Therefore, SUI6 used the same structure to plan her grammar lesson, which was grammar explanation followed by extensive decontextualised examples and exercises. Apparently, this was her preferred style, although she did express negative feelings about not including a story to be read or a listening segment. In this way, the textbook and the course requirements determined her style of teaching.

However, some SUIs considered the lack of ELT professional training as a major influential factor. As SUI6 is teaching grammar course based on the *The Fundamentals of English Grammar* textbook by Azar et al. (2011), her style of teaching contradicts what the textbook is intended to be used. This fact had been clarified by Azar (AzarGrammar, 2012, October 30) as she stated that teachers often misused the textbook. Language instructors often teach lesson following the written layout of the chapters that starts with a table explaining the rule followed by sentence-based activities in isolation of other language skill-based activities. SUI6, for instance, described herself firstly as a “beginner in teaching grammar” in response to the question about her preferred grammar teaching style, and provided a brief description of her teaching context:

⁵ The researcher had an opportunity to attend one of SUI6's classes which will be discussed within section 5.3 (Perceptions vs. practice).

⁶ It is worth mentioning that Azar admitted that some practitioners misused her grammar series as they limited their use to the explicit isolated approach (Azar, 2007, 2019; AzarGrammar, 2012, October 30).

Well, it would not embarrass me to say that it is not so much of a beginner. So, it is three years. But I have not been trained on how to teach grammar but now I am reading I am starting to read and search more about how to teach grammar. I am seeing that most of our students have weak grammar. I see that they fail. Now I realise that something is wrong. The students on the other hand, they do not study. They do not work hard, and I encourage them to study but also the grammar teaching here needs more methods, new methods. If the students listen to listening segments, they do [writing] pieces, they correct mistakes in a writing piece, listen to real life conversations, maybe this would enhance the level of their grammar. (SUI6)

As mentioned above, SUI6 was restricted by the textbook and the syllabus requirements as she had to finish one chapter weekly in two and a half hours to be able to cover the entire book over the semester. She said that time was her biggest issue, as she spent the entire class explaining grammar and could only cover one exercise per class with the students. As a result, she felt that there was a need for change. She also thought that “devoting 10-minute segments at the beginning for listening” would be good to improve learners’ grammar. However, the proficiency level of the learners and their personal needs could be the issues that prevented her and other instructors from employing new methods.

Ahmad et al. (2017) implied from their findings that instructors were inclined to employ innovative methods, but the low proficiency level of the learners forced them to start with explicit isolated grammar instruction followed by practice. As SUI6 explained, the questionnaire opened her eyes to seeking improvement in her grammar teaching and gave her the opportunity to judge her own style in teaching grammar. She was very excited about this and welcomed any changes that benefitted both the instructors and learners.

She gave a brief description of her students' attitudes towards learning English grammar, which may be a reflection of the learning context:

What I noticed is that students really care about knowing grammar. They really want to be perfect in grammar, to be fluent in grammar. When I told them that they had covered now 70% of the English grammar, they will be extremely happy in class just knowing this fact. So, they really care about knowing grammar. (SUI6)

Interestingly, SUI6's learners' sense of progress in learning grammar rules corresponds to the grammarians' argument which indicate that English language has a finite grammar items and this fact was seen by grammarians as an advantage for teaching and learning English (Thornbury, 1999). Instead of being overwhelmed by the whole new system of the new language one's learning, it is more digestive to know that English consists of discrete items that help in tidying up the language learning process.

Such expectations from the learners was previously demonstrated in the quantitative data, in which both the instructors and the learners strongly agreed on preferring lessons that focused on grammar teaching (see statement number 4 in Table 5.1). As mentioned above, the learners appreciated grammar in learning English, and they wanted to learn grammar explicitly to gain proficiency in EAP. This fact could greatly affect instructors' beliefs and preferences of grammar instruction as they would respond to the contextual needs. EFL Turkish teachers in Toprak's (2019) study shared a very similar experience in regard to the learners' expectations. One teacher explained her/his fail in avoiding explicit grammar teaching saying: "I catch them looking at me with empty eyes and they seem bored. When I start explaining the things explicitly, and by contrasting the rules with Turkish, they appraise my efforts and want me to do this all the time" (p. 210). This fact actually makes difficult for language instructors

to replace the explicit instruction to more implicit ones as learners force them to refine their teaching styles in accordance with the learners' needs and expectations.

In other words, if instructors believe in zero grammar teaching but are confronted with a curriculum that based its assessment on explicit grammar; instructors' perceptions could be altered to apply what they believe will work for this context related specific purpose. Such complexity of beliefs regarding grammar teaching is not surprising as it has been reported in the literature (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 2003b). However, the “studying of what teachers know, think, and believe and how these relate to what teachers do” (Burns & Borg, 2015, p. 160) will contribute greatly in clearing some of the associated complexities.

The course specifications appeared to be a determiner of the grammar teaching style preferences of the instructors as expressed by the majority of respondents. For example, SUI9 explained that her preferred way of teaching grammar “depends on the outcome and the consequences”, which means whether the students would be assessed on their grammar knowledge or limitation. So, if grammar is related to grades, the students themselves will choose grammar explicit explanations in favour of fun activities, as SUI9 expressed:

If you, for example, give them a story and try to have them learn by fun, then their minds are going to be on the grade. When are we going down to the business? Ok we do not want the fun. So, the attitudes of the students are important. I cannot teach indirectly, subconsciously without them knowing that they are learning, and when they don't appreciate it. (SUI9)

This addition corresponds strongly to the above discussion about how contextual factors could interfere in changing instructors' beliefs. Learners' needs and expectations, then,

play a major role in shaping the grammar teaching style. SUI9 made a powerful statement in regard to students' needs and expectations as she greatly cared about the learners' comfort zone of explicit instruction. She basically chose the style that could most help her students to pass the exams and to be happy. SUI10 shared the same view as SUI9, that grammar should be taught explicitly as the students "would not get it seriously" if it was presented in a different way. This echoed similar findings in Dajem (2012) study, in which teachers expressed an interest in employing a variety of activities, but they also revealed concerns related to the students who would not be comfortable with such approaches as they were used to the explicit teaching of grammar to fulfil their needs in passing the explicit isolated grammar-based test.

SUI10 preferred to present grammar rules using "equations by giving the basic rules" followed by an explanation. She stated that teaching grammar is essential for beginners. In fact, she stated that she prefers drills believing that practice makes perfect. She also believes that it is good for students to acquire the correct form and then to be able to produce their own sentences later which had been one of the grammar teaching's main merits as discussed by Thornbury (1999). Similarly, SUI11 believed that explicit grammar teaching was appropriate for the EFL context because of the lack of English usage outside of the classroom where learning grammar could help improve their language in context with limited language exposure. Thornbury (1999), in defining grammar, stated that grammar represents "the regularities in a language, and knowledge of these regularities provides the learner with the means to generate a potentially enormous number of original sentences" (1999, p. 15). So, grammar is seen as a useful tool that helps develop the language. Similarly, EFL instructors in Assalahi (2013) believed that learners will acquire the language and use it accurately if they are taught grammar explicitly.

Reading and writing activities in such grammar lessons seem to be a barrier or a detractor to learning a new structure, as stated by some of the instructors. Referring to the

questionnaire data, analysis of instructors' and learners' responses indicated 70% agreement with the statement “*I find it helpful for students to learn a grammar point before reading it in texts*” (item no. 9 in Table 5.2). On this issue, SUI11, in her interview, mentioned that she tends to skip writing tasks during class to ensure that students understand the new structure. SUI11 also commented on reading passages as an activity that can make things more complicated. She explained that some reading passages were scientific and “a bit complicated”, and if these were the focus of the lesson, she would “be busy explaining the passage rather than doing the explanation of” the rule. The main reason for her choice was due to time limitations in covering the textbook. This could explain the belief that any communicative activities, such as games or reading, will distract both learners and instructors from the main objective: teaching grammar and passing grammar test.

SUI12, also, preferred to teach grammar explicitly, especially in a grammar class, but in speaking and listening classes, she preferred to let the students learn implicitly from videos. She is an advocate of using videos to teach the language followed by breaking down the rules as a discussion with the students referring back to the video. However, she stressed that if it is a grammar class, there should be explicit explanations:

Some students need it, but I am just saying that ok I might teach it explicitly and she might understand it, but it does not mean necessarily that she'll speak it. You teach it and it will go out the door the next day. But if it is in the context when she absorbs it ok because I am telling you this because I read a lot about videos for my literature review. (SUI12)

SUI2 continued explaining her view which makes clear that beliefs are not always translated to practice due mainly to contextual factors. The Saudi university curriculum obliged

instructors to teach certain textbooks which can greatly limit the implementation of various teaching approaches. Here, in SUI2 case, the preference of teaching grammar explicitly is chosen for grammar classes where the course specifications proved its powerful influence on determining instructors teaching style.

On grammar textbooks influence, SUI7 stated that he had been teaching grammar in a male Saudi university using Azar's textbook *Fundamentals of English Grammar* for an English grammar course (Azar et al., 2011). It seems that the textbook is still popular within the Saudi Universities as four instructors mentioned it as a textbook. SUI7 described the textbook as “a wonderful book” that many graduates came back to him after graduation to say thank you for using this book in learning grammar. SUI7 argued that he could not teach his students “a sentence starting from a sentence” as an example of the “communicative methods of teaching grammar” and that he considered it “inapplicable in our society in particular.”

Based on the above rationalisations for their preferences, most of the teachers who picked the explicit isolated approach justified their choices as being strongly related to the course requirements, limited time, and learners' needs and expectations. This resonates with Borg's (2003a, 2003b) findings on instructors' justifications of their teaching style which corresponded greatly to student needs based on syllabus specifications. A number of studies on language instructors' beliefs and preferences have also shown similar findings to the present study in this regard, where their beliefs in a certain grammar teaching style is not practiced in class but rather they employ what they believe will meet learners' expectations and curriculum's requirements (Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Assalahi, 2013; Burgess & Etherington, 2002).

Further, learners' expectations worked as a determiner for teachers in choosing explicit grammar teaching in Burgess and Etherington (2002), on which over 90% of teachers agreed.

This applied to the majority of EAP teachers' rationales for favouring explicit isolated instruction in their classes (Borg, 2003a, 2003b; Burgess & Etherington, 2002).

Learners' needs and expectations also stemmed from the course specifications and requirements. The SUIs expressed how they tried to implement new methods in teaching grammar such as fun games, audiovisual or reading-based activities, but they turned out to be teaching as specified in the curriculum. In this regard, Al-Beiz (2002) raised some concerns about the use of innovative methods in teaching grammar, such as story-based approaches. According to Al-Beiz's (2002) participants, such approaches would lead them to alter the curriculum which would violate adherence to Saudi education curriculum requirements.

However, most SUIs appreciated the explicit grammar teaching and they elaborated on its effectiveness in developing the learners' language. Likewise, teachers in Dajem's (2012) study stated that explicit grammar teaching saves class time compared to the inductive implicit approach. This is also reflected in the present study where time was confirmed as a contextual constraint as reported to justify their preference of explicit grammar approaches over implicit approaches. In a recent study, Toprak (2019) found similar shared beliefs in regard to the effectiveness of grammar instruction and practice. Over 60% of the EFL Turkish teachers believed "that exercises that help students practice grammar would enhance learners' fluency in using grammar" (p. 215).

From the above discussion, the attitudes of learners and what they expect from their instructors is mainly connected to the course requirements. Therefore, those expectations from the learners' side play an influential role in SUIs' beliefs which consequently affected their classroom related teaching decisions. This finding had been confirmed in the literature of beliefs and practice discrepancies where both appeared to be greatly affected by the contextual factors such as curriculum and expectations (Basturkmen, 2012; S. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003a). Burgess and Etherington (2002) stated that such factors "weigh heavily enough with teachers

to influence their decisions, despite personal reservations about the pedagogical effectiveness of such grammatical treatment” (p. 435). Nevertheless, in the exploration of learners’ perceptions, SULSAs and SULAs, it had been revealed that there is a contradiction between what learners expect from their instructors and what instructors assume as learners’ expectations. This contradiction has been explored in the next sections.

In the following section, the same issues are focused on by the SULSAs and SULAs (the learners) where they explained and justify their preference for explicit isolated grammar teaching.

5.2.2.2 SULSA and SULA perceptions on explicit isolated grammar

instruction

This section reported and discussed learners’ (SULSAs and SULAs) preferences for explicit isolated grammar instruction. Five out of 12 SULSAs expressed their preference for explicit isolated grammar instruction, as shown in Table 5.3. On the other hand, 9 out of 10 Saudi learners in Australia, the SULAs, showed greater interest in explicit isolated instruction. Both groups have their own justifications for picking one teaching style and not others. SULSAs and SULAs shared the same purpose for learning EAP; however, they differed in the context in which they were learning, with SULSAs studying in the Saudi EFL context and SULAs in the Australian ESL context.

The uniqueness of exploring Saudi university learners in two different contexts revealed some interesting data. SULSAs, in the Saudi EFL context, shared their preferences for grammar instruction being critical about the lack of practice and communicative activities. On the other hand, SULAs, in the Australian EFL context, shared their preferences with appreciation of their teachers’ style of presenting grammar explicitly and in isolation, followed by plenty of examples, exercises, and activities. For both, explicit isolated grammar instruction

is the most preferable approach for this group but with requested modifications. Their beliefs about, and preference for the explicit isolated grammar approach related to clarity, logic, and being easy to follow.

The group of SULSAs preferred to learn the grammar rule in isolation first as with the traditional teaching style, but followed by intensive interactive activities. SULSAs showed a great understanding of their instructors' grammar teaching style. They were able to define certain teaching practices using terms like “traditional teaching style”. Although they expressed their preference for isolated instruction, they also were engaged in giving suggestions to improve the traditional approach of teaching grammar by introducing more interactive activities after the explicit explanation. It would be interesting to share the level of awareness that the learners showed in relation to different grammar teaching strategies. Being adult Saudi learners who had generally spent a long time struggling in English courses throughout primary and secondary school could be one explanation. In this regard, SULSA1 explained that some language instructors did not care very much about this, as most of the learners were very weak in English and the only approach used was the basic traditional approach:

Few instructors demonstrated a good teaching style where they engage them in class activities and encourage them to communicate using English. Those teachers also make use of the board to explain and further the communication in English even outside the classroom like, for instance, via emails. (SULSA1)

The purpose of teaching grammar for these instructors, as described by SULSA1, was not limited to passing the test which is a positive view of this situation. The learner here appreciated language instructors who engage the learners in a variety of activities which allow them to practice English in and beyond the classroom. Having such a critical view of teaching

grammar for the purpose of the test showed how the learners were judgmental with a surprising level of awareness.

Learners' and instructors' responses in the interviews suggested disparity in expectations about grammar instruction. SULSA1's response, for instance, revealed a valuable observation that demonstrated how instructors' expectations can sometimes be wrong. The learner here criticised those instructors who teach for the purpose of enabling learners to pass the test, whereas the instructors, as discussed earlier, thought that teaching to pass the test is what was expected from them by the learners.

Further, the findings related to SULSAs revealed that the preference for learning grammar through an explicit isolated approach was seen to be a clear and reasonable one. The learners believed that presenting the grammar rule first helped them to stay focused and avoid confusion during the activities (Tomita, 2015; Tomita & Spada, 2013). A very similar note had been reported by one of Tomita's (2015) study participants where if she “was not provided with any particular grammar form, [her] mind went blank. [She] could not say anything” (p. 60).

SULSA4, for instance, preferred the explicit isolated grammar teaching approach in which the instructor taught grammar “through illustrations on the board or giving examples, when to do this and when to not do it.” SULSA4 explained further:

I think it's hard to learn just from reading and then the teacher teaches us how the grammar based on the story. The third one of course it⁷ is unreasonable [i.e. implicit option] I think because, I don't know. I think it's the worst, the last example, but for

⁷ For the learners' interview extracts, grammatical errors were not corrected for the ones conducted in English for the purpose of sharing their level of language competencies

me the first one when we know the basic rule and practice on it and then read the story.

I think it is clear to my mind. (SULSA4)

SULSA4, as with SULSA6, justified their preference for isolated grammar instruction as it is a clear way which enables more focused learning, as SULSA6 expressed: “because that’s what will be in my mind all the time.” The gaining of clarity through explicit isolated grammar instruction was a prevailing belief among the learners, without which they may face difficulty as indicated in SULSA4’ quote above.

Shifting to the SULAs who were learning English in Australia, 9 out of 10 learners favoured the explicit isolated grammar lesson option. Very similar to the SULSAs, most of their justifications clustered around clarity and logic which made the grammar rules easy to grasp. Further, the SULAs built their beliefs on their successful ESL learning experiences.

On the sense of clarity in the explicit isolated approach, SULA1 explained his preference: “I prefer to learn grammar first followed by many examples where I can see it in many places, in reading for example.” Similarly, SULA9 stated that:

The first option is better which is explaining the rule and listen to it, then we read it and elicit the past tense from the reading. This is the best ... because if I read the story and then try to find the past tense, I will not be able to do it because I don’t know [it]. I have to know that there is a grammar rule so then I can spot it from the story. (SULA9)

Teaching grammar through reading, for example, was viewed as causing confusion which echoed the SULSAs’ (learners in Saudi universities) perceptions. It can be implied that as long as the learners knew that the lesson is about grammar, their brains would be busy waiting for the rule to be analytically presented and in isolation of other language skills such

as reading. Further, the analytical treatment of grammar rules was appreciated by almost all interviewed SULAs. This fact was often strongly connected to EAP learners who “tend to be relatively sophisticated, intelligent and experienced learners” (Burgess & Etherington, 2002, p. 444).

As indicated earlier, SULAs based their preferred grammar lesson on their positive experience learning EAP in Australia. The majority shared their perceptions regarding how their teachers taught them grammar. In this sense, SULA10 expressed his preference for grammar instruction in relation to what he found helpful from his experience in an Australian language institute:

They explain the grammar rule in detail discussing every word and its purpose in the sentence whether in past future or present. For example, “ing” when should we use it? and where in the sentence? (SULA10)

On the Australian EAP learning experience, SULA5 also explained, with appreciation, his preferred style of learning grammar based on his experience with one of his favourite teachers in Australia:

The ideal way of grammar teaching for me was done by one of my teachers in the institute. I loved and understand grammar because of him. He is Czech, and English is his second language, he learnt it like us. He taught us grammar using real examples. He gives us examples and asks us if the rule applies or not from real life. (SULA5)

The real-life examples that SULA5 referred to use the learner's personal life events and employs the grammar rule to make their own personal sentences, such as wishes, plans, or past events. Here, the sense of engaging with the learners' personal life triggered an interest in grammar instruction in which learners sometimes enjoyed sharing and expressing themselves. SULA6 also showed a strong preference for the 3Ps approach in teaching grammar, Presentation, Practice, and Produce, which is a prevailing approach that has been widely employed in EFL and ESL classrooms globally (Al-Hajailan, 2003; Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Assalahi, 2013; Azar, 2007, 2019; Burns, 2016), and upon which many textbooks are designed. In this approach, learners expect the teacher to start with an explicit analytical presentation of the grammar rule followed by practice. In this sense, SUI6 clarified that all "he need[s] is 10 to 15 minutes to explain the past tense or the grammar that you want to talk about". He continued describing his preference, offering further suggestions:

Give me a lot of examples, this is what I need. I need to practice 10, 20, or 30 sentences, tell me why I choose this one like, for example, in Saudi Arabia, it would be nice also if you try to translate it in Arabic and compare it with our grammar, it might help, it help me a lot when I tried to compare English grammar with Arabic grammar. Also, give me homework like, for example, give me 20 sentences and give homework after two days bring it back and try to review it with me and tell me if there are any mistakes. I think this is the best way to learn grammar. (SUI6)

SULA6 gave a detailed answer about his preferences for learning grammar in which explicit teaching is the starting point, but insisting on the benefits of following this with lots of written and oral exercises. He also showed an interest in using Arabic to translate, or compare, the grammar rules which, in his opinion, was highly beneficial. On the same page, SULA2 and

SULA3 stressed the idea of having more interesting in-class activities to promote English practice, such as games, reading, and interviewing or communicating with other people in addition to the explanation of grammar rules. SULA7, SULA8, and SULA9 preferred to have more reading, listening, and speaking activities alongside the explicit grammar teaching.

On recommendations for enhancing the teaching of grammar, the SULAs shared a number of suggestions. SULA4 had a strong preference for the traditional way of teaching grammar through explanations and examples; however, she proposed a new style of teaching grammar based on recent research on “how to teach grammar with humour” to “reduce the anxiety level of learners”. In her teaching style (as a student teacher), explicit grammar teaching is central, but humour was an addition to make it more fun and interesting. The humour that she described was related to embedding culture in education, in which she gave an example of using funny but well-known Arabic sayings to describe the present simple grammar rule. Introducing innovative teaching approaches in the Saudi EFL context has received positive appraisal by learners; for example, the story-based grammar teaching strategy (Al-Beiz, 2002), code switching in teaching grammar (Almansour, 2016) and the flipped classroom strategy in teaching grammar (Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016). However, the educational constraints in Saudi Arabia discussed earlier hinder the development of language teaching, as indicated by Al-Beiz (2002).

It is evident from the SULAs’ responses that grammar in Australian ESL classes was taught explicitly followed by practice and communicative activities. So, the main preference is to not devote the entire class to teaching the rule followed by context-free grammar drills and exercises. SULSAs and SULAs both expressed their interest in having more communicative activities that could help them practice the language and help the teacher detect mistakes in usage and then correct them.

In relation to the benefit of explicit language learning, DeKeyser (1998, 2003) argued that explicit grammar teaching provides declarative formal knowledge for ESL/ EFL learners which, when followed by exercises, will enable learners to acquire the language. This approach equips the learner with the forms that will stay in their minds and increase the level of consciousness within communicative activities (DeKeyser, 1998, 2003). In fact, learners who favoured the explicit isolated lesson confirmed DeKeyser's (1998, 2003) argument. They rationalised their choice according to which approaches benefited them the most in terms of clarity and sense of logic.

The overall responses of SULSAs and SULAs regarding explicit grammar teaching revealed a number of important issues. The learners showed significant engagement in discussing teaching styles referring back to their instructors' in-class practice, and whether they were positive or negative. On occasions, they were critical, while at other times, they were appreciative. Both groups believed in explicit grammar instruction as an approach which, according to their perceptions, denoted clarity and logic and helped the learners to avoid any confusion that might have been caused by the early intervention of communicative activities. In this regard, Tomita (2015); and Tomita and Spada (2013) similarly reported that EFL learners feel more comfortable when provided with a grammar rule, without which they feel lost and confused. They also reported that learners were more engaged and actively interacting within formal explicit instruction whether isolated or integrated (Tomita, 2015; Tomita & Spada, 2013).

It had been reported in a number of studies that learners often lean towards believing in the value of explicit isolated grammar instruction more than instructors (Hendriani, 2018; Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015; Schulz, 2001). The majority of ESL learners in Petraki and Gunawardena (2015) found explicit grammar teaching helpful and enjoyable as none of them expressed negative attitudes towards it. Similar to the SULSAs and the SULAs in the present

study, a minority of learners in Petraki and Gunawardena (2015) “were not critical of the usefulness of grammar, but expressed concern and dissatisfaction with the classroom practices and teaching methods” (p. 72). In a recent study on Indonesian EFL learners, Hendriani (2018) found that more than 70% of participants preferred their teachers to employ explicit isolated grammar instruction, which had been labelled as a deductive approach.

Being in Australia as ESL learners in one stage of their learning journey, the SULAs believed in the possibility of learning English through communication with native speakers. However, they strongly believed in the importance of at least learning the basics of grammar explicitly to be able to succeed in academia. The SULAs’ responses showed that almost all of them preferred to have some explicit grammar instruction that would be presented before, or within, interactive activities and practice. It is interesting to note that those learners who had a successful experience of learning English in Australia all shared similar positive beliefs about explicit isolated grammar teaching. None of them had an aversion to grammar instruction, but rather shared their views to make it more effective.

ESL learners in Valeo and Spada (2016) showed similar strong beliefs on the importance of explicit isolated grammar instruction compared to the teachers and the EFL learners in the present study. This can be explained in relation to language usage in context, as ESL learners are offered more opportunities to practice English compared to those in the EFL context. The SULAs’ views, however, contradicted the perceptions of the ESL students in Pazaver and Wang (2009) study, as they believed that they did not need grammar teaching because they lived in Canada where English was the native language. Looking at their justification, the learners in Pazaver and Wang (2009) stated that they had enough explicit grammar knowledge from back in their home countries. This helps us to understand the surface contradiction.

To conclude this section, Schulz (1996, 2001) reported that Foreign Language (FL) learners from different cultures had strong positive beliefs on explicit grammar teaching. They believed that formal instruction would enable them to master the language as they tended to remember the rules in reading and writing activities. From the SLA research perspective, explicit grammar instruction has been shown to have a positive effect on developing L2 acquisition specifically if tailored to the learners' needs and expectations (Ellis, 1991, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Long, 2014; Nassaji, 2017; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Robinson, 1997; Skehan, 2006; Spada, 2013; Valeo, 2015).

Having said this, another interesting area that has been recently explored is related to the best timing of presenting explicit grammar teaching. This has introduced a second approach to explicit grammar instruction in which it is presented in an integrative way within communicative activities. Therefore, the following section explores explicit integrated grammar instruction.

5.2.3 Explicit integrated grammar instruction (QUAN)

In this section, the researcher continues a discussion of the data related to perceptions of grammar instruction, with a focus on the second explored approach, explicit integrated grammar instruction. SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs had been asked to rate six statements on a 6-point Likert scale representing their level of agreement to explicit integrative grammar instruction as in Tables 5.5.

Integrating explicit grammar teaching within different language skills and activities showed an increased level of agreement by SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs compared to the explicit isolated items reported in Table 5.2. The overall mean score for the items across the groups is above 4.5.

Item number 13: “I like teaching/learning grammar by using English within written/oral communication” had the highest level of agreement for SULSAs (96%) and SULAs (98%) compared to the slightly lower level agreement for SUIs (92%). This indicates that learners are keen and willing to learn grammar by using the language, in either the written or oral form. This finding is also confirmed by the significantly lower level of agreement for item number seven (the learners’ version), “I find it hard to learn grammar through different activities like reading, conversation or in-class games”, across the learners’ groups. Only 32% of SULSAs, and 29% of SULAs agreed with the statement. Viewing the teaching of grammar through different activities as hard (item no. 7 instructors’ version) also did receive high level of agreement among the SUIs (41%).

