

Secondary School Teachers' Beliefs about Grammar Teaching in Ethiopia

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Abstract: This study intended to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs about direct/explicit and indirect/implicit grammar instruction. A simple random sampling technique was applied to select 396 secondary school EFL teachers among those who were pursuing their M.A. studies in the summer program of five universities. Among these, 348 participants responded to a questionnaire consisting of 21 items adapted from Jean and Simard (2011) and from Borg and Burns (2008). Then an exploratory factor analysis was applied, and the test determined only 15 items that would address the two types (direct and indirect) of grammar instruction. The results indicated that the teachers believed that implicit grammar teaching was viable, but they favored the explicit grammar teaching in their context. The paired sample t-test result, $t(347) = 5.655$; $p < .05$; Cohen's $d = .95$, revealed that the teachers had significantly stronger beliefs in the direct/explicit grammar instruction than in indirect/implicit grammar instruction. The two-way ANOVA results revealed that the participants' beliefs about direct grammar instruction significantly differed ($F(2, 346) = 14.120$; $p < .05$, partial eta square = .076) as a function of teaching experience in favor of the group of the most experienced teachers, but their belief about indirect grammar instruction did not differ as a function of both teaching experience and level of school they taught. The findings suggest a possible tension and conflict between belief and practice in the grammar instructional process, given the strong impact of teacher beliefs on teaching behaviors as the literature confirmed. Recommendations have also been included considering the findings of the study.

Key words: explicit grammar instruction, implicit grammar instruction, teacher belief

INTRODUCTION

Research has documented that teachers' beliefs have a considerable influence upon their teaching behaviors (Borg, 2003; Borg & Burns, 2008; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Burns, 1992; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Peacock, 2001; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). In connection to teachers' beliefs, a teacher cognition perspective has more recently been applied to the study of second language [L2] grammar teaching to address issues on the learning and teaching of L2 grammar (Ahmadi & Shafiee, 2015; Azad, 2013; Janfeshan, 2017; Li & Walsh, 2011; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Rosales & Coronel, 2017) such as how grammar should be taught: implicitly or explicitly (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Dekeyser, 2003); inductively, deductively

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or both (Nurusus, et al., 2015; Önalán, 2018), and whether or not knowledge of grammatical terminology enhances L2 learning (Krashen, 1999; Widodo, 2006; Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

The position of grammar instruction in ELT has varied following the different approaches and teaching methods used. Before the advent of communicative language teaching [CLT], grammar had a central place in language pedagogy reliant on a structural syllabus (Ellis, 2008a). With the emergence of CLT, the importance of grammar has changed and grammar instruction lost its most prestigious status in language learning (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Richards, 2008). To express the better status grammar teaching has regained in L2 curriculum in recent years, Swan (2011, p. 566) stated, “There is a modest rehabilitation of grammar instruction in second language acquisition (SLA) theory.” This could happen partly in response to the findings of SLA research, which suggest that explicit teaching of grammar contributes to its acquisition (Norris & Ortega 2000; Spada 2011). Language teaching professionals (e.g., Batstone & Ellis, 2009; Ellis, 2006; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004) now hold a strong conviction that grammar is too important to be overlooked, and that without a good knowledge of grammar, L2 learners’ language development will be severely inhibited.

Parallel to this international scenario, there has been a similar trend of emphasis shift in grammar instruction in Ethiopia. Prior to 1990s, grammar was taught directly at all levels using the structural method (Haregewoin, 2007). Ethiopian education and training policy (TGE, 1994), which introduced a significant shift in instructional approach from the traditional teacher-centered to the progressive learner-centered one, gave way to communicative language teaching [CLT] to manifest itself in the field of language teaching. Following this change, the series of textbooks (*English for New Ethiopia*) for primary and secondary schools was replaced by a new series of CLT- oriented textbooks (*English for Ethiopia*) in 1997 (Haregewoin, 2007). In line with the extant dominant belief, grammar received less attention in the curriculum; the syllabus, teachers’ training, and textbooks catered for the communicative oriented method. This was evidently observed in Grades 11 and 12 textbooks (MOE, 1997a), which did not contain grammar lessons. The introduction section of the *Teachers’ Book* for Grade 11 stated: “It should be noted that there is no grammar section. The most important grammatical structures have been taught and should have been mastered by the students by the end of Grade Ten” (MOE, 1997b, p.26). The recent series of textbooks by the same name “*English for Ethiopia*” (MOE, 2011) was brought into effect containing frequent brief grammar lessons under the heading *Language Focus* in each unit. This organization indicates the felt need for consolidating the teaching of English grammar in the Ethiopian EFL context.

