Pre-Service English Teachers' Beliefs Towards Grammar And Its Teaching At Two Turkish Universities

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Abstract

This paper examines pre-service English teachers' beliefs towards grammar studying at two Turkish Universities. A total of 90 pre-service English teachers, 57 of whom were studying at Muğla University and 33 of whom were studying at Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey, were involved in this study. The research participants completed two questionnaires. The aim of this paper is to look into pre-service English teachers' beliefs towards grammar and its teaching as well as their knowledge on the metalanguage of grammar. The findings reveal that although a great majority of the participants favour the use of metalanguage in teaching grammar, and support the deductive grammar teaching practises, they themselves still have serious problems even with the most basic grammatical terminology.

Keywords: Grammar teaching, pre-service teacher, belief, grammatical terminology, metalanguage

1. Introduction

Pre-service teachers come to any teacher education programme with prior experiences, knowledge and beliefs about learning and teaching. Pre-service teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs have an effective role in developing them as teachers. Recent research has made significant contributions to the exploration of pre-service teachers' beliefs, and the relationship between beliefs and practices which has yielded important findings for pre-service teacher education. Beliefs are part of the student teachers' evolving identity as teacher; they represent the "medium for each person to negotiate his/her identity as a social being" (Cabaroglu, & Roberts, 2000: 388). Therefore, in the teaching of grammar pre-service teachers are expected to have their own beliefs, which are reflected upon their prior experiences as students.

Given the obvious need to have a better understanding of the mindset of the pre-service teachers as to how they conceptualise grammar and its teaching as well as learning, this study aims to explore their knowledge as well as beliefs in the language teaching area. It first examines the literature on teacher beliefs in an effort to locate the current study within the overall framework. As part of the review, the study looks into various studies to come up with a viable explanation of metalanguage on the teaching of grammar as a foreign language. Next is the explication of the research design, where how data are collected is explained at length.

One of the controversial issues in grammar teaching is with the teaching of grammatical terminology/metalanguage. Metalanguage here is understood as "language about language" (Johnson, & Johnson, 1998: 212), and clearly the description of grammar is one of its central functions. According to Andrews (1999), the metalanguage recognition task is cognitively less demanding than metalanguage production task and rules and explanations task. But at this point there is need to distinguish between the two terms which are usually confused: Metalanguage (metalingual awareness) and metalinguistic knowledge**.** Burns, Roe and Ross define these terms as follow: "Metalanguage is the ability to think about the words. Metalinguistic awareness usually progresses from an understanding of the sounds of the language (phonology), to an awareness of the structure or grammar of language (syntax), to a final understanding of the meaning of the words (semantics)" (as cited in Edwards, 2003: 3).

Some pre-service English teachers may feel it is very important for students to know the correct terminology as it would help them 'to understand grammar books' or others may see nothing wrong with using grammatical terminology or some others may not want to make too much use of grammatical terminology. Their limited

grammatical awareness may affect the accuracy of their teaching and therefore the accuracy of what their students learn from them. The work on teacher metalingual awareness is significant in that it identifies what is likely to influence the academic performance of pre-service teachers: which is their degree of knowledge. One of the aims of this study is to reflect upon pre-service English teachers' beliefs towards grammar in terms of grammatical terminology; whether they are already familiar with basic grammatical terminology or to what extent grammatical terminology is required in the teaching of grammar instruction. As Borg (1999: 95) states it "Arguments abound in the literature as to what teachers should or should not do vis-à-vis terminology". To clarify this point in grammar teaching we need to focus on some of the arguments for or against the use of grammatical terminology.

When pre-service teachers are at college their beliefs have already been shaped somehow. The question is how pre-service English teachers react to the metalanguage, that is, the nonpropositional aspect, of grammatical description, and whether they are aware of particular features of the genre. The aim of this study is to shed light on pre-service English teachers' pedagogical beliefs about 'grammar' and its teaching and whether they attribute their reactions to specific features of the metalanguage.

The Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar, defines grammar as follows (2004): "Grammar is important because it is the language that makes it possible for us to talk about language. Grammar names the types of words and word groups that make up sentences not only in English but in any language". According to Nazir Ahmad (as cited in Bibi, 2002: 34) "grammar is the practical analysis of a language. It classifies a language under different categories and formulates a few general laws and principles of usage for the guidance of the learner". As human beings, we can put sentences together even as children – we can all *do* grammar. But to be able to talk about how sentences are built and about the types of words and word groups that make up sentences, we should know about grammar. And *knowing about grammar* offers a window into the human mind and our amazingly complex mental capacity.

