

Attitudes of Teachers and Pre-Service Teachers Towards Teaching Grammar and Their Perceptions of Grammar Instruction

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ABSTRACT: *The current study aimed to identify teachers' and pre-service teachers' attitudes towards English grammar, as well as their perceptions on the best mode of grammar instruction. The study was conducted using the comparative approach, intended to compare the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and pre-service teachers. The study utilized a questionnaire comprising 20 items applied to a sample of 306 pre-service teachers in the English Department at the College of Basic Education and 224 EFL teachers in public schools. The results found that teachers and pre-service teachers had favorable attitudes towards grammar. Teachers demonstrated stronger favorability towards grammar compared to pre-service teachers. It was also found that teachers and pre-service teachers favor an implicit mode of grammar instruction as opposed to explicit instruction. The sample of pre-service teachers demonstrated stronger favorability towards implicit grammar instruction. This study has implications on Kuwait's education system given its shift from an objective-based curriculum to a competency-based curriculum.*

KEYWORDS: explicit instruction, implicit instruction, deductive, inductive

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is a significant component of the English language and English language teaching. Grammar can influence a student's listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Ellis (2005) believed that teaching grammar provides a solid foundation for future learning. Schulz (2001) confirmed that the formal study of grammar is essential to eventual mastery of a second language. Researchers in the field such as Johnson (1994), Thornbury (1997), Borg (2006), and Ellis (2006) have all studied the importance of grammar and how to incorporate it into foreign language learning. Teaching is a cognitive activity and a teachers' beliefs will significantly impact instructional decisions made in the classroom (Kagan, 1992). As such, "Language teaching, then, can be seen as a process which is defined by dynamic interactions among cognition, context, and experience" (Borg, 2006, p.275). Borg (2006) divided grammar perception in terms of three distinctive subtopics: a) a teacher's knowledge of grammar, b) teachers' beliefs about grammar instruction, and c) the relationship between teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and their grammar practices.

Second and foreign language researchers have widely studied the many approaches of how grammar should be taught, and which approach is most effective for student success. Teachers and students have widely favored explicit instruction, emphasizing rules, drills, and structure (Ellis, 2006). Others may favor an implicit approach, emphasizing a communicative and natural framework. Nevertheless, Ellis (2006) found that the primary consensus among applied linguists is that language learning should have a primary focus on meaning with an overall communicative framework. Similarly, Schulz (2001) believed that grammar should be practiced both in oral and written forms, ultimately combining explicit and implicit grammar instruction. Munby (1984) believed that a practically useful, contextually apt, and theoretically sound approach to improving teaching begins with understanding teachers' perspectives. Regardless of a teacher's preference towards a specific mode of grammar instruction, teachers must experiment with new approaches of grammar instruction. Teachers should also be provided with professional development opportunities that will allow them to learn about the latest trends in language teaching, especially regarding grammar. Given this, it's imperative that we investigate the attitudes of EFL teachers and pre-service teachers in Kuwait. This also calls for research on their preferences towards modes of grammar instruction as it will allow curriculum planners to design curriculum that implements explicit instruction, implicit instruction, or a combination of both modes of instruction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stages of EFL Curriculum Implementation in Kuwait

English language instruction at public schools is performed in accordance with the strategic goals of the Ministry of Education in Kuwait. According to the Kuwait National Curriculum plan, published in 2016, "The new Kuwait National Curriculum is conceptually a competence and standards-based curriculum that aims at gradually developing students with a coherent system of competences" (p.14). Prior to this implementation, Kuwait's EFL curriculum had undergone many changes. Throughout the 20th century, grammar was taught using the grammar-translation approach. Simply put, the grammar-translation method involves learning grammatical rules and then applying those rules by translating sentences between the target language, English, and the native language, Arabic. This method relies on the memorization of grammar rules. Shortly after, the Ministry of Education expressed dissatisfaction with the grammar translation method, believing that it disregarded oral communication skills. According to AlRubaie's (2010) research on the history of Kuwait's EFL curriculum, the grammar-translation method was used from 1940 to 1960. Afterwards, the audio-lingual method was implemented. The audio-lingual method stressed dialogue as an effective tool of language learning; dialogue was conceptualized as the conscious habit of using linguistic elements in a course of communication. AlRubaie (2010) stated that, "The audio-lingual method constrained the fluency and true-to-life authenticity of foreign-language speech by suggesting unrealistic, fabricated topics in-classroom linguistic interaction" (p.33). Communicative teaching was later introduced in Kuwait during the 1980s which treated language as a sequence of speech acts varying according to function. However, this was eventually dropped due to "being too narrow" (p.33). Some components of communicative teaching were implemented in the revised EFL curriculum in 2002. The curriculum of 2002 to 2016 combined

the previous models of the grammar-translation approach, the audio-lingual method, and communicative teaching.

In 2017, the Ministry of Education implemented a competency-based curriculum. Competency-based curriculums are based on predetermined competencies which focus on outcomes and real-world performance. The newly implemented curriculum has a larger focus on communicative aspects of language teaching and learning. The Kuwait National Curriculum plan lists four main competencies: a) listening to oral messages by means of different strategies in a variety of contexts for effective comprehension, b) speaking by using strategies of individual and interactive speech in a variety of communicative contexts, c) reading and viewing a range of texts by means of different strategies in a variety of contexts, and d) writing a range of texts adapted to a variety of communicative purposes. The previous objective-based curriculum, however, had a larger focus on explicit instruction. The new curriculum aims at achieving students' accuracy of usage and fluency of using English for social and academic communicative functions. One of the main conceptual foundations of the curriculum plan is to use, "Vocabulary, structures, and grammar of spoken standard English to be able to communicate fluently and accurately, with increasing confidence" (Kuwait National Curriculum, 2016, p.19). Thus, in this paper we will investigate explicit grammar instruction, as it pertains to the previous objective-based curriculum. We will also investigate implicit grammar instruction, as it pertains to the recent competency-based curriculum. Knowing the previous and recent curriculum enactments will allow us to investigate the best approach of grammar instruction for the current EFL curriculum in Kuwait.

Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching Grammar

Educational research investigates the attitudes of those involved in the educational environment. Attitudes are the determinants of behavior when examining one's actions, thus making them worthy of research. In this paper, the view will be taken that attitudes are "The underlying values, beliefs and knowledge" of a person (Barnard & Scampton, 2008, p.61). These beliefs are said to be derived from a teacher's prior experience, school practices, and a teacher's individual personality (Borg, 2003). These beliefs can significantly impact how grammar is taught. Kagan (1992) held that a teacher's beliefs are "Often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and academic material to be taught" (p.81). Johnson (1994, as cited in Tsehay, 2017) stated that understanding teachers' attitudes can lead to the improvement of their teaching practices and teacher preparation programs. According to Ustuner et al. (2009) knowing the attitudes of teachers is significant in determining their behavior. They stated that teachers who demonstrate positive attitudes towards their profession can teach more effectively. Researchers such as (Borg, 1998; Freeman, 1989; Richards & Nunan, 1990; Woods, 1996) investigated how a teacher's cognitive process affects classroom instruction, including but not limited to, grammar instruction. Regardless of the mode of instruction used to teach grammar, Morelli (2003) believed that students' and teachers' attitudes should be considered when making decisions about how to teach grammar.

The body of literature demonstrated positive attitudes of teachers towards grammar instruction. For instance, Wittgeinstein (2007) conducted a study in Latvia and Sweden in which they

investigated teachers' attitudes towards teaching grammar. Most respondents expressed a positive attitude. Similarly, Richard & Nunan (2001) surveyed EFL teachers about their core beliefs regarding grammar instruction. Teachers reported that grammar was essential for communication, comprehension, and clarity. Participants described grammar as "The foundation of English language learning and as a necessary element of language learning at the early stages" (p.63).

Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching Grammar

Pre-service teachers, or student-teachers, are students at universities training to be teachers. Only a few studies have investigated pre-service teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding grammar instruction (Ustuner et al., 2009; Dikici, 2012; Bazos, 2014; Uysal & Yavuz, 2015; Murniati & Riyandari, 2016). AlJanian (2012) investigated the effects of experience, gender, and work environment on a teacher's beliefs about grammar. AlJanian's (2012) found that experienced teachers found grammar lessons tedious and used a variety of techniques to keep students motivated. In contrast, pre-service teachers prioritized the study of grammar in their classrooms and treated grammar as a key component of language learning. Basoz (2014) found that EFL pre-service teachers in Turkey had positive perceptions towards English grammar. About 82.5% of EFL pre-service teachers believed that the study of grammar can effectively foster students' English writing abilities and 69.7% believed that it can foster students' reading abilities. Other studies have reported that pre-service teachers may have negative attitudes towards grammar teaching. Kacar & Zengin (2013) conducted a study regarding the attitudes of EFL pre-service teachers in Turkey. According to Kacar & Zengin (2013):

They [pre-service teachers] considered grammar teaching a somewhat anxiety-inducing process. A little over 60% of the pre-service teachers reported having a fear of making mistakes. The majority (62%) did not consider themselves an authority figure in grammar instruction. Less than one third of the sample liked or enjoyed teaching grammar. Nearly half of the participants reported grammar teaching to be boring. This finding is not surprising as the majority of the participants in the study did not have any or had little classroom experience (p.58-59).

Teachers' Perceptions on the Modes of Grammar Instruction

Grammar can be taught in various ways and the best method for grammar to be taught is a subject of debate. Explicit instruction of grammar involves clearly stating the rules to students during the beginning of a lesson. Implicit instruction of grammar allows for students to uncover the rules of grammar on their own through repeated exposure. Implicit instruction does not involve overt grammar explanation but instead, "Grammatical rules are learnt unconsciously" (Xiao, 2019, p.21). A deductive approach is characterized by presenting grammar rules first, followed by illustrating examples, and ending with the provision of practice. An inductive approach is characterized by presenting the example, followed by practice, and ending with the provision of grammar rules (Glaser, 2013; Al-Zubi, 2015). Grammar can be taught separately, in which grammar points are taught in isolation. Grammar can be taught integratedly, in which multiple grammar points are taught with each other. There is no single way to teach grammar, but a combination of different instruction methods can cater to different contexts and learners.

The literature addressed several viewpoints regarding grammar instruction. It was found in the literature that teachers were widely in favor of an explicit approach to grammar instruction (Schultz, 2001; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Ellis, 2006, 2008; Barnard & Scampton, 2008). Plus, students expect traditional, explicit grammar instruction (Borg, 1999; Burgess & Etherington, 2002). Other teachers that favored an implicit approach supported it theoretically but often did not apply it into practice (Thu, 2009; Hos & Kekec, 2014).

Ellis (2008) argued that explicit and deductive instruction is more effective than implicit and inductive instruction because it produces longer-lasting learning results. Similarly, Canh & Barnard (2009) stated, “Responses strongly indicate that Vietnamese teachers have a strong correspondence of views regarding the need for explicit grammar instruction, the usefulness of explaining rules, and the need for practice of various kinds” (p.261). Both students and teachers favor explicit instruction. Several studies affirm that students expect an explicit presentation of grammar, otherwise, students feel insecure (AlMekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011; Borg, 1999; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Barnard & Scampton, 2008). AlMekhlafi & Nagaratnam (2011) noted, “Prescribed rules give students a sense of security” (p.70). Because students expect an explicit approach, teachers prefer to teach grammar explicitly as it is easier for students to internalize (Chia, 2003). Xiao (2019) recommended an explicit approach to grammar for students with low English proficiency as it explains grammatical concepts in a simplified and structural way. Nazari (2013) found that students who were taught grammar explicitly scored higher than students that were taught implicitly. The formal study of grammar is recommended for the eventual mastery of a foreign or second language when learning is limited to the classroom.