Ever since the emergence of CLT, language-teaching professionals have been arguing over what approaches language teachers use to teach grammar (Basturkmen, 2012; Ellis, 2008a; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Nazari & Allahyar, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Numerous language teaching scholars (e.g., Dekeyser, 1995; Krashen, 1982; Paradis, 1994) contend that grammar should be taught in an implicit or indirect way that emphasizes the role of exposure and that requires learners to understand the rules from the given examples. They claim that the inductive method in the implicit grammar instruction has its advantages in classroom practices and that it

promotes second language learners to discover rules with spontaneity and leads them to operate the language well.

Some other professionals (e.g., Doughty, 2003; Harley, 1998; Norris & Ortega, 2000) contend that grammar should be taught in an explicit or direct way which involves essentially teaching a series of grammatical rules before being used or practiced. Long (1991), in his proposal of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI), claimed that learners benefited from explicit attention to form within a meaningful context in terms of acquisition and accuracy. Doughty and Williams (1998) expounded that rule presentation and discussion, consciousness-raising tasks, and input-processing in the FFI are known as the three techniques of explicit teaching. Ellis (2005) also concurred that language acquisition is faster through explicit teaching because using grammar consciousness-raising or noticing tasks enables students to overcome grammar problems. Norris and Ortega (2000) argued that explicit teaching is more effective than implicit teaching because implicit grammar instruction does not suffice to promote accurate use of the target language.

Still other language teaching professionals (e.g., Ellis, 2008b; Fotos, 1994; Mathews et al. 1989; Rosa & O'Neill, 1999) propose that combining both implicit and explicit teaching might be a good way to learn a target language. In support of this, Spada and Lightbown (1993) expounded that language acquisition cannot happen unless learners notice the target language's structure to begin with. Ellis (1994) believes that explicit learning facilitates implicit learning and promotes learners' language knowledge because it helps to pay attention to the gap between the target language and their own inter-language. Ellis (2005) also suggested learners are encouraged to learn grammatical patterns first through explicit learning and then fine-tune those patterns and integrate them into their linguistic system by implicit learning. Arguing that inductive and deductive teachings have no significant differences between them, Rosa and O'Neill (1999) proposed that the most effective way of teaching could be mixing the two approaches and adopting them together while teaching. It is up to teachers to form this delicate blend. Ellis (2006) and Ellis et al. (2006) argue for the use of an approach that would best fit the surrounding circumstances under which teachers can make the best decision among the proposed grammar teaching options. As confirmed in the literature (e.g., Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Smith, 1996; Woods, 1996), contextual, learner-related and teacher-related factors have a great impact on the sustainability and practicality of the theories and approaches about teaching and learning.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In line with the paradigm shift and the issuance of the new national English curriculum in the Ethiopian EFL context, some changes on part of EFL teachers were inevitably expected: emphasizing the importance of communication and using the communicative approach in teaching grammar in accordance with the curriculum standard and teaching syllabus.

Some researchers (e.g., Aytenuw, 2015; Habtamu, 2011; Mengistie, 2019) documented that teacher perceptions have been slowly changing from traditional teaching to communicative

teaching. However, many researchers reported that the classroom practice has remained yet unchanged despite the policy claim and CLT- oriented curriculum and textbooks. For example, Birhanu (2013), Haregewoin (2007) and Zewudie (2017) stated that teachers in Ethiopian secondary schools still seem to use the teacher-centered approach, and the actual teaching and learning process seems to be unchanged. Girma (2005) also reported that teacher-fronted mode of teaching was dominant and pair and group work activities were never observed in most of the class time. Besides, Denne-Bolton (2001, p. 2) clearly expounded as follows: “Though the theory of communicative language teaching is well known in Ethiopia, and used successfully by some teachers, it is often not applied by others due to uncertainty of techniques, time constraints, and lack of confidence.”

This indicates the dissimilitude between the curriculum expectations and the actual practice. Some teachers may tend to favor the teacher-centered deductive teaching and resort to the structural approach in their grammar lessons, perhaps because they still hold stronger beliefs in the direct grammar teaching.