Cross (1991: 26) defines grammar as "the body of rules which underlie a language. This includes rules which govern the structure of words and which govern the structure of clauses and sentences 'that are acceptable to educated native speakers". On the other hand, grammar is seen as "an essential, inescapable component of language use and language learning (Burgess, & Etherington, 2002). Grammar is fundamental to language, and therefore the teaching of grammar is essential if students are to develop confidence in their ability to use language in various social and educational settings. Grammar is "an indispensable component of any language teaching programme". Formal grammar teaching helps learners to acquire L2 more rapidly and get higher achievement. Therefore, any grammatical error as Brooks (1960) puts it, "is like sin, is to be avoided at all cost". However, it is widely accepted now, that errors including grammatical errors are inevitable as there is no longer a theoretical basis for teaching grammar to prevent errors (Ellis, 2002). An increasing number of studies in the field of ESL/EFL have focused on the way teachers practise grammar in the classroom.

Recently there has been lots of debate about grammar in language teaching and learning. No area of second and foreign (L2) language learning has been the subject of as much empirical and practical interest as grammar teaching (Borg, & Burns, 2008: 1). Usually debates about grammar often lie at the heart of various methodological orientations whether grammar should be taught inductively/deductively or implicitly/explicitly. This hot debate about grammar has helped to develop language teaching practice. There are different views on defining grammar than theoretical perspectives. This paper aims to study the beliefs about grammar and knowledge of grammar because it is necessary to identify and discuss these points.

Teacher beliefs have beeen a great field of interest within the last few decades. Fenstermacher (1979) foresaw that teacher beliefs would become a major focus of research into teacher effectiveness, and indeed much of the research on teacher thinking has set out to examine the influence of teachers' beliefs on their pedagogical practice. Pre-service teachers' beliefs are important in understanding their thought processes, instructional applications, change and learning to teach. Borg (1999) generally defines belief as a proposition, which is consciously or unconsciously held and accepted true by the individual holding it and which serves as a guide to thought and behaviour. It also helps to frame our understanding of events. However, in reference to teachers' beliefs, Borg (1999) specifically defines it as teachers' pedagogic beliefs that are relevant to their teaching.

Teachers' beliefs about students' language use greatly influence their decisions about classroom instruction and, ultimately, play a significant role in student literacy development (Gabrielatos, 2002) . Therefore, teachers' perceptions, prior beliefs, and knowledge will affect the way they approach teaching. As Borg suggests, "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (as cited in Farrell, & Lim, 2005: 1).

Student teachers' prior knowledge and personal understandings have an infuential role in developing them as teachers (Almarza, 1996). As beliefs are instilled in new teachers by teachers of a past generation, teachers themselves are inclined to teach in the way they themselves were taught (Lortie, 1975). Pre-service teachers via their belief systems perceive and analyse their beliefs ; their beliefs are shaped as a result of their past reflection. Over time they form their own systems of beliefs and evaluation. These beliefs have been accumulated from a variety of sources including their past experiences as students themselves and may act as filters (Lortie, ibid.). Pre-service teachers reinterpret the theoretical models on the basis of their own set of beliefs, judgement and criteria. Much of the research on teacher thinking has set out to examine the influence of teachers' beliefs on their pedagogical practice.

Beliefs represent one's knowledge, a kind of accumulation constructed from experience and serve as implicit theories to direct our thoughts and actions. Beliefs are a backbone for many teachers particularly for many language teachers and they are inevitable that teachers' way of teaching is affected by their beliefs of teaching. Teachers not only bring their beliefs to the classroom but also their perceptions as well as their pedagogical and content knowledge. Teachers whilst preparing their lessons and their lesson plans base them on their beliefs and experience. Beliefs may shape pedagogical knowledge that is transmitted to the students (Staub, & Stern, 2002). These beliefs even affect the materials and activities they choose for the classroom. Their beliefs determine how they approach teaching. In a study by Burns (1996) Teachers' practices were shaped by beliefs relating to the institutional culture of the school they worked in, their personal beliefs about language, learners, and learning, and their beliefs about specific instructional tasks and materials. Their resistance to reshape their beliefs may take some time. Before teachers can be expected to change their beliefs, they need to first be made aware of them (Crandall, 2000). Studying teachers' beliefs is important because it has lots to contribute to the development of an entire understanding of the process of teaching and learning.

Beliefs strongly influence both perceptions and behaviours. According to Pajares (1992: 324) their filtering "ultimately screens, redefines, distorts, or reshapes subsequent thinking and information processing". Beliefs may vary from good to bad or from weak to strong. Beliefs exist in connection to other beliefs and may in fact contradict one another (Breen et al., 2001), reflecting the complexity of belief systems. According to Johnson (1994: 439) teachers' beliefs share three assumptions: 1) Teachers' beliefs influence perception and judgement, 2) Teachers' beliefs play a role in how information on teaching is translated into classroom practices, and 3) Understanding teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teaching practices and teacher education programs. Hence beliefs are built up gradually over time; beliefs consist of both subjective and objective dimensions, and serve as the background to much of the teachers' decision making and classroom actions.