According to the body of literature, pre-service teachers largely favored an implicit approach compared to in-service teachers. Thu (2009) affirmed that implicit instruction allows for students to acquire grammar unconsciously in authentic contextual situations in a relaxing manner. Schulz’s (2001) study found that teachers believed that students’ communicative abilities improve quickly if they practice the grammar of the target language in situations simulating real life. Ellis (2006) claimed that implicit instruction can develop students’ automatic self-checking process which allows them to create accurate grammar forms. However, some researchers have noted that an implicit approach is not suitable for those learning English as a foreign or second language. According to Xiao (2019), “It is hard for implicit instruction to arouse learners’ grammar consciousness. It is appropriate only for learners with high English proficiency” (p.21). Similarly, Canh & Barnard (2009) argued, “The Vietnamese students are much less able to access an English-speaking environment, and therefore need to learn grammar more consciously than their British or New Zealand counterparts (p.262). Similarly, Xiao (2019) argued, “It’s not easy in China to expose learners to authentic activities and conversations. Learners need a system which is laid out explicitly with rules to reason deductively” (p.24). Mohamad’s (2006) study, based in the Maldives, found that, “Teachers were unfamiliar with inductive approaches to grammar instruction because they wanted their students to produce error-free sentences” (p.134). Likewise, Dorji’s (2018) study found that 80% of teachers believed that formal study of grammar helps produce grammatically correct language. Mai and Iwashita (2012) added that students’ lack of willingness to apply their grammar knowledge into their communication outside of the classroom forces most

teachers to emphasize explicit and linguistic proficiency while limiting implicit and communicative features. Yusof et al. (2019)'s participants stated that drilling and such explicit methods are required due to students' lack of knowledge.

EFL teachers have also addressed the importance of converting grammatical accuracy into communicative output. According to AlMekhlafi & Nagaratnam (2011), "Most of their students can recall grammatical rules accurately and perform very well on discrete-point grammar exercises but fail to achieve such grammatical accuracy in actual communication" (p.79). However, they also noted that, "Practicing language as communication in real-life tasks might not give sufficient opportunities for students to improve their grammatical knowledge" (p.82). For some L2 learners, grammar may involve having intellectual knowledge of grammar. Another approach is to view grammar as one of the many resources in language that allow us to communicate.

Many researchers have concluded that students can learn grammar through various methods of instruction. Ellis (2006) suggested that explicit knowledge can lead to implicit knowledge once learners apply their knowledge into a communicative framework. Ur (1996) also believed that both implicit procedures and explicit procedures are needed to achieve the effective teaching and learning of grammar. Researchers such as (Ellis, 1984; Schulz, 2001; Barnard & Scampton, 2008) stated that whether learners may benefit from explicit or implicit instruction depends on variables such as a learner's language proficiency, personality, motivation, attitudes, and preparedness. Canh & Barnard (2009) concluded that, "Programs for teachers should have a balance between what is argued hypothetically and indicated from practical studies, and the development of language teachers should be a locally co-constructed and shared endeavor, and not a process of obligations of ideas drawn from somewhere else" (p.255).

Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions on the Modes of Grammar Instruction

Uysal & Yavuz (2015) surveyed EFL pre-service teachers in Turkey and found that 33% of students favored an implicit approach towards teaching grammar. They stated, "Few pre-service teachers are seen to obey the structural tradition in language teaching. They believe the theory that if learners discover rules on their own, they can acquire them better. Only a few pre-service teachers supported deductive teaching of grammar" (p.1831). Pre-service teachers lack the experience required to make instructional decisions. It is possible that with more years of experience in the classroom, pre-service teachers may prefer an explicit method of instruction. While teacher-education programs support theoretical methods, pre-service teachers are restricted in integrating implicit instruction into practicum given time and curriculum requirements (Sayag et al., 2013).

Other studies, such as Murniati & Riyandari's (2016) revealed that pre-service teachers believed that an explicit approach to teaching grammar was imperative. According to Murniati & Riyandari (2016), "The findings revealed that although the language policy in Indonesia has put English language teaching and learning within the framework of communicative competence since the enactment of the 2006 policy, the pre-service teachers favored the explicit method" (p.133). In fact, these pre-service teachers skipped communicative grammar lessons altogether. The study

noted that their prior experience of grammar instruction constructed these beliefs. Dikici (2012) surveyed 90 pre-service teachers about grammar instruction during their teaching practicum. He noted, “The participants theoretically supported communicative approaches, but they practically adopted a traditional approach to grammar teaching” (p.211). Dikici (2012) added, “Though they had studied the role of conscious knowledge in teacher education programs, it was the actual teaching experiences that gave the participants a clearer understanding of the importance of promoting conscious knowledge of grammar” (p.207). Similarly, Graus & Coppen (2016) found that pre-service teachers favored implicit instruction as opposed to explicit instruction. Graus & Coppen (2016) noted that implicit instruction was taught in Dutch teacher colleges and textbooks and therefore, undergraduates indicated that their undergraduate courses were a major source of their beliefs.

Factors Affecting Teachers’ Perceptions on the Modes of Grammar Instruction

1- Mismatch Between Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices

It's worth noting that there can be a mismatch between a teacher's beliefs and what is practiced in the classroom. Hos & Kecec's (2014) research revealed that, “There is a discrepancy between what teachers believe theoretically and what they do in the classroom” (p.85). While most of their participants noted their belief that grammar should be taught explicitly and implicitly, many of them taught grammar explicitly only. They stated, “The participants expressed that grammar should be taught contextually rather than in a mechanical way. However, the classroom observations showed that the lessons were mostly based on a mechanical presentation of the grammar with a focus on drill and exercises” (p.84). Richards & Lockhart (1994) found that, “The need to follow a prescribed curriculum, lack of suitable resources, and students' ability levels can prevent teachers from acting based on their beliefs” (p.387). According to Barnard & Scampton (2008), teachers may not “Fully represent those deeper constructs [attitudes] for various reasons such as: an individual's lack of explicit awareness of those underlying constructs; an internal contradiction between and within these categories; and/or a simple inability, or unwillingness, to convey these to another person” (p.61-62). Fang (1996) noted that mismatches between beliefs and practice are influenced by social, environmental, and psychological factors that prevent teachers from applying their personal beliefs into their lessons. For instance, authoritarian standards, principals, heads of departments, and prescribed textbooks constitute how things should be taught. Patricia's (2003) study revealed that a teachers' instructional decisions were influenced by factors other than their personal beliefs, often beyond their control.