Given the central position grammar occupies in studies of L2 acquisition (Ellis, 2008a) and the profound role teacher beliefs play in making decisions in the teaching and learning process (Borg, 2003; Borg & Burns, 2008; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Peacock, 2001), a dearth of research conducted in the Ethiopian context about teachers’ beliefs in explicit and implicit grammar instruction approaches represents a gap to be filled. Therefore, this study was initiated to explore what Ethiopian secondary school EFL teachers believe about the explicit and implicit grammar teaching approaches.

Informed by the literature on teacher cognition on grammar teaching and the practical EFL teaching experiences in our schools, this study addressed the following research questions:

- 1) What are the beliefs of English teachers about the explicit and implicit grammar instruction in Secondary Schools in Ethiopia?
- 2) In which grammar teaching approach do these EFL teachers have stronger beliefs?
- 3) How do demographic variables (teaching experience and grade level they teach) influence teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching?

METHOD

Design

Among numerous types of study designs in quantitative research approach, a descriptive survey method was used to generate data and address the aforementioned research questions in the current research.

Research Participants and Sampling Technique

The target population of this study is the EFL teachers who were government-sponsored summer students studying for their second degree in TEFL in five different universities. This population

was targeted because this was a viable way to involve a large number of EFL secondary school teachers as research participants from different parts of the country in an economical way. A simple random sampling technique was applied to select 396 EFL teachers. Only 348 participants, 74 (21.3%) female and 274 (78.7%) male, responded to the questionnaire, which made the return rate of the questionnaire 88.5%. The sample consisted of M.A. TEFL summer students from Bahir Dar University (n=92), University of Gondar (n=66), Debre Markos University (n= 58), Mekele University (n= 69), and Jimma University (n= 63).

Data Collection Instrument

Informed by a post-positivist paradigm, this survey study devoted a lot of time and energy to the development of a reliable and valid instrument by using exploratory factor analysis and involving a large number of participants. After such a rigorous test of factor analysis, this study used questionnaire as the only data collection tool. The rationale for using the factor analysis was to determine the construct validity of the instrument and to work on the scale means by aggregating the total mean scores of each component of the questionnaire as a whole.

The actual survey questionnaire used in this study consisted of four parts. However, this research used only the information gathered through Part 1 and Part 2 of the survey questionnaire. The first part elicited participants' demographic or background information. The data obtained from this part was used to provide information about the composition of the sample group as well as the key participant variables of the third research question. The second part, adapted mainly from Borg and Burns' (2008) and from Jean and Simard's (2011) questionnaire, comprised 21 close-ended items that addressed a range of key issues in grammar instruction, particularly direct (explicit) and indirect (implicit) grammar instruction. The participants were asked to mark the most suitable response to each item on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*). As a result of the exploratory factor analysis carried out as a means of validating the questionnaire, it was possible to explain 15 individual items (out of the 21 items adapted from two sources) that could address the two types of grammar instruction. In addition, Cronbach alpha was applied to measure the internal consistency of the two groups of items. The first group consisting of eight items about direct/explicit grammar instruction had good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient ($\alpha = .81$), while the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the second group consisting of seven items about indirect/implicit grammar instruction was .78.

Data Analysis Procedure

As the questionnaire was adapted from two questionnaires designed to measure participants' beliefs about direct/explicit and indirect/implicit grammar teaching, exploratory factor analysis was carried out as a means of validating the questionnaire, i.e. to determine the individual items that would address the two types (direct and indirect) of grammar instruction.

Prior to exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. The level of the KMO value of the sample that consisted of 348 participants was found 0.687, which is above the required 0.6 level of sampling adequacy (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006), and it was, therefore, acceptable. Also, the result of Bartlett Sphericity Test was significant ($\chi^2 = 465.036$, $n=105$, $p<.01$), which confirmed that the data set in terms of items efficiency had good fit for factor analysis. In order to show factor-construct of the questionnaire, principal components analysis and Varimax were employed and .35 was taken as the minimum limit for factor loadings to decide whether or not the scale items were to be extracted.