Teachers' beliefs in relation to classroom practice are by far the most researched theme in L2 teacher cognition research. A particular focus of this theme has been on teachers' decision making. Several researchers draw attention to the close inter-relationship of beliefs, knowledge and also experience in influencing pedagogical practice. Elbaz (as cited in Andrews, 2003), for example; in outlining her conception of a teacher's practical knowledge, emphasises the role of '… the teacher's feelings, values, needs and beliefs' in helping the teacher to integrate her experiential and theoretical knowledge, and orient these to her practical situation. Thoughts and decisions may be related largely to language concerns (such as explaining new vocabulary and creating contexts for meaningful language use). However Nunan (1992) in his study found that teachers' decisions related little to language concerns. Issues of classroom management such as the pacing and timing of lessons, the amount of teacher talk and the quality of their instructions and explanations to the students appeared to be more of a concern for the teachers in this study.

Some factors help teachers shape their beliefs: 1)*Own experience*: as teachers, the professional content and methodology courses as well as the actual practice of teaching appear to have given rise to a different set of beliefs, based on their professional experiences. 2) *Impact of In-service programmes*: Richards et al's (2001) study which found that in-service programmes reported by the teachers to be by far the biggest source of influence on their decisions, inspiring them to change their teaching and beliefs. 3) *Experimentation*: the teachers often experimented with new teaching ideas, and that such trial and error approaches often led to a change in beliefs and practices (as cited in Naashia, 2006: 234-235).

In contrast, the beliefs student teachers possess are implicit, informal and embedded in their mental images of classroom practice. Their beliefs act as perceptual, self validating, selective filters which sieve information presented to them. This filtered information is then used to confirm and support rather than confront or challenge their pre-existing conceptions. Their beliefs are inflexible and are constantly shaped by external and internal factors. Belief development and change is possible but it is "gradual" and "cumulative" and "highly variable"

among individual student teachers and that certain beliefs are more susceptible to change than others (Cabaroğlu, & Roberts, 2000). Similarly, Peacock's longititudinal study, investigating the belief systems changes of pre-service ESL teachers, reported that there had been little change in the trainees' belief systems about various aspects of second language learning at the end of their three-year pre-service training (as cited in Arıoğul, 2007: 173).

A number of studies have looked into the extent to which teachers' theoretical beliefs influence their classroom practices. Johnston & Goettsch (2000) showed that teachers' beliefs about how learners learnt influenced the instructional decisions they took. Grammatical rules did not feature prominently in the instructional practices instead, they focused more on using examples that illustrated the grammar point being discussed. Furthermore, they initiated student-centered discussions, due to the strong belief on the side of the teachers that the need for students' participation was inevitable in the learning phase. Johnson (1991) in a study, identified ESL teachers' beliefs: a teacher who expressed a skill based theoretical orientation generally presented lessons in which the focus was primarily on skill acquisition. A teacher with the rule-based orientation tended to employ more activities and exercises which served to reinforce knowledge of grammatical structures. S/he constantly referred to grammar even during reading and writing activities, for example, by asking students to identify a key of grammatical structure and to explain the rule which governed its use. The function-based teachers, on the other hand, selected activities which typically involved the learners' personal expression, teaching word meaning and usage through a meaningful context, reading activities which focused on the concepts or ideas within the text, and context-rich writing activities where students were encouraged to express their ideas without attention to grammatical correctness.

Beliefs of English teachers in terms of grammar teaching has been laid emphasis on by some scholars. Denham & Lobeck (2002) state that "many English education textbooks point out that teachers must be aware of certain grammatical fundamentals in order to help students recognise patterns of errors". Grammar is regarded by the teachers as a declarative set of facts to be learnt and grammar instruction is seen to entail the explanation of grammar rules. Joyce & Burns (1999) showed that teachers' personal views of what constituted grammar influences the way they approach the teaching of grammar in the classroom. In this respect a good knowledge of grammar is inevitable on the part of the English teachers. Grossman, Wilson & Shulman (1989) point out that teachers tend to avoid teaching grammar due to their uncertainty about their knowledge of grammar and inadequacy of grammatical knowledge.

A teacher who is more competent in terms of grammar and linguistics will fulfill the needs of his/her students a lot better. On the other hand, if a teacher is not competent in terms of grammar, what usually happens is that his/her students will deteriorate in terms of grammar and that they will be exposed to serious language problems. Earlier studies to date have indicated that the majority of student teachers of TESL in teacher training institutions had low proficiency in English despite being provided with proficiency classes during training. Because pre-service teachers' knowledge is limited at the outset they still need to improve their grammar and linguistic competence and they experience gaps in their knowledge which could in turn could affect their teaching and therefore have impact on their students' knowledge. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1- What are pre-service English teachers' pedagogical beliefs about grammar and the teaching of grammar?