2- Teachers’ Experiences as Language Learners

Patricia's (2003) study revealed that a teachers' instructional decisions were influenced by factors other than their personal beliefs, often beyond their control. Mode of grammar instruction is said to be influenced by teachers' experiences of learning grammar as students. Thu (2009) stated, “While talking about their [teachers] beliefs about grammar teaching, teachers usually refer to the influence of their views of their previous language learning experiences” (p.7). Richard and Lockhart (1996) also found that a teacher's experience as a language learner was the main source that shaped their beliefs. Their cognition is shaped by their experience as language learners.

3- Students' Preferences of Grammar Instruction

Researchers (Schulz, 2001; AlMekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011; Hos & Kekec, 2014) believed that teachers may not practice what they believe in the classroom because it conflicts with what learners want. Schulz (2001) describes this phenomenon as “perturbing differences,” or learners and teachers’ different views regarding how a second language should be learned. For instance, students expect traditional and explicit grammar instruction (Borg, 1999; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Barnard & Scampton, 2008). When teachers employ theoretically recommended methods, such as implicit instruction, they may not consider their learners’ preferences (AlMekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). Schulz (2001) suggested that teachers should explore their students’ perceptions so that potential conflicts between student beliefs and instructional practices can be alleviated. It’s worth exploring the attitudes of students regarding grammar instruction given that teachers choose a particular mode of instruction to satisfy students’ needs (Chia, 2003). Thu (2009) wrote that, “Students were found to have more favorable attitudes towards the formal study of grammar than their teachers. Most students agreed that they can improve their communicative ability more quickly if they study and practice grammar” (p.9). Burgess and Etherington (2002) believed that teachers’ preferences for explicit grammar instruction may be linked to their students’ previous experiences. According to Schulz (2001), “Their [teachers] personal experience in observing student success rates with particular forms of instruction has surely colored their perceptions as well” (p.255). The needs, interests, and abilities of students will influence teachers’ judgments and may lead to a change in their belief systems (Schulz, 2001).

Some researchers have noted the negative attitudes of students regarding grammar. For instance, Thu (2009) wrote, “Students had strong negative reactions to grammar. Nine teachers said that they were not enthusiastic about grammar teaching, and more than a quarter of teachers were not confident of their students in their ability to handle grammar sufficiently” (p.8). In fact, students noted disliking implicit modes of instruction because they found it difficult not being able to memorize grammar rules and learn grammar mechanically (Xiao, 2019). However, Hos & Kekec (2014) found that students demonstrated motivation to learn grammar because grammar represents 40% of their exam. The “washback effect” describes the influence testing has on a student’s learning. Hence, students are motivated to learn grammar because it is a key component of passing their exams. Similarly, Xiao (2019) explained that students in China must take an exam prior to receiving their diplomas. Grammar and structure accounts for 15 points, and 15 percent of the total exam. Interestingly, learners have expressed interest in, “Exercises that are translated to a students’ native language because it saves time, increases students’ motivation, and reduces ambiguity” (p.22).

Significance of the Study

Only a few studies have investigated the attitudes and perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding grammar instruction. The shortage of studies on pre-service teachers calls for thorough research on their attitudes and perceptions in the field of grammar. Once pre-service teachers complete their education, they will take on the role of teachers. Language teachers have distinct views regarding how grammar should be taught. It’s essential to investigate teachers’ attitudes towards grammar

because, a) teachers' beliefs affect perception and judgment, b) teachers' beliefs are reflected in their classroom practices, and c) there is a need to understand teachers' beliefs in order to improve teaching practices and teacher educational programs (Johnson, 1994). Furthermore, Kacar & Zengin (2013) found that pre-service teachers viewed grammar lessons as "an anxiety-inducing process" (58) because they did not consider themselves the proper authorial figures to teach grammar. Surveying pre-service teachers regarding their concerns can allow for the improvement of their performance in teaching and for the modification of their current teacher-education programs. Curriculum planners and educators can alleviate these concerns by strengthening the grammar skills of pre-service teachers and by exposing them to the multiple modes of grammar instruction. Investigating pre-service teachers' attitudes and perceptions will allow for curriculum planners to produce a stronger EFL curriculum that will satisfy the needs of students, teachers, and fulfill the curriculum requirements.

METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted a comparative approach to examine the attitudes and perceptions of EFL teachers and pre-service teachers, specifically investigating if there are differences between the two groups. The comparative approach is relevant to the nature of this study given that it compares two groups and attempts to draw a conclusion about a phenomenon. The researchers used a self-report survey methodology with several statistical tools.

Participants

The study sample included (306) female pre-service teachers at the English Department in the College of Basic Education, Public Authority of Applied Education and Training. The College of Basic Education is a four-year full-time teacher training program. The participants were randomly selected to answer the survey online on Microsoft Forms through their instructors. The pre-service teachers are enrolled in a program designed to graduate teachers to teach English as a foreign language in Kuwait's primary schools. The study sample also included (224) female EFL teachers at public schools. The teachers were investigated further according to demographic variables such as type of high school, years of experience, and whether they were taught grammar explicitly or implicitly as students.