The reported low agreement for item number 7 (in both versions) shows that instructors and learners, despite the different learning context experiences, had a strong inclination towards integrating grammar teaching within various activities. They all strongly believing in its effectiveness. A possible explanation for this might be that they viewed it as a need to diversify the dominant isolated explicit grammar teaching method in the EFL/ESL classroom which could help learners gain confidence and engage positively in the class (Burns & Borg, 2015; Spada & Lima, 2015). This is supported by Burns and Borg (2015) study investigating the integration of grammar in TESOL classrooms. As reported by (Burns & Borg, 2015), over 84% of the participating teachers rejected the idea of separating grammar from other communicative skills.



Table 5.4 Explicit Integrated Grammar Instruction Statements

Instructors' (SUIs)Version	Learners' (SULSAs	&SULAs) Version
(2) Explicit Integrated Items	(2) Explicit Integrated Items	
7. I find it hard to teach grammar through different activities like reading, conversation or in class games.	7. I find it hard to learn grammar through different language activities such as reading, conversation or in class games.	
<i>12. I prefer to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in class games.</i>	<i>12. I prefer my teacher to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in class games.</i>	
<i>13. I like teaching grammar by using English within written/oral communication.</i>	<i>13. I like learning grammar by using English within written/oral communication.</i>	
<i>15. I prefer to integrate grammar teaching as I work on different skills and activities.</i>	<i>15. I prefer my teacher to integrate grammar teaching while I work on different skills and activities.</i>	
17. Students learn better when I teach grammar while we read a text.	17. I learn better when my teacher teaches grammar while we read a text.	
18. I like to correct students' errors after an activity/lesson is completed.	18. I like my teacher to correct my mistakes after an activity/lesson is completed.	

*Items in *Italic* represent preferences and the others are beliefs

Table 5.5 Explicit Integrated Grammar Instruction (Likert Scale Items 7, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 18)

	SUIs (N=267)				SULSAs (N=1768)				SULAs (N=420)			
	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD
7	41%	59%	3.2	1.4	32%	68%	2.8	1.6	29%	71%	2.7	1.5
12	93%	7%	5.1	1.0	93%	7%	5.2	1.1	96%	4%	5.2	0.9
13	93%	7%	5.0	1.0	96%	4%	5.4	0.9	98%	2%	5.5	0.7
15	92%	8%	4.9	1.0	93%	7%	5.2	1.1	96%	4%	5.3	0.9
17	84%	16%	4.7	1.1	83%	17%	4.6	1.3	87%	13%	4.8	1.1
18	85%	15%	4.6	1.2	89%	12%	5.1	1.2	89%	11%	5.1	1.2

*Note: SUIs= Saudi Universities' Instructors, SULSAs= Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia and SULAs= Saudi University Learners in Australia. (A) refers to Agreement and (D) to Disagreement. (M) refers to the Mean and (SD) refers to the Standard Deviation.

In a study of the preferred timing of grammar, or form focused, instruction, Valeo and Spada (2016) similarly found that teachers and learners preferred the integrative approach. In an investigation of Arab and non-Arab teachers' views on form instruction, Ahmad et al. (2017) also confirmed the positive attitude that Arab teachers had towards integrating grammar instruction compared to the non-Arab group, despite the contextual challenges within the Saudi context. In relation to corrective feedback, the SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs all preferred

delayed error correction with very similar levels of agreement. For the instant error correction (item no. 3) reported in the explicit isolated section, the SUIs had a lower level of preference (61%) compared to (85%) for delayed corrections. The SULSAs and SULAs scored almost the same level of strong agreement for both instant and delayed error correction.

It is worth noting that item number 17, “(Students/I) learn better when (I the teacher) teach grammar while we read a text”, had a slightly lower level of agreement among SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs compared to the other high scored items in Table 5.5. Such interesting results indicate that reading can be considered as a difficult activity that is not suitable for grammar teaching and learning according to the SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs. Extracurricular reading in English is very limited in the Saudi EFL context in which students mostly had only textbook-based reading tasks (Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). This could explain the marginal difference discussed above that is considered a bit low, only in comparison with the other integrative activities’ items. Further, it should be viewed as a strong positively agreed on activity in comparison to the explicit isolated item number 9: “I find it helpful to learn a grammar point before reading it in a text”, where the agreement scores were: SUIs (73%), SULSAs (79%), and SULAs (79%).

Nevertheless, more in-depth rational discussion regarding integrative grammar instruction will be presented in the following sections across the three groups of participants.

5.2.4 Explicit integrated grammar instruction (QUAL)

In this section, the researcher continues to investigate the perceptions held by the SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs revealed in the qualitative responses to the third interview question (see Table 5.3). As in the previous section, the discussion started with the SUIs, and then the SULSAs and SULAs who contributed by providing their rationale for choosing explicit integrated grammar instruction.

5.2.4.1 SUI interviewees perceptions of explicit integrated instruction

As stated previously, the responses to interview question three, about the most preferred grammar teaching approach, suggested a great interest in the topic. The SUIs in particular discussed this issue in great detail, providing reasoning based on their teaching experiences which is referred to as the practical knowledge (Borg, 2003a; Burns & Borg, 2015; Pajares, 1992). In total, 5 out of the 12 instructors chose the explicit integrated lesson option as their preferred style of teaching grammar. This is the same number of SUIs who favoured the explicit isolated approach.

Most of the discussed rationale among SUIs for preferring integrated grammar was mostly related to the learners. It has been noted in the literature, that the majority of ESL/EFL instructors often referred to external factors that had great influence in shaping their grammar teaching style (Ahmad et al., 2017; Al Maqbali et al., 2019; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Assalahi, 2013; Basturkmen, 2012; Burns & Borg, 2015; Phan, 2018; Toprak, 2019). Those factors include learners' language proficiency level, interests, attitudes, expectations and needs. However, curriculum requirements seem to have a primary role in affecting both learners' and instructors' beliefs and preferences.

Learners' proficiency level is another important aspect that influenced instructors' educational beliefs which consequently affected their teaching style. Advocating for the integrative approach, SUI1 stated her views about her preferred way of teaching grammar. She based her choice of grammar teaching style on the proficiency level of the learners. For beginners, SUI1 admitted that she had to explain everything to them, including the grammar rules and sentences to enable them to practice the language properly. She also believed that learners should understand the grammar rules in order to write. As she explained, if they were advanced learners, she would provide them with several sentences that were grammatically related and would ask them to guess the underlying rule.



A contradictory view on the proper stage of introducing explicit grammar teaching was shared by SUI4⁸. He had been teaching English at the university level for over 20 years. He valued developing learners' communicative skills and confidence before introducing any grammar teaching specifically for beginners. He said that he spent “the first two semesters teaching language skills then [would] tell them about some rules of the grammar which is explicit, give them the rules, give the examples, give them quizzes until they master that.”

So, for advanced learners, SUI4 would teach them grammar rules explicitly, and then he would continue with the “implicit teaching of grammar which is deductive.” For him, deductive teaching meant that after the explicit explanation of grammar, the learners would be able to “deduct⁹ out the rule” from a reading passage:

In fact, yesterday, I was teaching my students about description paragraph and after deducting out all the adjectives from one of the paragraphs, I asked them what kind of tense does the writer use to write this paragraph? All of them be able to notice that he was using simple present. We had another description paragraph; we underline the adjectives and then I asked them what tense [he use?] and they said past simple. This is what I told you in the beginning, sometimes I ask them to get the rule but not directly and sometimes the whole unit there is nothing about the rules of the grammar. (SUI4)

⁸ The researcher had the opportunity to interview SUI4 and attended, via video streaming, one of his writing classes that will be reported on later in this thesis, in order to reflect on perceptions vs. practice section.

⁹ This is a different way of using the term “deductive” than it is generally used and understood in the literature.

According to SUI4's understanding, he viewed teaching grammar within communicative tasks as an implicit approach to grammar instruction.

Regardless of the learners' proficiency level, the strategy of eliciting the grammar rules from sentences or reading texts is viewed as a useful approach to integrate explicit grammar teaching within language activities. SUI1 and SUI2 were similar in their preference of giving the learner the opportunity to guess the grammar rule using elicitation. For SUI1, the learners would understand more if they extracted the rule from a series of sentences. This method, to her, was easier than asking the learners to make a sentence according to a prescribed rule. SUI2, for example, believed in a learner-centred approach to be employed in English language classes even for the purpose of teaching grammar rules. SUI2 preferred to start the grammar lesson asking questions related to the tense to be discussed, such as: "What did you do last night?" According to SUI2, the purpose of such questions is "to know from their knowledge or background how they can manage or control their language if they want to talk about something in the past." It is also beneficial for assessing the learners' knowledge and needs before starting a new lesson as SUI2 explained.

On learners' needs and expectations, SUI2 asserted that explicit grammar teaching, isolated or integrated, is needed for any English-related class as learners have a "great demand" for it. SUI2 also suggested that it would not "be a good start for learners to try practising English without a great deal of grammar in their syllabus or their curriculum." He clarified by saying:

But grammar, whether we like it or not, intentionally or unintentionally, should be learned. It can be interacted with the other skills and components of learning a language. So, I think the application of teaching grammar that might be something else that we

can talk about. I mean the application of teaching grammar should not be separated from the skills. It has to be related to the skills. (SUI2)

Apparently, the preferred way of teaching grammar for SUIs in this group was to explain grammar explicitly by engaging the learners, prior or after the explanation, in a related discussion to assess their needs.

As indicated earlier, course specifications and the overall curriculum requirements had the integral role in shifting, reshaping instructors' beliefs and preferences of grammar teaching. It seems that the textbook requirements also had a role in determining the instructor's way of teaching, as SUI2 explained: "if I have time, I would rather take advantage of another skill of learning such as speaking." He clarified that grammar textbook activities are known as "something like fill out the blank or choose from three choices or choose from the words between parentheses", but that introducing other language skills for practice would be expected and highly recommended if time permitted.

Here, instructors' beliefs contradict their in-class practice which is not uncommon compared to the related literature (Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004). Some instructors believed in improving teaching practice and employing grammar instruction within various language skills, but the course specifications are what controlled and shaped the preferences which accordingly affected the teaching style. This fact is also evident in a recent study on EFL grammar teaching in the Saudi university by Ahmad et al. (2017). Teachers strongly believed in the effectiveness of integrating grammar within communicative activities, but time limitations made this difficult to implement.

Additionally, the type of assessment required by the course specifications can clearly interfere in tailoring teaching practice. SUIs believed in the benefit of explicit integrated grammar teaching but this does not mean that they underestimate the importance on

grammatical accuracy. The majority of SUIs showed strong positive beliefs regarding teaching grammar for attain language accuracy and proficiency, which had been discussed earlier in chapter four.

SUI4, for instance, shared how he assessed his learners at a beginners' level in a writing course. He explained that content was more important than correct grammar; however, some “major” recurrent “mistakes” would be pulled out and discussed but not graded. Here is his own description of his approach:

What happened is that I told them: “now I will tell you some major mistakes and I selected random four papers” because I knew that most of them had mistaken. Some of them had little and some of them had too many. These four papers I selected, three of them had lots of mistakes and one of them had few mistakes. So, we worked together to show them the major mistakes. One of the major mistakes is subject-verb agreement, using simple verb present and also writing verb incorrectly, forgetting the (s) in the present verb, using for example, run on sentences, fragment sentences sometimes. So, we corrected two paragraphs of the four and I asked the students to rewrite them again and waiting for me to send it back through email and print it and give it as an example.

(SUI4)

From his description, grammatical accuracy was a high priority for him, although he also expressed that content matters. The examples of grammatical errors that he categorised as being ‘major’ clearly demonstrated the importance of grammar to him.

SUIs, in this group, also considered explicit isolated grammar instruction as a barrier to learning English that could contribute to creating negative attitudes towards learning English. Accordingly, they believe that employing integrated grammar teaching could help in

lessening the concerns related to grammar learning and would get the learners more engaged. The same beliefs had been shared by the teachers in a study conducted by Burns and Borg (2015) where integrated form focus instruction was viewed to have a positive impact in increasing learners' confidence, participation and satisfaction.

Of the same opinion was SUI4 who believed that grammar is a barrier that prevents learners from writing as “they had the opportunity to write more information than if they were told that the grammar will be corrected.” Such treatment of grammatical errors definitely contributes to negative attitudes towards learning grammar, although this does not necessarily mean that this will negatively affect formal acquisition.

Similarly, SUI8 discussed the students' attitudes towards grammar. She reported that students have a “fear” of grammar and correct sentence structure which prevent them from answering open-ended questions in the exam setting. SUI8 justified the students' fear of grammar, stating:

I believe that they got this fear because of the negative attitude towards learning grammar. They were taught in isolation out of context as I told you before. In none unauthentic way, out of the situation, without integrating this kind of rules or speech in presenting the materials.

SUI8, then, expressed clearly her preferred approach, as with many SUIs in this group, and encouraged the teaching of grammar contextually through engaging learners in an authentic context related to their personal experience. She clarified that grammar should be explained in any class related to English as she sometimes “came across certain [vocabs] or words during the discussions” that she needed to draw students' attention to; for her, this is teaching grammar in context.

All in all, SUIs had very positive attitudes towards integrating grammar instruction within language activities. This is consistent with a number of studies on teachers' perceptions, such as Ahmad et al. (2017); Barnard and Scampton (2008); Burgess and Etherington (2002); Burns and Borg (2015). The teachers in these studies appreciated the integrative model as they believed in its effectiveness to improve the level of learners' language, and in particular, for some of them, for EAP. This finding has important implications for Saudi ELT in terms of the need to develop grammar teaching from the viewpoint of SUIs who shared similar perceptions to those in other Saudi studies, such as Ahmad (2018); Al-Seghayer (2017); Alghanmi and Shukri (2016); Aljohani (2012); Mohammad and Khan (2017). In Aljohani (2012), for instance, the teachers expressed a strong belief in the importance of focusing on both grammar and meaning, and they leaned more towards the inductive treatment of grammatical rules.

However, conflicting views arose regarding when to present explicit grammar teaching. Some believed that it should be avoided for beginners (Ellis, 2002, 2005a, 2015) to develop their confidence through creating a positive environment in which the learner becomes engaged. This view was supported by Ellis (2002, 2005a, 2015) who advocated for delaying explicit isolated grammar instruction for beginners at least, and to have a greater focus on form methods such as TBLT.

Most teachers believed that presenting grammar in isolation of other communicative activities causes negative attitudes towards learning. They believed that by integrating explicit grammar instruction, the learners' needs would be met as they would acquire the intended formal structures through various communicative activities which would engage the four language skills together. Such justifications were also similarly drawn by the teachers in Burns and Borg (2015) study. They had strong beliefs about such integration which was largely based on their "accumulated experience of teaching, observations of learners' ability, progress, and achievement, feedback from learners, and their own language learning experience" (p. 478).

The teachers in Alghanmi and Shukri (2016); Aljohani (2012); and Valeo and Spada (2016) had the same preference for inductive and integrative grammar teaching methods over isolated ones. Similar to Phan's (2018) findings in the Vietnamese EFL context, the teachers were aware of the benefits of interactive activities but they "adopted teacher- centered, GTM- oriented instruction in the classroom" (p. 403). The similarity between the Saudi EFL context and the Vietnamese EFL context could explain this mismatch as in both contexts, external factors affected most of the in class practice.

On assessing the efficacy of inductive approaches for grammar teaching, Mohammad and Khan (2017) found that teachers had strong opinions about the positive nature of inductive approaches as this helps learners to be more critical thinkers, although a minority of respondents commented that employing an inductive approach appeared to be difficult for Saudi learners due to time limitations and the low level of the learners' language.

Conversely, what the instructors perceived as a good approach did not necessarily mean that they practiced it in class. Time limitations caused by course specifications played a dominant role in determining the teaching style, as they were required to fulfil the course requirements in a limited timeframe, as they indicated. In the next section, the SULSAs' and SULAs' perceptions of an integrative grammar approach will be discussed.

5.2.4.2 SULSA and SULA interviewees' perceptions of explicit integrated instruction

Learners' views on integrative grammar instruction have previously been explored within the explicit isolated section. The majority of SULSAs and SULAs who expressed their preference for isolated grammar instruction to be presented, first asserted the need for this to be followed by plenty of interactive language activities. So, preferring integrative grammar instruction does not mean rejecting the isolated approach or to see it as less beneficial. This

finding reinforces those of Valeo and Spada (2016) as “a clear preference for integrated FFI for the majority of both teachers and learners in ESL and EFL contexts. This preference for integrated FFI did not prevent many of the teachers and learners from acknowledging the benefits of isolated FFI” (p. 15).

For the explicit integrative lesson option, five SUSAs out of 12 expressed their preference for this approach, whereas one SULA out of 10 did (see Table 5.3). Unlike Brown’s findings, the instructors and learners in the present study showed similar perceptions of integrated and isolated approaches which were all strongly positive (2009). Whereas a discrepancy was apparent between instructors and learners in Brown’s study, as the learners favoured grammar-based approaches compared to the instructors who leaned more towards the communicative and integrative approaches (2009).

The rationale for preferring the integrated grammar approach for SULSAs, as EFL learners, was clearly connected to the lack of language usage within, and outside of, the classroom. All five SULSAs rationalised their preference for integrated grammar teaching to include more interactive activities, such as listening to a song, reading a story, or having a discussion, and that this should precede explanations of grammar more often than being after grammar instruction.

Neglecting the proper employment of various language activities affects the grammar lessons and make them boring, as expressed by the majority. SULSA2 expressed her interest in adding changes to the current “old boring teaching” as she wanted to have the lesson started with entertaining activities to engage the learners instead of presenting the grammar structure in isolation. For SULSA2, speaking was considered to be a very important skill that is often ignored in the Saudi English language classes, so she preferred to have more speaking activities before attempting grammar explanations.

In this regard, this group of SULSAs stressed the idea of implementing more student-teacher interaction, asking for more opportunities to be given to learners “to talk and practice the grammar” by speaking. According to their experience, current grammar teaching resembled the GTM and the traditional approaches in which the instructor gives the rule and forces the learners to memorise it, all being targeted at passing the test.

The lack of English language practice and communication in EFL makes the learners want more integrative teaching styles. Here, the context matters, which means that they did not reject the teaching of explicit grammar, but it was considered that the learners needed more practice (Valeo & Spada, 2016). SULSA5 explained her preference in this regard:

They [i.e. instructors] need to make us listen to something before learning grammar just and frustrating when you just learn grammar and they so much at the grammar and writing, grammar and writing and now we are not confident when we speak English or when we speak French, not confident at all that if we can speak because there are a lot of girls they can't speak a full sentence because they are just focusing on grammar grammar grammar...

Grammar has been a debatable issue in the Saudi context due to the intensity of using explicit isolated instruction that is accompanied by mechanical drills and practicing rules. This makes it a challenge for learners and a very boring approach which pushes learners to think about different and innovative strategies.

Throughout the discussion of the grammar teaching methods, learners, and specifically SULSAs, suggested a range of improvements. For example, SULSA8 described the preferred way of learning grammar based on reading a story followed by brief grammar explanations. According to SULSA8, instructors “shouldn't spend the whole class explaining the grammar”,

but should give learners the chance “to be able to recognise the grammar rule in the story when [they] read it.” Story-based grammar teaching had also received very positive evaluations from Saudi learners in Al-Beiz (2002) study. Further, Saudi EFL learners in Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri’s (2016) experimental study which investigated how learners perform and feel about the flipped classroom strategy in teaching grammar. So, learners had shown positive results and positive attitudes where they confirmed that this new strategy “enhanced their communication, benefited their learning, and encouraged their autonomy” in learning grammar (p. 66).

In the same sense, SULSA11 preferred to learn grammar in an inductive way which is the opposite of how she was taught in school prior to university. SULSA11 explained her preferred way of grammar teaching as an instructor since she had enrolled in an English language teacher preparation program:

I will teach grammar through content. I will teach it to my student by inductive way. I will not just give them rule, memorise it, then the same sentence will come to you on the exam. I will do it exactly the opposite. I will teach them in an inductive way to understand how to use the grammar. (SULSA11)

As with the majority in this group, SULSA11 were aware of the Saudi EFL shortcomings in regard to teaching grammar which adhere mostly to the GTM teaching method. In rejecting the traditional approach, SULSA11 summarised her proposed improvements to the avoidance of what can be called as test-based grammar teaching.

Leaning more to implicit grammar teaching, SULSA12 shared a very interesting view about her preferred grammar lesson. She chose to have a lesson that starts with a reading or listening activity “because when you don’t give me the grammar, my mind will automatically

formulate a grammar for this to use it again in the practice or the stories and try to formulate”.

She then continued her justification:

I mean when someone is reading, he or she will not have grammar knowledge in mind, but the mind will work instead of getting something ready and this will stick in the mind. So, if we did so, then we only need grammar to make sure that everything is good and learn made the irregular things at the end of the lesson. I feel that so many learnt by watching movies and the internet and they may do the same thing that I have talked about. (SULSA12)

SULSA12 was very confident in her choice of the integrated grammar lesson, as she used to employ it in her own self-learning style which mostly corresponded to the integrative model. However, she was leaning more toward the strong version of CLT as she believed that grammar can be acquired through communicative-based language learning. Grammar teaching, then will act a refining tool. SULA3, the one case in the ESL Australia, indicated, very similarly to SALSAs, his preferred grammar lesson to be explicit integrative. SULA3 explained that integrating explicit grammar teaching within communicative activities would be a comprehensive way to learn the language. To him, this approach looks like “a complete task” which has been proposed by several scholars and language practitioners in the field (Ellis, 2005a, 2015; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002; Harmer, 1982, 2007).

Within this group, some contradictory views had been found in relation to grammar teaching and reading activities. As discussed earlier in the explicit isolated section, the proponents of that approach believed that employing explicit isolated grammar teaching prior interactive activities is clearer to the learner’s mind. On the other hand, the proponents of the integrated grammar believed that the human brain can effectively understand the grammar rule

when it is presented while the learner is fully engaged in reading-based activities. The reported perceptions of integrating grammar within reading activities had been positively viewed and did not appear to cause ambiguity or difficulties in learning grammar.

Having one SULA preferred integrative compared to the other nine isolated supporters is one of the interesting findings of the present study. This finding supports many studies discussed earlier which indicated that the context can determine the preferred teaching style primarily based on need (Pazaver & Wang, 2009; Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015; Valeo & Spada, 2016). SULAs have enough rich communicative context outside of the classroom which could explain their strong preference for isolated grammar instruction. Nevertheless, learners in Saudi Arabia, SULSAs, are denied such opportunities.

Integrative explicit grammar teaching had gained considerable popularity in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) field. Most of the rational provided by the present study participants (SUIs, SULSAs & SULAs) were consistent with the views of Focus on Meaning (FoM) and Focus on Form (FoF) advocates in SLA research (Ellis, 2015; Ellis et al., 2002; Long, 1991, 2014). They have argued that providing rich communicative input in the learning environment can help language acquisition. Therefore, explicit integrated grammar instruction has been widely recognised by language practitioners recently. Advocates of this approach, such as Azar (2019); Burns (2016); Ellis (2015); Larsen-Freeman (2015); Long (2014); Swan (2002); Ur (2016) have confirmed the inextricable relationship between explicit grammar teaching and communicative language activities.

Having discussed the findings of the explicit isolated and the integrated approaches, the focus will shift next to the implicit grammar instruction approach in the following sections.

5.2.5 Implicit grammar instruction (QUAN)

Implicit grammar teaching, mainly found in the strong version of CLT, is the third approach discussed by the SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs. In this approach, isolated and integrated grammar instruction is almost neglected unless there is a real need to clarify a formal aspect that hinders communication (Harmer, 1982; Hymes, 1972; Krashen, 2003, 2009; Terrell, 1977, 1982). This approach is not less popular in ESL and EFL contexts similar to the Saudi context, due to context related challenges which made it difficult to apply (Celce-Murcia, 2015; Hinkel, 2016; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Sheen, 2003; Spada, 2013). Table 5.7 illustrates the participants' agreement and disagreement on three Likert scale items (16, 19, and 20) surveying perceptions of implicit grammar instruction.

Table 5.6 Implicit Grammar Instruction Statements

Instructors' (SUIs)Version	Learners'(SULSAs &SULAs) Version
(3) Implicit Grammar Instruction/CLT	(3) Implicit Grammar Instruction/CLT
<i>16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.</i>	<i>16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.</i>
19. Students can learn grammar while reading\ listening to a passage.	19. I can learn grammar while reading/listening to passage.
<i>20. I prefer to let the students learn grammar through various language activities without explaining.</i>	<i>20. I prefer to learn grammar through various language activities without explaining.</i>

*Items in *Italic* represent preferences and the others are beliefs

Table 5.7 Implicit Grammar Instruction (Likert scale Items 16, 19, & 20)

	SUIs (N=267)				SULSAs (N=1768)				SULAs (N=420)			
	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD
16	85%	15%	4.6	1.2	76%	24%	4.5	1.4	80%	20%	4.6	1.3
19	88%	12%	4.8	1.1	84%	16%	4.6	1.3	87%	13%	4.8	1.1
20	77%	23%	4.5	1.2	56%	44%	3.8	1.6	49%	51%	3.6	1.5

*Note: SUIs= Saudi Universities' Instructors, SULSAs= Saudi University Learners in Saudi Arabia and SULAs= Saudi University Learners in Australia. (A) refers to Agreement and (D) to Disagreement. (M) refers to the Mean and (SD) refers to the Standard Deviation.

Preferences for implicit instruction somehow showed a level of agreement which is very similar to the results reported previously regarding the explicit isolated grammar teaching (Table 5.2) and explicit integrated approaches (Table 5.5). All participants across the three groups, as seen in Table 5.9, shared very similar perceptions in relation to statement number 16, preferring lessons that “*focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need*”, and statement number 19: “*Students can learn grammar while reading/listening to a passage*”, but not for statement number 20. On statement number 16 , SUIs had the highest agreement level (85%) compared to SULSAs at 76%, and SULAs at 80%.

For item no. 20, the learners appeared to have very similar preferences regarding learning grammar through various language activities *without explaining*, which is not very positive. Between groups, the level of agreement on item no. 20 was lower for learners compared to the instructors where SULSAs scored 56% and SULAs 49%. On the other hand, SUIs, the instructors, had a higher level of agreement at 77%.

This partially confirms what had been previously reported in the literature, that the majority of EFL and ESL instructors, as well as learners, appreciate grammar learning to develop language acquisition (Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Alhaysony & Alhaisoni, 2017; Hinkel, 2017, 2016; Valeo & Spada, 2016). However, the high agreement level for instructors preferring to let learners acquire the language through language activities is somehow difficult to explain.

However, this finding could be explained in light of the previous reported data. It became thought-provoking to compare the data on the explicit isolated grammar instruction (Table 5.2) regarding item number 4: “I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar” compared to item number 16 in Table 5.7 above: “I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.” Both statements received very similar preferences and in the same pattern of item no. 16. The responses were

very similar and the level of agreement for both items across three groups was (70%) and above. The learners again showed higher levels of agreement by nearly (15%) more than the instructors for the explicit isolated item number 4, whereas the instructors, SUIs, had a higher agreement percentage to implicit item number 16 (85%) compared to SULSAs (76%) and SULAs (80%). For instructors, Barnard and Scampton (2008) had reported similar findings where the EAP teachers showed strong agreement for learning the language by exposure without grammar teaching and at the same time strongly agreeing to the importance of grammar instruction.