2- What are pre-service English teachers' knowledge on grammatical terminology/metalanguage?

Graduates of teacher training programmes in Turkey do not seem to 'produce' the kind of practising teachers: They do not practise the profession in the way they are taught in the courses designed to equip them with the state of the art knowledge and expertise transferred from the (mainly) western sources. It has been speculated and confirmed to a great extent that what has been termed 'teacher beliefs' could be the culprit. However, one is not in a position to claim that teacher beliefs are baseless and thus harmful. On the contrary, they are there to be seen and respected by the researchers. Teacher beliefs are more than an understanding of how pre-service or practising teachers understand teaching. Therefore, research on teacher beliefs can actually open fresh areas for further research.

2.Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The research is quantitative in nature in that it attempts to capture some data expressed in numerical values. In this sense, it is descriptive as it captures a phenomenon at once. Further, the number of statements, questions included in the instruments reveal data that can be coded in statistical software programmes. The research is not an experimental one in which certain variables are manipulated to observe how certain phonemana interact. Therefore, findings of this research are regarded purely "reported".

2.2 Participants

90 pre-service English teachers from two Turkish universities completed the questionnaires. 57 of the participants were from Muğla University and 33 of the participants were from Çanakkale 18 Mart University. 55 of the participants were female and 35 were male. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 25. All participants from both of the universities were the 4th year students. When the participants were asked to reply to the questionnaires, they were in the middle of their final year in the training programme, during which they had received considerable amount of education not only on the nature of language through the appropriate metalanguage but also on the pedagogy of teaching grammar. The participants in this study were selected randomly

2.3 *Instruments*

One of the questionnaires, adopted from Borg & Burns (2008), aims to reveal pre-service teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and learning. This questionnaire consists of 15 statements about grammar learning and teaching. Participants were asked to express their degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. The reason why this particular questionnaire was selected is that it is able to tap various types of beliefs of pre-service English teachers on grammar teaching and learning.

The second instrument is also a questionnaire adapted from a website (see appendix B). It aims to reveal pre-service English teachers' knowledge on metalanguage. It consisted of 10 multiple choice questions about basic grammatical terminology such as "subject, object, in/transitive verb, in/direct object, conjugation" and so on. This questionnaire aimed to reveal two pieces of information: What pre-service English teachers think about the use of metalanguage in their teaching and whether they are aware of metalanguage and if so to what extent.

2.4 Procedure

The researchers were granted permission from the two Turkish universities to carry out the research study. Questionnaires were handed out to the pre-service teachers who agreed to participate and the participants completed the questionnaires in class which took them roughly 10 minutes to complete or completed them at home and returned them to their instructor. 92% of the questionnaires were returned by the participants.

The first questionnaire (Borg, & Burns, 2008) about grammar teaching and learning consisted of 15 items on a five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questions cover various aspects of grammar teaching, such as explicit and implicit teaching of grammar, deductive and inductive teaching of grammar, integrating grammar with other skills, direct and indirect teaching of grammar, error correction, the teacher's role in grammar teaching and so on. This questionnaire was selected for the reason that it covered a wide range of issues in terms of grammar and its teaching.

The first questionnaire was analysed statistically via SPSS 16. The second questionnaire about metalanguage consisted of 10 multiple choice questions about basic grammatical terminology. There were 3 or 4 answers to choose from in each question. The answers to the second questionnaire were also analysed via SPSS 16.

3. Results and Discussion

Below are the results of the first questionnaire regarding pre-service English teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching by participants; the arithmetic means below may better indicate the data:

Table 1. Beliefs About Grammar Learning and Teaching

	SA	A	U	DA	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
1 Teachers should present grammar to learners before expecting them to use it.	25.6	36.7	8.9	23.3	5.6
2 Learners who are aware of grammar rules can use the language more effectively than those who are not.	23.3	52.2	13.3	11.1	0
3 Exercises that get learners to practise grammar structures help learners develop fluency in using grammar.	30.0	44.4	12.2	10.0	3.3
4 Teaching the rules of English grammar directly is more appropriate for older learners.	13.3	33.3	24.4	21.1	7.8
5 During lessons, a focus on grammar should come after communicative tasks, not before.	34.4	26.7	15.6	14.4	8.9

6 Grammar should be taught separately, not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing.	11.1	7.8	6.7	32.2	42.2
7 In a communicative approach to language teaching, grammar is not taught directly.	28.9	42.2	17.8	7.8	3.3
8 In learning grammar, repeated practice allows learners to use structures fluently.	27.8	44.4	12.2	14.4	1.1
9 In teaching grammar, a teacher's main role is to explain the rules.	5.6	22.2	13.3	37.8	21.1
10 It is important for learners to know grammatical terminology.	5.6	47.8	30.0	14.4	2.2
11 Correcting learners' spoken grammatical errors in English is one of the teacher's key roles.	12.2	37.8	20.0	25.6	4.4
12 Grammar learning is more effective when learners work out the rules for themselves.	28.9	34.4	21.1	14.4	1.1
13 Indirect grammar teaching is more appropriate with younger than with older learners.	38.9	38.9	12.2	7.8	2.2
14 Formal grammar teaching does not help learners become more fluent.	23.3	44.4	13.3	15.6	3.3
15 It is necessary to study the grammar of a second or foreign language in order to speak it fluently.	10.0	43.3	21.1	18.9	6.7