Table 1. Distribution of the Study Sample According to Demographic Variables

Variables		N	%
Type of High School	Private high school	466	87.90%
	Public high school	64	12.20%
Role	Teacher	224	42.30%
	Pre-service teacher	306	57.70%
Experience	No years of experience (pre-service teachers)	306	59.20%
	1-5 years	80	15.10%
	5-10 years	54	10.20%
	More than 10 years	82	15.50%
Preference of Grammar Instruction	Implicitly (naturally, communicatively, real-life situations)	260	49.10%
	Explicitly (forms, memorization, and structures)	270	50.90%

Study Tool

The study tool included a questionnaire that consisted of 20 items divided into two domains. The first domain is the attitudes towards teaching grammar and includes twelve items. The second domain is the perceptions of grammar instruction and includes eight items. The survey questions were adopted from Barnard & Scampton (2008) and Thu (2009), specifically the items that met the goals of the study. Only a few items were added by the researchers. Each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale as follows: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1).

Validity of the Questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was verified with external validity and internal consistency. Regarding external validity, the questionnaire was presented to a group of arbitrators specialized in English. The questionnaire was amended according to their suggestions and they endorsed the content validity of the items. The validity and content of the questionnaire was approved by the arbitrators. Regarding internal consistency, the questionnaire was confirmed by calculating the correlation coefficient between each item and the total degree of the dimension it belongs to. The correlation coefficient between each dimension and the total degree of the questionnaire obtained from the pilot study was applied to a sample consisting of 50 students in the English department. After the pilot study was conducted, the questionnaire was modified based on the reviewers' and the students' feedback. The statistical package (SPSS) was used to calculate correlation coefficients using Pearson Correlation.

Table 2. Correlations Between Each Item and The Total Degree of Each Domain

N	Correlations	No.	Correlations	No.	Correlations
First Domain		8	0.568**	15	0.511**
1	0.594**	9	0.620**	16	0.590**
2	0.666**	10	0.664**	17	0.503**
3	0.533**	11	0.569**	18	0.570**
4	0.553**	12	0.464**	19	0.514**
5	0.617**	Second Domain		20	0.561**
6	0.591**	13	0.526**		
7	0.669**	14	0.497**		

** Correlation is significant at the (0.01) level

The previous table indicates the correlation between each item and the total degree of the domain it belongs to. It is statistically significant at the level of (0.01). The correlation coefficient for the first domain ranged between (0.464-0.669). The correlation coefficient for the second domain ranged between (0.497-0.590). This indicates the internal consistency and thus the validity of the construction.

Table 3. Correlations Between Each Domain and Questionnaire's Total Degree

Domain	Correlations
Attitudes towards teaching grammar	0.895**
Perceptions of grammar instruction	0.885**

The table above indicates that the correlation between each dimension and the total degree of the questionnaire are high, significant at the significance level of (0.01), and ranged between (0.885-0.895). This asserts the internal consistency and thus the validity of the construction.

Stability of The Questionnaire

The questionnaire's stability coefficient was calculated by finding Cronbach's alpha stability coefficient for each axis of the questionnaire through the statistical package (SPSS) after applying it to the sample study, as displayed in the following table.

Table 4. Stability Coefficients for The Axes of The Questionnaire

Domain	No. of Items	Alpha
Attitudes towards teaching grammar	12	0.93
Perceptions of grammar instruction	8	0.94
Total Questionnaire	20	0.91

Based on the previous table, the axes of the questionnaire demonstrate a high degree of stability. The stability coefficient of the questionnaire was found at (0.91). The stability coefficients of the axes ranged between (0.93-0.94). Thus, the results obtained when applied to the study sample are credible.

To determine attitudes and perceptions towards grammar instruction, a five-point scale was used in answering the questionnaire. From the five-point scale, the responses were divided into three levels as follows. Arithmetic means that range between (3.67-5) indicates that the majority of EFL teachers and pre-service teachers agree with the statement. Arithmetic means between (2.34-3.66) indicates that some EFL teachers and pre-service teachers agree. Arithmetic means between (1.00-2.33) indicates that the majority of EFL teachers and pre-service teachers disagree.

Statistical Treatment

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to input data in order to answer the questions of the study. The following statistical treatments were performed: frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, One Way ANOVA, and the Scheffe Test. The following section displays the results of the study after conducting the statistical analysis of the data. To answer the study questions, the responses of the study sample were collected and processed statistically using the statistical package (SPSS) to get the arithmetic means and standard deviations of each item in the questionnaire. The following section presents and discusses the results.

RESULTS

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' and pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching grammar?
2. What are teachers' and pre-service teachers' perceptions of explicit and implicit grammar instruction?

First Research Question: What are teachers' and pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching grammar?

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations of the Study Sample's Attitudes Towards Teaching Grammar

No	Items	Sample of Teachers				Sample of Pre-Service Teachers			
		Mean	Std. Dev	Order	Level	Mean	Std. Dev	Order	Level
1	Grammar is one of the building blocks of language, combined to create the whole.	4.45	0.67	1	High	4.14	0.70	1	High
2	Grammar is a system that language builds on.	4.36	0.68	2	High	4.10	0.84	2	High
3	Grammar in language is as an equal pillar in supporting language proficiency (other pillars include speaking, reading, and writing).	4.26	0.68	6	High	4.09	0.87	3	High
4	Students enjoy studying grammar.	2.91	0.92	12	Moderate	2.83	1.03	12	Moderate
5	As a teacher, I enjoy teaching my students grammar.	4.01	0.86	9	High	3.56	1.03	9	High
6	Studying grammar helps students learn English as a foreign language.	4.02	0.81	8	High	3.84	0.95	7	High
7	Without proper grammar, students cannot be proficient in the English language.	4.13	0.91	7	High	3.83	1.04	8	High
8	As a teacher, I give enough attention to grammar in my lessons	4.29	0.85	5	High	3.97	0.81	5	High
9	Students' communicative abilities improve when they study and practice English grammar.	4.30	0.80	4	High	3.95	0.97	6	High
10	Without grammar, EFL students tend to make many errors.	4.35	0.73	3	High	3.98	0.91	4	High
11	Only good EFL teachers give attention to grammar.	3.71	1.00	10	Moderate	3.46	1.07	10	Moderate
12	Excluding grammar from language teaching programs is beneficial to students.	3.14	1.31	11	Moderate	3.03	1.27	11	Moderate
The general mean of the dimension		3.99	0.43	-	High	3.73	0.57	-	High