As a result, two factors were determined through Eigen values and scree plot graphs. Out of 21 items, only fifteen items of the questionnaire were grouped under two factors, and the rotated factor loadings higher than 0.35 are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Rotated Component Matrix

	Component			Component	
	1	2		1	2
ITEM 10	.624		ITEM 13		.585
ITEM 8	.584		ITEM 12		.580
ITEM 9	.569		ITEM 1		.528
ITEM 2	.558		ITEM 4		.477
ITEM 7	.507		ITEM 11		.433
ITEM 6	.478		ITEM 5		.356
ITEM 21	.379		ITEM 3		.352
ITEM 17	.372				

When the content of each individual item in the questionnaire was analyzed, supported by the results of the explanatory factor analysis, Factor I (Direct/Explicit Grammar Instruction and Factor II (Indirect/Implicit Grammar Instruction) were identified. The two factor solution explained a total of 28.40% of the variance. As it is clear from Table 1, the first factor consisted of eight items and the vertically rotated factor loadings by using Varimax method ranged from 0.372 to 0.624. The unique variance explained by this factor was 15.93%. Secondly, “Indirect/Implicit Grammar Instruction”, the second factor of the questionnaire, consisted of seven items and the vertically rotated factor loadings by using Varimax method ranged from 0.352 to 0.585. The unique variance explained by this factor was 12.47%.

Then, in order to account for teachers’ beliefs about grammar instruction (the first research question), frequency counts, means and standard deviations of participants’ responses to each item in the questionnaire were first computed. Next, means and standard deviations of the participants’ responses to the group of the questionnaire items (i.e., the measure of the scale) for each type of grammar instruction were computed. Based on these mean scores and standard deviations, statistical tests (i.e., paired sample t-test and two-way ANOVAs) were conducted in order to elucidate the beliefs held by EFL teachers about grammar instruction and to address the second and third research questions. Prior to running these tests of significance, the data were

explored to determine the possibility of applying the parametric tests. Accordingly, the exploratory data analysis confirmed that the data did not violate the assumptions of normal distribution and homogeneity of population variances.

RESULTS

The findings of the study have been thematically organized along the research questions. First, the demographic information of the research participants has been presented. The age of the participant teachers ranged from 24 to 57 ($M = 34.72$). Teachers' teaching experiences ranged from 1 year to 35 years ($M = 12.43$ years). An attempt was made to turn the continuous data of the variable "teaching experience" to categorical form by classifying the participants into three groups of approximately equal number. Thus, the first group comprised 120 (34.5%) teachers with one to eight years of experience; the second, 127 (36.5%) with nine to 14 years of experience; and the third, 101 (29%) with 15 years and above. Of all the participants, 162 (46.6%) were teaching in Grades 11 and 12, while the remaining 186 (53.4%) were teaching in Grades 9 and 10. In the four-year summer TEFL M.A. program, 99 (28.4%) participants were in their first summer, 97 (27.9%) in their second, 82 (23.6%) in their third, and 70 (20.1%) in their final summer programs.

Teachers' -Beliefs about Indirect/Implicit Grammar Instruction

Frequency counts, means and standard deviations of participants' responses to each item in the questionnaire were computed. First, results of the items about indirect/implicit grammar instruction with their summated mean score are reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of items about indirect/implicit grammar instruction

Item	Content	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	S.D.
5	During lessons, a focus on grammar should come after communicative tasks, not before.	71	95	35	113	61	2.99	1.397
11	Grammar can be successfully taught without extensive use of grammatical terminology.	50	130	77	91	28	2.78	1.172
4	Formal grammar teaching does not help learners become more fluent.	35	96	77	136	27	3.06	1.137
3	In a communicative approach to language teaching, grammar should not be taught directly.	24	76	60	128	81	3.45	1.222
12	Grammar learning is more effective when learners work out the rules for themselves.	24	62	52	150	82	3.55	1.191
13	Separate treatment of grammar fails to produce language knowledge which students can use in natural communication.	70	144	56	65	31	2.57	1.223
1	Grammar is best acquired unconsciously through meaningful communication.	41	107	73	113	35	2.98	1.193
Grand Mean							3.08	0.64