A possible explanation for these slight differences between instructors and learners could be related to the “imposed CLT curriculum” where the Saudi ELT train teachers to employ it which could influence their educational beliefs, as their perceptions appeared to be paradoxical. They, the instructor, showed high level of agreement for explicit isolated and integrated grammar teaching in addition to another high agreement for no grammar teaching. However, Saudi studies have indicated that the GTM is still practiced and CLT is still difficult to implement in the Saudi EFL context (Al-Hajailan, 2003; Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Assalahi, 2013; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). It can be inferred that the current beliefs are not against grammar but rather to grammar teaching approaches that are in need to be diversified.

Based on these quantitative findings, alongside the previous ones in section 5.2.1 and 5.2.3, all of the participants were very positive towards any statement that included “communicative activities”. This reveals a need and a high demand for more interactive activities that ESL and EFL learners and instructors often ask for, which have already been discussed within the explicit isolated and integrated grammar approaches (Ahmad, 2018; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Mohammad & Khan, 2017; Valeo & Spada, 2016). SUIs, thus, hold positive beliefs about the integrated as well as the implicit grammar instruction

which is different to the findings of Al Maqbali et al.'s (2019) study where the teachers developed "negative beliefs of the inductive grammar teaching". The study revealed that the lack of teacher training and understanding contribute in developing those negative beliefs of implementing inductive integrative approaches to grammar teaching.

Such exploration of beliefs and preferences among instructors on the one hand, and learners on the other, in relation to favouring various language activities to learn English with no grammar explanation, is important to be addressed. Further discussion of this issue is presented within the qualitative data.

5.2.6 Implicit grammar instruction (QUAL)

This section continues the exploration of perceptions of implicit grammar instruction in response to interview question three (see Table 5.3 and question details in Appendix J). The implicit grammar lesson option received the least preferences among the SUI and SULSA groups, while none of the SULAs chose it. The discussion of the rationale for this approach is presented in the next two sections.

5.2.6.1 SUI interviewees' perceptions of implicit grammar instruction

Referring to interview question number three, 2 out of 12 Saudi university instructors preferred and encouraged implicit grammar instruction, offering some insights from their experience. They both strongly believed in the benefits of immersing learners in communicative activities that will help them pick up the language. However, the Saudi ELT context has limitations to implementing such an approach, as previously discussed.

To start with, SUI3¹⁰ indicated her preference for implicit instruction as she liked to engage the entire class in discussing and practising English with learners in a communicative style of language teaching. She was against explicit grammar teaching methods as she believed that students can learn grammar through examples and communication, and that there was no need to introduce “grammar equations”. She commented afterwards on Saudi learners’ expectations:

Here [i.e. in Saudi Arabia], they prefer to learn the grammar of English because they study just to pass the exam not for speaking the language or to practice it outside the classroom. All what they need is to learn how to answer the questions of the exam. So, they ask always for the grammar, for the tenses and keep asking and asking about that.

According to SUI3, the learners preferred to learn grammar and were constantly asking for it as they wanted to pass the exams, which were mainly focused on grammar rules. This is a pragmatic reason that contributed greatly to the nature of the learners’ preferences which consequently affected the teaching style. Learners’ demands for SUI3 were echoed in Sabbu’ study (2019) as one Indonesian English teacher expressed her/his preference of implicit grammar instruction despite the students’ demands for explicit instruction. The Indonesian teacher similarly justified the choice of implicit instruction saying: “it is better if we deliver the material in an implicit way. I believe that the students can acquire the grammar structure unconsciously and simultaneously” (p. 19). Regarding implicit grammar teaching, the SUIs had expressed a number of constraints that are very similar to the Omani teachers’ perceptions

¹⁰ SUI3 is Canadian but her mother tongue is Arabic (see Table 3.11 For further details).

in Al Maqbali et al.'s (2019) study which prevented them from using implicit instruction. Both groups of teachers revealed a number of constraints such as the learners' proficiency level, the difficulty of grammar rules and the lack of ELT support including curriculum and PD programs.

SUI3, for instance, clarified that the curriculum requirements had a clear role in shaping ELT in Saudi Arabia based on her experience of teaching English for a long time in Canada at the University of Ottawa and the University of Carlton. She said that Saudi universities require a strong focus on grammar that determines the learners' success in the topic, while ignoring other skills as there is no assessment for speaking or listening. She explained that the instructor sometimes needs to explain structures and what is acceptable explicitly. However, she stated that this applied only to learners "in the advanced level where their vocabulary developed very well, and their communicative skill is very well, so what they need is to fill the grammar gaps at that point to be professionals."

In this regard, Ellis (2002) argued that beginners do not need explicit formal knowledge, which should be avoided as a grammar-focused approach would evoke the importance of accuracy and assessment. Nevertheless, many language practitioners value the early introduction of at least the basics of grammar which will enable the start of language communication (Long, 2014; Long & Robinson, 1998). Within this group who prefers implicit grammar teaching, most of the contextual factors hindering the language development were stated. As part of the discussion of context, SUI3 narrated an interesting experience in learning English:

At the beginning, I learned English as a foreign language in an Arab country where they taught us grammar explicitly, they focus a lot on grammar, but they ignored all about the practice, all about the language communication and skills. So, we end up that we

know all grammar, we can analyse text perfectly but when we speak, we stumble. After that, I went overseas, and I studied English as a language without teaching any grammar and my teachers were like impressed with my answers about grammar because I know grammar more than them.

From her learning experiences in the Arab EFL context, she expressed that grammar was given priority while the other language skills were neglected, specifically the oral based communicative skills such as speaking. Her experiences in learning the language were not completely negative as she felt proud to impress her native English instructors with her grammar, although she lacked communicative competence at that stage.

SUI5 had similar views on his preference for grammar teaching as SUI3. SUI5 had been teaching English for 10 years moving from the public schools to the university level. He was an advocate of implicit grammar teaching even though his learners complained about his style, saying: “He doesn’t explain much, he does not say much to us.” In his critique of the question about preferences for grammar teaching approaches (see Table 3.10), SUI5 re-asked the question explaining that the real question is: Would I teach grammar or not? That would be the question. He continued:

It depends...in my case because the nature of the syllabus I’m teaching requires standardised test and grammar is part of that, so certain aspects of grammar needs to be taught. Students usually engage in reading. Sometimes I try to engage them in some sort of genre analysis of a certain piece of reading. (SUI5)

Again context, in this case the syllabus requirements, does influence the instructors’ beliefs, and affects their practice. SUI5 was interested in applying “genre analysis” as the basis of his grammar teaching. He believed that learners would be “engaged through reading” and

would be asked “to do some sort of genre analysis in which they try to analyse the different elements, including the content and the meaning.” SUI5 clarified his perceptions about grammar:

And I’m not against pinpointing grammar from time to time, they do need that. They need sometimes to understand in what tense we’re talking about, how the sentence came this way. But at the same time, I’m pretty much sure that people can carry out many important communicative skills that can be really handy during their academic and professional lives, yet without much focus on grammar. (SUI5)

According to SUI5, “learners are ending up, then, noticing the smallest structures of sentences.” He gave an example of writing emails in which learners will read an email and analyse it, moving gradually to the related grammatical aspects. “Later on, as needed to avoid any misunderstanding or any over-generalisations, for example, to avoid any over-generalisation about (-ed) [i.e. suffix for the past tense], I have to draw their attention explicitly about how there are regular and irregular forms of past tense. That way, the session should be concluded.”

He declared that this style of teaching would consume time but “by the end of semester, learners [will] develop the ability to figure out how to deal with this lesson, how to figure out grammatical aspects.” SUI5 is interested in developing his students to be autonomous learners who “rely on themselves” instead of being spoon-fed learners. ESL Norwegian teachers in Johansen’s (2019) revealed similar beliefs favouring the implicit development of language and grammar as they believe in the un-necessity of teaching grammar for high schoolers. Their beliefs were greatly affected by their prior learning experience as they have studied grammar

intensively. Their current teaching style appeared to be a rejection of the previous learning practise.

Similarly, some participants raised the issue of learning English through watching movies. The majority believed that learners would learn to be fluent, but that the language would need to be refined to meet academic requirements. SUI11, for instance, explained that one can tell “what kind of movies (learners are) watching from the language they are speaking” as they just imitate without knowing the reason behind using some structures. This can help in understanding some aspects of the rationale behind the rejection of pure implicit language learning by the majority of the participants which was the least favoured approach.

Further, implicit L2 theories and approaches seem to be somehow difficult to apply within the EFL context, as teachers are expected to engage students in a range of uncontrolled everyday activities depicting real life situations, which is far beyond their capacity or ability to provide in a classroom setting (Al Asmari, 2015; Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2015, 2017; Alamin & Ahmed, 2012; Assalahi, 2013; Farooq, 2015).

In the next section, the learners’ responses will be explored in relation to implicit grammar instruction as a preference.

5.2.6.2 SULSA and SULA interviewees’ perceptions of implicit grammar instruction

In relation to university learners in Saudi Arabia and Australia, only two interviewees, SULSA3 and SULSA7, expressed an interest in learning grammar via the implicit approach, with both being in Saudi universities.

For the participants, the discussion of implicit grammar instruction appeared to be associated with confusion and ambiguity. This could be related to the negative attitudes they held about grammar teaching. Learners who expressed such views are actually expecting

grammar to be taught implicitly, or if it must be taught, that it should be within a rich and interactive communicative context.

The researcher had an interesting interview exploring SULSA3's perceptions of grammar instruction and ELT in general. She seemed to be unsure about her preferred style, or as she expressed, what works best to learn English. As with other participants, SULSA3 fluctuated between implicit and integrated grammar instruction; however, she would like to learn implicitly and employ this approach for her future students. Interestingly, she concluded the interview by referring to the Saudi context, and suggesting that grammar teaching should be extended to cover more than just the verb tenses which had been repeated in primary and intermediate schooling.

On the other hand, SULSA7 rejected the whole idea of teaching grammar based on her experience of acquiring the language. SULSA7 demonstrated a strong command of English as we conducted the interview in English only. She explained that listening and watching movies and videos helped her learn the language in an autonomous way. As she explained, she could use the language accurately, but could not tell or actually recall the underlying grammar rules. The researcher asked her to use “go” in relation to an event that happened yesterday, and she used the term “went”. The researcher then asked her why she changed “go” to “went”, to which she replied that it is an irregular verb.

It became clear to the researcher that she had grammar knowledge that she was not aware of at this stage, or she just disliked the idea of teaching grammar and could not see the positive side of learning it. From the related SLA literature, it had been confirmed that explicit knowledge of grammar can over years be “automatic and thus indistinguishable from implicit knowledge” (Spada, 2013, p. 77). This fact could explain how advanced ESL and EFL learners are using the language proficiently but are not able to recall all the learned grammar rules.

Therefore, SULSA7's rejection of grammar teaching, similar to many others, was mainly caused by the lack of implementing more communicative activities that give learners the opportunity to practice in a meaningful context away from boring “mathematics like” grammar analytical presentation. Grammar for her was important for language proficiency, as she had previously stated.

Rejection of grammar teaching by a minority had been similarly reported in Petraki and Gunawardena (2015) in which this group “believed that the methods of teaching grammar should be changed and wanted their teachers to teach grammar more creatively” (p. 72). Further, successful L2 experiences could result in viewing grammar negatively. Very similar experiences as those of SULSA7 were reported by 6% of students in Petraki and Gunawardena (2015) study who were neutral about grammar teaching. “They did not particularly dislike grammar lessons, but they believed that they learned English naturally as it was the language used by their parents. They confirmed that these lessons did not have a great impact on their language improvement” (p. 72).

Figure 5. below gives an overall overview of the quantitative and qualitative findings for explicit isolated, explicit integrated and implicit grammar instruction across the three groups, SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs. In part one, the researcher calculated the overall mean for group 1 Likert scale items (Explicit Isolated), group 2 Likert scale items (Explicit Integrated), and group 3 Likert scale items (Implicit). In part two, the results of the interview question 3 has been visualised in percentages. Altogether, both data are represent the parallelised view as a synopsis of the findings.

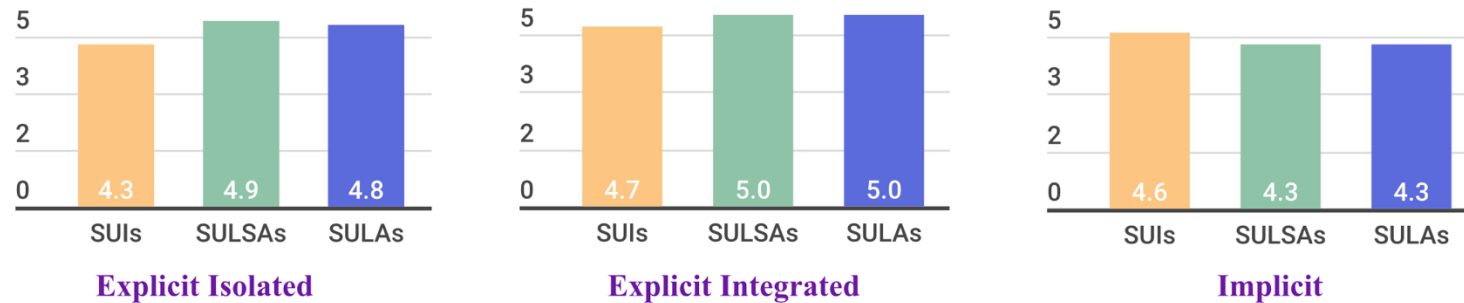


Overview of the findings



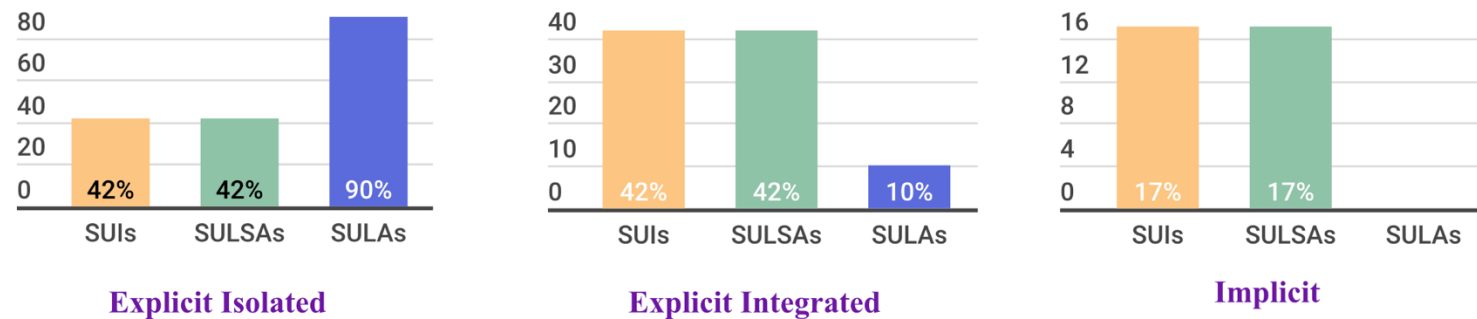
Part (1): Calculated Mean for explicit isolated (group 1 items), explicit integrated (group 3 items) and implicit (group 3 items)

Total number of participants for each group: SUIs = 267, SULSAs = 1,768, and SULAs = 420



Part (2): Interview question 3 results for explicit isolated, explicit integrated and implicit grammar instruction

Total number of participants for each group: SUIs = 12, SULSAs = 12, and SULAs = 10



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Figure 5.5.1 An Overview of Explicit Isolated, Explicit Integrated and Implicit grammar Instruction Findings (QUA)

5.2.7 Concluding remarks for Research Question 3

To summarise the findings of the Research Question 3, here are the main key points that had emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data and were similarly shared across the three groups of participants, SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs:

- The overall findings for Research Question 3 showed that instructors and learners indicated a preference for integrating explicit grammar teaching within language activities, but the majority did not believe in adopting an entirely implicit way of learning English in which grammar teaching is completely ignored.
- The results, though, show a confirmed belief among the groups towards the benefit of communicative engagement with explicit grammar instruction.
- SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs did not believe in the value of implicit input as an absolute approach to acquiring language through communicative exposure, as was confirmed in the quantitative data and justified in the qualitative data.
- The overall responses revealed that the level of agreement for the explicit integrative approach was slightly higher than for the others.
- It is surprising that they all agreed on grammar lessons that included a communicative approach; however, they did not believe that communication by itself was enough to learn grammar or to learn English in a general sense.
- Learners' expectations play an influential role in SUIs' beliefs which consequently affected their classroom related teaching decisions and it was confirmed as an external factor as the literature indicated.



- SUIs based most of their in-class decisions on their prior learning and teaching experience that were affected by a number of contextual external factors such as learners' expectations, curriculum requirements and time frame, learners' needs and assessment.
- The combined discussion of the grammar instruction related perceptions showed that preferences and beliefs are not always translated into the class practice.

The extracted rationales and justifications from the 34 one-to-one semi-structured interviews are summarised in Table 5.8 below. The researcher listed the reasons provided by the participants for their chosen style and the role of grammar according to interview question three that was discussed across the three groups. The researcher assumed that the presentation of this information in a table acts as a guide or a synopsis of the nature of the provided rationales.



Table 5.8 Overview of the Participants Rationale for 3-Lesson Options Interview Question (3)

	SUIs	SULSAs	SULAs
Explicit Isolated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easier to start with the rule rather than the example. • Giving the rule helps understanding it. • Suitable for big classes. • Suitable for beginners. • Suits Arabs' accumulative way of thinking. • Lack of grammar knowledge stop learners from writing. • Explicit is learners' comfort zone • Students would get it seriously. • Because sometimes the reading passage is a bit complicated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To focus and read with clear purpose. • Knowing the rule first and then practice is clearer to the mind. • To avoid confusion. • Learning grammar helps us in the exam whether we like it or not. • I get used to it. • I should know that there is a grammar rule so then I can spot it from the story. • To know what to focus on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances my confidence in using the right structure. • Helps me use the proper English and avoid the slang. • learners know what to focus on. • Grammar is important for international learners. • To enable us to understand the story. • To be able to write. • It is better to know the rule rather to be anxious about it. • Common in Australia. • To learn the language faster.
Explicit Integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners' tend to understand more. • Increase learners' confidence. • Suitable for beginners • To give the message in a good way. • To lessen the negative feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading or listening helps in acquiring the structure and remembering it even before explaining the rule. • Starting with stories will be more interesting so we do at the same time writing, reading and grammar. • Helps us in speaking. • Learning grammar only is frustrating and boring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get some indirect examples to practice at the beginning. • Mixing grammar in context makes it smooth for us to learn. • If you write or try to write, you must learn the basics of the grammar.
Implicit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote communication. • It needs time but worthy. • Some need explicit teaching it does not mean it will be acquired. • If it is within the context, learners absorb it. • While focusing on the message, your brain is absorbing the structure. • Grammar will come out smoothly without you knowing it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the native speakers would help you learn the language. • Learning English communicatively help us avoid Arabic. • Memorising the grammatical terms and rules is difficult. • Avoiding grammar explanation enables our brains to formulate the structure automatically and use it. 	NA

5.3 Grammar perceptions and classroom practices

In this section, the researcher continues the investigation of the preferred grammar teaching approaches across the three groups of participants, giving the focus to the most preferred related language activities. The investigation also shed some light on the current perceptions on the influence of Arabic language to grammar instruction. Additionally, English language (L2) usage within the Saudi EFL context for SUIs and SULSAs compared to the Australian ESL context for SULAs is discussed in this section. Therefore, a clearer picture of the explored Saudi perspective would be drawn. Related data were derived from both the questionnaire and the six classroom observations.

5.3.1 Language activities for grammar instruction (QUAN + QUAL)

In the questionnaire, the participants were provided with a multiple response question about different grammar instruction-related activities to choose from, in response to the statement: “I prefer to teach/learn English grammar through ...” (question no. 13, see Table 3. Or Appendices A & B). These activities corresponded to the *Explicit Isolated* approach (comparing it to Arabic grammar, step-by-step explanation, and doing a range of exercises) and to the *Explicit Integrative* approach (playing games in class, reading a text, conversation, writing, and listening to a clip/video etc). In Table 5.9, the frequency percentage is reported for each group addressing each item. The data shows a considerable discrepancy between SUIs, the instructors, compared to SULSAs and SULAs, the learners, particularly for 1) Comparing to Arabic grammar; 2) Playing games; and 8) Listening.

Table 5.9 Responses to Question Number [13] on the Questionnaire

I prefer to teach/learn English grammar through:						
Answer Choices	SUIs (N = 267)		SULSAs (N = 1768)		SULAs (N = 420)	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Explicit Isolated						
1 Comparing it to Arabic grammar	33%	86	21%	375	16%	67
3 Step-by-step explanation	57%	151	62%	1101	59%	246
4 Doing lots of exercises	68%	180	62%	1091	66%	279
Explicit Integrative						
2 Playing games in class	51%	134	41%	719	36%	152
5 Reading a text	60%	158	58%	1022	66%	275
6 Conversation	67%	178	76%	1345	72%	302
7 Writing	60%	157	59%	1049	75%	313
8 Listening to a clip/video etc.	44%	116	66%	1164	67%	281
	Answered	264	Answered	1768	Answered	420
	Skipped	3	Skipped	0	Skipped	0

For SUIs, the least preferable language activities to teach English grammar were through comparing it to Arabic (33%) and through listening (44%). In comparison to SULSAs' and SULAs' least preferable language activities, "comparing to Arabic grammar" was also the least chosen among all the options, but the learners appeared to be even less interested with only (21%) of SULSAs and (16%) of SULAs choosing this as their preference for learning grammar. Indeed, compared to the SULSAs and SULAs, the SUIs, the instructors, had a higher response rate in relation to preferring this way of teaching grammar. Instructors in this group could value comparing Arabic grammar structure to English as an accessible knowledge which can be similar to Kachru's (2006) views. Kachru stated that "contrasting the target language properties with the characteristics of other languages in the learners' repertoire may be a very

effective tool in helping learners internalize the target language grammars” (Y. Kachru, 2006, p. 254).

In the interview phase, using Arabic in teaching English grammar is welcomed by the majority of SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs which also had been similarly reported in other Saudi related studies (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Assalahi, 2013). The common justification for using Arabic was related to the convenience it offers to save time and energy in explain the rule where it has an exact counterpart in Arabic. The SUIs clarified that using Arabic is crucial sometimes to help the learners understand the meaning or the rule quickly. For instance, SUI7 commented on this issue saying that Arabic “is their mother tongue and they [i.e. learners] think using the same strategy they use to learn their mother tongue.” The researcher also observed a great deal of dual comparison in the SUI6 and SUI9 classroom observations.

Conversely , it appears less preferable for the Saudi learners in both contexts; EFL and ESL as the questionnaire data implied. This fact goes in line with the findings of a recent study by Almansour (2016) on Saudi EFL learners. Almansour (2016) found that using code switching between Arabic and English as a strategy to teach grammar was not useful in learners’ performance and also not welcomed by the Saudi EFL learners compared to their teachers who thought that it was beneficial for them.

Another interesting disparity is found in relation to playing games as an activity for grammar learning. The SUIs, instructors, had a higher frequency response (51%) for employing games in teaching English grammar, whereas the Saudi learners, SULSAs and SULAs, had a lower response at only (41%) for SULSAs and (36%) for SULAs. As reported by the teachers in the Burgess and Etherington (2002) study, learners also showed less interest in playing “silly games” favouring problem-solving approaches to grammar learning. This could be related to the culture of viewing learning as a serious task, as discussed by SUI9. She explained that her

students' attitudes were focused on explicit grammar teaching as this is what would help them most in the exam. Commenting on fun activities, she stated that learners often ask “when are [we] going down to the business? ok we do not want the fun. So, the attitudes of the students are important I cannot teach indirectly, subconsciously without them knowing that they are learning and when they don't appreciate it.” Importantly, the learners in this study were learning English for academic purposes and those groups of learners often have been described as sophisticated with a well-defined focus on developing the language, which could influence their perceptions about “having fun” in the class (Burgess & Etherington, 2002).

These results emphasised an inconsistency between what the learners preferred compared to the preferences of the instructors. There was a general interest across the three groups in interactive activities, such as conversation, as a preferred activity for grammar instruction, although the SULSAs (76%) and the SULAs (72%) showed a higher preference for this than the SUIs (67%). Grammar and writing activities were rated the highest by SULAs because they were learning English for academic purposes in Australia.

Most importantly, the preferred activities for grammar teaching that were rated at more than 55% across the three groups were: conversation, listening, reading texts, step-by-step explanations, and doing many exercises (and writing specifically for SULSAs). These findings supported the high demand of integrating grammar teaching with plenty of interactional and communicative based activities which use the four language skills discussed in the previous sections in this chapter.

5.3.2 English grammar instruction and L1 (Arabic) influence (QUAN)

First language prior learning experience and knowledge could interfere in shaping L2 grammar learning and teaching related perceptions. For the case of the SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs, Arabic language interference was investigated to find out if Arabic prior learning



experience affected their perceptions regarding English grammar instruction, as shown in Table 5.11.

Table 5.10 First Language (Arabic) Influence Statements

Instructors' (SUIs) Version	Learners' (SULSAs & SULAs) Version
(8) First Language Influence	(8) First Language Influence
27. I think my students expect to learn English grammar the way they learnt Arabic grammar.	27. I expect to learn English grammar the way I learn Arabic grammar.
29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on teaching English grammar.	29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on learning English grammar.

Table 5.11 First Language (Arabic) Influence Statements (Likert scale Items 27 & 29)

	SUIs (N= 267)				SULSAs (N= 1768)				SULAs (N= 420)			
	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD
27	70%	30%	4.2	1.4	60%	40%	3.9	1.7	49%	51%	3.4	1.6
29	68%	32%	4.2	1.4	81%	19%	4.6	1.4	70%	31%	4.1	1.4

The results in the above table indicated a great instructors' vs. learners' discrepancies. In regard to item number 27, SUIs had a low-level agreement (26%) in believing that their learners are expecting similar L1 grammar instruction for English grammar. However, approximately half of the learners were expecting English grammar to be taught in the same way they had learned Arabic grammar. Arabic grammar is predominantly taught in an explicit analytical on a sentence level approach. Teaching Arabic grammar often started at year four according to the Saudi educational curriculum. This could explain the strong agreement to all types of explicit English grammar teaching where learners showed great interest in them. However, this fact did not appear clearly within the qualitative discussion of the rationale

provided by participants in regard to favouring explicit grammar teaching over implicit teaching items (see section 5.2.2 and 5.2.4 for SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs).