The table above illustrates teachers' and pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching grammar. The domain earned a high degree with an arithmetic mean of (3.99) for teachers and (3.73) for pre-service teachers. According to the sample of teachers, the first item, "Grammar is one of the building blocks of language, combined to create the whole" earned the highest rank with a degree of (4.45). The second item, "Grammar is a system that language builds on" was ranked second with a degree of (4.36).

The tenth item, "Without grammar, EFL students tend to make many errors" was ranked third with a degree of (4.35). The ninth item, "Students' communicative abilities improve when they study and practice English grammar" was ranked fourth with a degree of (4.30). The twelfth item, "Excluding grammar from language teaching programs is beneficial to students" was ranked fifth with a degree of (3.14). The fourth item, "Students enjoy studying grammar" earned the lowest, with a degree of (2.91). According to the sample of pre-service teachers, the first item, "Grammar is one of the building blocks of language, combined to create the whole" earned the highest ranked with a mean of (4.14). The second item, "Grammar is a system that language builds on" was ranked second with a degree of (4.10). The third item, "Grammar in language is an equal pillar in supporting language proficiency" was ranked third with a degree of (4.09). The tenth item, "Without grammar, EFL students tend to make many errors" was ranked fourth with a degree of (3.98). The twelfth item, "Excluding grammar from language teaching programs is beneficial to students" ranked fifth with a degree of (3.03). The fourth item, "Students enjoy studying grammar" earned the lowest, with a degree of (2.83).

Second Research Question: What are teachers' and pre-service teachers' perceptions of explicit and implicit grammar instruction?

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of the Study Sample's Perceptions of Grammar Instruction

N	Items	Sample of Teachers				Sample of Pre-Service Teachers			
		Mean	Std. Dev	Order	Level	Mean	Std. Dev	Order	Level
13	Grammar is best taught implicitly. That is, teaching grammar naturally and communicatively.	3.78	0.94	4	High	3.93	0.79	2	High
14	It is more beneficial for students to learn grammar naturally through their environment and daily interactions.	3.97	0.96	1	High	4.05	0.91	1	High
17	Students prefer to be taught grammar implicitly.	3.59	0.99	7	Mode rate	3.54	0.92	6	Mode rate
19	There should be more implicit study of grammar in foreign language courses.	3.91	0.90	2	High	3.92	0.81	3	High
The general mean of implicit teaching		3.81	0.76	-	High	3.86	0.54	-	High
15	It is more beneficial for students to learn grammar through rules, drills, and memorization.	3.60	1.06	6	Mode rate	3.36	1.10	8	Mode rate
16	Grammar is best taught explicitly. That is, the rules and linguistic forms of grammar should clearly be stated to the students.	3.71	0.91	5	High	3.65	0.99	5	High
18	Students prefer to be taught grammar explicitly.	3.50	0.97	8	Mode rate	3.52	1.07	7	Mode rate
20	There should be more explicit study of grammar in foreign language courses.	3.79	0.82	3	High	3.71	0.98	4	High
The general mean of explicit teaching		3.65	0.64	-	Mode rate	3.56	0.82	-	Mode rate

The table above illustrates teachers' and pre-service teachers' perceptions on explicit and implicit grammar instruction. The domain for implicit instruction overall received a mean of (3.81) for teachers and (3.86) for pre-service teachers. According to the sample of teachers, the fourteenth item, "It is more beneficial for students to learn grammar naturally through their environment and daily interactions" earned the highest rank with a mean of (3.97). The nineteenth item, "There should be more implicit study of grammar in foreign language courses" was ranked second with a mean of (3.91). The thirteenth item, "Grammar is best taught implicitly. That is, naturally and communicatively" was ranked third with a mean of (3.78). Finally, the seventeenth item, "Students prefer to be taught grammar implicitly" earned the lowest mean with a degree of (3.59). According to the sample of pre-service teachers, the fourteenth item, "It is more beneficial for students to learn grammar naturally through their environment and daily interactions" earned the highest rank with a mean of (4.05). The thirteenth item, "Grammar is best taught implicitly. That is, teaching grammar naturally and communicatively" was ranked second with a mean of (3.93). The nineteenth item, "There should be more implicit study of grammar in foreign language courses" was ranked third with a mean of (3.92). Finally, the seventeenth item, "Students prefer to be taught grammar implicitly" earned the lowest mean with a degree of (3.54).

The table above also demonstrates teachers' and pre-service teachers' perceptions of explicit grammar instruction. The domain earned a moderate degree overall. The domain for explicit instruction received a mean of (3.65) for teachers and (3.56) for pre-service teachers. According to the sample of teachers, the twentieth item, "There should be more explicit study of grammar in foreign language courses" earned the highest ranking with a mean of (3.79). The sixteenth item, "Grammar is best taught explicitly. That is, rules and linguistic forms of grammar should clearly be stated to students," was ranked second with a mean of (3.71). The fifteenth item, "It is more beneficial for students to learn grammar through rules, drills, and memorization" was ranked third with a moderate degree of (3.60). Finally, the eighteenth item, "Students prefer to be taught grammar explicitly" earned the lowest, with a moderate degree of (3.50). According to the sample of pre-service teachers, the twentieth item, "There should be more explicit study of grammar in foreign language courses" earned the highest rank with a high degree of (3.71). The sixteenth item, "Grammar is best taught explicitly. That is, the rules and linguistic forms of grammar should clearly be stated to students" was ranked second with a moderate degree of (3.65). The eighteenth item, "Students prefer to be taught grammar explicitly" was ranked third with a moderate degree of (3.52). The fifteenth item, "It is more beneficial for students to learn grammar through rules, drills, and memorization: earned the lowest with a degree of (3.36).