Table 1 indicates that in item 1 majority of the participants favour the presentation of grammar to learners before expecting them to use it SA (25.6%) and A (36.7%). As to item 2 "Learners who are aware of grammar rules can use the language more effectively than those who are not" a great majority of the participants think that grammatical awareness is crucial in language teaching and learning SA (23.3%) and A (52%). Majority of the participants agree with item 3 that "Exercises that get learners to practise grammar structures help learners develop fluency in using grammar" SA (30.0%) and A (44.4%).

Almost half of the participants agree with item 4 that "Teaching the rules of English grammar directly is more appropriate for older learners" SA (13.3%) and A (33.3%). In this item the percentage of Unsure (24.4%) participants is fairly high. It could be said that they are still not sure whether the teaching of grammar directly is more appropriate for older learners.

Majority of the participants SA (34.4%) and A (26.7%) agree with item 5 that "During lessons, a focus on grammar should come after communicative tasks, not before". Hence regarding this question the percentage of Unsure participants and those who disagree are also fairly high which are SA (15.6%) and A (14.4%) which means that quite a high number of pre-service teachers are either against or still unsure about whether a focus should come after communicative tasks, not before.

A very big percentage of the participants SA (15.6%) and A (14.4%) are against item 6 that "Grammar should be taught separately, not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing. The participants maintain that grammar should not be taught separately. This result supports the view by Edilyan (n.d.: 94) that "grammar can be learnt in context indirectly through reading, writing, listening and speaking". She put emphasis on the importance of skills-based grammar teaching.

Similarly, participants favour item 7 SA (28.9%) and A (49.2%) that "In a communicative approach to language teaching, grammar is not taught directly". This supports Larsen-Freeman (2003) who has coined the term "grammaring" in proposing that "the ability to use grammatical structures is accurately a skill requiring productive practice".

Participants agree with item 8 that SA (27.8%) and A (44.4%) "In learning grammar, repeated practice allows learners to use structures fluently". Some structures may not be mastered without the opportunity for repeated practice. Harley (1989), for example found that Anglophone learners of L2 French were able to improve their accuracy in the use of the preterite and imparfait past tenses after intensive instruction (as cited in Ellis, 2005: 5). Practices that focus on repetition of newly introduced forms or grammatical structures are thought to help the learning.

With regard to item 9 majority of the participants in teaching grammar state "Explaining the rules is not the teacher's main role" SD (21.1%) and DA (37.8%). As stated by Sasson (2009) "learning a bunch of grammatical

rules is not learning English… memorising rules will not necessarily help". Therefore the teacher's main role is not just to explain the rules.

Item 10 which is "It is important for learners to know grammatical terminology" is supported by participants SA (5.6%) and A (47.8%) . but this item reveals a fact that although almost half of the participants in this study favour the use of grammatical terminology; 30% of the participants are unsure which might mean that either they do not know whether it is for learners' benefit to use grammatical terminology or it is likely that they themselves do not know what grammatical terminology/metalanguage refers to. This indicates that almost half of the participants have cautious approach to metalanguage. "Introducing unnecessary jargon into the classroom is intimidating and unhelpful, but the careful   introduction and regular use of a few well-chosen terms can be helpful and save a lot of time over the   length of a course for both teacher and learner" (Lewis, 2000: 129). On the other hand there might be some other factors in teachers' use of terminology such as personal or methodological factors and so on. There is evidence that one of the major determinants of terminology use is the teachers' own   background, i.e. whether their own teachers used much terminology and whether they have had a formal course in   English grammar (Berry, 2001: 112-115).

Participants' response to item 11 that "Correcting learners' spoken grammatical errors in English is one of the teacher's key roles" seems to be neutral. SA (12.2%) and A (37.8%) which means half of the participants state that correcting learner's spoken grammatical errors in English is one of the teacher's key roles". This is to say, learners' errors should be corrected by teachers, and the correction of errors is believed to be able to reduce the number of errors in the TL. This might also shed light on the fact that "when persistent errors are not treated, the incorrect forms are likely to be considered as correct ones by learners and thus these errors will be reinforced in the initial stage of language learning and eventually fossilised in the following stages of language learning. When this happens it will be difficult to eliminate such errors. Therefore, teachers should observe whether the errors made by learners are constantly occuring or not. If the answer is positive, then the teacher must take some actions to deal with such errors (Chiang, 2008: 28). The remaining half of the participants either do not agree or they   are unsure about error correction. That is to say, they   favour ignoring trivial grammatical errors so long as they do not hinder the comprehension of messages.