When the responses to the individual items of the sub-scale are further examined, we find the individual item mean scores ranging from 2.57 (Item 13) to 3.55 (Item 12). The highest item

mean ($M=3.55$) was obtained for Item 12 as the majority of the participants ($N= 232$; 60.4%) favored the statement “Grammar learning is more effective when learners work out the rules for themselves.” The next highest item mean ($M=3.45$) was obtained for Item 3 as the majority of the participants ($N= 209$; 54.4%) agreed to the statement “In a communicative approach to language teaching grammar should not be taught directly.” On the other hand, the mean scores for Item 5 ($M=2.99$), Item 1 ($M=2.98$), Item 11 ($M=2.78$), and Item13 ($M=2.57$) were below the mid-point of the scale. The lowest item mean ($M=2.57$) was obtained as 214 (61.5%) of participants expressed their disagreement to Item 13, “Separate treatment of grammar fails to produce language knowledge which students can use in natural communication”. The lower mean scores of these four items indicate that the participants had reservation in their commitment to the tenets of CLT: use of communicative tasks before explaining grammar items, teaching grammar without extensive use of grammatical terminology; failure of separate treatment of grammar to enable students to use the language in natural communication; and the possibility of unconscious acquisition of grammar through meaningful communication.

The participants’ responses to these seven items were finally computed to obtain the overall measure of the sub-scale (indirect/implicit grammar instruction). As can be seen in the table, the mean score of the sub-scale was 3.08 with a standard deviation 0.64, which is very close to the mid-point of the scale (3.00). This mean score indicates that the participants had a moderately favorable belief (if not a remarkably strong one) in implicit grammar teaching which is aligned to communicative language teaching.

Teachers’ Beliefs about Direct/Explicit Grammar Instruction

The computed frequency counts, means and standard deviations of participants’ responses to each item about direct/explicit grammar instruction in the questionnaire with their summated mean are presented below in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of items about direct/explicit grammar instruction

Item	Content	SD	D	U	A	SA	M	S.D.
7	Teachers should present grammar to learners before expecting them to use it.	11	41	77	165	71	3.67	1.009
2	Learners who are aware of grammar rules can use the language more effectively than those who are not.	114	150	42	53	15	2.21	1.142
21	Exercises that get learners to practice grammar structures help learners develop fluency in using grammar.	20	56	53	179	64	3.57	1.103
8	In learning grammar, repeated practice allows learners to use structures fluently.	26	70	61	141	71	3.44	1.199
9	In teaching grammar, a teacher's main role is to explain the rules.	48	79	46	119	83	3.29	1.358
10	It is important for learners to know grammatical terminology.	32	69	61	150	64	3.39	1.208
6	Correcting learners' spoken grammatical errors in English is one of the teacher's key roles.	14	43	60	199	55	3.64	0.994
17	Productive practice of structures is a necessary part of the learning process.	20	48	62	173	66	3.59	1.090
Grand Mean							3.35	.60

Table 3 above presents the summary of the data from the other sub-scale (direct/explicit grammar instruction). The highest item mean ($M=3.67$) was obtained for Item 7 as 236 participants (67.8%) agreed to the statement "Teachers should present grammar to learners before expecting them to use it." The next highest item mean ($M=3.64$) was obtained for Item 6 as 73% of the participant teachers ($N= 254$) supported the statement "Correcting learners' spoken grammatical errors in English is one of the teacher's key roles." The third highest item mean ($M=3.59$) was obtained for Item 17 as the majority of the participant teachers ($N= 239$; 68.7%) were in favor of the statement "Productive practice of structures is a necessary part of the learning process." The next highest item mean ($M=3.57$) was obtained for Item 21 as the majority of the participant teachers ($N= 243$; 69.8%) expressed their agreement to the statement "Exercises that get learners to practice grammar structures help learners develop fluency in using grammar." On the other hand, the lowest item mean ($M=2.21$) was obtained for Item 2 as 264 participants (76.6%) disagreed with the statement "Learners who are aware of grammar rules can use the language more effectively than those who are not." The mean scores for all items except that of Item 2 indicate that the participants had a strong tendency into the traditional teacher-fronted direct grammar instruction.

The participants' responses to these eight items were finally computed to obtain the overall measure of the sub-scale (direct/explicit grammar instruction). The mean score of the sub-scale was 3.35 with the standard deviation of 0.60. This mean score indicated that the respondents had a relatively stronger belief about direct/explicit grammar instruction than that about implicit grammar instruction (shown in Table 2). This implies that though majority of participants preferred students' own discovery of grammar rules (inductive teaching) during language instruction, they have a reservation that this would not be possible without explicit teaching of grammar rules and extensive use of grammatical terminology.