Similarly, statement number 29 raised provocative disparity. Only 25% of the SUIs rejected the idea that Arabic prior learning experience has no impact on their teaching style. This means that the majority of SUIs believed in the influential role of L1 prior learning experience. Whereas 81% of SULSAs and 70% of SULAs were agreeing to the non-influential role of Arabic learning experience on their current English grammar learning experience. Further investigation of the impact of prior Arabic learning experience is needed specifically regarding the beliefs, as this aspect is not a primary focus of the study but will serve future applications.

5.3.3 English language exposure in EFL and ESL contexts (QUAN)

In this section, the researcher investigated one of the most influential factors affecting the development of EAP in the Saudi EFL context which is time limitation versus language practice. English language instructors often signified the need of sufficient time to allow for conducting more communicative activities and offer learners a good chance to practice the target language in class (Ahmad, 2018; Ahmad et al., 2017; Al-Seghayer, 2014, 2017; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Assalahi, 2013). Therefore, SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs were given a chance to describe how much and how often they use the target language. ESL learners input in this regard is also important to further comparison of the stated perceptions. Below, Table 5.13 presents the findings of the language usage across the three groups.



Table 5.12 Statements about English Language Usage in Context

Instructors' (SUIs)Version	Learners' (SULSAs & SULAs) Version
(7) English language usage in context	(7) English language usage in context
23. I think students need more time to practice English.	23. I need more time to practice English.
24. I use English often outside the university.	24. I use English often outside the class/university.
25. I rarely use English outside the class / university.	25. I rarely use English outside the university /class.
26. I think students have enough time to practice English in class.	26. I have enough time to practice using English in class.
28. I think the class duration is enough for students to practice English.	28. I think the class duration is enough for me to practice English.

Table 5.13 English Language Usage in Context Statements (Likert Scale Items 23, 24, 25, 26, & 28)

	SUIs (N= 267)				SULSAs (N= 1,768)				SULAs (N= 420)			
	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD	A	D	M	SD
23	97%	3%	5.4	0.8	81%	19%	4.5	1.3	88%	12%	4.6	1.1
24	88%	12%	4.8	1.1	75%	25%	4.3	1.4	92%	8%	5.0	1.0
25	40%	60%	3.1	1.6	58%	42%	3.7	1.6	38%	62%	3.0	1.5
26	46%	54%	3.3	1.5	67%	33%	4.0	1.5	65%	35%	3.8	1.3
28	48%	52%	3.4	1.5	53%	47%	3.6	1.7	36%	64%	2.9	1.5

The high majority of all participants strongly agree to statement number 23 which says: “Students need more time to practice English” with a mean score of 4.5 for SULSAs, 4.6 for SULAs and 5.4 for the SUIs. Intensive language practice is a great demand for all regardless of the context whether EFL or ESL. However, the findings for statement number 26, “students have enough time to practice English in class” and statement number 28 “the class duration is enough for students to practice English” revealed interesting disparity in regard to context. SULAs, who are learning English in Australia expressed the need for more in class practice as

the class duration is not enough for them practice English. However, almost two thirds of the SULSAs and SULAs agreed that they have enough time to practice English in class. In terms of language usage in context, SUIs the instructors and SULAs were using English more often than the SULSAs. For SUIs, it is clearly connected to their profession as English language academic instructors so their chances of using English is expected to be high. For SULAs, being in Australia is the major factor forcing them to use the language to live. However, it is surprising to see that SULSAs, the EFL learners, had scored high level of agreement (75%) for statement number 24 which says, “I use English often outside the class/university”. This proves the increasing popularity of English language usage in the Saudi context as indicated by the literature (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Picard, 2018)

Additional data were extracted from the in-class observations of six SUIs to portray a broader picture regarding grammar teaching in practice in the Saudi context.

5.4 Perceptions vs. Saudi EFL grammar practice (QUAL)

The fact the most SUI interviewees believed in certain grammar teaching approaches but they stated that they did not practice them in class confirmed what had been reported in the related literature (Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; S. Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003b). In this section, the researcher closely observed the current grammar teaching approaches used in the Saudi university classes and how those practices corresponded to the stated beliefs and perceptions previously discussed.

Instructors’ perceptions about language learning often contribute to shaping their in-class practice (Barcelos, 2003; Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 2003b; Kalaja et al., 2015). A discrepancy between what instructors believe compared to their actual practice has also been confirmed in several studies focusing on grammar teaching perceptions vs. actual practice (Ahmad et al., 2017; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Assalahi, 2013; Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg & Burns, 2008). Observing instructors’

teaching practices, indeed, contribute in evaluating how stated beliefs are related to practice within all the contextual reported factors such as learners, textbooks, time, educational facilities and the curriculum requirements.

The researcher conducted six classroom observations. Of these, three of the instructors were interviewed: SUI4, SUI6, and SUI9. The aim of observing these classes was focused on the current grammar instruction practices in Saudi university-level classes. Further, this investigation contributed towards gaining insights into related factors that may have a role in shaping instructors' and learners' perceptions.

It has been anticipated that contextual and situational constraints play an integral role in creating disparity between what teachers believe in and end up doing. This fact was supported in the previous discussion of SUIs' preferences for explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit grammar instruction. In this regard, an evocative quote from SUI9 demonstrated this reality when she stated while reading the questionnaire: “yes, I do believe in those approaches, but they are not feasible and irrelevant for this context (i.e. Saudi Arabia)”.

5.4.1.1 A brief overview of the observed classes

The dominance of explicit isolated grammar practices was seen in all the classes compared to integrative communicative approaches. The observed classes confirmed what had been reported in the Saudi ELT related literature where GTM, 3Ps, and traditional language methods are still widely practiced (Al-Hajailan, 1999, 2003; Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2005, 2015, 2017; Assalahi, 2013; Picard, 2018). A number of interesting aspects related to language activities, error correction, the role of the learner, and language usage were reported. The overall duration of the classes is two hours except for SUI9's Class which was 50 minutes grammar focused class. The number of learners was on a range of 22 to 32 per class (see Table 3.12 for further information). To give a broader picture, the researcher captured the overall practice for each class in Figure 5.2 below:

Grammar Translation Method, the 3Ps, and explicit isolated grammar instruction were clearly prominent in the classes conducted by SUI13, SUI15, SUI6 and SUI9. Whereas in the classes by SUI4 and SUI14, the instructor’s teaching style was not entirely clear, as one class was focused on revision of previous work, while the other was a presentation day for the learners. However, the researcher did identify some evident characteristics of the instructors’ grammar teaching approaches.

SUI13, SUI15, SUI6 and SUI9 dominated the classroom spending a great deal of time explaining the grammar rules, comparing to Arabic, giving examples, conducting grammar drills, and reinforcing correct usage. Most of the learners were fully engaged and responsive in a way that showed their interest in understanding the presented materials. SUI6 and SUI9 were typical examples of the grammar translation method. The instructors in both classes, although from different universities, presented an identical lesson plan which was entirely based on the layout of the textbook lesson (Azar & Hagen, 2014). Grammar was presented in accordance with the focus on forms approach. The emphasis was on the “structure-of-the-day” as Ellis (2006, p. 100) described it.

For SUI4’s class, it was basically a review of a previously taught grammar lesson. The learners were at the beginners’ level. The researcher found attending SUI4’s reading class very informative in exploring how grammar was addressed within language skills classes. SUI4’s lesson was about how to write a descriptive paragraph. He was completing, with the learners, the second half of the previous textbook chapter about the use of the present tense in writing a descriptive paragraph. SUI4 started the lesson by linking the topic to the learners’ real experiences by posing questions such as: “Have you experienced a sand storm in Saudi?” The learners were active in sharing their experiences. They were divided into groups of five and were asked to read a descriptive passage and answer questions about it. There were leaders

assigned to each group. The instructor used many examples and connected them to real-life experiences.

Although SUI4 initiated and encouraged lots of discussion, grammar was constantly referred to. One of the textbook questions was “what verb tense does the writer use in this paragraph?” Accordingly, the instructor asked the learners to underline some verbs followed by a brief explanation of the “simple past” tense and its application within the descriptive passage. He asked several questions about grammar and the correct usage of the language through checking questions such as “What do? Or what does?” Examples of the grammar rules mentioned were related to linking verbs, the order of adjectives, verb tenses, gerunds, and quantities. The learners were asked by the instructor to provide examples and to practice what had been mentioned at home.

So, grammar rules were explained briefly in a review format. SUI4 did not use the whiteboard to break up the rules analytically, although he did some of this orally with the help of the learners. He frequently reminded them about the correct question structure for the past tense and for plurals. The learners were active, engaged, and responsive to the instructor.

For SUI6’s class, it was a grammar course. There were 29 females in the class at beginners’ level, and the class lasted for 2.5 hours (for more information, see Table 3.12). The observed teaching styles for SUI6 corresponded closely to the GTM in which grammar is taught in isolation, compared to the first language where translation is common.

SUI6 started the lesson by reviewing the homework with the learners orally in the same way as she did subsequently with all the exercises. She then moved onto the new chapter which was about “pronouns”. She told the learners that the pronouns chart in the book was complicated and then asked them to copy her simplified chart from the board. She explained the types of pronouns using her own chart. The instructor was talking most of the time. She encouraged the learners to memorise the grammar rules and gave them time to do so.

All new words were listed on the board. SUI6 often asked the students to write some simplified rules. She kept encouraging and giving time for memorisation, as she expressed: “because this chapter depends on memorisation, memorise every single word because chapter 7 and 8 are all about pronouns so, there is not much to say, you just need to memorise really well.” This is a typical example of most classes in the Saudi context which adhere greatly to the traditional approaches or the GTM (Ahmad, 2018; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Assalahi, 2013). The same findings had been confirmed in the Omani EFL context which shares very similar context to the Saudi one (Al Maqbali et al., 2019). They found that most teachers implemented deductive grammar approaches where the focus is on the explicit instruction and corrective feedback. The classroom also appeared to adopt the teacher centred style. As Al Maqgbalis et al. indicated, the main influential factor is related to the teachers’ lack of understanding of the inductive approaches. Such explanation could be related to the Saudi context although the majority of the present project’s participants believed in the learner centred classroom and had positive perception in regard to explicit as well as implicit approaches. The contextual external factors then appeared to be one of the main driving forces of classroom practice that needs to be given a greater focus. What applies in one EFL/ESL context does not mean it will be appropriate for other contexts.

In relation to time limitations as a determining factor of perceptions, SUI6 explained to the class that they ran out of time and that the learners needed to study at home to cover the required chapters, as she expressed that: “the chapter is really long, and it needs memorisation”. To tackle the time limitations, SUI6 and SUI9 provided learners with extra grammar classes to help them progress for the written test. One student from the SUI6 class asked about the nature of the extra class, and she replied that “it will be like revision of the difficult grammar rules like past/present perfect.”

Similarly, SUI9 started the 50-minute grammar lesson by immediately asking the learners to give sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. She then listed several sentences asking the students to work out the differences. After explaining subject-verb agreement explicitly using examples from the learners, they were asked to open their books to check the examples related to subject-verb agreement. In the book, there were two columns with a list of sentences that had similar tenses, but were different in their use of the singular and the plural. The instructor asked the learners to create similar sentences to check their understanding.

Again, in SUI13 and SUI15's classes, the grammar lesson was introduced through the grammar translation method. The only difference in SUI13's lesson related to the final activity where the learners were asked to write independently. The topic was to pick one person from the learners' family and write a sentence about him or her. There was a planned listening activity, but the instructor was unable to conduct it due to a technological problem with the projector audio. She allowed a generous amount of time for the learners to complete the textbook activities while she was walking around monitoring them.

5.4.1.2 Corrective feedback

Error correction in all six classes was prompt and immediate as the learners were constantly stopped to revise their answers. For instance, SUI9 tended to correct the students immediately by first giving the student a chance to recognise the mistake. Others would ask the rest of the class if the answer was correct or not and then would provide the correction orally. One learner in the SUI13 class started her answer with "I think", but the instructor told her: "do not say I think, because you all know the rule now".

Exam requirements were also an issue that had been raised in SUI4, SUI6, and SUI9's classes. For instance, SUI4 informed his students about this: "in the final exam, if you have a

question like, describe your room, what tense are you going to use? Use simple past because it will make you feel the description rather than present which is about facts.”

SUI6 was also constantly reminding the learners about the exam and drew their attention to the question structure that they may face. She informed the students about the marking system saying: “if you separate a pronoun in the exam, you will lose ¼ like (your self) and if you miss a punctuation, you will also lose ¼ of the mark.”

For instance, SUI4 explained to the learners: “In the final exam, if you have a question like, describe your room, what tense are you going to use? Use simple past because it will make you feel the description rather than present which is about facts.” In the SUI14 class, the learners were given the opportunity to look at their mid-term papers in which they checked their grammatical and structural mistakes with no attention paid to the quality of the content.

5.4.1.3 Language Activity

Most of the activities were grammar drills, such as filling in the blank and correcting sentences. The textbook seemed to be the dominant factor in controlling the lesson, as the instructors followed the text in a page-by-page manner. There were not many interactive activities that required students to talk and express themselves. Language activities linked to implicit grammar teaching were very limited.

The nature of the provided activities in SUI6 and SUI9’s classes did not allow the learners to practice using the language communicatively. Their responses were short and to the point and the discussions were limited to correcting any mistakes which had occurred.

SUI6 and SUI9 both employed explicit isolated grammar teaching without a related context as all the discussed statements and examples were context-free. Both analysed sentences and broke them down into small segments to explain grammar and meaning and to provide the correct pronunciation. All the exercises were done orally, and nothing was written on the board. There were no reading, listening, or speaking activities. The only skill practiced

was writing, but this was limited to writing answers in the textbook. There were no games or fun activities. The instructors spent most of the class explaining grammar rules and answering the exercises in the book. The two classes were intense as many rules had been discussed and introduced.

On the other hand, SUI4 engaged his students in many discussions and group work. Each learner had a chance to participate orally. Learners in this class were practicing many lots of speaking activities through group presentations, and interestingly, there were grammar related topics that were discussed intensively throughout the lesson, such as articles, infinitives, and plurals. During the interview, SUI4 stressed the importance of avoiding grammar teaching for beginners. He explained his approach in which he invested the time to develop language skills and left grammar for the advanced levels. However, he referred to advanced grammatical terms such as “gerunds” more than once during the lesson as a form of review. This suggested that the learners had received previous grammar teaching despite the fact that they were beginners.

SUI4 introduced an activity that was interesting for the learners. He asked them to describe himself as their teacher using the correct order of adjectives. The learners were laughing and excited to share a description of their instructor. Reading and writing activities were also provided. As mentioned above, SUI4 employed productive activities which promoted communicative language teaching. However, the class was based on a previous explicit grammar explanation which was clearly shown when the instructor referred back to a range of grammatical terms. The learners in SUI4’s class had a considerable amount of time to practice using English productively.

L1 and L2 usage

Arabic language usage was observed in all the classes. It was the language used for communication between learners during the activities. Learners used Arabic to ask the

instructor about the lesson. For the instructors, only SUI13 (Indian) and SUI15 (Saudi) used English exclusively during the whole lesson. Most of the instructors used Arabic to define words and explain grammar as well as giving class rules.

When it comes to comparing the English to the Arabic grammatical structure, the instructors provided learners with many examples. For instance, SUI6 used an example of a popular sentence related to Arabic grammar which is “I ate an apple”. SUI6 referred to Arabic grammar several times and specifically regarding pronouns. She mixed the Arabic and the English to explain the rules, thereby providing the learners with some tricks to help them understand. The learners used Arabic to ask questions. In effect, they were treating the rules as formulas to be solved. The new vocabulary was briefly explained by the instructor in English and provided with the Arabic translation as well.

SUI9 was also interested in the idea of comparing Arabic and English grammar rules. She compared some rules related to quantity, third person pronouns, and dualism. She also used Arabic language as a means to translate new vocabulary, such as “political parties”.

To conclude, the researcher recorded the observed teaching practices in the six classes using an observation checklist that had been developed based on the main topics of the present study: explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit teaching. It also had a number of other items related to the engagement of the learners within the lessons. The table below shows the combined checklists’ results for the six instructors which clearly confirmed the lack of grammar integration within communicative activities (Table 5.14).



Table 5.14 The Conducted Class Observations Checklist

Observed grammar practices		SUIs' Observed Classes					
		SUI4	SUI6	SUI9	SUI13	SUI14	SUI15
Explicit Isolated	1. The teacher gives the rule and follows it with practice.		✓	✓	✓	NA	✓
	2. The teacher presents a grammar point before reading it in text.		✓	✓	✓	NA	✓
	3. The teacher presents grammar without a context.		✓	✓		✓	✓
	4. The teacher does grammar exercises to encourage students to use English more accurately.	✓	✓	✓	✓	NA	✓
	5. The teacher uses lots of grammatical terminology.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	6. The teacher compares English grammar to Arabic.		✓	✓		✓	
Explicit Integrated	7. The teacher teaches grammar by explaining and doing practice exercises.	✓	✓	✓	✓	NA	✓
	8. The teacher teaches grammar by using English within communicative activities.	✓				✓	
	9. The teacher tends to teach grammar through reading or speaking activities.	✓				NA	
	10. The teacher presents grammar as she/he works on different skills and activities.	✓				NA	
	11. The teacher teaches grammar while the students read a text.	✓				NA	
	12. The teacher often teaches grammar while reading or listening to a passage.					NA	
	13. The teacher tends more to teach grammar through speaking, writing, listening, or reading activities.	✓				NA	
Implicit	14. The teacher communicates in English and teaches grammar only when necessary.						
	15. The teacher spends more time in teaching grammar indirectly.						
Error Correctio	16. The teacher corrects students' mistakes as soon as they make them.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	17. The teacher corrects students' mistakes after an activity is completed.						✓
L1 and L2 Usage	18. The teacher uses English only in the Class.				✓		✓
	19. The teacher tends to translate into Arabic.	✓	✓	✓			
Learners Engagement	20. Students are fully engaged with the teacher.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	21. Students have a chance to talk and ask questions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	22. Students have enough time to practice English.	✓					
	23. Students enjoy group work.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Note: (NA) refers to 'not applicable' items e.g. SUI14's role was only assessing learners' presentations as it was a presentation day.

Unlike Assalahi (2013) findings, the present research shows a contradiction between the instructors' beliefs and their in-class practice. However, it is important to note that in-class practice in Assalahi's (2013) study was reported by the teachers themselves rather than being observed by the researcher. Similar to Assalahi's (2013) findings, a total of three Indonesian EFL teachers in Sabbu's(2019) study had shown very similar beliefs about the effectiveness of explicit grammar instruction and they adopt what they believe in into their classroom practices. Sabbu(2019) clarified the limitation of the study as it investigated only three teachers and recommended further quantitative supporting data.

For the present study, it is evident in the instructors' responses, the SUIs, that some of them explained how their beliefs and ideas were not implemented in their classes due to external EFL contextual factors that kept such choices out of their hands. The SUIs were not impressed with the current teaching practices, but were obliged to use them to get their students to pass the exams and to finish the course successfully. Similar to Al Asmari (2015) findings, SUIs showed their willingness to change and improve the current grammar teaching practice which can clearly define that they practice what the context forces them to do, rather than according to their own beliefs.

Some language teaching approaches may be particularly difficult to use in countries such as Saudi Arabia, as the EFL context tends to hinder implementation. For example, CLT is an approach which had been difficult to apply because of the traditional instruction dominance in which the teacher controls the classroom and the learners are there to receive information with limited communication (Al-Osaimi & Wedell, 2014; Al-Seghayer, 2014, 2017; Asiri, 2017; Assalahi, 2013; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Elyas & Picard, 2010; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018; Picard, 2018).

Al-Mohanna (2010) conducted a study to find the reasons for this lack of consistency between the curriculum and real practice regarding the implementation of CLT. There were

internal and external factors that made CLT a challenging approach. Pre-service teaching programs, according to him, trained teachers using the grammar translation method, which influenced the teaching process. Other important external factors make it impossible, or very difficult, to use CLT in Saudi Arabia, including “time constraints, unavailability of required and adequate teaching/learning aids, inadequate EFL examination system and hindrances related to students control” (Al-Mohanna, 2010, p. 85).

Generally, the SUIs favoured the grammar translation method to teach English, as the entire process is exam-oriented, and grammar rather than communication is being tested (Al-Mohanna, 2010). On the challenges of applying CLT within a university EFL context, Al Asmari confirmed that there is a lack of understanding of the CLT approach. It is assumed that such a widespread misconception among teachers is related to the traditional teaching methodology which limited their view of CLT as merely a speaking class with no implied formal focus (2015). For teachers, the educational context is the main challenge, including lack of CLT supporting materials, facilities, training, and the lengthy syllabus and the specific requirements (Al Asmari, 2015).

Moreover, some SUIs refers to their prior learning experience as a justification of their current in class practice. The influence of the prior learning and teaching experience had been noted as one of the powerful factors that contributes in shaping the teaching style ((Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Phan, 2018; Sabbu, 2019; Toprak, 2019). Vietnamese EFL teachers in Phan’s (2018) investigation also based their in-class practice decisions on their own learning and teaching experience in addition to their educational background. A recent study by Al Maqbali et al. (2019) had revealed similar findings in relation to the factors affecting practice: “The teachers attribute their practices to five main reasons which are: the difficulty of some grammar rules, time constraints, learners’ low proficiency level, teachers’ personal preferences, and lack of understanding of inductive grammar teaching strategies” (p. 7).

Similarly, Vietnamese teachers, according to Phan (2018) stated that the low learning motivation level of their learners in addition to the lack of linguistic ability contributed in hindering the “implementation of communicative activities”. This finding was reflected in SUIs’ qualitative discussion where they mentioned the role of learners in determining the classroom activities which as well was challenging to include more interactive activities due to such similar factors; motivation and ability.

In conclusion, classroom observation has been an important qualitative addition to the present study that helps in connecting theory and beliefs to real classroom practice. As discussed earlier, the observations aimed to record the current grammar teaching practices regarding explicit and implicit teaching methods within the current Saudi EFL university class practice. Such exploration of the learning context confirmed what had been reported by SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs regarding the several contextual factors such as curriculum requirements, time, and the number of learners in the class that had been perceived to affect the development of EAP proficiency.

5.4.2 Overview of the Saudi EFL context characteristics

The answer to Research Question 4: “What are the characteristics of the Saudi EFL context which SUIs and SULSAs indicate as influencing their beliefs about grammar and practices of grammar teaching and learning?”, was extracted from the overall analysis of the questionnaire data, interviews, and class observations. Examining perceptions across the three groups, within two different contexts, helped the researcher to identify the occurrences and the commonly shared characteristics of the current Saudi EFL context.

One of the most influential factors that contributes to the effectiveness of English teaching is the type of instruction, which has consequently impacted learning outcomes. During the early stages of English teaching in Saudi Arabia, the education system implemented the

Audiolingual Method, followed by the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which the majority of current Saudi English teachers learned (Al-Seghayer, 2005, 2014, 2017; Braine & George, 2005; Elyas & Picard, 2010; Grami, 2012; Khan, 2011; Liton, 2012; Mahib ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). Instructors dominated the class within these approaches, while the learners' role remained passive. This has had a continual impact on contemporary pedagogical initiatives that propose the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to replace the GTM by designing curricula that are communicatively oriented (Al-Mohanna, 2010; Assalahi, 2013). Although CLT had been introduced to replace the GTM, it still was not clearly observed in real classroom practice.

Instructors and learners, participants of this study, are aware of one of the major issues that contributes to delayed development of English language in Saudi Arabia. This problem is related to a number of factors that are best described as characteristic of the Saudi EFL context: the education system, curriculum requirements, time limitations, the nature of assessment, expectations, prior L2 learning experience, and L1 interference.

As became evident in the previous discussion, those contextual characteristics have been identified by the SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs which, as they stated, contributed to the shaping of their beliefs and preferences and for determining in-class grammar instruction. Figure 5.2 depicts the contributing characteristics of the Saudi EFL context to the shaping of grammar teaching perceptions. The wider frame visualise the overall factors identified from the data discussion: purpose of learning English, prior learning experience, first language interference and language usage outside the educational context. Within the influence of these factors, university instructors' and their learners' perceptions are constrained by specific educational factors primarily led by the curriculum.

Accordingly, instructors' grammar teaching style was mostly affected by the limited time to cover the course specifications and to appropriately address learners' expectations.



Learners’ beliefs within grammar courses were mostly driven by the test requirements which is, according to the findings, against their preferences. Instructors and learners both appreciated more interactive and communicative based activities to accompany grammar explicit teaching, isolated and integrated, but the type of assessment confronted their perceived beliefs and preferences.

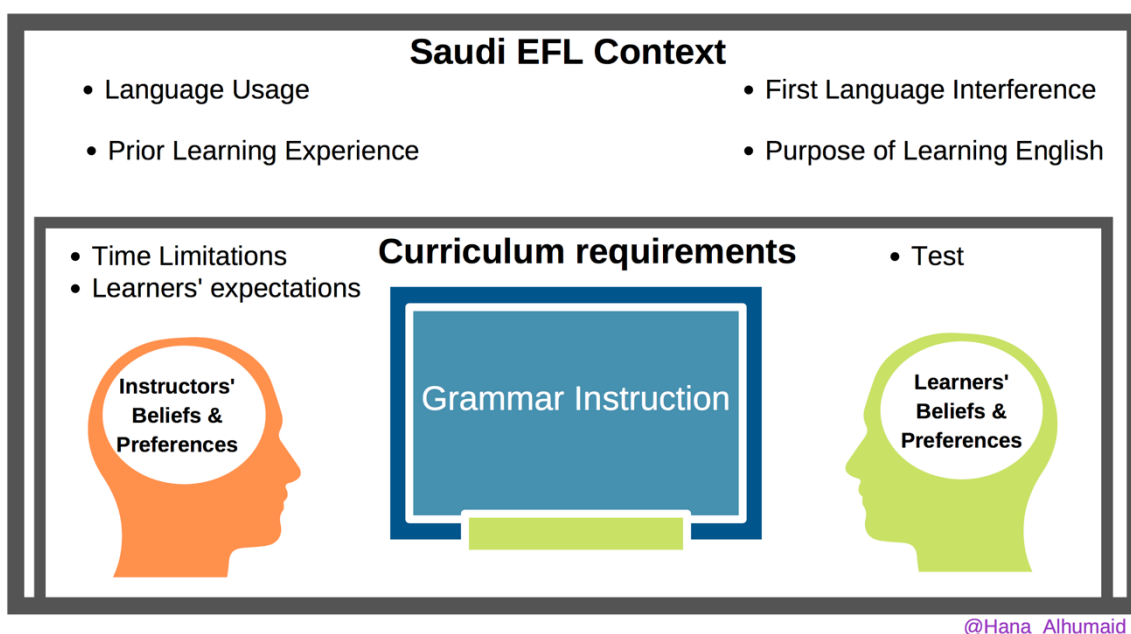


Figure 5.3 The Saudi EFL context contributing characteristics

University-level learners are motivated by fulfilling educational goals and getting a higher GPA which affects their preferences and beliefs towards learning English in general, and learning English grammar specifically. Learners are driven by this goal which is to pass the test and get good marks. If the English language curriculum is mainly based on the final written test that has a major grammar component, then they will work with their instructors to pass the test and succeed. Assessment, then, has a major influential role in shaping such views and beliefs about grammar instruction.