A great majority of participants SA (28.9%) and A (34.4%)   agree with statement 12 that "Grammar learning is more effective when learners work out the rules for themselves". This view supports an inductive approach to grammar teaching which can render service to teachers who have problems with grammar teaching. Knowing that they can work out grammatical rules from examples by themselves greatly increases learners' motivation, makes them attentive, and more confident and enthusiastic about the learning process rather than simply passive receipents. "An invitation to discover rules for themselves may be more motivating to learners than simply giving the rules…Thus, students take responsibility for their learning, instead of having materials spoonfed for them" (Ellis, as cited in Katz, & Blyth, 2007: 36).   This sort of approach to grammar teaching has the obvious advantage that what the learners themselves discover, they are more likely to remember.

Participants hold strong beliefs SA (38.9%) and A (38.9%) regarding item 13 that "Indirect grammar teaching is more appropriate with younger than with older learners". This approach was supported in a study by Paras (2005: 2) that "younger English language learners (ELL) are more likely to learn the grammatical usage of subject and object pronouns through experience and practice, without necessarily understanding anything about sentence structure.

Similarly, participants favour SA (23.3%) and A (44.4%)   item 14 that "Formal grammar teaching does not help learners become more fluent". Actual fluency comes about through practice, experimentation, suiting to form and so on. For example, fluency will not be helped by clause analysis, though some knowledge of clauses and conjunctions may make it easier for teachers and pupils to discuss sentence structure. Therefore, ability to speak fluently is not dependent on knowledge of grammar. By looking at participants' responses formal grammar teaching in terms of fluency cannot be justified. Field (2006: 344) states that " many students of EFL have studied formal grammar rules and memorised formal grammatical charts, verb tense forms, rules of morphology and syntax. They may be able to complete grammar exercises at a rather high level of structural understanding. In order to become fluent readers; however, they must be able to process sentences with an increasing speed, competence and automaticity. Continuing to work high level grammar exercises may teach students new elements of grammar, but it will not improve their ability to recognise and comprehend those structures automatically".

Majority of the participants think that SA (23.3%) and A (44.4%)   "It is necessary to study the grammar of a second or foreign language in order to speak it fluently". Participants in this study can be said to see grammar as a prerequisite to spoken fluency.

The results of the questionnaire adopted from Borg, & Burns (2008) match with their findings; the participants' responses to the questions do not differ a lot statistically. Discussion of findings has revealed that the pre-service teachers did not see the correction of students' errors as one of their primary roles and expressed a strong belief in the positive impact of grammar practice with regard to fluency. They also expressed a strong belief that grammar should not be taught in isolation, but it should be taught with other skills to support grammar teaching. They also expressed a strong belief with the integration of grammar and communicative language teaching and indicated that grammar should be presented in context.

One of the results to obtain from this study is that the pre-service teachers in this study do not lay emphasis on only form or meaning but they combine both form and grammar therefore, grammar and skills. The pre-service teachers value grammar, integrating grammar and skills; which is "a contextual perspective, which described integration in terms of the relationship between grammar work and the text or task it was related to" (Borg, & Burns, 2008). Another thing observed in this study was that the pre-service teachers reflected on their prior beliefs, and their own language experience about grammar in their answers.
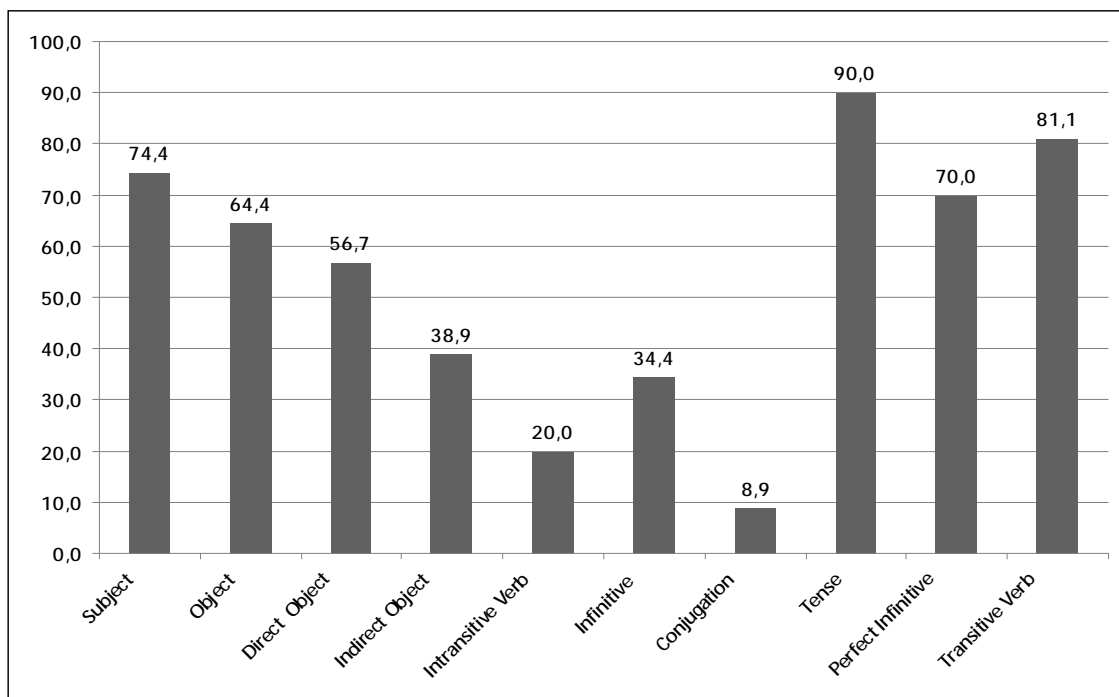