Comparison of Teachers' Beliefs about Direct and Indirect Grammar Instructions

To generate answers to the second research question, a further analysis was conducted to compare their beliefs. Table 4 below presents the comparison between EFL teachers' beliefs about direct/explicit and indirect/implicit grammar instructions. The participants had stronger beliefs about explicit grammar teaching ($M = 3.35$; $SD = 0.60$) than about implicit grammar teaching ($M = 3.08$; $SD = 0.64$).

Table 4

EFL teachers' beliefs about explicit and implicit grammar instruction

Beliefs in	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Direct Grammar Instruction	3.35	348	.60	5.566	347	.000	.95
Indirect Grammar Instruction	3.08	348	.64				

The difference in the participants' beliefs about implicit grammar instruction and explicit grammar instruction was tested with a paired-samples t-test. The result, $t(347) = 5.566$; $p < 0.05$; $d = .95$, showing a large effect size and a statistical effect for difference, confirmed that there was a significant difference between teachers' beliefs about the two grammar teaching approaches.

Analysis of Teachers' Beliefs about Implicit Grammar Instruction in Terms of Teaching Experience and Grade Level

To generate answers to the third research question, further analyses were conducted using two-way ANOVAs to examine whether teaching experience and grade level teachers taught had any impact on their beliefs about implicit and explicit grammar teaching. Prior to the result of two-way ANOVAs, the descriptive statistics have been presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics on beliefs about indirect/implicit grammar teaching in terms of teaching experience and grade level they teach

Teaching experience	Grade Level	N	Mean	S.D
1 – 8 years	General Secondary	64	3.13	.66
	Preparatory	56	3.13	.68
	Total	120	3.13	.67
9 - 14 years	General Secondary	73	2.99	.55
	Preparatory	54	3.09	.59
	Total	127	3.03	.56
above 15 years	General Secondary	49	3.02	.74
	Preparatory	52	3.12	.67
	Total	101	3.07	.70
Total	General Secondary	186	3.05	.64
	Preparatory	162	3.11	.65
	Total	348	3.08	.64

As can be seen in Table 5, detailed descriptive statistical information have been organized on two factors: teaching experience and level of school the participants were working in. First, 120 of the EFL teachers who belonged to the least experienced group (i.e., one to eight years of teaching experience) scored in their beliefs about indirect grammar teaching 3.13 on the one-to-five rating scale. Both sub-groups of participants teaching in general secondary schools and in preparatory schools in the least experienced teachers group had almost similar level of beliefs. Next, 127 of the respondents who belonged to the moderately experienced group (i.e., nine to fourteen years of teaching experience) scored 3.03 on the scale. However, participants teaching in general secondary schools in this group ($M= 2.99$) scored a little lower than those in preparatory schools ($M= 3.09$). Finally, the remaining 101 participants, who were grouped into the most experienced group (15 and more years of teaching experience), scored 3.07 on the same scale. In this group, participants teaching in general secondary schools and those in preparatory schools exhibited a bit different levels of belief (i.e., 3.02 and 3.12, respectively).

The table also depicts that the participants teaching in general secondary schools ($n= 186$) scored lower ($M=3.05$) than their counterparts in preparatory schools ($M=3.11$) in their beliefs about indirect grammar teaching.

Based on the descriptive statistics presented in Table 5 and the exploratory data analysis to make sure that all the required assumptions were met, a two-way ANOVA was applied to examine the significance of the differences in beliefs about indirect or implicit grammar teaching as a function of the two factors (teaching experience and grade level of school). The results have been presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Results of two-way ANNOVA examining beliefs about indirect grammar instruction

Source	F	df	Sig.	Partial Eta Square
Teaching Experience	.690	2, 342	.502	.004
Level of School	.942	1, 342	.332	.003
Teaching Experience * Level	.235	2, 342	.791	.001

As can be seen in Table 6 above, the participants' beliefs about indirect grammar instruction did not differ as a function of both teaching experience and level of school they teach. The two-way ANOVA results revealed that the main effects: teaching experience, ($F(2, 342) = .690, p > .05$, partial eta-squared=.004) and school level, ($F(2, 342) = .942, p > .05$, partial eta-squared=.003) did not have any significant impact on the difference of the teachers' belief about indirect grammar instruction, nor did they have a significant interaction effect, ($F(2, 342) = .235, p > .05$, partial eta-squared=.001). This means both the p-values and the effect sizes confirmed that the variation in teaching experience and level of school they teach in had negligible (only 0.4% and 0.3%, respectively) influence or contribution to the variation of the participants' belief about indirect grammar instruction.