DISCUSSION

The present study included two folds: a) to identify the attitudes of pre-service teachers and teachers regarding grammar, and b) to identify the perceptions of pre-service teachers and teachers regarding mode of grammar instruction. Our study found that teachers and pre-service teachers demonstrate positive attitudes towards grammar, with teachers and pre-service teachers receiving an overall mean of (3.99) and (3.73), respectively. Both teachers and pre-service teachers have unanimously agreed that grammar is an essential component of learning English as a foreign

language. Items one through three, regarding the importance of grammar, received the highest means from both samples. Items one through ten earned high means from the sample of teachers. Teachers' and pre-service teachers' attitudes are large determinants of their behavior inside the classroom. Ustuner et al. (2009) believed that teachers who demonstrate positive attitudes towards their profession can teach more effectively. The sample of pre-service teachers demonstrated less favorable attitudes towards grammar compared to the sample of teachers. For instance, the fifth item, "As a teacher, I enjoy teaching my students grammar" received a mean of (4.01) by teachers and (3.56) by pre-service teachers. The fourth item, "Students enjoy studying grammar" earned a mean of (2.91) by teachers and (2.83) by pre-service teachers, making it the item to receive the lowest mean across both dimensions. Thu (2009) similarly observed that students had negative reactions towards grammar because they found grammar difficult. The tenth item, "Without grammar, EFL students tend to make many errors" received a mean of (4.35) by teachers and (3.98) by pre-service teachers. Such results indicate that pre-service teachers may not be aware of the benefits of grammar until they receive experience in the classroom. Dikici (2012) surveyed pre-service teachers and found: "Though they [pre-service teachers] had studied the role of conscious knowledge in teacher education programs, it was the actual teaching experiences that gave the participants a clearer understanding of the importance of promoting conscious knowledge of grammar" (p.207). While pre-service teachers may not be aware of the importance of grammar at their current stage, it's likely that experience and exposure will give them an appreciation of grammar later during their careers. Kacar & Zengin (2013) reported that EFL pre-service teachers in Turkey believed that grammar was an anxiety-inducing process. According to Kacar & Zengin (2013), "This finding is not surprising as the majority of participants in the study did not have any or had little classroom experience" (p.59). Inexperienced teachers may find grammar difficult to teach, but experience in the classroom can alleviate this concern. This is most likely why pre-service teachers in our study demonstrated less favorable attitudes towards grammar, it simply could be due to the lack of experience.

The second domain of this study investigated teachers' and pre-service teachers' perceptions towards modes of grammar instruction. It was found that teachers and pre-service teachers prefer implicit grammar instruction, receiving means of (3.81) and (3.86), respectively. Whereas explicit grammar instruction received a mean of (3.65) by the teachers and (3.56) by the pre-service teachers. The fourteenth item, "It is more beneficial for students to learn grammar naturally through their environment and daily interactions," earned the highest mean in the domain by teachers (3.97) and pre-service teachers (4.05). The nineteenth item, "There should be more implicit study of grammar in foreign language courses" ranked second, with a mean of (3.91) by the sample of teachers. While the thirteenth item, "Grammar is best taught implicitly" ranked second with a mean of (3.93) by the sample of pre-service teachers. The body of literature unanimously supports that pre-service teachers favor implicit instruction while teachers favor explicit instruction (Dikici, 2012; Uysal & Yavuz, 2015; Graus & Coppen, 2016; Schulz, 2001; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Ellis, 2006, 2008; Barnard & Scampton, 2008). However, in our study, we found that both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers favor implicit instruction. A possible reason for this could be due to their education. Teacher-education programs often support modern methods such as implicit instruction. Graus & Coppen (2016) noted that pre-service

teachers in their study favored implicit instruction. Adding that, “Inductive instruction is what is in line with what is taught in Dutch teacher colleges and the textbooks. Indeed, undergraduates also indicated that their undergraduate courses were a major source of their beliefs” (p.589).

Another reason for this finding could be due to their schooling. Studies affirmed that teachers and pre-service teachers are influenced by their experiences as language learners. Thu (2009) stated, “Teachers usually refer to the influence of their views of their previous language learning experiences” (p.7). As previously mentioned, in 2017, the Kuwaiti EFL curriculum shifted from an explicit, objective-based curriculum to an implicit, competency-based curriculum. The newly implemented curriculum supports grammar instruction with an overall communicative framework. Pre-service teachers and teachers are either negatively or positively influenced by the mode of grammar instruction they were taught under during their schooling. Our results indicate that 290 participants were taught grammar implicitly, while 282 participants were taught grammar explicitly. For instance, some pre-service teachers and teachers may favor implicit instruction because they found it effective as students. Or, others may favor implicit instruction because they had negative attitudes towards explicit instruction as students. Now, as teachers, they may wish to provide their students with an alternative mode of grammar instruction compared to the one they were taught grammar through, believing that it will allow students to internalize grammar effectively. Likewise, participants may favor explicit instruction because they found it effective as students. Or, they may favor explicit instruction because they had negative attitudes towards implicit instruction. Schulz (2001) stated that, “Teachers’ perceptions regarding how languages are learned also play a crucial role in that they determine a teacher’s willingness to experiment with new approaches” (p.245). In contrast, Murniati & Riyandari (2016) study covered the curriculum shift in Indonesia. In 2006, Indonesia implemented a language policy that put English language teaching and learning within the framework of communicative competence. Despite this, teachers and pre-service teachers still believed that the traditional method of teaching grammar was more effective. Pre-service teachers in their study were taught grammar explicitly yet rejected the implicit study of grammar, refusing to teach it implicitly in their classrooms. Unlike the participants in Murniati & Riyandari’s (2016) study, teachers and pre-service teachers in our study demonstrated positive attitudes and enthusiasm regarding the implicit study of grammar.