Adult language learners who are learning English in an EFL context face greater challenges in developing their language proficiency, as they have limited access to the authentic use of the target language. This, therefore, makes it an uphill climb for instructors to enable the learners to learn the rules, as the task requires more than just using the language to actually understand the rules behind the use of correct English while observing all the norms and regulations involved (Lapp & Fisher, 2011). Language instructors across all levels have not been given a proper chance to share their concerns, ideas, and experiences regarding the new policies that have constantly been described as having been ‘imposed and forced’ on them (Assalahi, 2013). This is consistent with what some of the SUIs discussed regarding the new imposed methods of teaching that are not based on local Saudi EFL studies and needs.

Shifting the attention to instructors’ and learners’ beliefs and preferences is a new trend that seems crucial in enhancing the learning process, since teachers and learners are the ones who experience the whole process (Borg & Burns, 2008; Burns & Borg, 2015; Ellis, 2006; Ur, 2011b). In this regard, Azar also stated that teaching a second language has many possible correct options, and is not limited to one way only. Language instructors or facilitators have the authority to determine which approach is suitable and when to follow it (2007, 2019; 2012, October 30). To Azar, the most important aspect of facilitating second language acquisition is the relationship between the instructor and their learners. Therefore, language teachers should know their learners’ needs, expectations, and circumstances to best facilitate the learning process and to engage with them in a positive way. Instructors, then, are the ones who can test the various teaching methods regarding learners’ progress in the classroom. Such vital daily observations should not be disregarded as they help in evaluating various theories in real classroom practice (Azar, 2007).



5.4.3 Concluding remarks for Research Question 4

Drawing attention to the relationship between context and ELT is also essential. Understanding context and situational limitations contributes greatly to determining an appropriate teaching style. Gil and Najar (2009) argued that a focus on context is one of the responsibilities of the ELT professional to avoid “[r]eliance on imported methods and approaches” (p. 4). They recommended that professionals adapt more “localized” teaching methods that correspond to the breadth and width of the specific context (Gil & Najar, 2009). To address Research Question 4 focusing on the classroom practice, here are the main discussed findings which contribute in getting a clear picture of how in class practice corresponds to the context and vis versa:

- Classroom observation, though having a minor role, has been an important qualitative addition to the present study that helps in connecting theory and beliefs to real classroom practice.
- SUIs’ beliefs and ideas were not implemented in their classes due to external EFL contextual factors that kept such choices out of their hands.
- The dominance of explicit isolated grammar practices was seen in all the classes compared to integrative communicative approaches.
- GTM, 3Ps, and traditional language methods are still widely practiced which confirmed the findings of the Saudi ELT related literature.
- Teacher-centred approach is dominant in all classes and identical lesson plans had been commonly shared.
- Error correction in all six classes was prompt and immediate as the learners were constantly stopped to revise their answers.



- Most of the activities were grammar drills, such as filling in the blank and correcting sentences whereas language activities linked to implicit grammar teaching were very limited.
- The textbook seemed to be the dominant factor in controlling the lesson plan.
- Arabic language usage was observed in all the classes that mostly used in comparing structure between the two languages and vocabulary translation.
- The classroom observations confirmed what had been reported by SUIs, SULSAs and SULAs regarding the several contextual factors such as curriculum requirements, time, and the number of learners in the class that had been perceived to affect the development of EAP proficiency.

Therefore, a thoughtful focus on context is a necessity in L2 pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001). Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, context appeared to play a decisive role in determining in-class practice, which consequently, prevented or challenged any proposed development. To conclude, the researcher recounts Brown's (2007) integral question concerning the above debate: "Under what conditions, for which learners, and for what linguistic element, is one approach advantageous for second language acquisition?" (p. 292).

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed and reported on the findings pertaining to research questions three and four. The focus of these questions was on the instructors' and learners' beliefs about, and preferences for, explicit isolated, explicit integrated, or implicit grammar instruction. It also discussed the Saudi EFL context regarding grammar teaching current practice. The chapter started by reporting the quantitative data extracted from the questionnaire followed by the interview data and the class observations. The findings were

reported concurrently depicting the exploratory Convergent Parallel Design approach in which the researcher found and compared patterns among the responses of the three groups.

In answer to research question three, the SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs had high levels of agreement for explicit isolated, integrated, and implicit statements within the questionnaire. Some discrepancies were identified between instructors, SUIs, on the one hand, and learners, both SULSAs and SULAs, on the other. This was clear in their stated preference for the statement relating to the exclusion of grammar from language classes and devoting time to doing communicative activities (2, 16, & 20). Further, the language activities for grammar instruction had some disparity between the instructors and the learners. From the interviews and the class observations, the three groups showed great interest in the lesson option that adopted the explicit isolated and the explicit integrated approaches, with the majority of learners in Australia preferring the isolated grammar approach. Few participants chose the pure implicit approach.

However, the degree of disparity was not major, but clearly demonstrates how instructors sometimes differ from learners in their perceptions. Overall, the homogeneity across the groups provided a very strong picture of commonly shared beliefs and perceptions.

In answer to research question four, the researcher inferred the characteristics of the Saudi EFL context in particular, which contributed to the shaping of perceptions, as reported by the participants. The main characteristics included: the curriculum, learners' expectations, time limitations, and the purposes of learning. This chapter revealed the high complexity of exploring educational beliefs and preferences specifically when addressing both instructors and learners regarding a debatable topic in SLA such as grammar. Here, the researcher acknowledged the benefits of conducting convergent parallel mixed methods design, however, greater time and effort was needed to further and refine the discussion.



In the next chapter, the researcher will conclude the present study offering an overall summary and addressing the limitations of the project and a number of proposed recommendations.



6 Conclusion and Future Implications

6.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter brings the research project to a conclusion by summarising the main findings for each research question, identifying their related implications, discussing the study limitations, providing related research recommendations, and finishing with the researcher's concluding remarks.

6.2 Main research findings

Language learning is a noteworthy journey full of challenges and certainly a worthy area of research. Grammar, as an integral part of the language, is a perennially debated topic in the SLA field (Ellis, 2006; Lightbown, 2000; Ortega, 2014; Spada, 2013; VanPatten & Williams, 2014). SLA research suggests that providing English grammar teaching for the case of ESL and EFL is useful for acquiring the language (Ellis, 2012, 2015; Ellis et al., 2002; Lightbown & Pienemann, 1993; Long, 1991, 2014; Long & Robinson, 1998).

However, SLA research is still investigating how to teach grammar and how much is enough for L2 learners (Aarts, Clayton, & Wallis, 2012; Azar, 2007, 2019; Burns, 2016; Burns & Borg, 2015; Celce-Murcia, 2015; Ellis, 2006; Hinkel, 2017, 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2003, 2009, 2015; Spada, 2013; Ur, 2011b, 2016). The main teaching approaches for English grammar fall into three main categories: explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit. The majority of SLA and ESL/EFL studies focus on assessing learners' performance through various research methods, but rarely addressing the perceptions of instructors and/or learners (Basturkmen, 2012; Basturkmen et al., 2004; Borg, 1998, 1999a, 2003a; Borg & Burns, 2008; Burns, 1992; Burns & Borg, 2015; Ellis, 2008a; Horwitz, 1985, 1999; Kagan, 1992; Kalaja et al., 2015). Regarding this project, this aim was accomplished by shifting the attention to

explore the perceived beliefs about, and preferences for, grammar instruction among Saudi EFL and ESL learners in addition to EFL language instructors in Saudi universities.

The exploration of grammar teaching sparked great interest among the participants, both the instructors and the learners. The researcher was thrilled about the number of interested participants who were keen to have the chance to talk about what they think, believe, wish, and look for in their learning and teaching. Instructors and learners expressed their beliefs in interesting ways, which demonstrated the complexity of the issue of grammar teaching in relation to the bigger picture of developing language proficiency in Saudi Arabia. Both instructors and learners had very clear views on the issues surrounding grammar teaching.

The instructors (SUIs=267) have strong educational backgrounds in English- and TESOL-related fields, considerable teaching experience, and success in L2 acquisition for non-native English language instructors. The learners (SULSAs=1,768 and SULAs=420) also revealed a great level of understanding in relation to current grammar teaching methods, their own needs, and the current challenges. The majority admitted that grammar teaching is one of the more difficult aspects of the English language that needs to be properly addressed. However, they still hold strong beliefs about the importance of mastering grammar rules.

Regarding Research Question 1, ‘What are the current beliefs about grammar and grammar instruction held by SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs?’, the findings were related to current beliefs about grammar and grammar instruction from the Saudi perspective that were addressed quantitatively and qualitatively. It became clear that grammar is still viewed as an important aspect of the language to the vast majority of instructors and learners at the university level. Grammar teaching and learning were seen as integral components of the language which is consistent with the findings of related studies (Ahmad, 2018; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Aljohani, 2012; Barnard & Scampton, 2008; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Hendriani, 2018).

This view also extends to the Saudi EFL learners who experienced learning English as a second language in Australia.

Moreover, the findings from *Research Question 1* reveal that grammar has been viewed positively in relation to facilitating proper communication, conveying meaning, developing writing, promoting accuracy and, for some, as a secondary skill to be introduced in the later stages of language learning. Referring to the minority of participants who rejected the idea of teaching grammar, or those who called for a delay in teaching it, grammar was still seen as a polishing tool for advanced learners. This confirmed the idea that the explicit teaching of grammar is perceived to be needed, not for beginners but for a specific purpose. This reflects Hinkel (2017) argument about what to prioritize in teaching grammar and when to teach it, as well as the importance of considering “learners’ grammar needs and objectives” where “grammar teaching can rely on two rather invariable factors in any context: what specific types of learners need to know and should be able to do” (p. 382).

It also became clear, from a small minority of the learner participants, that the total rejection of grammar in English learning was strongly connected to the negative attitude towards the decontextualized traditional teaching methods that had been used for such a long time. These methods are more likely connected to the correct usage of specific structure in isolation of a meaningful context (Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015). This was noted in light of the traditional grammar teaching approach that has been dominant in Saudi EFL classes for a considerable time in which the focus has mainly been on accuracy and passing grammar-based courses (Al Asmari, 2015; Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2014, 2015, 2017; Aljohani, 2012).

For instructors, the idea of excluding grammar teaching from the curriculum related more to choosing the proper level at which to introduce it, which to them was not for beginners, in order to keep learners motivated and boost their confidence instead of judging the accuracy

of their responses on drills and exercises. It has been anticipated that if there is grammar teaching, judgement and accuracy will also be present, which could explain the relationship between grammar and accuracy (Ellis, 2006, 2015).

The findings of **Research Question 2**, ‘How do SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs perceive the importance of grammar instruction for EAP?’, build on and extend the understanding of the results that were discussed in response to the first question. The importance of teaching grammar appears to hold a stronger position when the purpose is related to attaining EAP proficiency. The majority of participants within both the quantitative and qualitative findings believed that grammar teaching and learning are essential to achieving EAP proficiency. The main concurrent perceptions strongly affect the preferences of grammar teaching styles for the purpose of developing EAP. Such a relationship between grammar learning and attaining language proficiency is not a surprising finding among L2 learners and TESOL teachers, as indicated in the literature (Ahmad et al., 2017; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Aljohani, 2012; Basturkmen, 2018; Burgess & Etherington, 2002). The salient feature in this study is that instructors and learners are not significantly different in viewing the value of grammar teaching as a means to attaining language proficiency. Attaining language proficiency and developing English writing skills have a positive relationship to grammar teaching.

Another interesting fact about accuracy has been expressed in relation to maintaining a respected self-image through speaking the language not only fluently, but also in a grammatically correct fashion. The importance of grammar does not relate only to language proficiency, but it also appears to be strongly connected to social acceptability among the participants, as expressed in the qualitative phase. The more articulate the speaker, the more accepted and valued they will be. This issue has also been identified by several SLA scholars and researchers (Alhaysony & Alhaisoni, 2017; Hinkel, 2017; Petraki & Gunawardena, 2015;

Thornbury, 1999), one of whom is Swan who considered this to be a good reason to learn grammar (Swan, 2002).

The findings from *Research Question 3*, ‘How do SUIs perceive explicit isolated, explicit integrated, and implicit grammar instruction compared to SULSAs’ and SULAs’ perceptions for developing EAP?’, were interesting and challenging to explore. While the findings for Research Questions 1 and 2 were quite similar among the instructors and learners, minor inconsistencies appeared in relation to Research Question 3. This can be explained through the nature of the questions and the topics of concern. While Research Questions 1 and 2 explored general perceptions, Research Question 3 looked to understand specific perceived beliefs and preferences for specific grammar instruction approaches.

In education, perceptions, including beliefs and preferences, are seen as powerful influencers that can affect the learning process and classroom practice. This was explored in-depth in Research Question 3. The quantitative data presented perceptions of the grammar teaching approaches, specifically addressing the three forms of instruction as well as related language activities.

SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs shared similar results on the explicit isolated and explicit integrated grammar instruction items. The majority showed strong agreement with explicit isolated grammar instruction, whereas SULSAs and SULAs, the learners, scored an approximate mean of 4.4 and above in all items compared to the SUIs, the instructors, who scored a mean of 4.1 across all items. The level of agreement across the groups of participants was even higher for the explicit integrative grammar instruction item on which all groups scored a mean of 4.6 and above.

For implicit grammar instruction, the findings somewhat varied, with SULSAs and SULAs showing strong agreement for all implicit items, except for the statement supporting the total exclusion of grammar instruction which showed an average mean of 3.7, whereas the

instructors, the SUIs, shared stronger agreement for all implicit items with a mean score of 4.5 and above.

The fact that L2 learners lean more towards explicit grammar teaching, and specifically, to the isolated approach with error correction was observed in a number of studies (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Ellis, 2008a, 2015; Hendriani, 2018; Hinkel, 2017; Valeo & Spada, 2016) in which instructors tended to specify this approach for an appropriate level of learners (Ahmad et al., 2017; Borg, 2003a; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Ellis, 2006; Valeo & Spada, 2016). All in all, SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs strongly agreed with the majority of the statements for the three grammar instruction approaches, but the percentages increased when the sentences contained communicative, skill-based activities to be integrated with grammar teaching.

Turning to the qualitative data addressing the same question, the researcher found that the instructors' beliefs and preferences did not always reflect what they did in class. This had been stated by the participants themselves and was also reflected in the classroom practice during the observation phase. These contradictions were actually understood by the majority of SUIs, six of whom had also been observed. They explained that they wanted to implement something, but they perceived the context as forcing them to do something else.

Based on the reasoning provided during the interviews, the instructors clarified that some of their stated beliefs and preferences were affected mostly by the contextual needs such as curriculum requirements that determine learners' needs and expectations in addition to time limitation. So, instructors had their own beliefs and preferences in relation to grammar teaching, but a conflict between perception and classroom practice is found. Such discrepancy could be viewed as the result of the instructors' role in balancing what they believed in, what the educational context required, what the learners expected and what was applicable within those boundaries.

The learners also had the opportunity to express their beliefs and to share their preferences. They showed a high level of awareness about the need for language development in Saudi Arabia. This revealed their willingness to learn English as well as to improve current teaching practice. In relation to the preferred form of grammar instruction, SUIs, instructors in Saudi universities, and SULSAs, Saudi learners in Saudi universities, were divided almost equally on this option as the most preferred approach. Interestingly, almost all the SULAs who were ESL students in Australia chose explicit isolated grammar instruction. Implicit grammar instruction was a very limited preference across the SUIs and SULSAs, while none of the SULAs had this as a preference.

Similarly, the overall rationale of the three approaches provided by the SUIs, SULSAs, and SULAs were related to learners' needs and expectations, which were mostly affected by the requirements of the specific context, including: the intensity of the curriculum, the type of assessment, learners' needs and expectations, time limitations, and prior L1 learning and teaching experiences.

For the class observations, four of six classes adhered to the traditional explicit isolated grammar teaching method, specifically presenting grammar using the 3Ps model. The other two classes were a revision of a previous lesson and a presentation day for learners. However, grammar within these two classes was addressed intensively through using grammatical terminologies and recounting several grammar rules. Only one teacher engaged the learners in interactive communicative activities while the other classes were limited to drills and decontextualized grammar practice. These observations confirmed the fact that the current English curriculum in the Saudi education system has been developed according to CLT principles; however, real classroom practice involved the intensive use of the grammar translation method instead (Al-Mohanna, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Almenieci, 2005; Assalahi, 2013; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018; Picard, 2018).

Research Question 4, ‘What are the characteristics of the Saudi EFL context which SUIs and SULSAs indicate as influencing their beliefs about grammar and practices of grammar teaching and learning?’, illustrates the factors that can shape instructors’ and learners’ perceptions of learning and teaching grammar. Classroom observations alongside interviews with instructors and learners provided an opportunity for the researcher to check real classroom practice and establish a comparison between reality and perceptions. It might be difficult to establish a comprehensive comparison due to the limited number of observed classes (N=6), yet this study has at least emphasised the importance of understanding context and has more likely provided insights from a different and important perspective. These factors could be described as the ‘characteristics of the Saudi EFL context’, including the education system, the curriculum requirements, time limitations, the nature of assessment, prior L2 learning experiences, L1 interference and, most importantly, meeting learners’ needs and expectations.

Meeting learners’ needs and expectations is a critical observation that needs to be addressed appropriately in the L2 learning process. Thornbury (1999) argued that L2 learners come to the classroom with preset expectations that could alienate them if these are ignored by instructors. This has been confirmed in Horwitz (1985, 1999) studies in which negative attitudes towards language learners emerged when the instructors did not work on learners’ expectations. In the case of the present findings, SULSAs and SULAs appeared to have very similar attitudes, and almost identical preferences that should not be ignored by instructors. Learners’ justifications for the need for grammar instruction, isolated or integrated, stem from a set of conditions that are important to explore in future research.

To summarise, the major finding of this study is the significant positive perceptions about grammar and grammar instruction as an integral part of learning English which is perceived by participants to contribute to the development of EAP proficiency. Grammar has an unquestionably important role in learning English, according to the vast majority of

instructors and learners. This can be inferred from the consistently strong positive beliefs and preferences across the three approaches investigated in both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. Grammar is viewed as complementing and facilitating the development of the four language skills, reading, writing, speaking, and listening, rather than creating barriers to L2 learning. The learners appeared to be precise and, to some extent, knew what they needed in order to develop their English. The instructors' perceptions of grammar instruction and their classroom practice is greatly affected by Saudi curriculum specifications which force them to choose the proper grammar teaching methods to fulfill curriculum requirements and help learners pass the exam. Additionally, learners' expectations are crucial in determining classroom practice and were deeply considered by the majority of instructors.

6.3 The research implications

The researcher in this section discusses the research implication that had been anticipated throughout the exploration of the perceptions of the participants guided by the four research questions. Related research implications are discussed addressing Saudi EFL instructors and learners, Saudi EFL researchers and the Saudi Ministry of Education.

6.3.1 Implications for Saudi EFL instructors and learners

The objectives of the present study targeted Saudi universities' English language instructors and learners to whom the research implications will apply first. It can be implied that the main concern for the participants, both the instructors and the learners, is related to the lack of proper grammar teaching methods.

Instructors and learners indicated the real need to introduce more interactive communicative-based activities alongside explicit grammar instruction. This was clarified from both the instructors and learners' perspectives, in which they clearly expressed. This combination of findings would urge instructors to engage learners in various learning

interactive activities where the four language skills (i.e. reading, listening, speaking and writing) are incorporated in each grammar lesson with consideration of the different learning styles and interests. According to the discussed results, it is clear that instructors and learners still show strong positive beliefs about learning and teaching grammar where the idea of excluding grammar is generally rejected. Therefore, as Larsen-Freeman (2003) indicated, the problem could be in our way of thinking and how we view grammar. The idea of considering grammar as fifth skill is more relevant and applicable to ESL and EFL context and specifically to the Saudi learning context. “Grammaring” is an appealing approach to consider grammar in learning English (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

The average of the observed language classes duration is two hours as the findings indicated. Addition of small segments of communicative based activities, as suggested by some of the interviewed SUIs, will contribute in enhancing the explicit isolated grammar instruction that is widely used in the Saudi EFL classes without causing a significant alteration to the course specifications which is beyond their ability. Such communicative interactive activities could be introduced to learners as take-home tasks where the instructors can make use of online audiovisual materials and design some tasks to build on what have been discussed in the class and engage learners beyond the classroom walls.

The present research suggests a crucial need for multi-faceted collaboration in universities between instructors and learners to invest in English language teaching and learning-related research. The findings also implied that instructors greatly consider learners’ needs and expectations. Hence, they are encouraged to openly discuss learning related concerns with their learners instead of building their teaching practice on assumptions. Instructors need to get to know their learners’ perceptions, needs, and expectations. This can be done in employing well-planned surveys in addition to conducting friendly discussion sessions throughout the academic semester.

A message to instructors would be, ‘the more we know who we teach, the better we teach and facilitate learning’. Another for learners to be active and to increase their contribution to the learning process by openly discuss their beliefs, preferences and what works well for them. This will narrow the gap between instructors, learners, and the overall curriculum requirements, and would facilitate the two ends meeting. Therefore, the reported data in this project makes a useful contribution to developing the current practice of ELT in Saudi Arabia.

The study findings also implied that lack of teacher training could influence the teaching practice where most of the instructors’ beliefs and related teaching styles were drawn from their practical knowledge. Some teachers showed uncertainty about the grammar teaching styles they use in class which depends solely on trial and error concept. The lack of continuous teacher training could push teachers to employ the traditional methods of teaching that they were used to and found it helpful for them.

6.3.2 Implications for Saudi EFL researchers

It has been confirmed in the literature that the Saudi ELT field needs more rigorous empirical studies (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012) to further the investigation of grammar teaching and learning (Alsowat, 2017). Saudi TESOL academics and researchers are encouraged to conduct research collaboratively to address specific Saudi EFL needs, challenges, and educational objectives. English language in the Saudi Arabian context is a foreign language (EFL) which has its own distinctive needs shaped by the context. So, developing a proper language curriculum, pedagogy, and content would be more beneficial if educators and researchers engage the discussion of the characteristics of the Saudi EFL instructors and learners. What is applicable in Asian EFL contexts might not be feasible in the Middle Eastern or the Saudi EFL context. Several factors can influence the learning process in each region such as the purpose of learning English, the curriculum, the educational objectives

and the future endeavours. Such context specific characteristics and needs have a powerful influence in shaping learners' and teachers' attitudes towards different language teaching methods and consequently will affect practice. Therefore, Saudi TESOL researchers' collaboration in investigating English language teaching and learning will help generate a more localised and effective curriculum.

6.3.3 Implications for the Saudi Ministry of Education

Although the research focus was restricted to grammar instruction, the findings will assist educators and curriculum developers to understand current issues associated with the development of English language proficiency in Saudi Arabia. In the context of the present research, the Saudi Ministry of Education has taken crucial measures to improve the level of English language proficiency through a number of initiatives. However, the role of instructors remains a challenging one. It is up to them to meet the expectations of their learners as well as to meet curriculum requirements.

One of the critical aspects of the Saudi MOE reform is the top-down policy in decision making and educational development. Instructors' role is often marginalised and they are seen as merely implementers. The problematic aspect of the top-down policy was expressed a long time ago with the establishment of the EFL curriculum, but no major changes have been made to involve instructors in the reform process (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alnefaie, 2016; Picard, 2018). Neglecting instructors will cause difficulties in understanding the specific context within the walls of the educational institutes and is far more complicated to touch on the classroom context related issues where instructors as well as learners represent the cornerstone of the educational process. Therefore, addressing instructors' and learners' perceptions, and acting on them, is a necessity to forward the steps to enhance the learning experience. Due to the complex nature of the SLA and ESL/EFL learning process, curriculum development would better address the

related ongoing educational reform through a blended model of bottom up and top down process. One model, as Fullan (1994) described, is not sufficient and the “more that top-down and bottom-up forces are coordinated, the more likely that complex systems will move toward greater effectiveness (p. 20).”

To address more specific EFL contextual constraints, it is highly recommended that the stakeholders in the Ministry of Education consider engaging English language instructors as well as learners before, during and after embracing any related educational change. They are the most active parts of the learning process who play noteworthy roles in shaping the learning experience and related outcomes. So, it is increasingly important to have an appropriate attention considering their collaboration in developing the curriculum, teaching methods and most importantly in assessing the outcomes.

Instructors and learners are aware of the curriculum shortcomings and limitations, they together appreciate change and improvements to current practice. Compelling contextual factors are well defined by the participants, which if appropriately addressed, could help greatly in paving the way for an educational shift. Assessment, as discussed in the study, is one of the integral contextual factors that contributed in instructor’ and learners’ beliefs and preferences of grammar instruction. The whole learning process was designed to enable learners to pass a specified curriculum-based test. Thus, instructors need to be allowed at least some flexibility in choosing the course materials and the proper type of assessment particularly in language teaching.

Indeed, investigating instructors’ and learners’ beliefs and preferences, can help educators to gain a better understanding of the current educational perceptions to build up fruitful learner-instructor relationships specifically for language learning. Language is a means for human interaction which involves different people with different learning styles, beliefs,

preferences, and needs which, if addressed appropriately, can contribute greatly to shaping a positive successful learning process.

6.4 Limitations and further recommendations

As teaching language is very contextualised, it is difficult to generalise research findings about individuals and context-specific regions or countries more globally (Cummins & Davison, 2007; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014; Lightbown, 2000; Nunan, 1998; Richards & Renandya, 2002; Scrivener, 2011; Skehan, 2006). This study has aimed to answer a number of questions about grammar instruction through a well-designed, mixed methods research project; however, limitations are inevitable.

It is important to acknowledge that the findings of this study are related to the stated perceptions and preferences of university-level instructors' and learners' who are engaged in learning English for academic purposes. Therefore, the findings and implications are limited to this scope within the EFL and ESL contexts. The researcher recommends extending the exploration of this topic to include other levels of education, such as primary and secondary schools and non-academic programs that, for instance, target vocational colleges providing English for specific purposes. Such an investigation would enable comparisons of perceptions of grammar instruction across different ESL/EFL sectors. Moreover, the dichotomous nature of exploring perceptions in terms of explicit and implicit approaches to grammar teaching needs to be acknowledged. The decision to construct data collection instruments and conduct analysis around this dichotomy was based on the existing literature and did prove valuable for this project. Nevertheless, it may not sufficiently capture instructors' preferences to include both implicit and explicit grammar teaching within their repertoire, giving equal value to both, and selecting the approach based on the needs, interests and ability of the students at a given moment in a specific context. As such, future research should be designed around a continuum model that includes explicit, integrated and implicit grammar teaching methods.