Analysis of Teachers' Beliefs about Explicit Grammar Instruction in terms of Teaching Experience and Grade Level

To compare teachers' beliefs about direct grammar teaching in terms of their experience and school level, the summary statistics are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics on beliefs about direct/explicit grammar teaching in terms of teaching experience and grade level they teach

Teaching experience	Grade Level	N	Mean	(S.D.)
1 - 8 years	General Secondary	64	3.12	(.64)
	Preparatory	56	3.18	(.56)
	Total	120	3.15	(.60)
9 - 14 years	General Secondary	73	3.38	(.59)
	Preparatory	54	3.35	(.46)
	Total	127	3.37	(.54)
above 15 years	General Secondary	49	3.69	(.61)
	Preparatory	52	3.44	(.59)
	Total	101	3.56	(.61)
Total	General Secondary	186	3.37	(.65)
	Preparatory	162	3.32	(.55)
	Total	348	3.35	(.60)

Table 7 above shows that 120 of the EFL teachers who belonged to the least experienced group scored in their beliefs about direct grammar teaching 3.15 on the one-to-five rating scale. The details also indicate that participants teaching in general secondary schools and in preparatory schools in the least experienced teachers group had a bit different level of beliefs (i.e., 3.12 and 3.18, respectively). Similarly, 127 of the respondents belonging to the moderately experienced group (i.e., nine to fourteen years of teaching experience) scored in their beliefs about direct grammar teaching 3.37 on the scale. As shown in the details, in this group the participants teaching in general secondary schools and those in preparatory schools scored almost the same level of beliefs (i.e., 3.38 and 3.35, respectively). The remaining 101 participants grouped into the most experienced group (15 and more years of teaching experience) scored in their beliefs about direct grammar teaching 3.56 on the scale. As shown in the details, in this group the participants teaching in general secondary schools ($M=3.69$) outscored those in preparatory schools ($M=3.44$) in their beliefs about direct grammar teaching.

Table 7 also depicts that the total of 186 participants teaching in general secondary schools scored 3.37, and the remaining total of 162 teachers in preparatory schools scored 3.32 in their beliefs about direct grammar teaching on the same scale.

Finally, to examine the significance of the differences in beliefs about explicit grammar teaching due to teaching experience and grade level, the two-way ANOVA was applied after making sure that all the required assumptions were met. The results have been presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Results of Two-way ANOVA examining beliefs about direct grammar instruction

Source	F	df	Sig.	Partial eta Square
Teaching Experience	14.120	2, 342	.000	.076
Level of School	1.527	1,342	.217	.004
Teaching Experience * Level	2.075	2, 342	.127	.012

A two-way ANOVA that examined the effects of teaching experience and grade level the participants taught on the variation in participants' beliefs in direct grammar instruction found a statistical effect for the main effect of teaching experience only ($F_{2,342} = 14.120$, $p < .05$, partial eta-squared=.076). The most experienced teachers believed that direct grammar instruction would be more helpful ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.76$, $n = 101$) than the moderately experienced teachers did ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.12$, $n = 127$) or the least experienced teachers ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.12$, $n = 120$). The effect size shows that this factor accounted for 7.6% of the variance in the data, which is a small effect. Neither the other main effect nor the interaction effect was found to be statistical. This means there was no significant difference, $F_{2, 342} = 2.075$, $p > .05$, partial eta-squared=.004, between general secondary school teachers and preparatory school teachers in their beliefs about direct grammar instruction, and this factor accounted for only 0.4% variance in the data.

DISCUSSION

The first finding suggested that the teachers had a moderately favorable belief about an indirect grammar instruction though that was not as strong as their belief about direct grammar instruction. This moderately favorable belief about an indirect grammar instruction can be attributed partly to the requirement of the current textbooks to focus on meaning through communication-based activities and/or to their training courses as Woods (1996) suggested. This clearly indicates the participants' tendency to support students to discover rules by themselves without disregarding the need to use direct grammar elements. With this perspective, the current finding is consistent with similar research about teachers' perceptions on grammar instruction (Andrews, 2003; Borg & Burns, 2008; Schulz, 2001).