Figure 1. Knowledge About Metalanguage/Grammatical Terminology

Teachers' decisions about the use of metalanguage is influenced by a range of cognitive, and contextual factors. Teachers should have a good understanding of language and the way it works if they are to be effective in their teaching of literacy, or indeed of any area. That is, teachers should have a metalanguage to enable them to reflect meaningfully on language in their teaching contexts, and to participate in spoken and written interactions about language as an object of study. The results of pre-service teachers' knowledge on metalanguage indicate that although basic metalanguage (i.e., subject, object, transitive and intransitive verb, conjugation) was administered in the questionnaire, it revealed that pre-service teachers still have difficulty with identifying such terminology. They can identify some of the terminologies more easily than some others. As it can be seen in Figure 1, the most easily identified term was *tense* 90% of participants identified it; then in the second place was *transitive verb* 81.1%, the third in ranking was *subject* 74.4%, and then *perfect infinitive* 70%, *object* 64.4%, *direct object* 56.7%, *indirect object* 38.9%, *infinitive* 34.4%, *intransitive verb* 20% respectively, and the most difficult term for participants to identify was *conjugation* (8.9%). Although all the participants were 4th year students what is suprising is that a great majority of them have problems even with the most commonly used terms; for example, only 8.9% of participants responded correctly to the question about conjugation which is a very low score. Similarly, intransitive verb was identified by only 20% of participants. On the other hand, infinitive form of a verb which is 'the dictionary form of the word' was identified by only 34.4% of participants. None of the grammatical

terminology was identified correctly by all participants although a majority of participants were able to identify 'tense, transtive verb, subject, object, direct object, and indirect object'. Therefore, the results can be said to be dissatisfactory.

With regard to grammatical terminology, if the question 10 (in Table 1), which is "It is important for learners to know grammatical terminology" is once more analysed, it is seen that more than half of the participants SA (5.6%) and A (47.8%) see grammatical terminoloy as an important criterion in language teaching but in contrast with their responses they lack a great deal of terminology. "Metalanguage helps the teacher explore how language can be used in different circumstances…and for different purposes…, covering meaning structures…,how sentences work,…[all] are solid indications of metalanguage within the lesson" (Zyngier, 2007: 212). Without the metalanguage of pedagogy which helps teachers to read, think and analyse critically and enable them to explain and describe the nature of errors identified and also to sharpen their skills in a closer examination of grammatical problems in students' writing, teachers may not be able to reflect upon their teaching.

4. Conclusion

This research on pre-service teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching and pre-service teachers' knowledge on metalanguage has shed light on factors that interact in the processes of teaching. EFL pre-service teachers bring beliefs accumulated from many years' learning experience to a teacher education programme which affect what and how they teach. Their beliefs may change in the process of education and that they can thus assess their beliefs in relation to their classroom practices about grammar and its teaching.

This study has focused on several things, namely pre-service English teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching and their knowledge on metalanguage. Hence, this study is not based on the direct study of grammar teaching; the results are based on the pre-service teachers' stated beliefs about grammar and their knowledge on metalanguage. Although the findings in the study match with the one by Borg, & Burns (2008), it should be stated that the findings about pre-service English teachers' beliefs about grammar may vary geographically from one country to another even from one university to another. To be able to understand these one has to understand what "teacher pedagogical belief" means. Teachers' beliefs come from various stages of their educational career: personal experience, experience with schooling and instruction (pedagogical knowledge) and experience with formal knowledge. It is evident in this study that teacher pedagogical knowledge and formal knowledge affect pre-service teachers' beliefs with respect to the delivery of grammar lessons. Their beliefs about grammar teaching are likely to differ. Teacher pedagogical content knowledge can be said to be complex in nature. With regard to grammar teaching, it involves a list of skills based on his/her beliefs of teaching and ability to teach.