One of the strengths of this research is related to the richness of the gathered qualitative and quantitative data addressing both instructors and learners. Nevertheless, such a study needs more time to synthesize and engage even more deeply in the investigation. The researcher suggests that future studies be longitudinal to see whether instructors' and learners' beliefs and preferences change over time. It is important to acknowledge the minor role of the data gathered through class observations. Class observations were limited to discrete lessons where the researcher could not capture changes in teachers' pedagogy over time. However, this area would be of great interest for future research, where longitudinal studies could be employed to track the changes over a longer period.

Additionally, the researcher recommends undertaking a further inferential statistical analysis for the quantitative data related to perceptions of grammar to extend the exploration. This could be undertaken by adding more comparable elements to explore how grammar teaching beliefs and perceptions relate to teaching experience, gender, country of origin, the purpose of learning English, and beliefs vs. performance.

Moreover, as suggested by Ellis (2015), the exploration of preferences of grammar teaching could be validated if the investigation tested the ability of learners to engage communicatively. This study did not test the English language proficiency of SULSAs and SULAs. Incorporating tests would allow future studies to investigate the relationship between beliefs and preferences about grammar and grammar instruction and proficiency.

The class observations in this study were limited to the Saudi EFL context, with the Australian ESL classes not being observed. It is recommended to observe grammar teaching practices in ESL as well as EFL contexts. This would help to examine how different contexts can influence beliefs, preferences, and classroom practice. Adding such a comparison would enhance the collected data and findings. Moreover, due to institutional complexities and the time limitations of the study, the researcher was able to conduct comparative observations

between perceptions and practice for three instructors only. A wider exploration of how beliefs and perceptions relate to classroom practice is worth exploring.

In relation to the research procedure and instruments, an acknowledged limitation is related to voluntary participation, which may bias the results towards participants who are interested in grammar. It is difficult to overcome this challenge in an online survey; however, the high response rate could be considered as an advantage for this study to help overcome the topic-related bias. Employing an online survey tool could also be considered a limitation, as some participants may not have Internet access. In this study, the target sample was university level and the survey was distributed via their official assigned emails, which are often used as formal correspondence within each institution. However, it is recommended for researchers to have the local internet access in the educational institution desktops to grant the participants the access.

Concerning the sample size, although the study had a large amount of data, it is still not representative of all English language instructors and university learners, as the current number of enrolled students in Saudi public universities exceeds 188,000. Students who are on scholarships in countries where English is the official language exceed 20,000 according to 2016 Saudi Ministry of Education statistics. However, the collected responses exceed the minimum number for statistical effect size. The sample size could be increased by including more universities in more cities in Saudi Arabia in future studies. Future studies could also increase the sample size by including students who are on scholarships in countries such as the USA, Canada, the UK and New Zealand.

6.5 A concluding remark

In relation to grammar teaching and learning related perceptions, the researcher has found plenty to share and discuss with a high level of complexity. As in the broader SLA research field, grammar instruction is still a topic of debate which also applies to the Saudi

perspective that has not been explored sufficiently, particularly in regard to perceptions of grammar instruction (Ahmad et al., 2017; Al-Osaimi & Wedell, 2014; Al-Roomy, 2015; Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016; Aljohani, 2012; Alsowat, 2017; Assalahi, 2013).

Curriculum and language teaching development in the Saudi EFL context have been described as a detached, stand-alone system that does not allow Saudi expertise, research findings, and collaboration to enter the debate, which could provide a more extensive understanding of context-specific needs if the doors were opened. Context appears to have played a significant role in evaluating the relative benefits of various grammar teaching approaches. EFL instructors and learners possess valuable experience in relation to this issue, and this therefore justifies further investigation.

The exploratory nature of this study offers noteworthy insights utilising quantitative data parallelised with in-depth thematic qualitative data analysis that addressed three groups within two different learning contexts. Therefore, it extends the existing knowledge of instructors' and learners' perceptions of grammar teaching that had been lightly travelled in the Saudi EFL context. The findings contributed in presenting a clear understanding of the perceived beliefs, preferences in regard to grammar and grammar instruction.

To conclude with, the researcher highly appreciate the investigation of instructors' and learners' perceptions and, as described by Pajares (1992), "found exploring the nature of beliefs a rewarding enterprise"(p. 326). For the purpose of this study, the reward of this exploration would help promote better alignment between instructors' and learners' perspectives on one side and research and theory implications on the other, all considered for the purpose of developing language proficiency. The researcher hopes this thesis will contribute to achieving this goal.



Conference Participations

- Alhumaid, H. (2015, November). *Perceptions on grammar instruction for developing English language proficiency in Saudi Arabia*. Poster presented at the Fourth International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity (LED 2015), University of Auckland, NZ.
- Alhumaid, H. (2018, April). *Spotlight on some challenges and expectations faced and discussed by international higher degree students*. Paper presented at the 13th Quality in Postgraduate Research Conference (QPR2018), Adelaide, SA. Abstract retrieved from http://www.qpr.edu.au/qpr2018/qpr_2018_program
- Alhumaid, H. (2018, August). *Context impact on Saudi ESL and EFL learners' beliefs towards grammar learning*. Paper presented at the Third Saudi Scientific Symposium, Sydney, NSW.
- Alhumaid, H. (2019, April). *Preparing young Saudis for the 21st century*. Panel Participant at the third TUELC-CUP symposium titled: Life competencies in ELT, Taif University, Saudi Arabia.
- Alhumaid, H. (2019, November). *Managing English Language Self-learning in Social Media Platforms*. Paper presented at the first online conference for English Mastery group. <https://twitter.com/Englishmastery0>

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Instructors' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction in Saudi Universities

Welcome to My Survey

Information sheet

معلومات عن الاستبيان

عنوان الأطروحة: آراء الطلاب والمعلمين في المرحلة الجامعية تجاه تعلم وتدريب قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية للإسهام في تطوير اللغة أكاديميا في المملكة العربية السعودية.
الباحثة: أ. هناء الحميد محاضر في جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبدالرحمن طالبة في مرحلة الدكتوراة في جامعة فلندرز في استراليا (hana.alhumaid@flinders.edu.au)

وصف الدراسة: هذه الدراسة هي جزء من مشروع بحث الدكتوراة والذي يهدف إلى الإسهام في تطوير وتحسين مستوى اللغة الإنجليزية كـ **كلغة أكاديمية** من خلال النظر إلى آراء **طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية ومعلميها في المرحلة الجامعية** تجاه فعالية الطرق المستخدمة حاليا في تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية. **الدراسة المقترحة تهدف إلى** إبراز التوجهات الجديدة في تعليم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من منظور سعودي من خلال المقارنة بين آراء الطلاب والمعلمين حول تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية مع الممارسات الصفية الواقعية. وبذلك تطمح الباحثة لاستحداث نموذج مناسب لتعليم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية في السياق السعودي لتعزيز وتنمية إجادة اللغة الإنجليزية.

ماذا على أن أفعل؟ أولا، يسرني دعوتك للمشاركة في الاستبيان الإلكتروني للإجابة على بعض الأسئلة حول وجهات نظركم في تعلم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية بناء على خبراتكم الشخصية بدون الحاجة لذكر الهوية الخاصة بك. **الاستبيان قد يستغرق من ١٥ إلى ٢٥ دقيقة كحد أقصى** من وقتكم. ثانيا، إذا كنت على استعداد للمشاركة في **المقابلة الشخصية** لمناقشة المواضيع المطروحة في الاستبيان، أرجو منكم التكرم بإبراج وسيلة الإتصال المناسبة سواء بريد الكتروني أو هاتف في نهاية الاستبيان. المقابلة تستغرق حوالي 30 إلى 50 دقيقة وسيحدد المكان والوقت المناسب لإمكانيتكم. المشاركة هي تطوعية بحثه ويمكنك الإسهام منها متى شئت.

مالفائدة المكتسبة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟ تبادل الآراء والخبرات مهم جدا في التخطيط لتحسين وتطوير مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية مستقبلا في المملكة العربية السعودية وللمساعدة كذلك في تحسين مستوى الكفاءة بين المتعلمين السعوديين. يهمني جدا كـ معلمة للغة الإنجليزية تقديم كل ما هو مفيد وجديد لتطوير العملية التعليمية فيما يخص اللغة الإنجليزية ورسد آرائكم بصدد هذا الموضوع سيسهم في إثراء اطروحتي والتي أهدف فيها لخدمة أبناء وبنات وطني.

هل يتطلب الإفصاح عن هويتي عند اشتراكي في هذه الدراسة؟ المشاركة بالاستبيان لا تستوجب معرفة اسمك أو هويتك وجميع المعلومات المسجلة والمدونة ستكون محفوظة لغرض الدراسة فقط وبمجرد الإنتهاء من البحث سيتم إتلاف الملفات المحفوظة.

هل هنالك أية مخاطر في المشاركة بالبحث؟ لن يتعرض المشتركين لأي نوع من المخاطر حيث أن الدراسة ذات طابع تربوي بحث علما بأن المشاركة كما أوضحنا مسبقا لا تتطلب الكشف عن الهوية.

كيف تتم الموافقة على المشاركة؟ مشاركتك تقوم على أساس التطوع وحب الخير للمجتمع حيث أن آرائكم ومقترحاتكم هي هدفنا لتحقيق الفائدة للجميع وعليه فإن لكم مطلق الحرية في المتابعة أو الانسحاب دون أي تواج سلبية. **تتم الموافقة على المشاركة** بالبحث بمجرد إستئناف وإستكمال الإستبيان.

ماذا عن نتائج البحث؟ سيتم تلخيص النتائج وتحليلها وإطلاعكم عليها عند طلبكم عبر البريد الإلكتروني الخاص بالباحثة.

أشكر لكم قبولكم دعوتي للمشاركة بالبحث وأتمنى لكم التوفيق والسداد :



Instructors' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction in Saudi Universities

Section one: Instructors' Biographical Information

[1] What is your gender?

Female

Male

[2] What is your age?

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 64

Other (please specify)

[3] What is your country of origin?

[4] What is your native language (mother tongue)?

[5] What is the highest level of education you have completed?

[6] What is your educational background?

[7] I am working currently in:

[8] Hours of Teaching English per week inside the university:

0-2 hours

3-5 hours

6-10 hours

11+

Other (please specify)

[9] In what country do you teach now?

[10] How long have you been teaching English?

[11] Average students' number per class:



Instructors' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction in Saudi Universities

Section Two: Multiple Responses on Preferences and Beliefs about Grammar Instruction

[12] Learning English grammar help students in: (you can choose more than one answer)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve their English language |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conversation and communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding reading texts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expressing their ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |

[13] I prefer to teach English grammar through:(you can choose more than one answer)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comparing it to Arabic grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a text |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing games | <input type="checkbox"/> Conversation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step by step explanation | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing lots of exercises | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to a clip/video...etc. |

Other (please specify)



Instructors' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction in Saudi Universities

Section Three: Preferences and Beliefs about Grammar Instruction

Please answer the following questions about your beliefs and preferences of grammar and teaching grammar. This will help us better understand how teachers prefer to teach grammar. This is not a test, so there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. All responses will be kept confidential. Thank you very much for your help :-)

.....

Please indicate the level of agreement in the following statements about preferences for teaching grammar. Please feel free to add any comments you wish to make.

[14] Preferences and Beliefs of Grammar Instruction

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

(1) I like to explain the grammar rule following it with practice.

(2) I find it easier for students to learn grammar when I teach it by itself.

(3) I like to stop students to correct their errors as soon as they make them.

(4) I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar.

(5) I like teaching grammar for students by explaining as well as practicing exercises.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

(6) Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to use English more accurately.

(7) I find it hard to teach grammar through different activities like reading, conversation or in class games.

(8) I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of students in English.

(9) I find it helpful for students to learn a grammar point before reading it in texts.

(10) I believe that teaching English grammar is important to improve Academic English.

(22) I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.

(11) My students expect me to provide them with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc) before practice.

feel free to comment

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

(12) I prefer to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation, and in-class games.

(13) I like teaching grammar by using English within written/oral communication.

(14) I believe conducting communicative activities (like role-playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help my students to improve their Academic English quickly.

(15) I prefer to integrate grammar teaching as I work on different skills and activities.

(16) I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.

(17) Students learn better when I teach grammar while we read a text.

(18) I like to correct students' errors after an activity/lesson is completed.

(19) Students can learn grammar while reading\ listening to a passage.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

(20) I prefer to let the students learn grammar through various language activities without explaining.

(21) Doing communicative activities for students is a good way to learn the English language more accurately.

Feel free to comment



Instructors' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction in Saudi Universities

Section Four: The Teaching Context

[15] English Language Usage in Context:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(23) I think students need more time to practice English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(24) I use English often outside the university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(25) I rarely use English outside the class / university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(26) I think students have enough time to practice English in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(28) I think the class duration is enough for students to practice English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Feel free to comment

[16] I use English (in where I live now) mostly in:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> University | <input type="checkbox"/> Home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurants | <input type="checkbox"/> Travelling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With friends | |

Other (please specify)

[17] Arabic Language Learning Interference:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
(27) I think my students expect to learn English grammar the way they learnt Arabic grammar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(29) The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on teaching English grammar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Feel free to comment

[18] How (if at all) has the way you learnt Arabic affected your teaching of English grammar?



Instructors' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction in Saudi Universities

Interview Invitation and Class Observation Request

[19] If you are interested to join me for an **interview**, please provide your best contact details: (for male participant, will arrange for skype live streaming)

Country

Email Address Phone

Number

[20] The researcher would like to arrange for attending one of your classes, is it possible? (if it is a male class, will arrange for skype live streaming with my research assistant)

Yes :)

No :(

Other (please specify)

[21] Please give me your best contact detail for the class observation:

Name

University

City/Town

Email Address

Mobile

Thank you for your participation :)

If you need anything do not hesitate to contact me at: Hana.Alhumaid@flinders.edu.au

Twitter: [@Hana_Alhumaid](https://twitter.com/Hana_Alhumaid)



Saudi University Learners' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction

Welcome to My Survey

معلومات عن الإستبيان

عنوان الأطروحة: آراء الطلاب والمعلمين في المرحلة الجامعية تجاه تعلم وتدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية للإسهام في تطوير اللغة أكاديميا في المملكة العربية السعودية. **الباحثة:** أ. هناء الحميد محاضر في جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبد الرحمن طالبة في مرحلة الدكتوراة في جامعة فلندرز في استراليا (hana.alhumaid@flinders.edu.au)

وصف الدراسة: هذه الدراسة هي جزء من مشروع بحث الدكتوراة والذي يهدف إلى الإسهام في تطوير وتحسين مستوى اللغة الإنجليزية كـ **لغة أكاديمية** من خلال النظر إلى آراء **طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية ومعلميها في المرحلة الجامعية** تجاه فعالية الطرق المستخدمة حاليا في تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية. **الدراسة المقترحة تهدف إلى** إبراز التوجهات الجديدة في تعليم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من منظور سعودي من خلال المقارنة بين آراء الطلاب والمعلمين حول تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية مع الممارسات الصفية الواقعية. وبذلك تطمح الباحثة لإستحداث نموذج مناسب لتعليم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية في السياق السعودي لتعزيز وتنمية إجادة اللغة الإنجليزية .

ماذا على أن أفعل؟ أو لا، يسرني دعوتك للمشاركة في الإستبيان الإلكتروني للإجابة على بعض الأسئلة حول وجهات نظركم في تعلم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية بناء على خبراتكم الشخصية بدون الحاجة لذكر الهوية الخاصة بك. **الإستبيان قد يستغرق من ١٥ إلى ٢٥ دقيقة كحد أقصى** من وقتكم. ثانيا، إذا كنت على استعداد **للمشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية** لمناقشة المواضيع المطروحة في الإستبيان، أرجو منكم التكرم بإدراج وسيلة الإتصال المناسبة سواء بريد الكتروني أو هاتف في نهاية الإستبيان . المقابلة تستغرق حوالي 30 إلى 50 دقيقة وسيحدد المكان والوقت المناسب لإمكانياتكم. المشاركة هي تطوعية بحثه ويمكنك الانسحاب منها متى شئت.

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هل يتطلب الإفصاح عن هويتي عند اشتراكي في هذه الدراسة؟ المشاركة بالإستبيان لا تستوجب معرفة اسمك أو هويتك وجميع المعلومات المسجلة والمودنة ستكون محفوظة لغرض الدراسة فقط وبمجرد الإنتهاء من البحث سيتم إتلاف الملفات المحفوظة.

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ماذا عن نتائج البحث؟ سيتم تلخيص النتائج وتحليلها وإطلاعكم عليها عند طلبكم عبر البريد الإلكتروني الخاص بالباحثة.

أشكر لكم قبولكم دعوتي للمشاركة بالبحث وأتمنى لكم التوفيق والسداد (:



Saudi University Learners' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction

Section one: Learners' Biographical Information

[1] What is your gender?

ما جنسك؟

- Female أنثى
- Male ذكر

[2] What is your age?

كم عمرك؟

- 18 to 20
- 21 to 24
- 25 to 27
- 28 to 30
- 31 to 34

[3] What is your academic level?

ماهي مرحلتك الجامعية؟

- English year for scholarship holders
مرحلة اللغة الإنجليزية للمبتعثين
- Preparatory year
السنة التحضيرية
- First/ Second year
السنة الأولى أو الثانية
- Third/ fourth year
السنة الثالثة أو الرابعة
- Above/ Graduate
مرحلة التخرج وما بعدها

[4] What is your specialization?

ما هو تخصصك الجامعي؟

[5] What is your GPA out of 5?

ما هو معدلك الجامعي الحالي من 5؟

- 4.1 or above أو أعلى
- 3.6 - 4.0
- 3.1 - 3.5
- 2.6 - 3.0
- 2.5 or below
- Other إجابة أخرى

[6] Where do you study now?

مقر الدراسة الحالي؟



Saudi University Learners' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction

[7] Choose your university Please:

أي من الجامعات التالية تدرس بها حالياً؟

[8] what is your purpose of learning English?

ما لغرض من دراستك اللغة الإنجليزية؟

[9] Hours of learning English per week:

ما معدل الساعات التقريبي التي تقضيها في تعلم وممارسة اللغة الانجليزية خلال الأسبوع؟

0-2 hours
ساعتين أو أقل

3-5 hours
٣ إلى ٥ ساعات

6-10 hours
٦ إلى ١٠ ساعات

11+ hours أكثر من ١١ ساعة

Other

[10] Your IELTS Score:

الدرجة الحاصلة عليها في اختبار الأيلتس إن وجد؟

6.5 - 9

5.5 - 6

4.0 - 5.0

أقل من 4.0

لا شيء

[11] Your TOEFL iBT score:

الدرجة الحاصلة عليها في إختبار التوفل إن وجد؟

- 100-120
- 80-99
- 60-79
- 40-59
- لا شيء NA



Saudi University Learners' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction

Section Two: Multiple Responses on Preferences and Beliefs about Grammar Instruction

[12] Learning English Grammar helps me in (you can choose more than one answer):

تعلم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية يساعدي في (يمكن اختيار أكثر من إجابة):

- Academic writing
الكتابة الأكاديمية
- Improving my English language
تحسين لغتي
- Understanding reading texts
فهم النصوص
- Conversation and communication
الحوار والتواصل
- Expressing my ideas
التعبير عن أفكاري
- None of the above
لا شيء مما سبق

[13] I prefer to learn English grammar through (you can choose more than one answer):

أفضل تعلم القواعد الإنجليزية من خلال القنوات التالية (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من واحد):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comparing it to Arabic grammar
المقارنة بقواعد اللغة العربية | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a text
قراءة النصوص |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing games in class
ممارسة الألعاب الصفية | <input type="checkbox"/> Conversation
المحادثة |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Step by step explanation
الشرح خطوة بخطوة | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing
الكتابة |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing lots of exercises
آداء الكثير من التمارين | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to a clip/video...etc.
الاستماع للمقاطع الصوتية والمرئية |



Saudi University Learners' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction

Section Three: Preferences and Beliefs about Grammar Instruction

Please answer the following questions about your beliefs and preferences of grammar and learning grammar. This will help us better understand how students prefer to be taught grammar. This is not a test, so there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. All responses will be kept confidential. Thank you very much for your help :-)

أرجو الإجابة على الفقرات التالية بما يعبر عن معتقداتكم وما تفضلونه في تعلم القواعد الإنجليزية وذلك يسهم في الوصول إلى فهم أعمق لما تتمنونه في مجال تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية. أود التأكيد على أن هذا الاستبيان ليس اختبار ولا يوجد إجابة صحيحة أو خاطئة وإنما هو فرصة لكم للتعبير عما تتوقون له علما بأن جميع الإجابات ستعامل بسرية تامة. شاكرين لكم مشاركتكم ☺

Please indicate how far you agree with the following statements about preferences for teaching grammar. Please feel free to add any comments you wish to make.

[14] Preferences and Beliefs of Grammar Instruction

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree
أوافق بشدة أوافق نوعا ما أوافق نوعا ما أرفض أرفض أرفض بشدة

(1) I like my teacher to explain the grammar rule first following it with practice.

أود من معلمي/معلمتي شرح القاعدة النحوية ومن ثم التدرب عليها

(2) I find it easier to learn grammar when the teacher teaches it by itself.

أرى أنه من الأسهل فهم وتعلم القواعد حين يتم تدريسها على حدة

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	نوعاً ما أوافق	نوعاً ما أرفض	أرفض	أرفض بشدة
<p>(3) I like my teacher to stop me and correct my mistakes as soon as I make them.</p> <p>ود من معلمي معلمتي استيقافي لتصحيح أخطائي حال حدوثها</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>(4) I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar.</p> <p>تعجبني الدروس التي تركز على تعليم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>(5) I like learning grammar by seeing the explanation as well as practicing exercises.</p> <p>أفضل تعلم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية عبر متابعة الشرح وأداء التمارين التدريبية</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>(6) Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to learn using English more accurately.</p> <p>أداء تمارين قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية هي طريقة تعليمية فعالة للاستخدام اللغوي بشكل صحيح</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>(7) I find it hard to learn grammar through different language activities such as reading, conversation or in class games.</p> <p>أجد أنه من الصعب تعلم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال أنشطة اللغة المختلفة مثل القراءة والمحادثة والألعاب الصفية</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree
أوافق بشدة أوافق نوعا ما أوافق نوعا ما أرفض أرفض بشدة

(8) I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of my English.

ممارسة التدريب على قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية هي باعتقادي طريقة تسرع من تطوير لغتي

(9) I find it helpful to learn a grammar point before reading it in a text.

أجد أنه من النافع دراسة القاعدة الإنجليزية قبل قراءة النصوص

(10) I believe that studying English grammar is important to improve my Academic English.

أعتقد أن دراسة قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية شيء ضروري لتطوير لغتي الأكاديمية

(22) I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.

أعتقد أنه من الممكن تعلم الإنجليزية بدون تعلم قواعد النحوية

(11) I expect my teacher to provide me with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc) before practice.

أترقب من معلمي معلمي تزويدي بالمصطلحات النحوية

Feel free to comment مساحة لتعليقاتكم

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree
أوافق بشدة أوافق نوعا ما أوافق نوعا ما أرفض أرفض أرفض بشدة

(12) I prefer my teacher to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation, and in-class games.

أفضل أن تقوم معلمتي/يقوم معلمي بتدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال الأنشطة المتعددة مثل القراءة والمحادثة والألعاب الصفية

(13) I like learning grammar by using English within written/oral communication.

أفضل تعلم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام اللغة في التواصل تحدثا وكتابة

(14) I believe conducting communicative activities (like role-playing, conversation, group work.... etc) will improve my academic English quickly.

أعتقد أن أداء الأنشطة التفاعلية (مثل لعبة الأدوار والمحادثة وغيرها) باستخدام اللغة سيطور لغتي الأكاديمية سريعا.

(15) I prefer my teacher to integrate grammar teaching while I work on different skills and activities.

أود من معلمي/معلمتي دمج شرح القواعد في المهارات والأنشطة المختلفة.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

أوافق بشدة أوافق نوعاً ما أوافق نوعاً ما أرفض أرفض بشدة

(16) I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.

أفضل الدروس التي تركز على التفاعل والمشاركة بحيث يكون التركيز على القواعد محدود وحسب الحاجة فقط

(17) I learn better when my teacher teaches grammar while we read a text.

أتعلم بشكل أفضل عندما يشرح معلمي القواعد الإنجليزية أثناء قراءة النصوص

(18) I like my teacher to correct my mistakes after an activity/lesson is completed.

أود من معلمي / معلمتي تصحيح أخطائي بعد انتهاء الدرس أو النشاط

(19) I can learn grammar while reading/listening to a passage.

يمكنني تعلم القواعد الإنجليزية أثناء القراءة / الاستماع إلى النصوص

(20) I prefer to learn grammar through various language activities without explaining.

أفضل أن أكتسب قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال أنشطة اللغة المختلفة بدون الحاجة للشرح

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree
أوافق بشدة أوافق نوعا ما أوافق نوعا ما أرفض أرفض أرفض بشدة

(21) Doing communicative activities is a good way for me to learn English more accurately.

ممارستي للأنشطة التفاعلية هي طريقة جيدة لإجادة اللغة الإنجليزية

Feel free to comment

Section Four: The Learning Context

[15] English Language Usage in Context:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	نوعا ما أوافق	نوعا ما أرفض	أرفض	أرفض بشدة
(23) I need more time to practice English. أحتاج وقتا أطول للتدرب على استخدام اللغة الانجليزية	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(24) I use English often outside the class/university. من المعتاد أن أستخدم اللغة الانجليزية خارج الصف\ الجامعة	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(25) I rarely use English outside the university/class. من النادر أن أتحدث الإنجليزية خارج الجامعة أو الهيئة التعليمية	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(26) I have enough time to practice using English in class. لدي الوقت الكافي لممارسة اللغة الإنجليزية في الصف	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(28) I think the class duration is enough for me to practice English. أعتقد أن المدة الزمنية لممارسة اللغة الإنجليزية في الفصل كافية	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Feel free to comment

[16] I use English (in where I live now) mostly in: أستخدم اللغة الانجليزية غالبا في:

University

Home

Internet

Hospitals

Shopping

work

Restaurants

Travelling

With friends

[17] Arabic Language Learning Interference:

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

أوافق بشدة

أوافق

نوعا ما أوافق

نوعا ما أرفض

أرفض

أرفض بشدة

(27) I expect to learn English grammar the way I learn Arabic grammar.