While pre-service teachers and teachers prefer implicit grammar instruction, implicit instruction alone is not suitable for those learning English as a foreign language. Canh and Barnard (2009) explained that learning grammar naturally through the environment is difficult to achieve if students cannot access an English-speaking environment. Xiao (2019) added, “It is not easy in China to expose learners to authentic activities and conversations. Learners need a system which is laid out explicitly with rules to reason deductively” (p.24). Similarly, Arabic is the official language in Kuwait and the majority of the population communicate in Arabic. Thus, it can be difficult to expose learners to English naturally when the only exposure they receive is in the classroom. Xiao (2019) stated, “It is hard for implicit instruction to arouse learners’ grammar consciousness. It is appropriate only for learners with high English proficiency” (p.21). The thirteenth item, “Grammar is best taught implicitly. That is, teaching grammar naturally and communicatively” earned a mean of (3.78) by the sample of teachers and (3.93) by the sample of

pre-service teachers. This finding indicates that pre-service teachers demonstrate a stronger preference towards implicit instruction. Once again, teachers may demonstrate less acceptance towards the implicit study of grammar because they have the experience to make instructional decisions according to the needs of students and student success rates in the past. Teaching experience allows for teachers to understand that the implicit study of grammar isn't a suitable method of grammar instruction for learners in all educational stages. Dikici (2012) noted that actual teaching experience gave pre-service teachers a clearer understanding of the importance of the explicit study of grammar. Even though pre-service teachers and teachers favor the implicit study of grammar, this does not necessitate that they will teach grammar accordingly, as multiple studies have found that there's a mismatch between a teacher's beliefs and what is actually practiced in the classroom (Schulz, 2001; Thu, 2009; Dikici, 2012; Hos & Kecec, 2014).

Teachers and pre-service teachers in this study demonstrated less favorability towards explicit instruction. Items regarding explicit instruction earned lower means by both samples. The eighteenth item, "Students prefer to be taught grammar explicitly" received the lowest mean among teachers and pre-service teachers with means of (3.50) and (3.52), respectively. This finding contradicts many studies that affirm students prefer the explicit study of grammar (AlMekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011; Borg, 1999; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Barnard & Scampton, 2008). Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam (2011) noted that, "Prescribed rules give students a sense of security" (p.70). With Xiao (2019) similarly adding that, "Students found it difficult not being able to memorize what they should do, and they mainly learn grammar by rote or mechanically" (p.23). Our results indicate that pre-service teachers and teachers may favor implicit instruction simply because their students favor implicit instruction. The seventeenth item, "Students prefer to be taught grammar implicitly" earned a mean of (3.59) by the sample of teachers. While the eighteenth item, "Students prefer to be taught grammar explicitly" earned a mean of (3.50) by the sample of teachers. As previously mentioned, teachers indicated that they prefer the implicit study of grammar. Hence, it can be inferred that teachers' preferences of grammar instruction are influenced by their students' preferences. The experiences, needs, interests, and abilities of students have a large impact on a teacher's belief systems (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Schulz, 2001). When teachers and pre-service teachers modify their modes of teaching to cater to the needs of students, this will lead to the improvement of a students' performance and skills. Doing so will strengthen the performance of students and satisfy their needs, curriculum requirements, and teaching preferences.

CONCLUSION

The study identified teachers' and pre-service teachers' attitudes towards English grammar and their perceptions on the best mode of grammar instruction. Our results indicate that EFL pre-service teachers and teachers have favorable attitudes towards grammar. Additionally, pre-service teachers and teachers have favored an implicit mode of instruction, with an emphasis on a communicative framework, over an explicit mode of instruction, with an emphasis on structure and drills.

Limitations of the study mainly involved the diversification of data. Our study included (306) EFL pre-service teachers and (224) EFL teachers. While we have received many participants, our participants were all females. The College of Basic Education and public schools in Kuwait segregate classrooms based on gender due to the feminization policy enacted by the Ministry of Education. Including male participants will diversify the data. Plus, a qualitative study could have been conducted thereby providing stronger data. Qualitative input of our teachers and pre-service teachers is invaluable. A qualitative study would allow us to hear the concerns, fears, comments, and emotions teachers and pre-service teachers have regarding their roles as grammar instructors.

Teacher-education programs should instill confidence into their pre-service teachers by equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and background needed to effectively teach grammar. The study seeks to encourage pre-service teachers and teachers to use different modes of instruction for grammar instruction, as Ur (1996) believed that both implicit and explicit procedures are needed to achieve effective teaching and learning of grammar. Students are known to expect explicit instruction because they prefer to be given prescribed rules (Xiao, 2019; AlMekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). However, numerous studies have proven that pre-service teachers prefer implicit instruction (Dikici, 2012; Uysal & Yavuzm 2015; Graus & Coppen, 2016). More importantly, pre-service teachers and teachers should aim to satisfy the needs of their students. They should also modify their current approach of grammar instruction if it relies heavily on one mode. Finally, the current EFL curriculum in Kuwait is a competency-based curriculum, with an emphasis on the communicative framework of grammar. Previously, the EFL curriculum in Kuwait was an objective-based curriculum with an emphasis on explicit grammar instruction. However, studies have proven that explicit grammar instruction leads to eventual mastery of a foreign or second language, higher test scores, and improved grammatical accuracy. Instead of teaching grammar purely implicitly or explicitly, curriculum planners should integrate explicit and implicit instruction in the national curriculum. Given that the current competency-based curriculum leans too heavily on implicit instruction, the curriculum can be modified in order to include a healthy balance of explicit and implicit grammar instruction, thereby satisfying the needs of students, accommodating teachers' preferences, and fulfilling the curriculum requirements.

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