The result of the statistical analyses confirmed that these teachers favored the direct grammar instruction better than the indirect. This implies that teachers tend to favor the teacher-centered deductive teaching and believe that formal grammar instruction (i.e., explicit grammar instruction) has a more facilitative role in language learning than implicit grammar instruction does. In other words, this could mean that these teachers, considering the reality of their EFL context, are likely to make pedagogical decisions that reflect traditional grammar teaching, practices leading to teacher-centered lessons, mechanical exercises, and direct feedback on grammar-based oral and written errors, as suggested by Phipps and Borg (2009).

Given the role of the contextual factors that have the highest impact on teachers' beliefs and decisions (Smith, 1996; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011), the obtained result can be attributed to the EFL context and students' demand in Ethiopia. EFL teachers' major objective is likely to be to help their students use English for academic purposes, where accuracy may be targeted for written communication, provided that the students have very limited access to the English language and little opportunity to learn an acceptable form of English and to practice their communication skills outside the classroom in Ethiopia (Haregewoine, 2007).. Consequently, they may tend to prefer to use a lot of rule-based practice involving meta-language which they believe can provide students with accuracy-focused activities.

Given the above school situation, the EFL classroom culture is likely to be characterized by a strong demand of students who pursue high scores in the traditional examination system, just like other school subjects by cramming grammar rules. Therefore, EFL teachers might have to work hard to meet their students' demands, thereby resorting to traditional English teaching which puts much focus on language forms instead of meaning.

Based on these findings, this study presents empirical evidence to existing literature which suggests that EFL teachers still favor several elements of direct grammar teaching (Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997; Nurusus, et al., 2015; Önalán, 2018; Schulz, 1996).

Regarding the comparison between teachers based on teaching experience in their beliefs about grammar instructions, the findings of this study indicate a similar pattern among the three experience groups in their beliefs about indirect grammar instructions. There is not a significant difference among the three groups in beliefs about the implicit/indirect grammar instruction. The least experienced teachers and the most experienced ones believed indirect grammar teaching as an essential part of language instruction. However, a significant difference was observed among the three groups in their beliefs about explicit/direct grammar instruction in favor of the most experienced group. This means that the most experienced teachers to a larger extent have stronger tendency towards explicit/ direct grammar teaching. This might have happened partly due to their attempt to cater for their students' demands and the situational factors. This implies that the most experienced teachers of this study are more likely to be flexible when it comes to teaching grammar in that they occasionally may want to use both direct and indirect grammar elements in their teaching. Here, it can be inferred that experience in teaching leads to more flexibility on the part of teachers with occasional blended use of indirect and direct grammar instruction when necessary.

Generally speaking, it can be inferred that the teachers favored the indirect grammar instruction in line with the general principles of communicative language teaching, and at the same time they more firmly upheld the direct grammar instruction a typical way of traditional grammar teaching. This is consistent with Andrews' (2003) finding that the teachers' grammar teaching beliefs were neither conservative nor radical.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, we can conclude that the majority of participants upheld the belief in implicit grammar teaching in which students' own discovery of grammar rules (inductive teaching) should be encouraged during language instruction, but they have a reservation that this would not be possible without explicit teaching of grammar rules and extensive use of grammatical terminology. This situation is likely to lead to tension and conflict between belief and practice in the grammar instructional process, given the strong impact of teacher beliefs on teaching behaviors as the literature confirmed.

Teacher educators and other stakeholders in education should therefore pay greater attention to the ongoing continuous professional development and training in order to resolve the possible tension and conflict by ensuring that teachers make appropriate decisions based on well-informed beliefs in the teaching of grammar.

LIMITATIONS

The current paper does not include actual teaching practices of the participants, and the sample consisted of EFL teachers who were only involved in the summer TEFL M.A. programs; hence, the conclusions are based on those easily accessible teachers' reported beliefs. Further research is necessary to be able to draw practical conclusions on the beliefs and practices of English teachers about their grammar instruction. Thus, subsequent investigations should involve observing more varied sample of English teachers while teaching grammar as another data collection method to support the questionnaire results.

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