أتطلع لتعلم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية بنفس الطريقة التي تعلمت بها قواعد اللغة العربية

(29) The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on learning English grammar.

الطريقة التي تعلمت بها قواعد اللغة العربية لم تؤثر على تعلمي للقواعد الإنجليزية حاليا

[18] How (if at all) has the way you learnt Arabic affected your learning of English grammar?

كيف كان تأثير تعلمك لقواعد اللغة العربية على دراستك الآن لقواعد اللغة الإنجليزية؟



Saudi University Learners' Perceptions on Grammar and Grammar Instruction

Interview Invitation

[19] If you are interested to join me for an **interview, please provide your best contact details:**
إذا كنت ترغبين\ترغب في إجراء مقابلة شخصية في ذات الموضوع البحثي أرجو تزويدي بأفضل وسيلة اتصال لديكم.

البريد الإلكتروني

رقم الهاتف

Thank you for your participation :)

If you need anything do not hesitate to contact me at: Hana.Alhumaid@flinders.edu.au

Twitter: [@Hana_Alhumaid](https://twitter.com/Hana_Alhumaid)

SUPERVISOR LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



Department of Language Studies
Room 227, Humanities Building
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001
Tel: (+618) 82013086
Fax: (+618) 82012784
Robyn.Najar@flinders.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Letter of Introduction

Dear Participant,

This letter is to introduce Mrs Hana Khalid Al Humaid who is a PhD student in the Department of Humanities and Language Studies at Flinders University.

She is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on the subject of Students' and Teachers' Perceptions on Grammar Instruction for Developing English Language Proficiency in Saudi Arabia: mixed methods study.

She would be most grateful if you would volunteer to assist in this project, by completing a questionnaire and granting an interview and classroom observation, which cover certain aspects of this topic.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest of confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Since Hana intends to keep a history record of the transcribed interview, she will seek your consent, on the attached form, to keep a history record of the interview, to use the it in preparing the thesis, report or other publications, on condition that your name, email or identity is not revealed, and to make the history record available to other researchers on the same conditions.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed at me at the address given above or by the telephone on 82013086, by fax on 82012784 or by email (robyn.najar@flinders.edu.au).

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Robyn L. Najar
Associate Professor
Head TESOL/ESOL
Department of Language Studies

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 6752). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

QUESTIONNAIRE INFORMATION SHEET
(Learners' Version)

Title: “Instructors’ and Learners’ Perceptions of English Grammar for Developing Language Proficiency: A Mixed Methods Study within Saudi Arabia and Australia”

Investigator:

Mrs Hana Al Humaid
School of Humanities
Flinders University
Mobile: +61432443573

Primary Supervisor:

Associate Prof. Robyn Najar
School of Humanities
Flinders University
Ph: +61 8 8201 3086

2nd Supervisor:

Dr. Jeffrey Gil
School of Humanities
Flinders University
Ph: +61 8 8201 2436

Description of the study:

This study is part of the project entitled:

“Instructors’ and Learners’ Perceptions of English Grammar for Developing Language Proficiency: A Mixed Methods Study within Saudi Arabia and Australia”

This project will investigate Saudi English as a second language teachers’ and learners’ views on the value of teaching English grammar to improve English language proficiency. This project is supported by Flinders University, School of Humanities.

Purpose of the study:

The proposed study is aiming to address the following issues:

- Identify new views on teaching English grammar from a Saudi Perspective.
- Identify if Saudi English as a Foreign Language context has a role to play in teachers’ and learners’ views on the importance of teaching grammar
- Compare students and teachers’ opinions about teaching English grammar to real classroom practices.
- Generate a suitable practice model for teaching English grammar in the Saudi context to promote the development of English language proficiency.
- Identify if there is a dichotomy between second language teaching pedagogy and real classroom practice in relation to the Saudi EFL context.

What will I be asked to do?

Firstly, you are invited to do an online anonymous questionnaire to answer some questions on your views about learning English grammar based on your experience. It will not take more than

20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Secondly, if you are willing to participate in an interview please indicate that at the end of the survey by providing your email or any suitable contact details. The interview will take about 30 to 50 minutes. The interview will be saved to help with looking at the results. The audio recording of the interview and the observation will be stored as a computer file for five years and then destroyed.

Concerning the observation, the researcher will undertake onsite observation in English language classes. A consent form will be firstly obtained from the teacher to conduct the observation. The role of the researcher is to sit back and observe how the teacher will teach the grammar lesson according to the provided lesson plan and record the students' attitudes and status during the lesson without any interruption or interference from the researcher side. The whole class is under observation. Over all, this is voluntary.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The sharing of your experiences will improve in the planning of future English language curricula in Saudi Arabia to help in improving the level of proficiency among Saudi learners. I am very keen to deliver a service and resources which are as useful as possible to people.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

We do not need your name and you will be anonymous. Once the research is done, the saved files will be destroyed. Any identifying information will be removed, and the typed-up file stored on a password-protected computer that only the coordinators (Associate Professor Robyn Najar and Dr Jeffrey Gil) will have access to. Your comments will not be linked directly to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

There are no burdens or risks to the participants. Individuals will not be identified by name and as such will not experience invasion of privacy or embarrassment. The questions are not of a sensitive nature. Individual participants will not be identified, or identifiable in my thesis.

How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. Your participation is valuable to the undertaken research, but you may refuse to answer any questions and you are free to withdraw from the questionnaire and the interview

at any time without effect or consequences. For the survey, you will agree by starting and completing the questions. An invitation will accompany the survey for a follow up interview, if you are willing to participate in the interview please provide me with your email or any suitable contact details (preferred to be anonymous) and if you agree to participate please read and sign the form.

How will I receive feedback?

Outcomes from the project will be summarised and given to you by the investigator if you would like to see them via email.

Outcomes from the project will be summarised and given to you by the investigator if you would like to see them via email.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

QUESTIONNAIRE INFORMATION SHEET
(Instructors' Version)

Title: *“Instructors’ and Learners’ Perceptions of English Grammar for Developing Language Proficiency: A Mixed Methods Study within Saudi Arabia and Australia”*

Investigator:
Mrs Hana Al Humaid
School of Humanities
Flinders University
Mobile: +61432443573

Primary Supervisor:
Associate Prof. Robyn Najar
School of Humanities
Flinders University
Ph: +61 8 8201 3086

2nd Supervisor:
Dr. Jeffrey Gil
School of Humanities
Flinders University
Ph: +61 8 8201 2436

Description of the study:

This study is part of the project entitled:

“Instructors’ and Learners’ Perceptions of English Grammar for Developing Language Proficiency: A Mixed Methods Study within Saudi Arabia and Australia”

This project will investigate Saudi English as a second language teachers' and learners' views on the value of teaching English grammar explicitly to improve English language proficiency. This project is supported by Flinders University, School of Humanities.

Purpose of the study:

The proposed study is aiming to address the following issues:

- Identify new views on teaching English grammar from a Saudi Perspective.
- Identify if Saudi English as a Foreign Language context has a role to play in teachers' and learners' views on the importance of teaching grammar

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 6752). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

- Compare students' and teachers' opinions about teaching English grammar to real classroom practices.
- Generate a suitable practice model for teaching English grammar in the Saudi context to promote the development of English language proficiency.
- Identify if there is a dichotomy between second language teaching pedagogy and real classroom practice in relation to the Saudi EFL context.

What will I be asked to do?

Firstly, you are invited to do an online anonymous questionnaire to answer some questions on your views about teaching English grammar based on your experience. It will not take more than 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Secondly, if you are willing to participate in a class observation and an interview please indicate that at the end of the survey by providing your email address or any suitable contact details. The interview will take about 30 to 50 minutes. The interview will be saved to help with looking at the results. The audio recording of the interview and the observation will be stored as a computer file for five years and then destroyed.

Over all, this is voluntary.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The sharing of your experiences will improve in the planning of future English language curricula in Saudi Arabia to help in improving the level of proficiency among Saudi learners. I am very keen to deliver a service and resources which are as useful as possible to people.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

We do not need your name and you will be anonymous. Once the research is done, the saved files will be destroyed. Any identifying information will be removed, and the typed-up file stored on a password-protected computer that only the coordinators (Associate Professor Robyn Najar and Dr Jeffrey Gil) will have access to. Your comments will not be linked directly to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

There are no burdens or risks to the participants. Individuals will not be identified by name and as such will not experience invasion of privacy or embarrassment. The questions are not of a sensitive

nature. Individual participants will not be identified, or identifiable in my thesis.

How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. Your participation is valuable to the undertaken research, but you may refuse to answer any questions and you are free to withdraw from the questionnaire and the interview at any time without effect or consequences. A consent form will accompany the survey and interview invitation later on and if you are willing to participate in the interview please provide me with your email or any suitable contact details (preferred to be anonymous) and if you agree to participate please read and sign the form.

How will I receive feedback?

Outcomes from the project will be summarised and given to you by the investigator if you would like to see them via email.

Outcomes from the project will be summarised and given to you by the investigator if you would like to see them via email.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

QUESTIONNAIRE INFORMATION SHEET (Arabic Version)

معلومات عن الاستبيان

عنوان الأطروحة: آراء الطلاب والمعلمين تجاه تعلم وتدريب قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية للإسهام في تطويرها في المملكة العربية السعودية.
الباحثة: هناء الحميد محاضر في جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبدالرحمن وحاليا في جامعة فلندرز (hana.alhumaid@flinders.edu.au)

وصف الدراسة:

هذه الدراسة هي جزء من مشروع بحث الدكتوراة والذي يهدف إلى الإسهام في تطوير وتحسين مستوى اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال النظر إلى آراء طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية ومعلميها في المرحلة الجامعية تجاة فعالية الطرق المستخدمة حاليا في تدريس قواعد اللغة الانجليزية.

الهدف من الدراسة

الدراسة المقترحة تهدف إلى معالجة القضايا التالية:

- (١) إبراز التوجهات الجديدة في تعليم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من منظور سعودي.
- (٢) النظر في إذا ما كان للبيئة السعودية دور في رسم اتجاهات المعلمين والمتعلمين نحو تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية.
- (٣) المقارنة بين آراء الطلاب والمعلمين حول تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية مع الممارسات الصفية الواقعية.
- (٤) استحداث نموذج مناسب لتعليم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية في السياق السعودي لتعزيز وتنمية إجادة اللغة الإنجليزية.

ماذا على أن أفعل؟

أولا، يسرني دعوتك للمشاركة في الاستبيان الإلكتروني للإجابة على بعض الأسئلة حول وجهات نظركم في تعلم قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية بناء على خبراتكم الشخصية بدون الحاجة لذكر الهوية الخاصة بك. الاستبيان قد يستغرق من ١٥ إلى ٢٥ دقيقة من وقتكم. ثانيا، إذا كنت على استعداد للمشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية لمناقشة المواضيع المطروحة في الاستبيان، أرجو منكم التكرم بإدراج وسيلة الاتصال المناسبة سواء بريد الكتروني أو هاتف في نهاية الاستبيان . المقابلة تستغرق حوالي 30 إلى 50 دقيقة وسيحدد المكان والوقت المناسب لإمكانيتكم. المشاركة هي تطوعية بحثه ويمكنك الانسحاب منها متى شئت.

مالفائدة المكتسبة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟

تبادل الآراء والمخبرات مهم جدا في التخطيط لتحسين وتطوير مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية مستقبلا في المملكة العربية السعودية و للمساعدة كذلك في تحسين مستوى الكفاءة بين المتعلمين السعوديين. يهمني جدا كعامة للغة الإنجليزية تقديم كل ما هو مفيد وجديد لتطوير العملية التعليمية فيما يخص اللغة الانجليزية ورصد آرائكم بصدد هذا الموضوع سيسهم في إثراء اطروحتي والتي اهدف فيها لخدمة أبناء وبنات وطني.

هل يتطلب الإفصاح عن هويتي عند اشتراكي في هذه الدراسة؟

المشاركة بالإستبيان لا تستوجب معرفة اسمك او هويتك وجميع المعلومات المسجلة والمدونة ستكون محفوظة لغرض الدراسة فقط وبمجرد الانتهاء من البحث سيتم اتلاف الملفات المحفوظة.

هل هنالك أية مخاطر في المشاركة بالبحث؟

لن يتعرض المشتركين لأي نوع من المخاطر حيث أن الدراسة ذات طابع تربوي بحث علما بأن المشاركة كما أوضحنا مسبقا لا تتطلب الكشف عن الهوية .

كيف تتم الموافقة على المشاركة؟

مشاركتك في بحثي تقوم على أساس التطوع وحب الخير للمجتمع حيث أن آرائكم ومقترحاتكم هي هدفنا لتحقيق الفائدة للجميع وعليه فان لكم مطلق الحرية في المتابعة او الانسحاب دون أي توابع سلبية. تتم الموافقة على المشاركة بالبحث بمجرد استكمال الاستبيان.

ماذا عن نتائج البحث؟ سيتم تلخيص النتائج وتحليلها وإطلاعكم عليها عند طلبكم عبر البريد الإلكتروني الخاص بالباحثة.

أشكر لكم قبولكم دعوتي للمشاركة بالبحث واتمنى لكم التوفيق والسداد :

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 6752). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM
(Learners' Version)

“Instructors’ and Learners’ Perceptions of English Grammar for Developing Language Proficiency: A Mixed Methods Study within Saudi Arabia and Australia”

Ibeing over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the letter of introduction for the research project on Teaching English Grammar in the Saudi Context.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
 - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
 - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
 - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
 - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on any service that is being provided to me.
 - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on my progress in my course of study, or results gained.
 - I may ask that the recording/observation be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
6. I agree to the tape/transcript being made available to other researchers who are not members of this research team, but who are judged by the research team to be doing related research, on condition that my identity is not revealed.

Participant’s signature.....**Date**.....

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher’s name.....

Researcher’s signature.....**Date**.....

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 6752). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM
(Instructors' Version)

“Instructors’ and Learners’ Perceptions of English Grammar for Developing Language Proficiency: A Mixed Methods Study within Saudi Arabia and Australia”

I being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the letter of introduction for the research project on Teaching English Grammar in the Saudi Context.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
 - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
 - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
 - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
 - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on any service that is being provided to me.
 - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on my progress in my course of study, or results gained.
 - I may ask that the recording/observation be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
6. I agree to the tape/transcript being made available to other researchers who are not members of this research team, but who are judged by the research team to be doing related research, on condition that my identity is not revealed.

Participant’s signature.....**Date**.....

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher’s name.....

Researcher’s signature.....**Date**.....

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 6752). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM (Arabic Version)

استمارة الموافقة للمشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية

عنوان الأطروحة: "آراء الطلاب والمعلمين تجاه تعلم وتدريب قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية للإسهام في تطويرها في المملكة العربية السعودية"

أقر أنا بأن عمري فوق 18 عاماً ويسرني الإعراب عن موافقتي للمشاركة في المقابلة المتعلقة برسالة الباحثة هناء الحميد عضو هيئة التدريس في جامعة الأميرة نورة وطالبة الدكتوراه حالياً في جامعة فلندرز في أستراليا والتي تدور حول موضوع تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من منظور سعودي.

أقر بأنني قرأت المعلومات الخاصة بالبحث في مقدمة الاستبيان الإلكتروني وعليه:

- تم إيضاح جوانب البحث والمتطلبات.
- أوافق على المشاركة في البحث وليس لدي مانع من التسجيل الصوتي أثناء المقابلة لأغراض البحث فقط.
- اعلم أن علي الاحتفاظ بنسخة من معلومات البحث وكذلك نسخة من الموافقة الموقعة.

مما علمت أيضاً:

- أنه قد لا أستفيد بطريقة مباشرة من المشاركة في هذا البحث.
- يمكنني الانسحاب من المقابلة في أي وقت، ولدي كامل الحرية في عدم الإجابة على أسئلة معينة.
- ستبقى المعلومات الشخصية في أمانة الباحث ولن تستخدم في البحث أو أي مقال ينشر من خلاله.
- المشاركة في البحث أو عدمها أو حتى الانسحاب لن يؤثر بأي شكل من الأشكال على وضعي الدراسي أو العملي.
- المشاركة في البحث أو عدمها أو حتى الانسحاب أيضاً لا يشكل أي تأثير على التطور المنشود في وطني ولا حتى في نتائج البحث الحالي.
- يحق لي طلب وقف التسجيل أو الانسحاب أثناء المقابلة الشخصية دون أية مشاكل.

ليس لدي اعتراض على إتاحة الفرصة للباحثين المهتمين بنفس المجال كذلك للاطلاع والاستفادة من المعلومات المسجلة المطروحة أثناء المقابلة لأهداف تربوية فقط بشرط التحفظ على الهوية والخصوصية.

توقيع المشاركة:

التاريخ:

أقر بأنني قد أوضحت وشرحت متطلبات وضوابط المشاركة في الدراسة البحثية وأن الموافقة تمت بكامل حرية المشارك ووفقاً لطلبية.

اسم الباحث:

توقيع الباحث:

التاريخ:

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 6752). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSED TOPICS

The interview questions will be generated from the survey around the same topic that is views and preferences for teaching and learning English grammar in Saudi Arabia. Here are some of the general guiding questions and topics that will lead the discussion:

Topics to be discussed:

- ◆ English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia.
- ◆ The Saudi context in relation to teaching English.
- ◆ Different approaches toward teaching and learning grammar.
- ◆ Views and beliefs about English grammar.
- ◆ In class participation.
- ◆ Class duration.

Suggested questions:

- 1- What do you consider grammar?
- 2- How important is learning and teaching grammar in regard to language proficiency?
- 3- How do Saudi English teachers and learners prefer to teach English grammar?

Which of the following three lessons do you prefer in teaching and learning grammar:

1. Explicit Isolated.
2. Explicit Integrated.
3. Implicit.

"I will describe for you 3 options for a grammar lesson, presenting for instance the simple past tense, and I want you to choose the most preferred one to you and tell me your reasons for your choice:

1. Explicit Isolated Grammar Instruction:

Explicit teaching of the rule > examples > practice

The instructor will present the past tense rule for example followed by some examples, and then concluding the lesson with text reading or listening to a related audio. At the end, lots of practice is provided.

2. Explicit Integrated Grammar Instruction:

Reading or listening activity > discussing the related info> explicit teaching of the rule > practice it

the instructor will start the lesson with a story to be read and the story has the past tense. After reading the story or listening to it, a discussion of the events only will be provided. At the final stage, the instructor will explain the rule and ask learners to practice.

3. Implicit Grammar Learning:

The purely implicit teaching of the grammar rule

The instructor will spend the whole class on reading a story or listening to an audio clip which is in the past. With the learners, they will discuss the events, talk about the characters, and write about the story itself without giving direct attention to the grammar rules. So, the instructor will just let the learners listen. read and write without explicitly explaining the past tense rule."

Appendix K Class Observation Checklist

CLASS OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Class: _____ Time: _____ Department: _____
 Level: _____ Date: _____ Number of students: _____
 University: _____ Lesson: _____

SUI [?]		Yes	No	Example
Observed grammar practices				
Explicit Isolated	1. The teacher gives the rule and follows it with practice.			
	2. The teacher presents a grammar point before reading it in text.			
	3. The teacher presents grammar without a context.			
	4. The teacher does grammar exercises to encourage students to use English more accurately.			
	5. The teacher uses lots of grammatical terminology.			
	6. The teacher compares English grammar to Arabic.			
Explicit Integrated	7. The teacher teaches grammar by explaining and doing practice exercises.			
	8. The teacher teaches grammar by using English within communicative activities.			
	9. The teacher tends to teach grammar through reading or speaking activities.			
	10. The teacher presents grammar as she/he works on different skills and activities.			
	11. The teacher teaches grammar while the students read a text.			
	12. The teacher often teaches grammar while reading or listening to a passage.			
	13. The teacher tends more to teach grammar through speaking, writing, listening, or reading activities.			
Implicit	14. The teacher communicates in English and teaches grammar only when necessary.			
	15. The teacher spends more time in teaching grammar indirectly.			
Error Correction	16. The teacher corrects students' mistakes as soon as they make them.			
	17. The teacher corrects students' mistakes after an activity is completed.			
Language	18. The teacher uses English only in the Class.			
	19. The teacher tends to translate into Arabic.			
Learners engagement	20. Students are fully engaged with the teacher.			
	21. Students have a chance to talk and ask questions.			
	22. Students have enough time to practice English.			
	23. Students enjoy group work.			

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW THEMES
(Initial and beyond the study frame themes)

NVivo List of Nodes

“Files” represents the participants’ transcribed interview and “Reference” denote the number of the specific coded text for each concept.

Name	Files (34 transcribed files in total)	References
Academic English and grammar	18	23
Acquiring grammar subconsciously through language exposure	5	7
Arab learners and grammar	12	21
Arabic grammar interference	25	40
Attitudes towards change	29	91
Background info	18	31
Beginners and grammar	9	20
Beliefs about learning English	27	99
Betty Azar	5	8
Building vocab	4	4
Can students learn English without learning grammar	31	85
Communication	22	43
Comparing to Arabic grammar	21	28
Content rather than correct grammar	4	5
Context	30	83
Challenges	21	68
Nature of class activities	31	84
Assessment	31	53
Class size	18	22
Culture	7	7
Curriculum	21	45
Facilities	1	1
Difference between 2 contexts	9	20
Does Saudi context support practicing English	23	35
Is there enough time to practice English in your context?	29	58
Correct usage of grammar	29	44
CLT	17	40
CLT for Saudi context	10	16
Genre analysis	1	1
games	9	11
Group work	10	12
Do you use reading or listening to teach grammar?	8	10
EFL learners	9	21
English for academic purposes	10	13
Explicit grammar	13	32
How did you find the questionnaire?	17	23
How do your instructors teach English grammar?	12	14
How important is learning grammar in relation to language proficiency?	34	48

How to improve language?	10	14
IELTS test	1	1
Implicit teaching	17	34
Integrated grammar teaching	16	35
Interesting	22	53
Is grammar essential?	31	59
Language skills	13	18
Learners ability	8	11
Learners experience	21	38
Learning English and grammar as children	20	21
Learning responsibility	4	5
Level	9	15
Listening skill	9	10
Making mistakes	20	23
Motivation	5	13
Native speakers	8	9
Preference versus practice	12	16
Purpose of learning English	11	12
Qualification	2	2
Reading skill	3	3
Real life examples	7	7
Recommendations and feedbacks	30	39
Research question	4	21
Reasons for choosing explicit	18	34
Reasons for choosing implicit	17	36
Speaking skill	10	13
Specialization	13	21
Stopping students to correct their mistakes	11	15
Students attitudes	23	55
Students expectations	14	27
Students needs	19	37
Students' attitudes to English in general	12	17
Students' preference	18	32
Teacher nationality	2	2
Teachers attitudes	12	83
Teaching experience	11	54
Textbook	14	28
Class duration	22	38
The questionnaire inspires to change	4	4
Time as a factor	11	22
University students	6	9
Using Arabic in teaching English grammar	19	30
Using examples	5	6
Using grammatical terms	1	1
Using stories	3	3
Using videos to acquire grammar	5	8
What are the current views on teaching English grammar from a Saudi perspective?	15	48
What is grammar according to you	34	47
Attitude towards grammar	34	171
Challenging	1	1
Grammar as a gate to understanding	8	8

Grammar is the basis	9	9
Don't care about grammar	1	1
Important for making sentences	10	11
Important for writing	4	4
Grammar and writing	24	36
Grammar as a barrier to learning English	3	4
Grammar as a mean to convey meaning	4	6
Grammar as math	3	7
Grammar comes with practice	11	16
Grammar is boring	2	4
Grammar is simple	2	2
What is your preferred way of learning English grammar	34	142
3 options lesson	30	31
No rule explanation	5	5
Reading or listening, rule then practice	12	13
Rule, example then reading or listening	13	13
What is your preferred way of teaching grammar	16	93
Which beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching are most widely held by teachers and learners	20	65

INSTRUCTORS' LIKERT SCALE ITEMS

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I like to explain the grammar rule following it with practice.						
2. I find it easier for students to learn grammar when I teach it by itself.						
3. I like to stop students to correct their errors as soon as they make them.						
4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar.						
5. I like teaching grammar for students by explaining as well as practising exercises.						
6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to learn using English more accurately.						
7. I find it hard to teach grammar through different activities like reading, conversation or in class games.						
8. I believe practising grammar rules accelerate the improvement of students in English.						
9. I find it helpful for students to learn a grammar point before reading it in texts.						
10. I believe that teaching English grammar is important to improve Academic English.						
11. My students expect me to provide them with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice.						
12. I prefer to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation, and in class games.						
13. I like teaching grammar by using English within written/oral communication.						
14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help my students to improve their Academic English quickly.						
15. I prefer to integrate grammar teaching as I work on different skills and activities.						
16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.						
17. Students learn better when I teach grammar while we read a text.						
18. I like to correct students' errors after an activity/lesson is completed.						
19. Students can learn grammar while reading\ listening to a passage.						
20. I prefer to let the students learn grammar through various language activities without explaining.						
21. Doing communicative activities for students is a good way to learn English language more accurately.						
22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.						
23. I think students need more time to practice English.						
24. I use English often outside the university.						
25. I rarely use English outside the class / university.						
26. I think students have enough time to practice English in class.						
27. I think my students expect to learn English grammar the way they learnt Arabic grammar.						
28. I think the class duration is enough for students to practice English.						
29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on teaching English grammar.						

LEARNERS' LIKERT SCALE ITEMS

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I like my teacher to explain the grammar rule first following it with practice.					
2. I find it easier to learn grammar when the teacher teaches it by itself.					
3. I like my teacher to stop me and correct my mistakes as soon as I make them.					
4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar.					
5. I like learning grammar by seeing the explanation as well as practicing exercises.					
6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to learn using English more accurately.					
7. I find it hard to learn grammar through different language activities such as reading, conversation or in class games.					
8. I believe practising grammar rules accelerate the improvement of my English.					
9. I find it helpful to learn a grammar point before reading it in a text.					
10. I believe that studying English grammar is important to improve my Academic English.					
11. I expect my teacher to provide me with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice.					
12. I prefer my teacher to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in-class games.					
13. I like learning grammar by using English within written/oral communication.					
14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role-playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help to improve my Academic English quickly					
15. I prefer my teacher to integrate grammar teaching while I work on different skills and activities.					
16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.					
16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.					
17. I learn better when my teacher teaches grammar while we read a text.					
18. I like my teacher to correct my mistakes after an activity/lesson is completed.					
19. I can learn grammar while reading/listening to passage.					
20. I prefer to learn grammar through various language activities without explaining.					
21. Doing communicative activities is a good way for me to learn the English more accurately.					
22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.					
23. I need more time to practice English.					
24. I use English often outside the class/university.					
25. I rarely use English outside the university /class.					
26. I have enough time to practice using English in class.					
27. I expect to learn English grammar the way I learn Arabic grammar.					
28. I think the class duration is enough for me to practice English.					
29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on learning English grammar.					