A higher number of participants and universities would have revealed more comprehensive results over the beliefs and assumptions of pre-service teachers of English. This study would be longitidunal, that is, the same participants could be administered these questionnaires to observe the developmental patterns through a four year period. Interviews could be conducted to triangulate the findings obtained through quantitative means. In doing so, one could see the more human face of what has been going on, as far as the grammar teaching beliefs are concerned. As this is a questionnaire based survey, findings are evaluated on the basis of the reporting of the participants. Therefore, findings should be considered tentative.

Despite the limitations, this study, however, has provided a number of insights about pre-service teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching, particularly the teaching of grammar with skills teaching, not in isolation, and pre-service teachers' knowledge on metalanguage. Although most of the pre-service EFL teachers in this study favoured the use of metalanguage in grammar classes, the results indicated that they still lacked a great deal of metalanguage. The results of this study may help pre-service English teachers support their language pedagogy in terms of grammar teaching; therefore, enabling their beliefs to be surfaced during the teacher education programme if the programme is expected to contribute to the deep structure of pre-service ELT teachers' beliefs about grammar and its teaching. It is also suggested that further study is required to reveal the deep knowledge level about grammar that exists in pre-service English teachers' minds by analysing actual grammar lessons and that a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods may be more profitable.

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Appendix A

Beliefs about grammar learning and teaching adopted from Borg, S., & Burns, A. (2008). Integrating grammar in adult TESOL classrooms, *Applied Linguistics*, 29(3), 456-482.

	The following questions are a part of a research project to reflect your view. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be used only in aggragate form.Thank you for your contribution 5 Strongly disagree (SD), 4 disagree (DA), 3 Unsure (U), 2 Agree(A), 1 Strongly agree (SA)	Srongly agree SA 1	Agree A 2	*Unsure U 3*	Disagree DA 4	Strongly disagree SD 5
1	Teachers should present grammar to learners before expecting them to use it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	Learners who are aware of grammar rules can use the language more effectively than those who are not.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	Exercises that get learners to practise grammar structures help learners develop fluency in using grammar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	Teaching the rules of English grammar directly is more appropriate for older learners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	During lessons, a focus on grammar should come after communicative tasks, not before.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	Grammar should be taught separately, not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	In a communicative approach to language teaching, grammar is not taught directly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	In learning grammar, repeated practice allows learners to use structures fluently.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	In teaching grammar, a teacher's main role is to explain the rules.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	It is important for learners to know grammatical terminology.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	Correcting learners' spoken grammatical errors in English is one of the teacher's key roles.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	Grammar learning is more effective when learners work out the rules for themselves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	Indirect grammar teaching is more appropriate with younger than with older learners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	Formal grammar teaching does not help learners become more fluent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	It is necessary to study the grammar of a second or foreign language in order to speak it fluently.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix B

The following questions are a part of a research project to reflect your view about awareness of metalanguage. Please select the most appropriate answer. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be used only in aggragate form. Thank you for your contribution.

Retrieved from: http://www.class.uh.edu/mcl/faculty/armstrong/home/latn1301/drills/Grammar.htm

1- John likes to eat toast with eggs and fruit. What is the subject of this sentence?
    a) John's breakfast.
    b) John.
    c) Toast.
    d) What John prefers to eat for breakfast.

2- The object of a sentence is:
    a) a thing that is used to do something in a sentence.
    b) its main point.
    c) never a person or an abstract idea.
    d) that which receives the action of the main verb.

3- The hammer hit Jim on the head. The direct object of this sentence is:
    a) Jim.
    b) Jim's head.
    c) The hammer.

4- Jim gave Steve the hammer. The indirect object of this sentence is:
    a) Steve.
    b) Jim.
    c) the hammer.

5- An intransitive use of the verb "to smoke" would be:
    a) I smoke.
    b) I am smoking.
    c) I am smoking Virgina Slims.
    d) I smoke too often.

6- An infinitive is a form of the verb which is:
    e) has no person or number.
    f) has no tense or number.
    g) has infinite meanings.
    h) Is the dictionary form of the word.

7- Conjugation is:
    i) the inflection of verbs.
    j) a word that connects clauses.
    k) the inflection of nouns and adjectives.

8- Tense in a verb expresses:
    a. the level of stress of the subject.
    b. whether the action occurs in the past, present or future.
    c. whether the action is a fact, command or, a hypothesis.
    d. the number of speakers.

9- The perfect infinitive of "to be" is:
    a. to been.
    b. has been.
    c. having been.
    d. to have been.

10- A "transitive verb" is a verb of:
    a. motion.
    b. transition.
    c. which can take a direct object.
    d. which needs no subject.