Appendix O Grouped Likert scale items for instructor's and learners

Instructors' (SUIs)Version	Learners' (SULSAs & SULAs) Version
(1) Explicit & Isolated Items	(1) Explicit & Isolated Items
<i>1. I like to explain the grammar rule following it with practice.</i>	<i>1. I like my teacher to explain the grammar rule first following it with practice.</i>
<i>2. I find it easier for students to learn grammar when I teach it by itself.</i>	<i>2. I find it easier to learn grammar when the teacher teaches it by itself.</i>
<i>3. I like to stop students to correct their errors as soon as they make them.</i>	<i>3. I like my teacher to stop me and correct my mistakes as soon as I make them.</i>
<i>4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar.</i>	<i>4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar.</i>
<i>5. I like teaching grammar for students by explaining as well as practicing exercises.</i>	<i>5. I like learning grammar by seeing the explanation as well as practicing exercises.</i>
<i>9. I find it helpful for students to learn a grammar point before reading it in texts.</i>	<i>9. I find it helpful to learn a grammar point before reading it in a text.</i>
<i>11. My students expect me to provide them with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice.</i>	<i>11. I expect my teacher to provide me with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice.</i>
(2) Explicit & Integrated Items	(2) Explicit & Integrated Items
<i>7. I find it hard to teach grammar through different activities like reading, conversation or in class games.</i>	<i>7. I find it hard to learn grammar through different language activities such as reading, conversation or in class games.</i>
<i>12. I prefer to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in class games.</i>	<i>12. I prefer my teacher to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in class games.</i>
<i>13. I like teaching grammar by using English within written/oral communication.</i>	<i>13. I like learning grammar by using English within written/oral communication.</i>
<i>15. I prefer to integrate grammar teaching as I work on different skills and activities.</i>	<i>15. I prefer my teacher to integrate grammar teaching while I work on different skills and activities.</i>
<i>17. Students learn better when I teach grammar while we read a text.</i>	<i>17. I learn better when my teacher teaches grammar while we read a text.</i>
<i>18. I like to correct students' errors after an activity/lesson is completed.</i>	<i>18. I like my teacher to correct my mistakes after an activity/lesson is completed.</i>
(3) Implicit Grammar Instruction/CLT	(3) Implicit Grammar Instruction/CLT
<i>16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.</i>	<i>16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.</i>
<i>19. Students can learn grammar while reading\ listening to a passage.</i>	<i>19. I can learn grammar while reading/listening to passage.</i>
<i>20. I prefer to let the students learn grammar through various language activities without explaining.</i>	<i>20. I prefer to learn grammar through various language activities without explaining.</i>
(4) Explicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items	(4) Explicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items
<i>6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to use English more accurately.</i>	<i>6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to learn using English more accurately.</i>
<i>8. I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of students in English.</i>	<i>8. I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of my English.</i>

10. I believe that teaching English grammar is important to improve academic English	10. I believe that studying English grammar is important to improve my academic English.
(5) Implicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items	(5) Implicit for Accuracy & Proficiency Items
14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help my students to improve their Academic English quickly.	14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help to improve my Academic English quickly
21. Doing communicative activities for students is a good way to learn English language more accurately.	21. Doing communicative activities is a good way for me to learn English more accurately.
22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.	22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar.
(6) English language usage in context	(6) English language usage in context
23. I think students need more time to practice English.	23. I need more time to practice English.
24. I use English often outside the university.	24. I use English often outside the class/university.
25. I rarely use English outside the class / university.	25. I rarely use English outside the university /class.
26. I think students have enough time to practice English in class.	26. I have enough time to practice using English in class.
28. I think the class duration is enough for students to practice English.	28. I think the class duration is enough for me to practice English.
(7) First Language Influence	(7) First Language Influence
27. I think my students expect to learn English grammar the way they learnt Arabic grammar.	27. I expect to learn English grammar the way I learn Arabic grammar.
29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on teaching English grammar.	29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on learning English grammar.

*Items in *Italic* represent preferences and the others are beliefs

Appendix P 29 Likert scale descriptive statistics across the three groups

1. I like to explain the grammar rule following it with practice. (I)						
1. I like my teacher to explain the grammar rule first following it with practice. (L)						
	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	12	5%	38	2%	8	2%
Disagree	16	6%	34	2%	9	2%
Somewhat Disagree	19	7%	34	2%	13	3%
Somewhat Agree	54	20%	157	9%	28	7%
Agree	78	29%	430	24%	111	26%
Strongly Agree	88	33%	1075	61%	251	60%
M	4.6		5.3		5.3	
SD	1.4		1.1		1.1	

2. I find it easier for students to learn grammar when I teach it by itself. (I)						
2. I find it easier to learn grammar when the teacher teaches it by itself. (L)						
	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Disagree	10	4%	65	4%	22	5%
Disagree	30	11%	97	6%	23	6%
Somewhat Disagree	49	18%	139	8%	33	8%
Somewhat Agree	49	18%	298	17%	83	20%
Agree	92	35%	474	27%	135	32%
Strongly Agree	37	14%	695	39%	124	30%
M	4.1		4.8		4.6	
SD	1.4		1.4		1.4	

3. I like to stop students to correct their errors as soon as they make them. (I)						
3. I like my teacher to stop me and correct my mistakes as soon as I make them. (L)						
	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Disagree	18	7%	26	2%	6	1%
Disagree	29	11%	27	2%	13	3%
Somewhat Disagree	56	21%	66	4%	23	6%
Somewhat Agree	68	26%	173	10%	37	9%
Agree	55	21%	403	23%	86	21%
Strongly Agree	41	15%	1073	61%	255	61%
M	3.9		5.3		5.3	
SD	1.4		1.1		1.2	

4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar. (I)

4. I like the lessons that focus on teaching grammar. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Disagree	13	5%	74	4%	9	2%
Disagree	20	8%	79	5%	16	4%
Somewhat Disagree	48	18%	167	9%	31	7%
Somewhat Agree	81	30%	466	26%	121	29%
Agree	57	21%	427	24%	122	29%
Strongly Agree	48	18%	555	31%	121	29%
M	4.1		4.6		4.7	
SD	1.4		1.4		1.2	

5. I like teaching grammar for students by explaining as well as practicing exercises. (I)

5. I like learning grammar by seeing the explanation as well as practicing exercises. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Disagree	4	2%	30	2%	7	2%
Disagree	9	3%	49	3%	6	1%
Somewhat Disagree	10	4%	89	5%	20	5%
Somewhat Agree	53	20%	291	17%	74	18%
Agree	89	33%	545	31%	152	36%
Strongly Agree	102	38%	764	43%	161	38%
M	4.9		5.0		5.0	
SD	1.1		1.1		1.1	

9. I find it helpful for students to learn a grammar point before reading it in texts. (I)

9. I find it helpful to learn a grammar point before reading it in a text. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Disagree	7	3%	76	4%	21	5%
Disagree	18	7%	94	5%	23	6%
Somewhat Disagree	47	18%	206	12%	44	11%
Somewhat Agree	63	24%	423	24%	115	27%
Agree	85	32%	429	24%	117	28%
Strongly Agree	47	18%	540	31%	100	24%
M	4.4		4.5		4.4	
SD	1.1		1.4		1.3	

11. My students expect me to provide them with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice. (I)

11. I expect my teacher to provide me with the grammatical terminology (verb, adjective...etc.) before practice. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly Disagree	4	2%	73	4%	17	4%
Disagree	14	5%	95	5%	28	7%
Somewhat Disagree	29	11%	190	11%	42	10%
Somewhat Agree	87	33%	391	22%	111	26%
Agree	88	33%	488	28%	121	29%
Strongly Agree	43	16%	531	30%	101	24%
M	4.4		4.5		4.4	
SD	1.1		1.4		1.3	

7. I find it hard to teach grammar through different activities like reading, conversation or in class games. (I)

7. I find it hard to learn grammar through different language activities such as reading, conversation or in class games. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	40	15%	491	28%	108	26%
Disagree	48	18%	394	22%	106	25%
Somewhat Disagree	71	27%	323	18%	85	20%
Somewhat Agree	53	20%	267	15%	57	14%
Agree	38	14%	156	9%	40	10%
Strongly Agree	17	6%	137	8%	24	6%
M	3.2		2.8		2.7	
SD	1.4		1.6		1.5	

12. I prefer to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in class games. (I)

12. I prefer my teacher to teach grammar through various activities such as reading, conversation and in class games. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	1	0%	26	2%	3	1%
Disagree	5	2%	40	2%	4	1%
Somewhat Disagree	13	5%	58	3%	10	2%
Somewhat Agree	36	14%	226	13%	52	12%
Agree	93	35%	488	28%	158	38%
Strongly Agree	119	45%	930	53%	193	46%
M	5.1			5.2		5.2
SD	1.0			1.1		0.9

13. I like teaching grammar by using English within written/oral communication. (I)

13. I like learning grammar by using English within written/oral communication. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	2	1%	15	1%	0	0%
Disagree	5	2%	12	1%	2	1%
Somewhat Disagree	11	4%	37	2%	6	1%
Somewhat Agree	42	16%	141	8%	34	8%
Agree	120	45%	469	27%	134	32%
Strongly Agree	87	33%	1094	62%	244	58%
M	5.0		5.4		5.5	
SD	1.0		0.9		0.7	

15. I prefer to integrate grammar teaching as I work on different skills and activities. (I)

15. I prefer my teacher to integrate grammar teaching while I work on different skills and activities. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	2	1%	27	2%	2	1%
Disagree	8	3%	29	2%	4	1%
Somewhat Disagree	12	5%	61	4%	9	2%
Somewhat Agree	48	18%	233	13%	53	13%
Agree	117	44%	553	31%	156	37%
Strongly Agree	80	30%	865	49%	196	47%
M	4.9		5.2		5.3	
SD	1.0		1.1		0.9	

17. Students learn better when I teach grammar while we read a text. (I)

17. I learn better when my teacher teaches grammar while we read a text. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	3	1%	56	3%	6	1%
Disagree	7	3%	67	4%	11	3%
Somewhat Disagree	33	12%	180	10%	38	9%
Somewhat Agree	50	19%	453	26%	88	21%
Agree	115	43%	511	29%	148	35%
Strongly Agree	59	22%	501	28%	129	31%
M	4.7		4.6		4.8	
SD	1.1		1.3		5.1	

18. I like to correct students' errors after an activity/lesson is completed. (I)

18. I like my teacher to correct my mistakes after an activity/lesson is completed. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	4	2%	36	2%	13	3%
Disagree	16	6%	72	4%	12	3%
Somewhat Disagree	21	8%	96	5%	21	5%
Somewhat Agree	60	23%	190	11%	44	11%
Agree	98	37%	497	28%	127	30%
Strongly Agree	68	26%	877	50%	203	48%
M	4.6		5.1		5.1	
SD	1.2		1.2		1.2	

16. I prefer lessons that focus on communication with a limited focus on grammar that is only when there is a real need.

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	3	1%	69	4%	13	3%
Disagree	15	6%	117	7%	16	4%
Somewhat Disagree	23	9%	241	14%	56	13%
Somewhat Agree	61	23%	357	20%	88	21%
Agree	99	37%	418	24%	110	26%
Strongly Agree	66	25%	566	32%	137	33%
M	4.6		4.5		4.6	
SD	1.2		1.4		1.3	

19. Students can learn grammar while reading\ listening to a passage. (I)

19. I can learn grammar while reading/listening to passage. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	3	1%	48	3%	5	1%
Disagree	9	3%	86	5%	9	2%
Somewhat Disagree	19	7%	150	9%	40	10%
Somewhat Agree	62	23%	446	25%	104	25%
Agree	99	37%	473	27%	131	31%
Strongly Agree	75	28%	565	32%	131	31%
M	4.8		4.6		4.8	
SD	1.1		1.3		1.1	

20. I prefer to let the students learn grammar through various language activities without explaining. (I)

20. I prefer to learn grammar through various language activities without explaining. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	5	2%	184	10%	44	11%
Disagree	13	5%	234	13%	64	15%
Somewhat Disagree	44	17%	359	20%	108	26%
Somewhat Agree	57	21%	351	20%	85	20%
Agree	89	33%	282	16%	59	14%
Strongly Agree	59	22%	358	20%	60	14%
M	4.5		3.8		3.6	
SD	1.2		1.6		1.5	

6. Doing grammar exercises is an effective way to use English more accurately.

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	5	2%	38	2%	4	1%
Disagree	18	7%	50	3%	12	3%
Somewhat Disagree	30	11%	95	5%	30	7%
Somewhat Agree	52	20%	311	18%	88	21%
Agree	83	31%	499	28%	130	31%
Strongly Agree	79	30%	775	44%	156	37%
M	4.6		5.0		4.9	
SD	1.3		1.2		1.1	

8. I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of students in English.(I)

8.I believe practicing grammar rules accelerate the improvement of my English. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	6	2%	32	2%	6	1%
Disagree	17	6%	53	3%	17	4%
Somewhat Disagree	27	10%	94	5%	30	7%
Somewhat Agree	58	22%	308	17%	99	24%
Agree	95	36%	542	31%	131	31%
Strongly Agree	64	24%	739	42%	137	33%
M	4.5		5.0		4.8	
SD	1.3		1.2		1.2	

10. I believe that teaching English grammar is important to improve Academic English.(I)

10. I believe that studying English grammar is important to improve my academic English.(L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	26	2%	4	1%
Disagree	3	1%	25	1%	6	1%
Somewhat Disagree	7	3%	47	3%	12	3%
Somewhat Agree	40	15%	186	11%	43	10%
Agree	94	36%	457	26%	124	30%
Strongly Agree	121	46%	1027	58%	231	55%
M	5.2		5.3		5.3	
SD	0.9		1.0		1.0	

14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help my students to improve their Academic English quickly.(I)

14. I believe conducting communicative activities (like role playing, conversation, group work...etc.) will help to improve my academic English quickly. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	3	1%	20	1%	0	0%
Disagree	2	1%	23	1%	6	1%
Somewhat Disagree	4	2%	62	4%	16	4%
Somewhat Agree	24	9%	209	12%	52	12%
Agree	99	37%	425	24%	129	31%
Strongly Agree	135	51%	1029	58%	217	52%
M	5.3		5.3		5.3	
SD	0.9		1.0		0.9	

21. Doing communicative activities for students is a good way to learn English language more accurately. (I)

21. Doing communicative activities is a good way for me to learn English more accurately. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	16	1%	2	1%
Disagree	3	1%	16	1%	4	1%
Somewhat Disagree	8	3%	58	3%	7	2%
Somewhat Agree	42	16%	215	12%	44	11%
Agree	96	36%	544	31%	163	39%
Strongly Agree	118	44%	919	52%	200	48%
M	5.2		5.3		5.3	
SD	0.9		1.0		0.9	

22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar. (I)

22. I believe that English can be learned without teaching grammar. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	23	9%	304	17%	79	19%
Disagree	36	14%	279	16%	79	19%
Somewhat Disagree	55	21%	323	18%	94	22%
Somewhat Agree	60	23%	396	22%	83	20%
Agree	57	22%	250	14%	53	13%
Strongly Agree	34	13%	216	12%	32	8%
M	3.7		3.4		3.1	
SD	1.5		1.6		1.5	

23. I think students need more time to practice English. (I)

23. I need more time to practice English. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	43	2%	7	2%
Disagree	1	0%	96	5%	17	4%
Somewhat Disagree	8	3%	190	11%	26	6%
Somewhat Agree	16	6%	482	27%	127	30%
Agree	87	33%	505	29%	152	36%
Strongly Agree	153	58%	452	26%	91	22%
M	5.4		4.5		4.6	
SD	0.8		1.3		1.1	

24. I use English often outside the university.

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	3	1%	91	5%	1	0%
Disagree	7	3%	131	7%	11	3%
Somewhat Disagree	21	8%	223	13%	23	6%
Somewhat Agree	58	22%	479	27%	83	20%
Agree	83	31%	400	23%	155	37%
Strongly Agree	93	35%	444	25%	147	35%
M	4.8		4.3		5.0	
SD	1.1		1.4		1.0	

25. I rarely use English outside the class / university.

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	57	22%	214	12%	86	21%
Disagree	42	16%	247	14%	89	21%
Somewhat Disagree	59	22%	276	16%	86	21%
Somewhat Agree	47	18%	380	22%	89	21%
Agree	37	14%	363	21%	49	12%
Strongly Agree	23	9%	288	16%	21	5%
M	3.1		3.7		3.0	
SD	1.6		1.6		1.5	

26. I think students have enough time to practice English in class. (I)

26. I have enough time to practice using English in class. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	37	14%	128	7%	23	6%
Disagree	43	16%	174	10%	49	12%
Somewhat Disagree	62	23%	285	16%	76	18%
Somewhat Agree	60	23%	460	26%	140	33%
Agree	40	15%	423	24%	101	24%
Strongly Agree	23	9%	298	17%	31	7%
M	3.3		3.6		2.9	
SD	1.5		1.7		1.5	

28. I think the class duration is enough for students to practice English. (I)

28. I think the class duration is enough for me to practice English. (L)

	SUI (N=267)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	32	12%	294	17%	96	23%
Disagree	41	16%	231	13%	82	20%
Somewhat Disagree	64	24%	301	17%	89	21%
Somewhat Agree	61	23%	360	20%	79	19%
Agree	45	17%	283	16%	54	13%
Strongly Agree	22	8%	299	17%	20	5%
M	3.8		3.6		2.9	
SD	1.5		1.7		1.5	

27. I think my students expect to learn English grammar the way they learn Arabic grammar. (I)

27. I expect to learn English grammar the way I learn Arabic grammar. (L)

	SUI (N=243)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	8	4%	231	13%	72	17%
Disagree	24	10%	178	10%	50	12%
Somewhat Disagree	41	16%	304	17%	92	22%
Somewhat Agree	52	21%	341	19%	89	21%
Agree	75	31%	307	17%	64	15%
Strongly Agree	43	18%	407	23%	53	13%
M	4.20		3.9		3.4	
SD	1.4		1.7		1.4	

29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on teaching English grammar. (I)

29. The way I was taught Arabic grammar has no impact on learning English grammar. (L)

	SUI (N=233)		SULSA (N=1768)		SULA (420)	
	N	%	N	%	N	N
Strongly Disagree	11	5%	91	5%	34	8%
Disagree	17	7%	79	5%	29	7%
Somewhat Disagree	46	20%	169	10%	65	16%
Somewhat Agree	43	18%	364	21%	112	27%
Agree	69	30%	513	29%	109	26%
Strongly Agree	47	20%	552	31%	71	17%
M	4.2		4.6		4.1	
SD	1.4		1.4		1.4	

Scale Reliability

Scale: All variables combined for all groups (SUIs, SULSAs & SULAs)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.779	29

Reliability

Scale: All variables for (SUIs)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.797	29

Reliability

Scale: All variables for (SULSAs)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.778	29

Reliability

Scale: All variables for (SULAs)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.786	29

Appendix R Samples of the Saudi universities' ethical approvals

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry Of Education
Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University
(048)
Graduate Studies and Scientific Research Vice-Rectorate
Deanship of Scientific Research



المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبد الرحمن
(٠٤٨)
وكالة الجامعة للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي
عمادة البحث العلمي

الموضوع: بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحثة/ هناء الحميد.

تعليق

سعادة عميدة كلية

(الآداب، التربية، اللغات والترجمة، السنة التحضيرية، الطب، الصيدلة) **حفظهم الله.**

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد

نرفق لسعادتكم صورة من خطاب الملحقية الثقافية السعودية بكانبرا، والذي يفيد بأن الباحثة/ هناء بنت خالد الحميد، بصدد إجراء دراسة لنيل درجة الدكتوراه بجامعة فلندرز بأستراليا، بعنوان: (آراء الطلاب والمعلمين تجاه تعلم وتدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية للإسهام في تطويرها في المملكة العربية السعودية).
عليه نأمل من سعادتكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحثة أعلاه بالسماح لها بإجراء ملاحظات صفية لدروس اللغة الإنجليزية، بالإضافة إلى مقابلات مع عدد من الأساتذات والطالبات في مختلف التخصصات، وتوزيع الاستبانة الإلكترونية على أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية عبر الرابط التالي:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PKXVRTY>

وطالبات قسم اللغة الإنجليزية عبر الرابط التالي:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P8RFVLV>

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم.

عميدة البحث العلمي.

أفنان الخراشي

الرقم: التاريخ: ٠٥/٠١/١٤٣٩هـ المشفوعات: ٨



بشأن: تسهيل مهمة المحاضر هناء الحميد

حفظه الله.

سعادة وكيل جامعة الدمام للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد :

نفيد سعادتكم بأن المحاضر / هناء بنت خالد الحميد المبتعثة لدراسة الدكتوراه بجامعة Flinders University في أستراليا تخصص (مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية) ترغب بإجراء دراسة علمية بعنوان (آراء الطلاب والمعلمين تجاه تعلم وتدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية للاسهام في تطويرها في المملكة العربية السعودية) حيث تشتمل على استبانة الكترونية موجهة لطالبات يدرسن المقررات باللغة الإنجليزية على الرابط: (www.surveymonkey.com/r/P8RFVLV) وأعضاء الهيئة التعليمية في كليات اللغات والترجمة - التربية- الآداب (قسم اللغة الإنجليزية) على الرابط: (www.surveymonkey.com/r/PKXVRTY)

وذلك بناء على توصية رئيسة قسم تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة Flinders University، نأمل من

سعادتكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحثة المذكورة .

والله يحفظكم ويرعاكم .

وكالة الجامعة المكلفة
لدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي

إيمان الخميري

الرقم : / ٦٩٠٠٢٠٠٠ / ج.ك.د التاريخ : ١٤٣٦/١٢/٠١ المشفوعات :

Ministry of Higher Education
University of Hail
Vice Rector For Graduate
Studies & Scientific Research



مكتب الوكيل
Vice Rectors Office

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبد الرحمن
الوارد العام
الرقم: ٨٩٣
التاريخ: ١٤٣٧/١٥
المشروعات: -

وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة حائل
وكالة الجامعة للدراسات
العلية والبحث العلمي

سلمه الله

سعادة وكيالة جامعة الأميرة نورة بنت عبد الرحمن المكلفة
للدراسات العلية والبحث العلمي
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته. وبعد:

تهدي وكالة جامعة حائل للدراسات العلية والبحث العلمي لسعادتكم أطياب
تحياتها . وإشارة إلى خطاب سعادتكم والمتضمن طلب تسهيل مهمة المحاضر/ هناء
بنت خالد الحميد لقيامها تطبيق استبانة إلكترونية موجهه لطالبات يدرسن المقررات
باللغة الإنجليزية بعنوان: (آراء الطلاب والمعلمين تجاه تعلم وتدریس قواعد اللغة
الإنجليزية للاسهام في تطويرها في المملكة العربية السعودية).

نفيدكم بأنه لا مانع لدى الجامعة من تطبيق أداة الدراسة متمنياً لها التوفيق.


وتقبلوا سعادتكم فائق الاحترام والتقدير...

وكيل الجامعة
للدراسات العلية والبحث العلمي

ه/التشري


الرقم: ١٧٧٤/١٥
التاريخ: ١٤٣٧/١٥/١٥
المرفقات: -

المملكة العربية السعودية - حائل هاتف : ٥٣٥٨٢٣٠ - فاكس : ٥٣١٠١٩٢ - ص. ب. : ٢٤٤٠ حائل
Saudi Arabia Hail Tel.: 06 - 5358230 Fax : 06 - 5310192 Post Box No. Hail 2440



Perceptions on Grammar Instruction for Developing English Language Proficiency in Saudi Arabia

Hana Alhumaid
A lecturer in Princess Nourah University
Currently a PhD student in Flinders University



Introduction

Methodologies for teaching grammar in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning are still under debate. One of the most controversial issues surrounding English language acquisition is the teaching of grammar and the ongoing debate on whether formal instruction of grammar leads to language proficiency (Ellis, 2006). For more than a half century, researchers and educators have been divided into two main views, those supporting explicit grammar teaching and those against it (Brown, 2000). Each group has worthy theoretical justifications that could improve real classroom practice. Thus, most of the literature has not considered EFL teachers' and learners' views on this issue specifically in an EFL context, though they are crucial. The present study is paving the way for a new perspective in regard to grammar teaching from EFL teachers and learners specifically in the Saudi Arabian context.

Initial Results

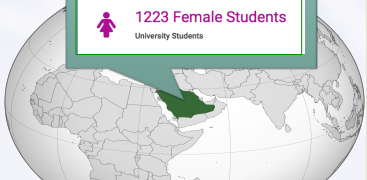
The data collection is still in progress. The presented graphs represent the latest general statistics.

♂ 67 Male Teachers
English Language University Teachers

♀ 135 Female Teachers
English Language University Teachers


♂ 778 Male Students
University Students

♀ 1223 Female Students
University Students




Methods and Materials


The researcher assumes that using mixed method approach will provide a broader understanding of the research problem and outcomes integrating the supreme of quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell 2015). A *concurrent embedded design* is employed (Creswell, 2012, Scott & Morrison, 2006).



Online Questionnaire for University English language Teachers and Learners



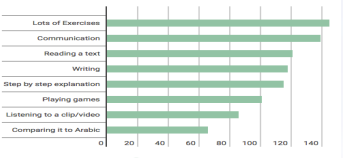
One to one semi-structured Interviews for University English language Teachers and Learners



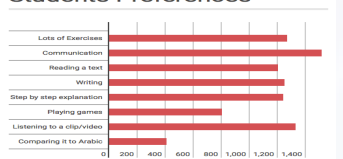
University Level English grammar classes Observation

Collecting Data alongside using concurrent embedded design

Teachers Preferences



Students Preferences



Objectives

Proficiency in English language is a goal that the Saudi education system is trying to attain in order to help learners acquire knowledge and expertise in the sciences, arts, economic development, as well as to fulfill national and religious demands. The main purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' and learners' views on the effectiveness of grammar instructions, which is rarely addressed in depth, in relation to their experience in the EFL context. This study will focus on a number of variables such as first language curriculum interference, time limitation, teachers' previous experiences and learners' expectations.

Research Questions

- ◆ How do Saudi English teachers and students prefer to teach/learn English grammar?
- ◆ Does the Saudi EFL context have a role to play in teachers' and learners' views on the effectiveness of grammar teaching?
- ◆ Is there a dichotomy between English grammar teaching theories and real classroom practice in relation to the Saudi EFL context?

Conclusions

The exploration of teachers' and learners' perspectives resulted in this study, aims to add improvements to the Saudi English curriculum so that expertise in the English language is generated, and in addition sheds light on the applicability of second language acquisition theories and research in Saudi Arabia.

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